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Quality Assurance Manual

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REVISION HISTORY

This quality manual and the policies it contains is under continuous review and may change at any time. A record of amendments is given below.

Revision No	Issue Date	Description of Change
1	January 2016	Original
2	September 2016	<p>Updated P5.2 Programme Design to include the development of all course materials. All contracted trainers delivering a programme will use the same course materials to ensure all learners have a consistent learning experience.</p> <p>Updated P5.5 Programme Review to include annual reviews.</p> <p>Update P5.6 Fair and Consistent Assessment of Learners to limit the involvement of the Managing Director and Head of Centre, Patrick Byrne, to ensure there is a clear separation of the academic and business making structures of the company. Patrick will only be involved in the appointment of our Internal Verifier and in reviewing incidents or allegations of malpractice with our QA Officer.</p> <p>Update P7 Protection for Enrolled Learners</p>
3	November 2016	Updated Organisation Chart and company address
4	May 2018	<p>Updated P4.3 Recognition of Prior Experiential or Certified Learning (RPL) – updated definition of RPL</p> <p>Updated Organisation Chart</p>
5	May 2019	Updated Organisation Chart
6	May 2020	Updated Organisation Chart

7	September 2020	Updated Organisation Chart
8	February 2021	Update to P1. Introduction - Our Strategic Plan Addition of Blended Learning Strategy to Appendix
8	February 2021	Update to P1. Roles and Responsibilities Addition of new roles to support blended learning
8	February 2021	Update to P1. IT Management and Development Addition of new IT systems used to provide and support blended learning.
8	February 2021	Update to P1. Legal Context Updated to include QQI QA Guidelines for Providers of Blended Learning Programmes and several resources provided by the National Forum for the Enhancement of Teaching and Learning which were used during the development of our Blended Learning Strategy and the amendment of the support QA.
8	February 2021	Update to P2.4 Communication with Staff Updated to include details of the new IT systems used to improve collaboration among staff.
8	February 2021	Update to P3.2 Learner Feedback Updated to include details of how we collect and analyse learner feedback via our dedicated elearning@ and admin@ support emails.
8	February 2021	Update to P3.4 Provision and Maintenance of Learning Resources Updated to include details of the new course resource pages that have been developed to support all class-room and blended learning courses.
8	February 2021	Update to P 4.4 Facilitating Diversity

		Updated to include link to new online form used to request Reasonable Accommodation.
8	February 2021	<p>Update to P4.6 Programme Deferral</p> <p>Updated to include link to new online form used to request a course deferment and our procedure around requesting evidence and fees.</p>
8	February 2021	<p>P5. Programme Development, Delivery and Review</p> <p>P5.2 Programme Design</p> <p>P5.3 Programme Approval</p> <p>P5.4 Provision and Maintenance of learning facilities/resources</p> <p>P5.5 Programme Review</p> <p>P5.6 Learner Records</p> <p>Updated to include a link to our Programme Development Handbook which maps out our internal interactive process for developing new programmes / making substantial developments to existing programmes.</p> <p>All procedures reviewed and adapted to support blended learning.</p>
8	February 2021	<p>P6. Fair And Consistent Assessment Of Learners</p> <p>P6.1 Assessment Planning</p> <p>P6.2 Information to Learners</p> <p>P6.3 Security of assessment related processes and materials</p> <p>P6.5 Reasonable Accommodation</p> <p>P6.4 Assessment Design</p> <p>P6.6 Assessment Malpractice</p> <p>P6.7 Feedback to Learners</p> <p>P6.8 Assessment Submission</p> <p>P6.9 Extension Requests</p> <p>P6.10 Continuity of Marking Between Assessors</p> <p>P6.11 Assessment Performed By Third Parties</p> <p>P6.12 Internal Verification</p> <p>P6.13 External Examinations</p> <p>P6.14 Results Approval</p>

		P6.15 Learner Appeals All procedures reviewed and adapted to support blended learning.
8	February 2021	Replaced all Appendix references with links to external files on the shared drive

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P1. INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this Manual is to present the quality assurance policies and procedures of DCM. Supporting policy documents and handbooks are also considered to be an integral part of DCM's quality assurance system. Collectively these documents should be used as a guide for all participants involved in quality assurance across the company.

As a corporate entity, DCM is fully committed to ensuring the success of our quality assurance system in all aspects of strategy, governance and management. This is evidenced by the inclusion of our QAS in corporate strategy and the allocation of resources in the form of specific responsibilities for quality assurance.

We are committed to ensuring that quality assurance underpins all our activities not just those related to the design, delivery and assessment of programmes. We view quality assurance as a supportive infrastructure within which we meet our responsibilities in a manner likely to achieve success.

Our policies and procedures aim to ensure that we design, develop and deliver high-quality programmes and provide a high-quality service to our learners at all times. They will also assist us in reviewing the effectiveness of the programmes we offer and the service we provide on an on-going basis. We are committed to developing a culture that recognises the importance of quality in everything we do.

Our policies and procedures are learner-focused to ensure all learners: -

- Can easily access information about programme outlines, progression opportunities, assessment procedures and criteria
- Have the opportunity to give and receive feedback on their experience and achievements
- Have reasonable access to support services including contact to trainers for a one-to-one consultation
- Are treated fairly and respectfully at all times
- Have access to all relevant QA documentation including policies and procedures in place to deal with any extenuating circumstances that may affect the learner's progression

DCM PROFILE

DCM was co-founded in 2013 by Patrick Byrne and Denise Howard who are the joint shareholders of the company. We now have a team of 30 people (20 professional training contractors, 2 working directors, 1 non-executive director and 8 full-time members of staff) based in 24 Laurence Street, Drogheda, Co. Louth.

We offer a range of short training programmes in the areas of Project Management, Lean, Management, Agile as well as soft skills training programmes e.g. Public Speaking, Conflict Resolution and Time Management. Along with our standard training programmes, we also work closely with our clients to design and deliver customised training programmes that meet the specific needs of their team.

We strive to make the learner the focal point in everything we do and to provide relevant and practical training programmes for learners that they can use immediately on the job and that will help them develop in their chosen career.

OUR MISSION STATEMENT

At DCM, our mission is to ensure our learners are successful, that they achieve their qualifications on time, and that they receive quality service resulting in a positive learner experience.

OUR VISION

Our learners are the focal point of DCM's vision to be Ireland's leading professional training provider of affordable and quality assured level 5 and level 6 blended programmes. .

OUR VALUES

Teamwork

We are a team. Each member of the team has their strengths and weaknesses but working together makes us stronger.

Client/Learner Focussed

Every interaction we have with a client/learner is an opportunity to provide excellent customer service and enables us to support our learners every step of the way through their learning.

Accessible

We are always aware of individual student needs and strive to find solutions to their educational requirements

Be the Best

We continually strive to deliver 'best in class education in a highly professional environment. Our team is committed to offering learners the most up-to-date learning.

OUR STRATEGIC PLAN

In line with our mission, vision and values we have developed a strategic plan for the period of 2019 to 2022. The appropriateness and success of the strategic plan will be reviewed and monitored regularly by the Board of Management and changes will be made where necessary.

Central to the success of the strategic plan is to expand our reach nationally and to increase the range of programmes that we offer as face-to-face and blended learning programmes. See our [Appendix 1: Blended Learning Strategy](#) for more detail on our approach to Blended Learning.

We have identified three key strategic areas to focus on: -

1. Transformation through Digital Technology

Technology is changing the way we work today and live today. Our staff and our learners need to be equipped to make use of these technologies and to adapt to the changing working environment and the changing society that these technologies are going to create. We recognise that this transformation affects everything we do at DCM and have set the following goals: -

A. Implement advanced systems and services

- a. Make use of digital systems to simplify and reduce the need for staff times to be absorbed in routine tasks
- b. Make use of digital systems to simplify learner interactions with DCM

B. Provide an inclusive and accessible learning experience

- a. Introduce blended learning programmes so we can be more flexible to each learner's needs.
- b. Make use of accessible technology to support the application of Universal Design principles in our programme development.

C. Develop our team

- a. Up-skill our existing team in the use of all new technologies and procedures introduced
- b. Complete a gap analysis and hire new staff with required skills where needed
- c. Collaborate with external consultants/experts

2. Increased Accreditation and Recognition

To enhance the standing of the DCM as a leading Further Education provider in Ireland we have set the following goals: -

- A. To develop DCM as an innovative and cutting-edge training provider
 - a. Promote the reputation of DCM and our offerings professionally across a wide range of media
 - b. Develop a series of free CPD knowledge webinars for our learners
 - c. Develop an annual CPD conference during the time-frame of this strategic plan
- B. To gain further accreditations relevant to our learners
 - a. Review existing Project Management programmes in line with PMI and PRINCE II Accreditation requirements
 - b. Complete application process for PMI and PRINCE II Accreditation
- C. To become an ISO 9001 certified company
 - a. Review existing QMS against the current ISO 9001 standards
 - b. Complete the application process for ISO 9001 certification

3. Increased Product Offering

Initially, we will expand the programmes we offer to include: -

- 6N4329 Supervisory Management
- 6S3372 Training and Development (incl. 6N3325 Training Needs Identification & Design)
- 6N0697 Customer Service Skills
- 6N3087 Coaching Models of Practice
- 6N2054 Consultative Selling
- 6N4910 Mediation
- 5N1364 Digital Marketing
- 5N1407 Reception and Frontline Office Skills

ORGANISATIONAL CHART

Management Team & Board of Directors

Denise Howard **
Operations Director

Patrick Byrne
Managing Director

TBA
Non Exec Director

Support Team

Belinda Neary
Training Manager

Niamh Pentony
Training Advisor

Martina Lacey
Training Advisor

Hannah Finlay
Training Advisor

Ruth Caffrey
Elearning Project
Manager

Caroline Brereton
eLearning
Coordinator

Michelly Goncalves
Digital Marketing
Manager

Nicola Gaffney
QQI Coordinator

Subject Matter Experts / Trainers

Andrew Gibson *

Padraig McCabe *

Damian McCourt *

Karen Maher *

Joanne O' Brien *

Ger Ahearne *

Maura O'Toole

Ann O'Brien

Jacinta Doyle
Durand

Hugh Mc Govern

Olivia Roche

Margaret Dorgan

Dave Conway

Joe O'Connor

Eamonn Doyle

Maureen Sullivan

Anne Broderick

Robert Potter

Margaret Kearns

Padraig O'Connor

Points to note: -

*A number of our trainers that were involved in the development of programmes or who have specialist subject matter expertise for a given programme will also be asked to fill the role of Internal Assessor for that programme.

** Currently, our Operations Director, Denise Howard fills the role of Educational Technologist. Denise also contributes to the Learning Content Designer role in conjunction with Ruth Caffrey.

In recognition of the need for the separation of commercial and academic decision making we have developed policies and procedures that seek the input from external experts when needed.

In addition to the personnel outlined in the Organisational Chart above we also maintain a network of external stakeholders we can draw from when needed, including External Examiners, Instructional Designers, Educational Technologists and Subject Matter Experts with specialist topic knowledge.

EXTERNAL STAKEHOLDERS

We are committed to ensuring that our programmes meet the needs and expectations of our external stakeholders who have actual or potential connections or contributions to our programmes. We are committed to engaging in a systematic way with these stakeholders to maximise the potential benefit to programmes and learner outcomes. We adapt a strategic approach to stakeholder engagement and review its effectiveness as part of our programme reviews

A sample of our stakeholders is laid out below:

- Our Clients (Employers)
- Higher Education & Training Providers
- Funding & Referral Agencies
- Accreditation Bodies
- Regulatory Bodies
- Sectoral Bodies

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Below is a description of the roles and responsibilities of key personnel involved in the design, development, delivery and support of our class-room and blended learning programmes. Note: The responsibilities listed below are not exhaustive.

Head of Centre (Managing Director)

As the Head of Centre Patrick takes responsibility for the overall delivery of a quality service to stakeholders and for driving continuous improvement of the service we provide and the programmes we design, develop and deliver.

As the Managing Director Patrick Byrne is responsible for working with the board to define the strategic goals and objectives of the company.

Key responsibilities include: -

- Acting as Chair of the Results Approval Panel
- Signing off on all results
- Financial planning and management of the company to ensure it can continue to operate as a quality training provider
- Management of the human resources function and resource allocation of support staff, trainers, internal verifiers and external examiners
- Development and management of strategic alliances

QA Officer & QQI Coordinator (Operations Director)

As the Operations Director, Denise Howard is responsible for the day-to-day running of the company.

As the QA Officer in DCM Denise's role is to encourage, motivate and support all internal support staff and trainers in their roles to uphold DCM's quality standard in everything they do.

Denise is also the main point of contact for all external awarding bodies.

Key responsibilities include: -

- Contributing to the development and implementation of appropriate management information systems.

- Acting as the main point of contact for all external awarding bodies
- Acting as the Data Protection Officer for the organisation
- Creation, retention and maintenance of data relating to the registration and examination performance of learners, programme validation and content
- Admission, registration and deregistration of learners
- Management of assessments and examinations
- Promotion of quality assurance
- The provision and overall management of learner support services
- Supporting the operations of the various panels

Non-Executive Director (to be appointed)

The role of the Non-Executive Director in DCM is to bring an independent, impartial and experienced oversight to the governance of the company.

They should also act as a Chairperson, preside over the Board of Directors monthly meetings and ensure that business is conducted in a professional and orderly manner.

Key responsibilities include: -

- Ensuring the highest ethical standards of integrity are upheld by the company
- Ensuring financial information is accurate and all audit requirements are satisfied
- Monitoring the performance of the management team in relation to agreed targets and objectives
- Assisting in the development of the company's strategic goals and objectives
- Ensuring controls and risk management systems are robust and defensible
- Assisting in internal projects such as trainer recruitment or programme development

Board of Directors

Our Board currently comprises Patrick Byrne (Managing Director) and Denise Howard (Operations Director). Following the retirement of our previous Non-Executive Director and Chairperson, Sean Mc Entee, a new Non-Executive Director must be appointed.

The Board complies with and satisfies its common law and statutory duties as provided for under the Companies Acts. The Board meets on a monthly basis and is responsible for: -

- Reviewing financial reporting and projections
- Agreeing the strategic goals and objectives of the company
- Strategic decision-making in line with the agreed strategic plan
- Ensuring compliance with relevant legal obligations and those set down by external awarding bodies
- Reviewing resource requirements and agreeing on additional resources as needed
- Managing HR issues including Support Staff and Trainer development
- Monitoring adherence to agreed QA policies and procedures
- Final signoff on the creation and validation of all training programmes on offer
- Ensuring the on-going monitoring and review of our QA system including the review of regular internal quality audits

Support Staff

Our Support Staff work closely with our learners and trainers to ensure our programmes are run to a high quality standard.

Key responsibilities include: -

- Providing support to our current and prospective learners including
 - Acting as the primary point of contact for all programme information including programme outlines, access and progression details, assessment criteria, and relevant policy information.
 - Managing learner enrollment
 - Handling all general learner enquiries

- Coordination and approval of venues in accordance with our QA procedures and training specifications
- Supporting Trainers in all aspects of planning and programme delivery
- Management and distribution of training materials
- LMS and VLE support for Trainers and learners
- Monitoring learner feedback and reporting to management
- Maintaining the Corrective Action Log

eLearning Support Staff

Our eLearning Support Staff are specially trained in administering our chosen LMS and VLE systems.

Key responsibilities include: -

- Setting up and maintaining online resources for blended learning programmes
- Setting up blended learning sessions on our chosen VLE
- Supporting trainers with all aspects of our VLE and LMS use
- Enrolling learners on our VLE for remote training sessions
- Enrolling learners on our LMS so they can access online course resources
- Handling all technical enquiries from learners relating to our blended learning programmes
- Maintaining improvement log for LMS and VLE

QQI Administrator

Our QQI Administrator works closely with our learners throughout their assessment period.

Key responsibilities include: -

- Communicating key submission dates and instructions to all current learners
- Communicating assessment results
- Handling all assessment related learner enquiries such as appeals, special accommodation requests and extension requests
- Entering results onto the QQI Business System (QBS)
- Amending results on the QBS after IV and prior to the EA visit, if required
- Issuing award certificates after receiving them from the awarding body
- Attending RAP meetings

Internal Verifiers

When acting as an Internal Verifier our Support Staff will also be responsible for verifying that our assessment procedures are being applied consistently and checking the accuracy of assessment results. This verification takes place on a sample basis. We will use our Sampling Procedure as a guide when selecting samples to verify.

Specific responsibilities include: -

- Verifying that our assessment procedures are being applied consistently and checking the accuracy of assessment results
- Using our Sampling Procedure as a guide when selecting samples to verify
- Checking there is sufficient learner evidence for all assessments
- Checking learning has been assessed using the agreed techniques for the given programme
- Checking that assessment marks and grades have been recorded correctly for all learners
- Highlighting any irregularities to the QA Officer
- Producing an Internal Verification report

Internal Assessors

Our Internal Assessors are responsible for evaluating all learner evidence received and making a decision on whether the learner has demonstrated their understanding of the learning outcomes as outlined in the specification for the given programme/award.

Specific responsibilities include: -

- Evaluating all learner evidence received and making appropriate assessment decisions
- Making decisions on whether the learner has demonstrated their understanding of the learning outcomes as outlined in the specification for the given programme/award.
- Ensuring they fully understand the learning outcomes of the programmes they are assessing
- Ensuring they fully understand the assessment procedures of the programmes they are assessing
- Recording all grades using the marking sheets provided
- Providing information and feedback to learners

External Examiners

We will engage an independent, external examiner to ensure our assessments have been marked in a valid and reliable way and are compliant with the requirements for the given programme/award. This examination takes place on a sample basis. We will use our Sampling Procedure as a guide when selecting samples to verify.

The key responsibilities of the External Examiners are: -

- Reviewing the appropriateness of the intended learning outcomes for each programme we offer
- Reviewing each programme to ensure the assessment criteria are appropriate
- Monitoring our assessment procedure to ensure it is reliable, fair and consistent
- Reviewing our Internal Verification reports for accuracy
- Highlighting any irregularities to the QA Officer
- Producing an External Examiner Report

Trainers/Subject Matter Experts

The key responsibilities of our Trainers include: -

- Working with our programme developers to identify training needs
- Assisting in the design and development of training programmes to meet identified needs
- Providing reasonable support, including mentoring and feedback, to Learners on their programmes
- Delivering agreed training programmes to Learners, face-to-face and virtually
- Producing content to be used during face-to-face, virtual and online training sessions
- Liaising with Support Staff and Management on an on-going basis to provide feedback
- Attending and contributing to development meetings relating to the programmes they deliver as arranged by DCM
- Assuming the role of Programme Leader to take programmes through our Programme Approval and Review process
- Attend PARP meetings as required
- Providing support to Learners within the agreed time frame of the assessment activity
- Work with our Internal Verifier to ensure all documentation in is order for IV
- Attend RAP meetings if requested

Educational Technologist

The role of the Educational Technologist is to analyse, design, develop, implement and evaluate the processes and tools we use to enhance our blended learning programmes.

Specific responsibilities include: -

- Work with management and the team to implement and enhance the blended learning strategy and relevant quality assurance policies
- Researching and analysing the tools available to enhance blended learning e.g. VLE, LMS, Authoring tools
- Support the development and implementation of internal CPD to staff on a range of systems and digital pedagogy

- Working with the team to restructure content for use within our chosen VLE and LMS to ensure best practice in curriculum design and development
- Developing guides for learners on VLE and LMS use
- Using authoring tools and LMS to create content and build courses
- Reviewing engagement and feedback from stakeholders to identify areas for innovation and improvement
- Keeping up to date with technological developments to identify possible improvements to blended learning programmes
- Full management and oversight of all systems chosen to support blended learning

Learning Content Designer/Instructional Designer

The role of the Learning Content designer is to identify the training needs of our learners and work with subject matter experts to create learning activities and content using instructional design.

Specific responsibilities include: -

- Work with management and the team to identify best practice guidelines for developing content and learning activities for blended programmes
- Develop and deploy suitable design templates, standards and guidelines for internal CPD use
- Take the lead during the planning, analysis, and design phases of course content development
- Apply standard ID approaches to designing course structures that are aligned to set learning objectives and outcomes.
- Review draft content and provide input to enhance clarity of objectives, structure
- Review engagement and feedback from stakeholders to identify areas for innovation and improvement

Graphic Designer

The role of the Graphic Designer is to design guidelines for our overall brand, including style, layout, feel and usability and to create visual assets/content.

Specific responsibilities include: -

- Work with management to define corporate brand guidelines
- Create design systems and templates for use in the development of blended learning programmes
- Create and maintain library of assets for use in all social and digital platforms, course content, internal decks, and marketing collateral
- Assist in video production and other content as needed
- Designing and maintaining programme documentation such as Course Brochures, Quick Start Guides, User Instruction Leaflets etc.
- Stay current with design and marketing trends, industry developments and visual styles.

eLearning Project Manager

The eLearning Project Manager guides the rest of the team through the design and development process efficiently and is responsible for planning, resourcing, budget, schedule and stakeholder management.

- Work with management and the team to agree project priorities and key deliverables
- Develop and implement project plans, outlining project tasks, dependencies and resources that aligns with agreed objectives, scope and deliverables
- Track progress against the plan ensuring key project milestones are achieved and provide regular reporting as required on key project metrics
- Collaborating with the team to manage and schedule the coordination and delivery of learning programs.
- Actively see opportunities for continuous improvement in the design and development of programmes

IT MANAGEMENT AND DEVELOPMENT

We are committed to having Information Management Systems in place to ensure we have sufficient information and data to enable evidence-based decision making. We will maintain critical quality indicators, review them on an on-going basis and use them to inform continuous improvement within the organisation.

We maintain a range of appropriate information and management systems which are intended to support the effective operation of the organisation. These systems include Learner and Client Information systems, eLearning and Learner Management Systems.

All systems we use are cloud based, enter-prise grade systems. Each system is password protected and further secured with two-step authentication where possible.

Information is stored in these systems in line with our Data Protection Policy which ensures it is accurate, secure and only accessible to the necessary personnel.

The main systems we use are: -

- **Dediserve**

Dediserve is a high-performance, enterprise-grade SSD hosting provider.

- **Google Workspace**

Google Workspace, formerly known as G Suite, is a collection of cloud computing, productivity and collaboration tools, software and products developed and marketed by Google. We use Google Mail, Drive, Docs, Sheets, Calendar and Meets.

- **Hubspot CRM**

Hubspot is a customer relationship management platform for storing all customer information and correspondence.

- **TalentLMS**

TalentLMS is an award-winning learning management system which we use to manage the online elements of our courses, distribute course materials and facilitate collaboration between our learners and trainers.

- **GoToTraining & GoToWebinar**

GoToTraining is an online classroom and desktop sharing software that allows our trainers to present their screen to learners, share course materials, facilitate live Q&As, interactive whiteboards and on the spot quizzes/tests. GoToWebinar is a similar piece of software that can facilitate larger numbers if needed.

- **Zoom for Education**

Zoom is an online video conferencing service that can be used for internal and external meetings and to deliver remote training sessions if requested by clients.

- **Vimeo**

Vimeo is an online video hosting, sharing and services platform. We use vimeo to host our recorded content that can then be integrated into our LMS.

- **Slack**

Slack is a channel-based messaging platform which allows our team people can work together more effectively by sharing information and managing projects.

- **Xero**

Xero is an online accounting software.

- **Stripe & Paypal**

Stripe and PayPal are both online payment processing systems we use to provide our learners with additional payment options.

- **Grammarly**

Grammarly is a digital writing assistance tool that we use internally for all correspondence, documentation and course materials. We also use this software during our assessment process to detect plagiarism.

- **Microsoft Office 365**

Microsoft Office 365 includes applications such as Word, Excel and Powerpoint.

- **Dropbox**

Dropbox is a cloud-based file storage app that we use to share large files across the team. We also use Dropbox to collect large assessment files from learners such as the video recorded skills demonstrations.

- **Survey Monkey**

Survey Monkey is an online survey software that we use to create and administer our feedback surveys. The system also stores feedback received and allows us to generate a range of useful reports and track our NPS for each programme.

These systems are essential to the overall operation of the business and the facilitate the easy monitoring and tracking of communications between DCM and our external clients and learners, as well as facilitating quick access to the accurate reporting on a range of learner data such as: -

- Personal information: Name, Address, Email, PPSN, Date of Birth, Phone, Courses, Grades etc.
- Learner performance, participation and engagement
- Assessment submissions
- Enrolment and completion rates

Access to these systems is restricted to the people who require the information to complete their role only. These systems are subject to ongoing monitoring for reliability and overall effectiveness.

Before we introduce a new system to the organisation it is thoroughly investigated for suitability and reliability. Once introduced training is provided to all staff and the system is monitored and tested on a regular basis. WE also seek feedback from a range of users to assess the overall effectiveness of the system.

We have a dedicated team to assist staff, clients and learners that may be experiencing technical difficulties. When we are considering and planning an upgrade to any system we make transitional arrangements to ensure the continuity of service.

LEGAL CONTEXT

DCM complies with the requirements of [Quality and Qualifications Ireland \(QQI\) Quality Assurance guidelines](#) in the development of our QA policies and procedures and in the development of the training programmes we offer to our learners.

The policies and procedures that make up our QAS are consistent with QQI standards, guidelines, policies and criteria relating to programmes and awards, as outlined in the publications below:

- [Core QA Guidelines](#)
- [Sector Specific QA Guidelines for Independent Private Providers \(2016\)](#)

Particular attention has also been given to the Blended Learning guidelines which underpin our QA for the delivery of online modules:

- [QA Guidelines for Providers of Blended Learning Programmes \(2018\)](#)

In addition, our policies and procedures have been informed by the National Forum for the Enhancement of Teaching and Learning guidance documents including: -

- [Guide to Developing Enabling Policies for Digital Teaching and Learning \(National Forum, 2018\)](#)
- [Teaching and Learning in Irish Higher Education: A Roadmap for Enhancement in a Digital World 2015-2017 \(National Forum, 2015\)](#)
- [National Professional Development Framework for All Staff Who Teach in Higher Education \(National Forum, 2016\)](#)

Our policies and procedures also address legislative and regulatory, in particular Data Protection (including GDPR).

P2. STAFF RECRUITMENT AND DEVELOPMENT

DCM has a systematic approach to the recruitment, allocation and continuing professional development of the people we employ and contract to deliver training and to support the delivery.

We define staff as all the people who are employed by the company and all the people contracted by the company to design, develop, deliver, review and assess our training programmes and who offer support to our learners throughout their learning experience.

We believe that all staff have a direct impact on the learner's overall experience and we are committed to selecting qualified experts for all of our vacancies. We are an equal opportunities employer and are guided by employment equality legislation and best practice in our staff recruitment procedures.

We are committed to developing a culture of continuing professional development and we encourage our staff to continually develop their skills to ensure they are capable and competent to design, develop, deliver, review, assess and support our training programmes. We provide training opportunities and regular performance reviews to help identify areas for professional development.

The full spectrum of HR policies and procedures operated by DCM is detailed in the staff document: [DCM Employee Handbook](#).

P2.1 STAFF RECRUITMENT

Title:	P2.1 Staff Recruitment
Version & Date:	1 January 2016
Purpose:	This procedure describes how DCM targets and recruits staff with the qualifications and skills needed to deliver and support quality training programmes.
Staff Involved:	Company Directors; Head of Centre; Trainers;
Supporting Documentation:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Job Descriptions • Screening Interview Template • Interview Template • Interview Template (Trainer) • Reference Check Form • Employment Contract • Trainer Agreement

Method	Who Does it	Evidence Generated
Defining Requirements <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We identify a need and a decision is made by the Board whether recruitment is necessary • We create a Job Description 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Company Directors 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Job Descriptions
Attracting Potential Candidates <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We advertise the job on the DCM website • We decide on a budget to be spent on 3rd party job advertising e.g. Job Sites/LinkedIn/Facebook/Recruitment Agencies • We contact suitable candidates via LinkedIn and invite them to apply 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Company Directors 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • LinkedIn Messages • Ad copy for third party websites • Email correspondence with recruitment agencies

Interviewing Candidates <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Our main assessment method is a formal interview • We review all CVs and cover letters and invite suitable candidates to interviews • If we have an high number of suitable applicants we supplement this process with presentations, second interviews, skills and aptitude tests as appropriate 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Company Directors • Senior Trainers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Emails to arrange interviews • Interview Assessment Forms
Candidate Selection <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The primary method of selection is by means of an Interview Panel. which is established in respect of each job and is asked to recommend a candidate for each job. • We assess the merit of each applicant based on their abilities and experience against key criteria for the job which may include: - <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o training/qualifications; o past experience; o suitability to role; o communication skills; o enthusiasm for the position. • We contact successful candidates over the phone and ask them for two references, one being their most recent employer • Following successful reference checks we make the candidate a job offer via email • We inform unsuccessful candidates via email • We keep copies of all recruitment records for unsuccessful candidates for 6 months • We keep copies of all recruitment records for successful candidates indefinitely 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Company Directors • Senior Trainers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interview Assessment Forms • Emails to candidates • Reference Forms • Candidate Verification
Candidate Recruitment <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We discuss and agree a salary/daily rate with successful candidates • For Support Staff we send on the Employment Contract by email for them to review and sign • For Trainers we send on the Contract of Engagement by email for them to review and sign 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Company Directors 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Signed Employment Contract • Signed Contract of Engagement

Monitored By	Frequency	Method(s)	KPIs
Company Directors	Annually	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> We review our recruitment procedures as part of our annual quality review or if a specific issue arises which we consider warrants a review in the interim. Our Operations Manager prepares a report about our staff recruitment and development efforts for the previous year showing the key KPI's 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of applications received (per source) Number of people interviewed (successful:unsuccessful) Number of Support Staff working past the probation period Number of Trainers working with us on an on-going basis Numbers of Support Staff and Trainers that have left the company

P2.2 STAFF INDUCTION

Title:	P2.2 Staff Induction
Version & Date:	1 January 2016
Purpose:	<p>This procedure describes how DCM inducts all members of staff and trainers to ensure they have all the information and support needed to perform their new role to a high standard.</p> <p>Trainers and Support Staff roles and responsibilities with respect to the delivery and support of programmes that lead to awards from external bodies form an integral part of our induction process.</p>
Staff Involved:	Operations Director; QA Officer; Trainers;

Supporting Documentation:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pre-arrival Setup Checklist • Induction Checklist
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Method	Who Does it	Evidence Generated
Pre-Arrival Prior to the arrival of new recruits we: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Arrange a desk, PC, phone and other equipment needed • Set up accounts on the relevant internal systems e.g. Email; Shared Calendar; Shared file system; LMS; • Brief colleagues about the new recruit and their role • Agree and arrange mentors if required • Prepare training plan and Induction checklist 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Operations Director 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Induction Checklist • Staff Verification
On Arrival For each new recruit we will create a tailored induction plan based on their role for the first 6 months (typical probation period) of their employment with DCM . On the first day all new recruits will have a face-to-face meeting with their line manager during which the induction plan will be introduced. All QA procedures that are relevant to the specific role will be included in the induction training plan such as: - <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Official programme documentation including assessment details • Appeals procedure • Special Accommodation Request procedure • Extension Request procedure • Complaints procedure During the initial meeting we will also discuss: -	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Operations Director 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Induction Checklist • Staff Verification • Copies of information shared

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduction to the company including background, ethos, structures, strategies and plans • Their employment contract and any questions they may have • The employee handbook and any questions they may have • Their job roles and responsibilities • The existing team and lines of communication • Administration procedures such as payroll and sick leave procedures • QA policies and procedures <p>Following on from the initial meeting, we will arrange check-ins are regular points throughout the 6 month period to share feedback and agree next steps in the training plan: -</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Every week for the first 4 weeks • Every month for the following 5 months <p>New recruits will also be assigned to an existing team member who they can call on when they need help and they are actively encouraged to request a chat/advice if needed between the agreed check-ins.</p>		
<p>Post-Induction</p> <p>All new recruits are offered ongoing support in their role and training where needed.</p> <p>We will conduct a Probation Appraisal at 6 months for each new recruit and agree if the probation period needs to be extended or if further training is needed.</p> <p>In the case of new trainers, we also closely review the feedback received after each session/programme that they deliver to learners.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Company Directors 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff Verification • Trainer Feedback forms

Monitored By	Frequency	Method(s)	KPIs
Company Directors	Annually	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> We review our induction processes as part of our annual quality review or if a specific issue arises which we consider warrants a review in the interim. Our Operations Manager prepares a report about our staff recruitment and development efforts the previous year showing the key KPI's 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Scores for 6 months appraisals Scores for trainer evaluation form

P2.3 STAFF CONTINUED PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Title:	P2.3 Staff CPD
Version & Date:	1.0 January 2016
Purpose:	This describes our policies and procedures governing the continuous professional development of staff (CPD). We consider that staff CPD is critical to the success of our programmes and that staff need to have access to appropriate CPD, based on a systematic identification of training needs.
Staff Involved:	Company Directors; Trainers;
Supporting Documentation:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Staff Appraisal Form Trainer Evaluation Form Staff CPD Logs Learner Feedback Form (Sample)

Method	Who Does it	Evidence Generated
<p>The Board allocates an annual training budget for CPD. This is spent in a number of ways: -</p> <p>External Training Programmes All staff are invited to attend external training or conferences that are significant to the individual's professional development</p> <p>In Company Training Workshops These workshops are organised for Support Staff and Trainers and include presentations and open discussion amongst all staff involved in programme delivery and support. Staff are invited to suggest topics for future workshops.</p> <p>In Company/External Online Training Modules All staff have access to a LinkedIn Learning account and to our in-house LMS where they can access training modules relevant to their roles.</p> <p>Membership of Related Professional Bodies All published reports and research is shared with staff.</p> <p>In addition staff are invited to attend any DCM training programme.</p> <p>Details of all training attended is recorded in our Staff CPD Logs</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Company Directors 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Board Meeting Minutes detailing budget allocation for that year Programme Materials of company workshops Copies of Certificates received Staff CPD logs
<p>Trainers are required to complete Self-Evaluation Feedback Forms following the delivery of each programme to assess how they delivered the programme and to identify areas for improvement.</p> <p>In addition the Trainer has a review phone call with the QA Officer following the delivery of each programme.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Trainer QA Officer 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Completed Trainer Evaluation forms Monthly Metrics of Programme Evaluations Report

Learners are requested to complete Feedback Forms following the completion of each programme. These forms are reviewed by the QA Officer and trainer to identify areas of possible improvement.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learner • Trainer • QA Officer 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Completed Learner Feedback forms • Monthly Metrics of Programme Evaluations Report
We attend all relevant briefings, consultations and training events hosted/organised by awarding body organisations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • QA Officer 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Calendar entries • Entries in staff CPD log
We host an Annual DCM Training Workshop for all staff with a focus on changes/enhancements to our QAS.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All members of staff • Head of Centre 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agenda and minutes for Annual DCM Training Workshop /QA Day • Evaluation of Annual DCM Training Workshop/QA Day by all participants
<p>We arrange regular performance review meetings with Support Staff: -</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Initial 6 months for new staff members • Annually for permanent members of staff <p>Staff and Management are asked to complete appraisal forms prior to each meeting.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Company Directors • Staff 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Completed Staff Appraisal Forms

Monitored By	Frequency	Method(s)	KPIs
Company Directors	Annually	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We review our CPD procedures as part of our annual quality review or if a specific issue arises which we consider warrants a review in the interim. • Our Operations Manager prepares a report about our staff 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Size of Training Budget • % of Training Budget Spent • Number of staff availing of CPD opportunities • Satisfaction ratings of staff by CPD events • % uptake of training opportunities • Number of hours each staff member invested in CPD

		development efforts for the previous year showing the key KPI's	
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P2.4 COMMUNICATION WITH STAFF

Title:	P2.4 Communication with Staff
Version & Date:	2 February 2021
Purpose:	This procedure describes how DCM encourages and facilitates two way communication with all staff and ensures that we communicate with all staff regularly regarding their roles and performance.
Staff Involved:	Head of Centre, QA Officer, Senior Trainers
Supporting Documentation:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff Appraisal Form • Trainer Evaluation Form • Learner Handbook • Trainer Handbook

Method	Who Does it	Evidence Generated
<p>We communicate with staff on a day-to-day basis using a number of channels: -</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gmail, Google Hangouts & Google Meet • Collaboration Tools - Google Drive Stream, Dropbox & Slack • Formal and informal meetings • Programme Team meetings • Programme Review meetings • Staff meetings 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Company Directors • Support Staff • Trainers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Emails & Message Logs • Programme Calendar • Company Website • LMS • Training Proposals • Formal Meeting Minutes

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Telephone calls • Shared Programme Calendar • LMS • Company Website • Programme Brochures/Official Programme documentation • Training Proposals • In-company training events • Social Events 		
The Board of Management meets on a monthly basis and any relevant outcomes are shared with staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Company Directors 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meeting agendas and minutes
We communicate with support staff more formally through their probation and annual performance reviews	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Company Directors • Support Staff 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Completed Appraisal forms
We communicate with our trainers more formally using Trainer Evaluation Forms which they complete at the end of each programme they have delivered	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • QA Officer • Trainer 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Completed Trainer Evaluation Forms
<p>We communicate our QA policies and procedures and our official programme documentation with all staff via: -</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • QA Manual and supporting documentation • Company Website • Programme Brochures • Programme Descriptors • Learner Handbook • Trainer Handbook • QA Reports 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Company Director • QA Officer 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • QA Manual • Company Website • Programme Brochures • Learner Handbook • Trainer Handbook • QA Reports

Monitored By	Frequency	Method(s)	KPIs
Company Directors	Annually	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Our Operations Manager prepares a report on incidents arising caused by bad communication 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of staff meetings • Number of staff appraisals

		<p>and the corrective action that was put in place to prevent the issue from recurring.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• All Policy documents, programme brochures, programme descriptors and handbooks are reviewed also to ensure we are communicating the most up to date information to all staff.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Number of trainer evaluation forms
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P3. TEACHING & LEARNING

We are committed to the continuous assessment, evaluation and improvement of training delivery and ensuring a learning environment that has our learners and their requirements at its core.

Our training methodology is both learner and subject matter focused with our training staff working closely with our Quality Officer to ensure our programmes are relevant, current and at the highest possible standards of delivery.

We regard meaningful engagement with our main stakeholders as being central to ensuring the quality of our programmes and services

P3.1 STAFF FEEDBACK

Title:	P3.1 Staff Feedback
Version & Date:	1.0 January 2016
Purpose:	<p>This procedure describes how we ensure all certified programmes are evaluated for validity and compliance with QA controls at key points in its delivery .</p> <p>The purpose of this procedure is to ensure that we have systems in place to collect, analyse, report and act on trainer and staff feedback in order to monitor and improve the quality of the learner experience.</p>
Staff Involved:	Quality Officer; Trainers; QA Admin; eLearning Support;
Supporting Documentation:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Trainer Evaluation Form • Improvement/Change Log

Method	Who Does it	Evidence Generated
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We communicate with our staff throughout the delivery of each programme to get their feedback and to ensure we can respond to any issues promptly as they arise: -

Interim Programme Trainer Evaluation

For programmes that run over a number of days/weeks we will arrange a call between the trainer and our QA Officer after Day 1 or in the middle of the programme.

Trainer Evaluation Form

At the end of each programme all trainers are asked to complete an Evaluation Form which gives them the opportunity to reflect on their experience and make suggestions for future programmes. This includes feedback on:-

- Self reflection on programme delivery
- Programme timing
- Training facilities
- Programme Administration
- Any issues arising
- Recommended changes to programme materials

In-Company Days

Trainer feedback on training delivery, programme development and improvements are also sought during our DCM staff events/internal training days.

End of Certification Period Feedback

We schedule an RAP at the end of each certification period before provisional results are shared with our learners. EA feedback and any issues that arose during the certification period are constant agenda items. Any improvements/changes needed are agreed, assigned an owner and recorded in the minutes.

- Trainers
- QA Officer
- QA Admin

- End of Programme Trainer Evaluation Form

<p>All feedback, issues, areas for improvement are compiled and reviewed during monthly board meetings.</p> <p>All changes/improvements agreed are maintained in an <i>Improvement/Change Log</i>. Each action is assigned an owner and any changes are communicated with the rest of the team using email, instant messenger or Slack and training is arranged where needed.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quality Officer • Board of Directors 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Board Meeting Minutes • Improvement/Change Log
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Monitored By	Frequency	Method(s)	KPIs
Company Directors	Annually	Review of evidence generated	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All forms are present and complete for each programme that has run in the given period. • Feedback scores have remained consistent (or improved) during the given period • Improvement/Change log is up to date

P3.2 LEARNER FEEDBACK

Title:	P3.2 Learner Feedback
Version & Date:	2 February 2021
Purpose:	The purpose of this procedure is to ensure that we have systems in place to collect, analyse, report and act on learner feedback in order to monitor and improve the quality of the learner experience
Staff Involved:	Quality Officer; Trainers;
Supporting Documentation:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learner Evaluation Form • Improvement/Change Log • Feedback Report (Example)

Method	Who Does it?	Evidence Generated
<p>We engage with our learners in a number of ways to get their views on their learning experience: -</p> <p>End of Programme Evaluation Form At the end of each programme all learners are asked to complete an Evaluation Form which gives them the opportunity to reflect on their experience and make suggestions for improvements. This includes feedback on:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Programme Information • Programme objectives/learning outcomes • Programme delivery methods • Programme materials provided • Training facilities • Programme Administration • Assessment criteria and processes (if applicable) <p>One-to-One Communication Trainers are available to learners throughout the programme to collect feedback and will provide their email address to provide continued support or refer them to the appropriate person for any other issues, complaints or additional support.</p> <p>Learner handbook Our learner handbook also documents how learners can contact us directly to share their feedback or concerns throughout their experience.</p> <p>eLearning and QQI Admin Queries Reviews We regularly monitor the number and type of queries we receive from learners through our dedicated admin@ and eLearning@ email addresses to identify common issues and areas for improvement.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learners • Trainers • Quality Officer • eLearning Support • QQI Admin 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evaluation Forms

<p>Feedback received is collated over time into digital reports for analysis/ All feedback, issues, areas for improvement are compiled and reviewed during monthly board meetings.</p> <p>All changes/improvements agreed are maintained in an <i>Improvement/Change Log</i>. Each action is assigned an owner and any changes are communicated with the rest of the team using email, instant messenger or Slack and training is arranged where needed.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quality Officer • Board of Directors 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Feedback Reports • Board Meeting Minutes • Improvement/Change Log
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Monitored By	Frequency	Method(s)	KPIs
Company Directors	Annually	Review of evidence generated	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All forms are present and complete for each programme that has run in the given period. • Feedback scores have remained consistent (or improved) during the given period • Improvement/Change log is up to date

P3.3 STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

Title:	P3.3 Stakeholder Engagement
Version & Date:	1.0 January 2016
Purpose:	This procedure describes how we engage in a systematic way with our external stakeholders to validate and measure the success of our programmes. We do this so as to maximise the potential benefit to programmes and learner outcomes.
Staff Involved:	Quality Officer; Trainers;
Supporting Documentation:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learner Questionnaire

- [Improvement/Change Log](#)

Method	Who Does it	Evidence Generated
When a training event is arranged with a client (those who engage our training services, not the learners) we always follow up to get their feedback. This may be a phone call or email.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clients • Quality Officer 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Emails • Client notes in CRM
To measure the impact of training within the workplace we will also send out regular questionnaires to learners who have previously completed programmes with us.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learners • Quality Officer 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Completed Learner Questionnaires
<p>Feedback from the forms mentioned above are compiled on an on-going basis and reviewed during monthly board meetings.</p> <p>All changes/improvements agreed are maintained in an <i>Improvement/Change Log</i>. Each action is assigned an owner and any changes are communicated with the rest of the team using email, instant messenger or Slack and training is arranged where needed.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quality Officer • Board of Directors 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Board Meeting Minutes • Improvements Action Lists
We ensure that our stakeholders have access to relevant information about our programmes and related services as appropriate.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support Staff 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Website regularly updated • Mailing list for DCM Newsletter/eZine
We involve our stakeholders in our Self-Evaluation processes as appropriate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • QA Officer 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Self-Evaluation Reports

Monitored By	Frequency	Method(s)	KPIs
Company Directors	Annually	Review of evidence generated	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All forms are present and complete for each programme that has run in the given period.

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Feedback scores have remained consistent (or improved) during the given period.
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P3.4 PROVISION AND MAINTENANCE OF LEARNING RESOURCES

Title:	P3.4 Provision and Maintenance of Learning Resources
Version & Date:	2 February 2021
Purpose:	This procedure outlines how we provide a range of learning resources and supports to meet the evolving needs of learners.
Staff Involved:	Quality Officer; Trainers; Board of Directors
Supporting Documentation:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Learner Handbook Programme Brochure (Sample) Online Resource (Sample)

Method	Who Does it	Evidence Generated
<p>The Programme Development team identifies learning resources necessary for successful delivery and assessment at the programme development stage.</p> <p>These resources may include e-learning materials which may improve the learner experience by giving them the flexibility to learn at their own pace and at a time that is convenient to them.</p> <p>All programme resources are detailed within the programme overview and session plans.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Programme Leader Learning Content Designer Educational Technologist 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Details programme overviews and session plans

Learning resources are discussed by the BOD and a budget is agreed to ensure that adequate resources are in place prior to programme delivery	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Board of Directors 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Meeting minutes showing budget agreed
<p>A master copy of all programme materials is stored on our cloud-based shared drive which supports access control and version control.</p> <p>Once materials have been signed off for a given programme they will also be added to our VLE and LMS.</p> <p>If changes are made to the materials throughout the lifetime of the programme the master version must be changed and then these changed materials will be replaced on the VLE and LMS.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Programme Leader Educational Technologist 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All files on shared drive All files on VLE All files on LMS
<p>Once a learner enrolls on a programme they will receive a copy of our Programme Brochure and Learner Handbook which contains details of: -</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Programme outline Pre-programme work/Independent Learning required Assessment criteria and procedures Blended Learning Guides NFQ Information and progression opportunities Recognition of prior learning Reasonable accommodation requests Contact details for further assistance Supplementary QA policies 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support Staff 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Programme Brochure Learner Handbook Online Guides/Resources
At the beginning of each programme our trainers will complete an induction which reviews all of the information included in the Learner Handbook.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Trainer 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Online Guides/Resources
During the programme each learner will have access to soft-copies of all of the programme training materials. These materials will include	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Trainer 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Copies of training materials

Course Manuals, Assignment Briefs, Assignment Templates, Other useful templates, recommended reading.		
<p>Our trainers will provide ongoing support, assignment mentoring and feedback throughout the programme delivery and assessment period. This will be face-to-face while the programme is running and via email after the last day of the programme.</p> <p>The trainer will provide their email address during the induction session on day 1.</p> <p>Our support staff will also be available for email & phone support from 9am to 5pm, Monday to Friday and endeavors to respond to all queries within 24hrs.</p> <p>The contact details for our support staff are highlighted within the Learner Handbook.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Trainer • Support Staff 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Copies of email • Learner Handbook
Each learner attending our programmes will also be set up on our LMS where they can access all their programme materials and learning resources.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • QA Officer • Support Staff • Trainers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All files held on LMS

Monitored By	Frequency	Method(s)	KPIs
Company Directors	Annually	Review of all evidence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Up-to-date programme brochures and Learner Handbook • LMS Access Report showing the number of active accounts and the learning resources accessed. • All learners will be asked for feedback on the learning resources provided. These ratings will be included in our Monthly Metrics Report which is monitored by the board at their monthly meetings.

P4. ACCESS, TRANSFER AND PROGRESSION

We are committed to implementing fully section 56, Part 4 of the Qualifications and Quality Assurance (Education and Training) Act 2012

We fully support learners in accessing our programmes, successfully participating, transferring to other providers and progressing to higher level awards. We are committed to providing prospective and current learners with clear information so they can make informed choices regarding their education.

We are aware that a learner's academic progress can be affected by personal circumstances. Something may happen that has an impact on learners personally and, therefore, on their academic progress. DCM has different pathways available to learners who experience difficulties with progression. The intention is to facilitate learners to continue with their studies or to exit where they wish to do so.

DCM facilitates diversity; welcoming all applicants and strives to ensure the fair and equitable treatment of all without exception.

P4.1 INFORMATION FOR LEARNERS

Title:	P 4.1 Information for Learners
Version & Date:	1.0 January 2016
Purpose:	This procedure describes how we provide clear and unambiguous information to applicants/potential learners with regard to entry requirements and approved progression routes to help ensure their successful participation and completion of our training programmes.
Staff Involved:	Quality Officer; Support Staff; Trainers;
Supporting Documentation:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learner Handbook

Method	Who Does it	Evidence Generated
<p>Details of all the programmes we offer, including entry requirements are published on our website www.dcmlearning.ie.</p> <p>We publish information relating to programmes leading to awards including details of the award type, awarding body and the relevant NFQ level in its title using the QQI Brand Guidelines as a reference</p> <p>Each programme on our website has the option to download a programme brochure which includes: -</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Programme title • Details of associated awards including award type, level and details of awarding body • Programme outline including learning outcomes • Entry requirements if any • Assessment criteria including details of self directed learning and assignments • Fees payable • Transfer and Progression opportunities available on completion of programme <p>Learners can also contact us directly by phone or email and we can send them a digital or hard copy version of our programme brochures.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support Staff 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Programme Brochures • Website
<p>We engage with applicants by phone and email and advise them with regard to programme choice. We train our support staff and trainers with regard to information provision. This way they can supply learners with the information they need or put them in contact with the correct person.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Trainer • Support Staff 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Training Materials

<p>When a learner enrolls on a programme they will receive a copy of our Learner Handbook which contains details of: -</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Programme outline • Pre-programme work/Independent Learning required • Assessment criteria and procedures • NFQ Information and progression opportunities • Our policy on Recognition of prior learning • Reasonable accommodation requests • Contact details for further assistance 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support Staff 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learner Handbook
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Monitored By	Frequency	Method(s)	KPIs
Company Directors	Annually	Review of all evidence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Up-to-date Programme Brochures, Learner Handbooks and Website.

P4.2 LEARNER ENTRY ARRANGEMENTS

Title:	P 4.2 Learner Entry Arrangements
Version & Date:	1 January 2016
Purpose:	This procedure describes how we ensure that we are transparent, fair and consistent when selecting learners for our programmes and how we communicate any criteria for entry onto a programme.
Staff Involved:	Support Staff; Board of Directors

Method	Who Does it	Evidence Generated
The entry requirements for each programme are clearly outlined on our website and in the programme brochure and include a statement of the	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support Staff 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Programme Brochures • Website

<p>knowledge, skill and competence needed as a basis for successful participation</p> <p>For onsite training arranged with a DCM client (those who engaged our training services, not the learners), details of any entry requirements, knowledge skills and competence needed will be explained in detail over the phone, via email or as part of any training proposals submitted.</p> <p>These requirements will also be explained directly to prospective learners by our Support Staff when they are enrolling in a programme over the phone, face to face or via email.</p> <p>Once a learner has enrolled on a programme they will receive a welcome note for that programme which will repeat this information.</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Training Proposals • Programme welcome notes
<p>If we refuse entry to a programme to an applicant for any reason, the applicant has a right to appeal the decision</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Entry Appeals Procedure

Monitored By	Frequency	Method(s)	KPIs
Company Directors	Annually	Review of all evidence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Up-to-date Programme Brochures, Website and Programme Welcome notes.

P4.3 RECOGNITION OF PRIOR LEARNING (EXPERIENTIAL OR CERTIFIED) (RPL)

Title:	P 4.3 Recognition of Prior Learning (Experiential or Certified) (RPL)
Version & Date:	1 January 2016
Purpose:	The procedure describes how we recognise prior learning* to enable entry to our programmes.

	<p>(We do not, at this stage, recognise prior learning to provide exemption from programme requirements, as credit towards an award or to establish eligibility for a full award).</p> <p>* We define recognition of prior learning as ‘an assessment process which makes use of evidence of a learner’s previous achievements, knowledge, understanding or skills they already possess to demonstrate competence or achievement against a unit or qualification. Through the RPL process, evidence of a learner’s previous achievement (learning) is assessed against the learning outcomes and assessment criteria of a unit. (Ref ILM Recognition of Prior Learning Policy)</p>
Staff Involved:	Quality Officer; Support Staff; Programme Leader;

Method	Who Does it	Evidence Generated
We agree on details of entry requirements and how we recognise prior learning for entry at the programme design stage.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Programme Leader 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Programme Descriptor
We make a statement of arrangements available to applicants outlining the competencies needed to succeed on the programme at the enrolment stage.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Quality Officer Programme Leader 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Website Statement of entry requirement for each programme

Monitored By	Frequency	Method(s)	KPIs
Company Directors	Annually	Review of all evidence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Up-to-date Programme Descriptors and Website.

P4.4 FACILITATING DIVERSITY

Title:	P 4.4 Facilitating Diversity
Version & Date:	2 February 2021

Purpose:	This procedure describes how we facilitate all learners to access and participate successfully in our programmes without the hindrance of unnecessary barriers. In doing so we comply with national policy and legislation in relation to equality and non-discrimination
Staff Involved:	Quality Officer; Support Staff;
Supporting Documentation:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Employment Equality Acts 1998 to 2011 • Equal Status Acts 2000 and 2004 • Disability Act 2005 • CDVEC Disability Support Service Principals' Manual • DCM Equality and Diversity Policy • Learner Handbook • QQI Admin Handbook • Programme Development Handbook • Training Facility Assessment Checklist • Reasonable Accommodation Request Form

Method	Who Does it	Evidence Generated
<p>In accordance with the Equal Status Act, 2000 to 2004 We have an Equality and Diversity Policy which states: -</p> <p><i>“We aim to promote a place of learning and work where all individuals are treated fairly and equally, with dignity and respect at all times irrespective of their Age, Gender, Race, Marital Status, Family Status, Religion, Sexual orientation, Disability or Membership of the travelling community”</i></p> <p>This policy is made available to all of our support staff and trainers at induction.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quality Officer • Support Staff 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Website • Learner Handbook • Policy Document • Staff Induction Checklist

The policy is also referenced in our Learners Handbook, is available to download from our website or on request from our Support Staff over the phone or by email.		
A copy of our Equality and Diversity Policy Statement is displayed prominently in our offices to highlight our commitment to welcoming diversity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Quality Officer 	
We make copies of guides such as the CDVEC Disability Support Service Principals' Manual available to members of our programme team to use when advising learners and making accommodations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Quality Officer 	
Our Quality Officer reviews all requests for reasonable accommodation and makes a final decision with regard to how it is implemented and monitored	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Quality Officer 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reasonable Accommodation Request Form
<p>We provide reasonable accommodation throughout the learning process by ensuring our selection procedures, entry requirements, programme content, delivery and assessment are adaptable to facilitate learners with a particular need, such as a physical special need and/or other learners covered by equality legislation.</p> <p>All our learners and prospective learners are made aware of this via their Learner Handbook which they receive before the programme commences, when they enrol.</p> <p>We will also address reasonable accommodation during the induction session on day 1 of each programme and learners will be invited to speak with our trainers privately if they have any concerns.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Quality Officer Support Staff Trainers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Learner Handbook
To accommodate learners with physical disabilities we will assess all the training venues we use for suitability and to ensure they meet our Training Facility Assessment Guidelines.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Quality Officer Support Staff 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Client Correspondence

When we are delivering onsite programmes at a client's venue we will share our Training Facility Assessment Guidelines with them to ensure their venue is suitable.		

Monitored By	Frequency	Method(s)	KPIs
Company Directors	Annually	Review of evidence.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Completed checklist for each venue used by us to deliver training. Correspondence with clients about their onsite training facilities. Our Equality and Diversity Policy is up to date with the latest regulations.

P4.5 TRANSFER & PROGRESSION

Title:	P 4.5 Transfer & Progression
Version & Date:	1 January 2016
Purpose:	This procedure describes how we provide learners with advice and information about their transfer and progression opportunities (i.e. ways learners can transfer within the same level or progress to a higher level course on the NFQ) following the successful completion of a programme.
Staff Involved:	Quality Officer; Support Staff; Programme Leader; Head of Centre;
Supporting Documentation:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Progression an overview of the Higher Education Links Scheme for 2013 Learner Handbook

Method	Who Does it	Evidence Generated
We consider transfer and progression opportunities at the programme design stage and design programmes so as to maximise the opportunities for our learners to transfer or progress	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Programme Leader 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Programme Descriptor
<p>Information about the transfer and progression opportunities for certified programmes will be published on the appropriate programme page on our website - www.dcmlearning.ie.</p> <p>If the transfer and progression opportunities are dependent on any particular attainments (e.g. where a learner must achieve a distinction in an award to progress to the next level) this will be highlighted also.</p> <p>This information will also be included in the programme brochure for that programme which is available to download from our website or on request from our support staff over the phone or via email.</p> <p>Support Staff and Trainers are familiar with the NFQ and are able to give advice on the opportunities for transfer and progression following the successful completion of one of our certified courses. We will share this knowledge with learners over the phone, via email and face-to-face during training sessions.</p> <p>Details of the NFQ are included in our Learner Handbook and discussed at learner induction.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> QA Officer Support Staff Trainers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Programme Brochures Website Learner Handbook
We will make connections and network, where possible, with other providers in FE and HE, who may be in a position to provide transfer and progression routes for our learners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Head of Centre 	
We reference NARIC Ireland (the national academic recognition information centre for Ireland) in our Learner Handbook and make more information available to learners if requested.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> QA Officer 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Learner Handbook

We reference the HELS (Higher Education Links Scheme) which provides systematic progression opportunities for learners to first year of higher education programmes on the basis of FET (QQI) Level 5 and 6 awards, through the CAO (Central Applications Office) in our Learner Handbook and make more information available to learners if requested.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • QA Officer 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learner Handbook
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Monitored By	Frequency	Method(s)	KPIs
Company Directors	Annually	Review of Evidence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Our website and programme brochures are up to date • New trainers and new support staff have received training about the NFQ and the transfer and progression opportunities for each of our certified programmes. • Existing trainers and support staff have received training about the progression opportunities

P4.6 PROGRAMME DEFERRAL

Title:	P4.6 Programme Deferral
Version & Date:	2 February 2021
Purpose:	This procedure describes how we provide learners with advice and information about programme deferral.
Staff Involved:	Quality Officer; Support Staff; Head of Centre;
Supporting Documentation:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learner Handbook • QQI Admin Handbook • Trainer Handbook • Programme Deferral Form

Method	Who Does it	Evidence Generated
Details on the option to defer from a programme are included in our Learner Handbook and discussed at learner induction.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • QA Officer • Support Staff • Trainers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learner Handbook
All Support Staff and Trainers are familiar with the options around programme deferral and are able to give advice to learners. We will share this knowledge with learners over the phone, via email and face-to-face during training sessions.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • QA Officer • Support Staff • Trainers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • QQI Admin Handbook • Trainer Handbook • Email Correspondence
All learners who request a deferral will be offered additional tutor support if needed and encouraged to speak with their tutor. They are also made aware of the other options available to them and the consequences of deferral so they can make an informed decision.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • QA Officer • Support Staff • Trainers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Email Correspondence
<p>Granting a deferral is not guaranteed. All learners who request a deferral will be required to submit evidence to support their request.</p> <p>Deferral requests must be submitted via our Programme Deferral Form.</p> <p>Each request will be subject to individual review and DCM reserves the right to adjust decisions depending on individual circumstances.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • QA Officer • Support Staff • Trainers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Email Correspondence • Learner Evidence
<p>Deferrals will be subject to a set fee which must be paid before learners are permitted to re-commence their learning. Learners will be made aware of this before they commit to the deferral.</p> <p>This fee may be waived, where for example there are exceptional circumstances or fees are forfeited.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • QA Officer • Support Staff • Trainers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Email Correspondence • Invoices

Our programmes evolve over time so a deferral may result in a learner recommencing a different programme. Learners will be made aware of this before they commit to the deferral.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • QA Officer • Support Staff • Trainers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Email Correspondence
Learners are required to give notice about when they would like to recommence the course. At this point we can arrange payment of any additional fees and confirm key programme dates.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • QA Officer • Support Staff • Trainers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Email Correspondence

Monitored By	Frequency	Method(s)	KPIs
Company Directors	Annually	Review of Evidence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New trainers and new support staff have received training about programme deferral options. • Learner and Employee Handbooks are up to date.

P 4.7 PROGRAMME WITHDRAWAL

Title:	P 4.7 Programme Withdrawal
Version & Date:	1 January 2016
Purpose:	This procedure describes how we provide learners with advice and information about programme withdrawal.
Staff Involved:	Quality Officer; Support Staff; Head of Centre;
Supporting Documentation:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learner Handbook • QQI Admin Handbook • Trainer Handbook

Method	Who Does it	Evidence Generated
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Details on the option to withdraw from a programme are included in our Learner Handbook and discussed at learner induction.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • QA Officer • Support Staff • Trainers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learner Handbook
All Support Staff and Trainers are familiar with the options around programme withdrawal and are able to give advice to learners. We will share this knowledge with learners over the phone, via email and face-to-face during training sessions.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • QA Officer • Support Staff • Trainers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • QQI Admin Handbook • Trainer Handbook • Email Correspondence
All learners who request a withdrawal will be offered additional tutor support if needed and encouraged to speak with their tutor. They are also made aware of the consequences so they can make an informed decision.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • QA Officer • Support Staff • Trainers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Email Correspondence
All learners who choose to go ahead with a withdrawal must complete our Programme Withdrawal Form	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • QA Officer • Support Staff 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Email Correspondence

P5. PROGRAMME DEVELOPMENT, DELIVERY AND REVIEW

We recognise that our core function as providers of education and training is the development and delivery of programmes which meet the needs of our learners and to manage the quality of these programmes to ensure the best possible learning experience for our learners

To achieve this we are committed to designing and delivering programmes which allow learners to achieve the national standards for specified awards and to review our programmes constructively and regularly with a view to continuous improvement. The programmes we develop support our mission and values, align with our areas of expertise and are relevant, practical and quality assured.

Our policy at DCM is that all our programmes are developed, delivered and reviewed to ensure they are viable, suitable and that learners can achieve the learning outcomes of their chosen award as specified by the relevant external awarding body. Our programmes must meet an identified need of our existing and prospective learners and also those determined through industry contacts and trends. The programmes we decide to develop should support our missions and value and should align with our expertise.

All programmes leading to an award are subject to a rigorous design and approval process against established criteria. They are delivered in line with the requirements of Qualifications and Quality Ireland (QQI) and are aligned with an appropriate level on the National Framework of Qualifications (NFQ).

This policy sets out the process by which new programmes, and substantial modifications to existing programmes, are developed, described, considered by the DCM community and approved. It establishes a robust development process based on a design that requires proposals (i) to demonstrate compliance with QQI validation criteria and (ii) to go through several iterative stages, incorporating feedback (both internal and external) at each stage. Once the final programme is approved, the design can be submitted for approval.

These procedures are supported by our [Programme Development Handbook](#).

P5.1 NEEDS IDENTIFICATION

Title:	P 5.1 Needs Identification
Version & Date:	1 January 2016
Purpose:	This procedure describes the steps we take to ensure that the programmes and services we provide are designed to meet the needs of both our learners and other stakeholders
Staff Involved:	Head of Centre; Programme Leaders;
Supporting Documentation:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learner Questionnaire • End of Course Learner Evaluation Forms [Sample]

Method	Who Does it	a
We network, formally and informally with stakeholders and meet them on a regular basis. This includes consulting with prospective employers.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Head of Centre 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Memberships of external Professional Bodies • Calendar entries
We respond to stakeholders training needs and requests for training proposals and tenders.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support Staff 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Proposal Documents • Tender Documents
We conduct training needs analysis directly with graduates and clients.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support Staff 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learner Questionnaires
We monitor developments in the further education and training sector and we also monitor our competitors activity.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Head of Centre 	
We review all programme evaluations for feedback and log requests for further training.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support Staff 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learner Evaluation Forms

We record and collate all enquiries re programmes received via our website, telephone, email or face-to-face	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support Staff 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> CRM
We carry out market research for developments in the fields of learning in which we have the capacity and expertise to ensure that we are in a position to respond proactively to training needs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Head of Centre 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Competitor Analysis Keyword Research Google Trends

Monitored By	Frequency	Method(s)	KPIs
Company Directors	Annually	<p>The Head of Centre reports to the board on potential new areas of training based on the market research and learner feedback outlined above.</p> <p>The Head of Centre also reports on the success of the new areas explored in the previous time period.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of new programmes offered Number of enrolments Number of learners assessed Number of awards achieved

P5.2 PROGRAMME DESIGN

Title:	P 5.2 Programme Design
Version & Date:	3 February 2021
Purpose:	This procedure describes the process we follow when we are designing and developing new courses to ensure that they meet identified needs, the requirements of learners and the criteria for programme validation.
Staff Involved:	Board of Directors; Head of Centre; QA Officer; Programme Leader;

Supporting Documentation:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Further Education and Training – Resources for Programme Validation • Quality Assurance Guidelines and Criteria • Validation of FET Programmes – Policy 2014 • Policy and Criteria for Making Awards • Quality Assuring Assessment - Guidelines • Preparing Descriptors for FET Programmes • FET Programme Validation Application Form Part 1, Programme Descriptor • FET Programme Validation Application Form Part 2, Programme Module Descriptor • Circular on Validation November 2015
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Method	Who Does it	Evidence Generated
Programme Planning The Board of Directors will consider the following when deciding on new programmes to be developed: - <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The rationale for developing the programme • Does the programme support our mission and strategy? • The qualifications and / or skills and experience required for the appointment of staff • Organisational capacity and competence to design and deliver the programme • Evidence of market demand • How will the programme be delivered? • What is our target market? • What awards can the programme lead to? • What are the validation/accreditation requirements for the relevant awarding body? • Do we have the expertise required and available to design and deliver the programme 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Board of Directors 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meeting Minutes

As a key part of programme design, we clearly identify the qualifications and / or skills and experience required for staff to deliver a programme to ensure that we have the capacity required for effective delivery	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Board of Directors 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Statement of Staff Qualifications
<p>Programme Design</p> <p>When a programme has been approved by the BOD for development, the Head of Centre appoints a programme development team (PDT) with the required expertise to develop the programme. This team will typically include the following roles: -</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • eLearning Project Manager • Trainers/Subject Matter Experts • Educational Technologist • Learning Content Designer • Graphic Designer <p>The eLearning Project Manager will act as the team lead and has overall responsibility for the development of the programme.</p> <p>The process will begin with a kick-off meeting to establish a full understanding of the requirements and agree a timeline.</p> <p>Our programme design process is detailed in our DCM Programme Development Handbook.</p> <p>The outputs from this procedure are: -</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Draft Programme Descriptor • Draft Programme Materials 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Head of Centre • Trainers/Subject Matter Experts • Educational Technologist • Learning Content Designer • Graphic Designer • eLearning Project Manager 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meeting Minutes • Programme Descriptors • Programme Materials

Monitored By	Frequency	Method(s)	KPIs
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Company Directors	Annually	Review of Evidence	Programme Descriptors are available for each programme we offer
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P5.3 PROGRAMME APPROVAL

Title:	P 5.3 Programme Approval
Version & Date:	2 February 2021
Purpose:	This procedure describes how we evaluate and approve programmes prior to submitting an application to the relevant awarding body for validation.
Staff Involved:	Head of Centre; QA Officer; Trainers/Subject Matter Experts; Programme Approval and Review Panel;
Supporting Documentation:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Further Education and Training – Resources for Programme Validation • Quality Assurance Guidelines and Criteria • Validation of FET Programmes – Policy 2014 • Policy and Criteria for Making Awards • Quality Assuring Assessment - Guidelines • Preparing Descriptors for FET Programmes • FET Programme Validation Application Form Part 1, Programme Descriptor • FET Programme Validation Application Form Part 2, Programme Module Descriptor • Circular on Validation November 2015 • Programme Approval Terms of Reference • Review Panel Terms of Reference

Method	Who Does it	Evidence Generated
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<p>Internal Peer Review</p> <p>We share the Programme Descriptor setting out content, structure and assessment details available via our shared drive for internal peer-review to ensure the programme is appropriate for the associated award level.</p> <p>All reviewers are invited to give feedback via document comments to include recommendations for improvements</p> <p>Following this peer review, the eLearning Project Manager will agree with the Head of Centre what changes should be implemented.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Head of Centre • eLearning Project Manager • Trainer/Subject Matter Expert(s) • Educational Technologist 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Peer Review Feedback
<p>Quality Check</p> <p>Before the programme is presented to the Programme Approval and Review Panel, our QA Officer carries out a quality check which includes: -</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Checking that the programme has been peer-reviewed and the feedback has been actioned on • All components of the programme descriptor are present as per our template <p>If the QA Officer is not happy that the peer review was thorough or the documentation is incomplete it will be returned to the eLearning Project Manager.</p> <p>When the QA Office is happy with the checks the programme is then presented to the Programme Approval and Review Panel</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • eLearning Project Manager • QA Officer 	
<p>If a second provider is to be involved in the delivery of the programme we draw up a collaboration agreement / Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) which sets the role and responsibilities of all parties. This MOU is signed by both parties.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Head of Centre • Quality Officer 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MOU • Record of meetings/emails with collaborator

The Chair of the Programme Approval and Review Panel (Head of Centre) formally signs off approving the programme and requesting the Quality Officer to submit an application for external validation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Head of Centre 	
<p>Submission</p> <p>Our Quality Officer prepares any documentation required by the external awarding body for programme validation.</p> <p>This documentation and the programme descriptors are reviewed at our BOD meetings.</p> <p>Following this meeting, applications for validation are submitted by the Quality Officer to the awarding body.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Quality Officer 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Final Programme Descriptor Minutes of BOD meetings Application Documents

Monitored By	Frequency	Method(s)	KPIs
Company Directors	Annually	The QA Officer prepares a report for the Board on the KPIs for programme approval in the given period.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of programmes approved Number of draft programmes that failed the initial quality checks Number of programmes submitted for validation to external bodies Number of programmes successfully validated

P5.4 PROVISION AND MAINTENANCE OF LEARNING ENVIRONMENT/RESOURCES

Title:	P5.4 Provision and Maintenance of learning facilities/resources
Version & Date:	V.3 February 2020
Purpose:	This procedure describes how DCM ensures that staff and learners have access to an effective, functional, safe learning environment and the required resources to successfully participate in their chosen programme.
Staff Involved:	Board of Directors; Head of Centre; QA Officer;

**Supporting
Documentation:**

- [Training Venue Assessment Checklist](#)
- [Health and Safety Policy](#)

Method	Who Does it	Evidence Generated
Please see P3.4 Teaching & Learning - Learning Resources for details about the range of learning resources and supports we provide to learners.		
We work hard to ensure the health and safety of our staff and learners. We review and update our Company Health and Safety Policy regularly and maintain a record of meetings with the Company's Health and Safety consultants	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quality Officer 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Health and Safety Policy
<p>Our face to face training is delivered onsite at our client premises venue or in selected temporary premises including hotels and specialist training centres</p> <p>When we are using temporary premises we assess them for accessibility and suitability to make sure they are fit for purpose and to ensure they meet the criteria outlined in our Training Facility Assessment Guidelines.</p> <p>When we are delivering at client sites we will share our Training Facility Assessment Guidelines with them to ensure their venue is suitable.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quality Officer • Support Staff 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Training Facility Assessment Checklist • Client Correspondence
<p>For blended learning programmes consideration is given to the eLearning resources/platforms required during the programme design phase.</p> <p>All blended learning resources are continuously monitored to assess the reliability, suitability and quality of the teaching and learning experience.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quality Officer • Support Staff 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learner and Trainer Feedback Forms • Change log

We ask for feedback from our learners and trainers on all training venues/eLearning platforms. Any issues identified are reported to and reviewed by our BOD. Agreed changes are logged in our change log and actioned in a timely manner.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quality Officer • Support Staff • BOD 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learner and Trainer Feedback Forms • Change log
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Monitored By	Frequency	Method(s)	KPIs
Company Directors	Annually	Review of Evidence	As per P3.1 Staff Feedback and P3.2 Learner Feedback the learning resources and facilities scores in the Monthly Metric reports are monitored by the board. Any issues arising will be addressed in a timely manner.

P5.5 PROGRAMME REVIEW

Title:	P5.5 Programme Review
Version & Date:	3 February 2021
Purpose:	<p>This procedure describes how we monitor and review our programmes on an ongoing basis to identify strengths and areas for improvement ensuring their quality and continued suitability for their target market.</p> <p>The continuous monitoring of programmes in DCM involves a continuous cycle that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Incorporates feedback on all aspects of programmes; • Reviews and analyses that feedback; • Incorporates feedback into recommendations for continuous improvements.
Staff Involved:	QA Officer; Programme Lead; Trainers/Subject Matter Experts; Programme Approval and Review Panel;
Supporting Documentation:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Programme Quality Report Template

Method	Who Does it	Evidence Generated
<p>We benchmark all programmes on an annual basis against a range of quality indicators and monitoring data to measure consistency of outcomes with objectives and standards.</p> <p>Data gathered for programme monitoring includes feedback from internal and external stakeholders:</p> <p>Internal Stakeholders</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learners; • Clients; • Trainers; • Support Staff; <p>External Stakeholders</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • External Examiners • Employers; • Work-place Managers and Supervisors <p>We begin by asking all learners and clients who completed/staff completed the programme in the previous period to complete a survey about their learning experience and the skills gained since completing the programme.</p> <p>We research industry trends, competitor courses and request feedback from external stakeholders where possible.</p> <p>We review all trainer feedback forms from the previous period and request further feedback from our trainers.</p> <p>We review External Examiner reports for suggestions and recommendations for improvements.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • QA Officer • Programme Approval and Review Panel; 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Programme Quality Report • Panel meeting minutes

<p>We then compile a Programme Quality Report. This is undertaken by the QA Officer and includes data on: -</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enrolment rates • Completion rates • Assessment results and awards • Feedback from trainers, learners, clients and stakeholders • Available benchmarking data (sourced externally) • Feedback from external awarding bodies <p>These reports are presented to our Programme Approval and Review Panel. If it is agreed that modifications are needed, our eLearning Project Manager will get a team together and oversee the changes.</p> <p>This procedure is supported by the ongoing monitoring of each programme including monthly metric reports, learner and client feedback and regular reports on learner numbers, completion rates and success rates.</p>		
<p>Any agreed modifications to programmes must be minor and not require re-validation by the external awarding body: -</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Minor changes to the module content that do not affect the learning outcomes • Minor changes to course materials that do not affect the learning outcomes • Minor changes to the assessment methods that do not affect the assessment strategy as agreed with the external awarding body <p>Once the changes are completed new materials will be distributed and explained to all trainers delivering this programme.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Trainer/Subject Matter Expert 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Updated Programme Descriptor
<p>If a programme is scheduled to be revalidated by an awarding body we undertake a self-evaluation which includes an external panel review</p>		

and report. We may conduct this review on individual programmes or groups of programmes in a common field of learning – see Section Self-Evaluation and Improvement of Programmes and Services		
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Monitored By	Frequency	Method(s)	KPIs
Company Directors	Annually	Review of Evidence	All Evidence is reviewed for consistency in our approach and to ensure all suggested modifications were considered and implemented.

P5.6 LEARNER RECORDS

Title:	P 5.6 Learner Records
Version & Date:	2 / September 2016
Purpose:	This procedure describes how we ensure all learner records are maintained safely and securely and are readily accessible when required by DCM personnel and external awarding bodies.
Staff Involved:	Head of Centre; QA Officer; Trainers; Support Staff; Internal Assessors
Supporting Documentation:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Data Protection Policy

Method	Who Does it	Evidence Generated
We maintain a Learner Record System (LRS) - a robust and comprehensive database system which we use to collect accurate and timely data and generate appropriate information.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support Staff 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> LMS
Our learner records include the following information for each learner: - <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Programme Entry Dates 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support Staff Trainers Internal Assessors 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sign-in Sheets Reasonable Accommodation Requests

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attendance records/Sign-in Sheets • Programme completion dates • Reasonable accommodation requests • Written assessments (hard or soft copy) • Materials used during skills demonstrations (e.g. Videos, Slideshows, Handouts - hard or soft copies) • All scoring sheets relating to assessments completed • Extension Requests • Applications for appeals <p>Any hard-copy data will be kept in a secure storage area on our premises.</p> <p>Learner records will only be accessed by authorised personnel.</p> <p>Data held in our learner records will be processed as per our Data Protection policy.</p> <p>Copies of learner records will be kept on file until the next certification period.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Internal Verifiers • Learners 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Written Assessments • Skills Demo Materials • Scoring Sheets • Extension Requests • Applications for Appeal
<p>As we are required to collect sensitive personal data from learners on behalf of awarding bodies (e.g. PPS numbers and Date of Births) we have additional security arrangements in place in relation to the collection, storage and management of this data. Details are outlined in our data protection policy.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support Staff 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Data Protection Policy

Monitored By	Frequency	Method(s)	KPIs
Company Directors	Annually	We monitor the LRS for effectiveness and integrity of data through day to day use.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of Data Breaches • Number of users with access to our LMS • System Downtime • Number of backups/failed backups

		<p>Our QA Officer prepares a report for the board for the given period with details of the most relevant KPIs.</p> <p>Our QA Officer will also take a sample of learners to check that their records are up to date and that we are not holding unnecessary or incorrect data for these learners.</p> <p>Our QA Officer will also review our Data Protection policy to ensure it is in line with the most up to date legislation.</p>	
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P6. FAIR AND CONSISTENT ASSESSMENT OF LEARNERS

We are committed to ensuring that appropriate assessment mechanisms are in place to support assessment in an online context.

During the planning and development phase of a programme we create an assessment plan that is documented in the programme descriptor and submitted to QQI for approval.

Comprehensive assessment instructions, briefs and sample answers are also prepared during the development phase which are subject to approval before sharing with the learners.

During the assessment process learner assessments will be internally validated and externally authenticated to ensure consistency with the original programme descriptor. Feedback received from visiting EA's will be reviewed and discussed at our Results Approval Panel meeting and any required actions will be recorded in our change log and actioned in a timely manner.

Learners are made aware of assessment requirements for their chosen programme via the information shared on our website, their learner handbook and in more detail via our eLearning platforms.

Learners are invited to give feedback on the assessments they complete and the resources available to them. All feedback received is reviewed and required actions recorded on our change log.

Learners are given the opportunity to receive formative feedback throughout their programme through online quizzes, Q&A sessions and tutorials with tutors. They also have direct access to their tutor for the duration of the programme.

Learners are educated about the importance of academic integrity and are provided with multiple resources to aid them in this area. All learners are required to complete a Declaration of Academic Integrity for each completed assignment they submit.

All learner submissions are uploaded via our online submission forms and stored on our shared drive and are maintained in line with our Data Protection Policy.

All internal assessors are trained in detecting plagiarism and we use Grammarly Plagiarism Detection software to identify

similarities.

Following internal assessment and external authentication our Results Approval Panel will meet to review and sign off on all grades for the given assessment period and to consider any feedback received from the EA.

Assessment results are then sent to learners via email at the end of each assessment period. Detailed feedback reports outlining the reason for the awarding and deduction of marks is also available.

Learners will be given the opportunity to appeal their grade which will result in their assignments being reviewed by a second assessor.

We have the following procedures in place to ensure the fair and consistent assessment of Learners.

P6.1 ASSESSMENT PLANNING

Title:	P 6.1 Assessment Planning
Version & Date:	V2 February 2021
Purpose:	This procedure describes how we systematically plan the assessment for each programme in advance of commencing learning and assessment activities. We take the needs of learners into consideration and allow them sufficient opportunities to generate evidence to demonstrate achievement of the standards of knowledge, skill or competence.
Staff Involved:	QA Officer; Trainers;

Method	Who Does it	Evidence Generated
<p>Assessment Schedules</p> <p>We review the QQI component specification to determine the assessment requirements, techniques and percentages.</p> <p>We draw up a Programme Assessment Plan (PAP) for every programme at the programme design stage (See P 5.2 Programme Design).</p> <p>The PAP includes: -</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The learning outcomes that will be assessed • How these outcomes will be assessed (i.e. assessment techniques and instruments) • Details of the time that each assessment activity will take place within the programme • Details of any deadlines for assessments to be completed after the end of the programme 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Trainers • QA Officer 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Programme Descriptor • Programme Assessment Plan for each programme

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> What are the assessment criteria and how will marks be applied <p>In designing PAPs we consider how the assessment will be undertaken in a blended context and how the assessment techniques and methods could be adapted to provide reasonable accommodation</p> <p>This assessment plan is submitted, as part of the overall programme outline, for approval by the awarding body for validation as required.</p>		
Marking Sheets A comprehensive marking scheme is developed for each assessment technique to ensure consistent grading across internal assessors.		
Sample Answers Sample answers are created for each assessment technique. These are used by Internal Assessors, Internal Verifiers and External Authenticators for reference.		
Assessment Submission Deadlines (ASD) The submission of learner assessments is subject to deadlines for each programme. Details of these deadlines are decided at the programme design stage and are included in each programme descriptor. Learners are made aware of the ASD's at induction If a learner feels they cannot meet the ASD they may apply for an extension.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> QA Officer Trainer Support Staff 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Programme Descriptor Email Correspondence with learners Learner evidence of extenuating circumstances Extension Request Form
Assessment Learner Evidence For assessment activities where we cannot observe the learner they will be asked to provide an Academic Integrity Statement testifying that the evidence they are submitting for assessment is their own work.		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Signed Academic Integrity Statements

Monitored By	Frequency	Method(s)	KPIs
Company Directors	Annually	Review all evidence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure there is an up to date Assessment Plan for each programme we are delivering Consistent marks for each programme delivered in the given time frame. Consistent learner and trainer feedback relating to programme assessment in the given timeframe.

P6.2 INFORMATION FOR LEARNERS

Title:	P6.2 Information to Learners
Version & Date:	V2 February 2021
Purpose:	This procedure outlines how we make information relating to assessment for a given programme and related procedures available to learners prior to assessment commencement.
Staff Involved:	Support Staff; Trainers;
Supporting Documentation:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Learner Handbook Programme Resource Page (SAMPLE) Programme Assignment Checklist (SAMPLE)

Method	Who Does it	Evidence Generated
<p>When a learner enrolls they receive a welcome note and a copy of our Learner Handbook which details: -</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The relevant Award Specification Assessment regulations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Trainers Support Staff 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Programme Welcome Notes Learner Handbook Programme Resource Pages

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Timetables/ assessment deadlines • PAP (programme assessment plan) • Details on how they can submit their assessments • Tips on format, layout and details that should be included • Assessment and grading requirements • Information on reasonable accommodation for learners • Details on how they can appeal results • Details of our policy for dealing with incidents of academic misconduct e.g. plagiarism <p>In addition the learner will be given access to a number of resource pages for their programme.</p> <p>The trainer discusses the programme assessment plan in detail as part of learner induction.</p> <p>Our trainers also provide mentoring and feedback throughout the programme delivery and assessment period. This will be face-to-face during programme delivery and via email afterwards</p> <p>Our support staff are also available for email & phone support from 9am to 5pm, Monday to Friday and endeavour to respond to all queries within 24hrs.</p> <p>The contact details for our support staff are highlighted within the Learner Handbook.</p>		
We give copies of Assessment Briefs to Learners.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Trainers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sign-off for receipt for Assessment Briefs • Assessment Brief templates
We provide feedback to learners on their progress at various stages throughout the programme.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Trainers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sign-off by learners • Trainers' notes • Emails to learners • Notes on assessments

We provide remote, live Q&A sessions for each programme that all learners are invited to attend. During these sessions our trainers will answer all questions relating to course content and assessment.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Trainers Support Staff 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Emails to learners
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Monitored By	Frequency	Method(s)	KPIs
Company Directors	Annually	Review of Evidence	

P6.3 SECURITY OF ASSESSMENT RELATED PROCESSES AND MATERIALS

Title:	P6.3 Security of assessment related processes and materials
Version & Date:	V2 February 2021
Purpose:	This procedure describes how we record, store and access learners' assessment records safely and securely at all times
Staff Involved:	Trainers; Internal Assessor; Support Staff
Supporting Documentation:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Data Protection Policy Assignment Submission Form

Method	Who Does it	Evidence Generated
<p>Learners submit assessments electronically via their programme resource page, following the detailed instructions in their assessment brief.</p> <p>Submissions are monitored daily and supports are available to learners that may be having technical difficulties.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support staff 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Learner evidence Email correspondence with learners LMS Google Drive

<p>If applicable our support staff will liaise with our trainers to ensure the secure delivery of hard copies of assessment evidence.</p> <p>This may include: -</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A signed and dated attendance sheet. This will be used to cross-reference the assignments received from learners at the end of the assessment period. • Learner evidence & video recordings for skills demonstrations that were delivered and assessed in person. • Marking sheets for these skills demos or other assessment activities that occurred in person. <p>These items may be delivered to the central office by our trainers via registered post or by hand or they can be scanned and uploaded into our secure LMS/Shared Drive.</p> <p>Once the items are received by our support staff they are stored in a secure storage area onsite or they can be scanned and uploaded into our secure LMS/Drive.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Trainer • Support staff 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sign in sheets • Learner Evidence • Marking sheets • LMS • Google Drive • Secure storage area
<p>Assessment Learner Evidence</p> <p>All learners are required to submit a Declaration of Academic Integrity with each assessment they submit.</p> <p>The Internal Assessor must be able to confirm that assessment evidence is reliable and genuine.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Internal Assessor 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Signed Declarations
<p>All hard copy assessment materials are held in a secure storage area onsite during the assessment period and retained inline with our Data Protection Retention & Destruction Policy.</p> <p>All digital assessment materials are stored in our secure shared Google Drive and retained inline with our Data Protection Retention & Destruction Policy.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support Staff 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assessment Record • Google Drive • Secure storage area • Data Protection Policy

<p>Access to our Google Drive is password protected with two-step authentication in place. During the assessment process our Internal Assessors, Internal Verifiers and External Examiners will have restricted access to the materials relevant to them. This access will be co-ordinated by our support staff.</p> <p>We retain an assessment record for each learner to track the evidence received for each learner and details of the internal assessor that graded them.</p>		
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Monitored By	Frequency	Method(s)	KPIs
Company Directors	Annually	Review of Evidence	Number of breaches

P6.4 ASSESSMENT DESIGN

Title:	P6.4 Assessment Design
Version & Date:	V2 February 2021
Purpose:	This procedure describes the steps we take to ensure that assessment instruments we design and use are consistent, valid, reliable and fit-for-purpose
Staff Involved:	Internal Verifier and Programme Leaders

Method	Who Does it	Evidence Generated
The assessment instruments are the specific activities/tasks or questions devised by our Programme Leaders based on the assessment techniques specified in the Award Specifications.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Programme Leader 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Component Specifications Programme Descriptors Assessment Briefs

<p>It is the role of the Programme Leaders to design appropriate assessment instruments. In doing so they must ensure that the instruments: -</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are appropriate to the technique and fit for purpose • Allow learners to generate sufficient evidence • Enable evidence to be generated which can be measured against the learning outcomes outlined in the Award Specification • Enable reliable assessment decisions by assessors • Are suitable and practicable <p>We use the <i>QQI Quality Assuring Assessment Guidelines for Providers Revised 2013</i> as a guide when designing assessment instruments and all trainers have a copy of the Guide</p>		
The Internal Verifier reviews the assessment instruments and confirms that they are fit-for-purpose	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Internal Verifier 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sign-off by IV
We provide training in designing assessment instruments as part of our Trainer CPD programme	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Internal Verifier 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Trainer CPD Log

Monitored By	Frequency	Method(s)	KPIs
Head of Centre	Annually	Review Internal Verifiers sign-off reports for details of corrective action which was taken.	Number of changes made by the Internal Verifier

P6.5 REASONABLE ACCOMMODATION

Title:	P6.5 Reasonable Accommodation
Version & Date:	V2 February 2021

Purpose:	This procedure explains how we aim to accommodate all learners, in accordance with our Equality and Diversity policy to help ensure that they can successfully participate in our training programmes and will be able to demonstrate their achievements for assessment purposes.
Staff Involved:	QA Officer; Support Staff; Trainers;
Supporting Documentation:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reasonable Accommodation Request Form • Reasonable Accommodation Request Procedure • Learner Handbook

Method	Who Does it	Evidence Generated
<p>Details of our reasonable accommodation procedure is included in our Learner Handbook</p> <p>At enrolment our support staff will ask each learner if they have any specific needs around programme delivery and assessment.</p> <p>At induction, our trainers explain in detail what we mean by 'reasonable accommodation' and make all learners aware that we will adapt our assessment techniques to accommodate specific needs of learners if requested.</p> <p>Our support staff help learners complete their application for reasonable accommodation and can fill in the request form if needed.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Trainer • Support Staff 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learner Handbook • Reasonable accommodation Request Form • Reasonable accommodation procedure
<p>Our QA Officer reviews all requests and may consult external experts on ways to adapt the programme delivery/assessment techniques.</p> <p>Our QA Officer signs-off on a request only if it is reasonable and practicable to provide reasonable accommodation and that it does not affect the standards of the given award. Examples of adaptations we can make : -</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • QA Officer • Support Staff • Trainer 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Email correspondence with learner • Assessment Record

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rest periods during programme delivery • Modifying programme materials e.g. presentation slides/handouts/assignment sheets • Using a sign-language interpreter • Using a scribe or reader • Use of assistive technology • Extended time to complete assignments <p>The learner is notified by our support staff when the QA Officer has made a decision.</p> <p>Our trainer will be made aware of any adaptations to the programme delivery that they need to consider.</p> <p>The learners assessment record will be updated and our internal assessor, internal verifier and external Examiner will be made aware of the agreed adaptations for that learner</p>		
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Monitored By	Frequency	Method(s)	KPIs
Company Directors	Annually	Review of Evidence	Number of Reasonable Accommodation Requests Numbers granted/rejected The success rate for learners who received reasonable accommodation

P6.6 ASSESSMENT MALPRACTICE

Title:	P6.6 Assessment Malpractice
Version & Date:	V2 February 2021
Purpose:	This procedure details how we investigate and deal with any form of alleged, suspected or actual assessment malpractice which could impact on the validity of assessment.

Staff Involved:	QA Officer; Support Staff; Trainers; Head of Centre;
Supporting Documentation:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improvement/Change Log • IV Report Template • Trainer Handbook

Method	Who Does it	Evidence Generated
<p>Examples of assessment malpractice activities include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learner plagiarism i.e. passing off someone else's work as the learner's own with or without their permission. This may involve direct plagiarism of another learner's work or getting another individual to complete the assessment activity • Impersonation of another learner • Fabrication of evidence • Alteration of results • Wrongly obtaining secure assessment material e.g. examinations • Behaving in any way such as to undermine the integrity of the Assessment Process <p>We have procedures in place to ensure the reliability of learner evidence and our trainers are trained to identify and deal with issues of assessment malpractice</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Trainers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Trainer Handbook
<p>The QA Officer investigates and reviews all incidents or allegations of malpractice and brings them to the attention of the Head of Center if considered to be of a serious nature.</p> <p>We ensure that the review is completed in a sufficient time scale so that the learner is not disadvantaged</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • QA Officer • Head of Centre 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Corrective Action Log

We report the outcomes of assessment malpractice investigations to the External Examiner.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • QO • IV 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • IV Report
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Monitored By	Frequency	Method(s)	KPIs
Company Directors	Annually	Review of Evidence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of suspected incidents • Number of proven incidents • Number of learners involved • Number of learners denied certification

P6.7 FEEDBACK TO LEARNERS

Title:	P6.7 Feedback to Learners
Version & Date:	V2 February 2021
Purpose:	This procedure describes how we provide our learners with appropriate, timely and constructive feedback on their assessments to help bring them to successful completion of the programme.
Staff Involved:	Support Staff; Trainers; Internal Assessor

Method	Who Does it	Evidence Generated
<p>Our trainers are available throughout the programme to give formative feedback on a one-to-one basis to learners. This may include feedback on areas for development, gaps in their learning or direct feedback on assessment activities completed during the programme.</p> <p>When the programme ends our trainers are available via email throughout the assessment period.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Trainers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Skills demonstration marking sheets

Online activities completed by learners via the LMS will give learners the opportunity to receive instantaneous formative feedback as they work through their programme		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Completed Online Activities
<p>While marking assessments our trainers comment on the assessment scripts. This summative feedback is given to learners and is available for review by the External Examiner. Our Internal Verifier checks for evidence of feedback by the tutor on the scripts</p> <p>This feedback is kept on file in the learner record and is available on request by learners under the Freedom of Information Act.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Trainers Internal Assessor 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assessment Scripts
<p>We ask our learners if they are satisfied that they got sufficient feedback at all stages and analyse the feedback.</p> <p>We require our trainers to sign-off to confirm that they have provided feedback</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support Staff Internal Assessor 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Marking sheets Correspondence with learners Learner Evaluation

Monitored By	Frequency	Method(s)	KPIs
Company Directors	Annually	Review of learner evaluation of feedback provided, trainer evaluation, IV and EE comments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No of information requests Feedback score received from learners in the end of programme feedback forms. This is tracked in our Monthly Metric reports.

P6.8 ASSESSMENT SUBMISSION

Title:	P6.8 Assessment Submission
Version & Date:	V2 February 2021
Purpose:	This procedure describes how we ensure that there is an effective process in place for monitoring, tracking and processing assessment submissions.

Staff Involved:	Support Staff;	
Method	Who Does it	Evidence Generated
Our programme resource pages are used by our learners to upload digital copies of their assessments. Our support staff are on hand to assist learners that may have technical difficulties.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support Staff 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Resource Pages
We test our programme resource pages regularly to ensure they are working correctly	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support Staff 	
<p>Learners are given detailed instructions within their assessment brief on how to upload their assessments.</p> <p>We also provide video resources showing how to upload assessments via the resource page.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support Staff 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assessment Briefs Resource Videos
We make learners aware of their submission date at the beginning on the programme and they are sent reminders via email at regular intervals throughout the programme.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support Staff 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Emails to Learners
Submissions are monitored daily and learners are notified by email to confirm that their assignments have been received.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support Staff 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Emails to Learners
<p>Information on how to request extensions and the consequences of late submission is included in the Learner Handbook.</p> <p>This is also discussed by the trainer during the class-room/remote sessions on the programme.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support Staff 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Learner Handbook
Learners are notified if all of the assessment parts have not been fully addressed.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support Staff 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Emails to Learners
We maintain an assessment log that shows what assessments have been submitted	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support Staff 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Submission Log

P6.9 EXTENSION REQUESTS

Title:	P6.9 Extension Requests
Version & Date:	V2 February 2021
Purpose:	This procedure describes how we ensure that there is an effective process in place for requesting and accommodating extension requests from learners.
Staff Involved:	Support Staff;
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Extension Request Form • Extension Request Procedure • Trainer Handbook • Learner Handbook

Method	Who Does it	Evidence Generated
We have a documented operational procedure for extension requests.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • QA Officer 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Extension Request Procedure
<p>Details of our Extension Request Process/Operational Procedures are included in our Trainer and Learner Handbooks.</p> <p>Our trainers explain the process as part of learner induction.</p> <p>Our support staff are also available to discuss our Extension Request Process over the phone or via email from 9am to 5pm, Monday to Friday.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Trainers • Support Staff 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learner Handbook • Trainer Handbook • Extension Request Procedure • Website
If a learner would like to make an extension request they must complete an Extension Request form and explain in detail the grounds for the extension.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support Staff 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Extension Request Procedure • Extension Request Form • Learner Evidence • Emails with Learners

<p>There are 3 stages to our extension process : -</p> <p>Stage 1: 2 Week Extension This extension can be granted immediately on request if the learner just needs a little more time to complete their assessments.</p> <p>Stage 2: 4 Week Extension If the learner needs more time to complete the course content and their assessments they can request a four week extension. They will need to provide evidence to support their claim.</p> <p>Stage 3: Deferral If the learner needs more than 4 weeks to complete the course content or their assessments we will suggest that they defer their place on the programme until they have the time to complete the work needed.</p>		
Learners will receive notification regarding the outcome of their request within 3 working days	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Support Staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Emails with Learners
Learner records will be updated with details of the request and outcome	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Support Staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Learner Records

Monitored By	Frequency	Method(s)	KPIs
Company Directors	Annually	<p>Review all extension requests.</p> <p>Compare our extension request statistics over time to see if there is room for improvement</p>	<p>No. and % of Requests</p> <p>Yearly comparisons</p>

P6.10 CONTINUITY OF MARKING BETWEEN ASSESSORS

Title:	P6.10 Continuity of Marking Between Assessors
Version & Date:	V2 February 2021
Purpose:	This procedure describes how we ensure that our marking remains consistent across a number of Internal Assessors that may be correcting on a single programme.
Staff Involved:	Head of Centre; QA Officer; Internal Assessor; Support Staff;
Supporting Documentation:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Internal Assessors Handbook • Marking Schemes

Method	Who Does it	Evidence Generated
Our Internal Assessors Handbook outlines the steps and standards required of our assessors at all stages of the marking process.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support Staff • QA Officer 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • IA Handbook
Detailed marking schemes are used by all Internal Assessors for a given programme.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support Staff • Internal Assessors 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Marking Scheme
Induction and ongoing training is offered to our internal assessors to ensure they are informed on industry standards relating to effective assessment in an online context and to inform them on any changes to the DCM assessment process.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • QA Officer • Internal Assessors 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Induction Checklists • Training Records
Interim peer reviews of graded learner evidence is conducted to ensure consistency across Internal Assessors.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support Staff • QA Officer • Internal Assessors 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Marking Sheets

<p>External Authenticator will review grades and feedback awarded across a number of Internal Assessors for a single programme in line with our Sampling Strategy.</p> <p>Feedback received from the EA is shared with Internal Assessors and discussed by the Results Approval Panel to identify areas for improvement.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support Staff • QA Officer • External Authenticator • Internal Assessors 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • EA Reports • RAP Minutes • Emails to Trainers
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Monitored By	Frequency	Method(s)	KPIs
Company Directors	Annually	The quality officer reviews a sample of the EA reports as part of monitoring activity.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The number of irregularities highlighted in the given time period • The number of concerns raised by the External Examiner in relation to the IA process

P6.11 ASSESSMENT PERFORMED BY THIRD PARTIES

Title:	P6.11 Assessment Performed By Third Parties
Version & Date:	V2 February 2021
Purpose:	This procedure describes how we ensure the appropriate recruitment and management of third-party assessors.
Staff Involved:	Head of Centre; QA Officer; Internal Assessor; Support Staff;
Supporting Documentation:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Internal Assessors Handbook • Marking Schemes

Method	Who Does it	Evidence Generated
All third-party assessors are recruited in line with our Staff Recruitment and Development policy & procedures.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> QA Officer 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Job Descriptions Job Advertisements Emails to arrange interviews Interview Assessment Forms Emails with Candidates Candidate CVs
Once selected a partnership agreement is put in place	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> QA Officer 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Signed Agreement(s)
Our Internal Assessors Handbook which outlines the steps and standards required of our assessors at all stages of the marking process is shared.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support Staff QA Officer 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> IA Handbook
Detailed marking schemes are used by all Internal Assessors for a given programme.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support Staff Internal Assessors 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Marking Scheme
Induction and ongoing training is offered to our internal assessors to ensure they are informed on industry standards relating to effective assessment in an online context and to inform them on any changes to the DCM assessment process.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> QA Officer Internal Assessors 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Induction Checklists Training Records
Interim peer reviews of graded learner evidence is conducted to ensure consistency across Internal Assessors.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support Staff QA Officer Internal Assessors 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Marking Sheets
<p>External Authenticator will review grades and feedback awarded across a number of Internal Assessors for a single programme in line with our Sampling Strategy.</p> <p>Feedback received from the EA is shared with Internal Assessors and discussed by the Results Approval Panel to identify areas for improvement.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support Staff QA Officer External Authenticator Internal Assessors 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> EA Reports RAP Minutes Emails to Trainers

Monitored By	Frequency	Method(s)	KPIs
Company Directors	Annually	The quality officer reviews a sample of the EA reports as part of monitoring activity.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The number of irregularities highlighted in the given time period The number of concerns raised by the External Examiner in relation to the IA process

P6.12 INTERNAL VERIFICATION

Title:	P6.12 Internal Verification
Version & Date:	V2 February 2021
Purpose:	<p>This procedure describes how we ensure that our Internal Verifiers verify that our assessment procedures are applied consistently, our assessment records are complete and our assessment outcomes are accurate.</p> <p>This includes checking that our assessment procedures have been applied from planning to finalising results including checking/monitoring the accuracy of assessment results to ensure learner evidence exists and that results and grades are correctly computed and recorded</p>
Staff Involved:	Head of Centre; QA Officer; Internal Verifier;
Supporting Documentation:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Internal Verifier Checklist Internal Verifier Report Sampling Strategy

Method	Who Does it	Evidence Generated
<p>Induction</p> <p>The Head of Centre appoints the Internal Verifier and ensures that the IV has adequate time, training, expertise and resources to fulfil the role of Internal Verifier.</p> <p>Once appointed our QA Officer is responsible for their training and will be available to provide ongoing support. Our training follows the QQI Guidelines for Internal Verification</p> <p>IV training will include</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • QA policies and procedures specifically those relating to the role of the IV • Details on the programmes that we offer that they will be verifying, in particular the learning outcomes and the assessment criteria used • Details about the systematic steps involved in the verification process <p>During induction we will provide a copy of our Internal Verification procedure also.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Head of Centre • QA Officer 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Internal Verification Procedure • Induction Checklists
<p>Our IV is involved at all stages of the assessment process and has specific responsibilities at the planning stage. The IV reviews all assessment instruments and confirms that they are in order before assessment begins.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Internal Verifier 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All assessment instruments signed off by IV
<p>Our IV supports our trainers during the assessment process and answers queries they have on an ongoing basis.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Internal Verifier 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Email Correspondance
<p>Verification Process and Reporting</p> <p>Our Internal Verification takes place on a sampling basis in line with our sampling strategy.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Internal Verifier • QA Officer 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Internal Verifier Checklist • Internal Verifier Report • Sampling Strategy

For each sample selected our Internal Verifiers must: -

- Check that information on assessment was provided to learners
- Check that all learner evidence required to complete the assessment for the given programme is present
- Check that the assessment techniques and instruments outlined in the relevant programme descriptor have been used to assess this user
- Check that the correct marking sheets have been completed and grades have been assigned
- Check that all marks have been calculated correctly and the appropriate grade has been awarded as per the external awarding bodies guidelines
- Check that all data required to complete certification is present e.g. PPS Numbers.

The IV also verifies that our assessment policies and procedures are being applied consistently.

The IV completes a detailed Checklist for Internal Verification and an Internal Verification report for each certification period, signs it and makes it available to the External Examiner before external examination.

Our Internal Verifier attends our Results Approval Panel meetings to present the IV report and discuss issues highlighted in the Report and particularly any concerns that they have in relation to the assessment process.

We record any issues identified by the Internal Verifier in the IV report and structure them in the form of an improvement plan which we monitor on an ongoing basis and sign-off before the next meeting of the RAP.

Our Internal Verifier highlights areas of concern to our QA Officer, who will, in turn, escalate them if needed to the Head of Centre.		
Areas of concern will also be discussed at the RAP meeting		

Monitored By	Frequency	Method(s)	KPIs
Company Directors	Annually	The quality officer reviews a sample of the internal verification reports as part of monitoring activity.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The number of irregularities highlighted in the given time period The number of concerns raised by the External Examiner in relation to the IV process

P6.13 EXTERNAL EXAMINATION

Title:	P6.13 External Examinations
Version & Date:	V2 February 2021
Purpose:	This procedure describes how we select and appoint suitably qualified external examiners and we quality assure the external examining process
Staff Involved:	QA Officer; External Examiner; Board of Directors; Internal Verifier
Supporting Documentation:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> External Examiner Code of Practice External Examiner Report Sampling Strategy

Method	Who Does it	Evidence Generated
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<p>Selection</p> <p>The Head of Centre is responsible for the selection and appointment of suitably qualified external examiners.</p> <p>We quality assure the appointment of all external examiners and retain evidence of this for monitoring</p> <p>We maintain a panel of external examiners which we have selected for their subject matter expertise and capacity to make recommendations for improvement to programme content and assessment practice and to confirm consistency with national standards.</p> <p>We do not contract the services of the same External Examiner for more than three successive certification periods.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Board of Directors • QA Officer 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interview Assessment Sheet • External Examiners Database • Signed External Examiner Code of Practice
<p>Induction</p> <p>Once appointed our QA Officer is responsible for providing our External Examiners with the information they need to complete their role: -</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Details about our QA policies and procedures specifically those relating to their role • Details on the programmes that we offer that they will be authenticating, in particular the learning outcomes and the assessment criteria used • Details and agreement on the systematic steps involved in the authentication process • Details and agreement on our sampling strategy <p>At this stage we will also discuss and agree the volume of work, remuneration and a schedule for visits.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • QA Officer 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Email Correspondance
<p>Examination Process and Moderating of Results</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Internal Verifier • External Examiner 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sampling Strategy

<p>Our Internal Verifier is responsible for ensuring that all the necessary documentation/information is made available to our External Examiners during each visit.</p> <p>Our External Examiners must: -</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be familiar with the programme descriptors and assessment criteria for each programme they will authenticate • Review and authenticate our Internal Verification reports • Moderate the assessment results by: - <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Select a sampling of learner evidence as per our sampling strategy, ensuring to include an even spread of grades, learner groups and assessment techniques. The sample must also include portfolios from a range of Internal Assessors to ensure the consistency of marking between them. ○ Conclude if the type of evidence presented for examination meets with award requirements ○ Confirm if assessment criteria and marking sheets are appropriate ○ Confirm if the evidence meets the standard required for the grade given ○ If they disagree with the grade given they should check all of the grades for that Internal Assessor 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Copies of all information made available for external examination
<p>Feedback and Reporting</p> <p>When the external examination process is complete the External Examiner completes a report recording the outcome of the process.</p> <p>We record any issues identified and improvements recommended by the External Examiner and structure them in the form of an improvement plan which we monitor on an ongoing basis and sign-off before the next meeting of the RAP</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • External Examiner • QA Officer 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • External Examiner Reports

We maintain external examiners reports on file as evidence of the fair and consistent assessment of our learners which includes:-

- Our provider details
- External Examiners details
- Date of Examination
- Details of the award(s) authenticated
- The learner sample selected
- Details of any result changes made during the moderation process
- Comments on possible areas of improvement of the assessment process

We also invite verbal feedback from our External Examiners and our QA Officer is available during the process.

If there are any major irregularities discovered during the process the External Examiners will make our QA Officer aware of them who will escalate them as needed to the Board of Directors.

We invite the EE to attend our Results Approval Panel meetings (if feasible) to present the EE report and discuss issues highlighted in the Report, particularly any irregularities discovered during the process by External Examiners.

Monitored By	Frequency	Method(s)	KPIs
Company Directors	Annually	Review of all Evidence	No of issues raised No of recommendations for improvements Quality of the feedback provided by the EE Rating of the overall performance of the EE No and % of grades changed

P6.14 RESULTS APPROVAL AND ISSUE OF RESULTS

Title:	P 6.14 Results Approval
Version & Date:	V2 February 2021
Purpose:	This procedure describes how we put a Results Approval Panel (RAP) in place to formally review and approve results data, and formally sign-off on results prior to submission to external awarding bodies.
Staff Involved:	Results Approval Panel (RAP); Support Staff;
Supporting Documentation:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • RAP Terms of Reference

Method	Who Does it	Evidence Generated
<p>The appointed Chair convenes a meeting of the Results Approval Panel(RAP) for each certification period.</p> <p>The Panel may include: -</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • QA Officer • Internal Assessor(s) • Internal Verifier(s) • External Examiner's <p>At least two people from this group must sign off on each set of results to be submitted to external awarding bodies for certification.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • RAP 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Terms of Reference – RAP • RAP Agenda • Statement of Results Emails
We review broadsheet reports displaying learner results and outcomes using comparative grade analysis at the RAP meeting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • RAP 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Broadsheet results reports • RAP Agenda
We record any issues identified and improvements recommended at the RAP meeting and structure them in the form of an improvement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • RAP 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • RAP agenda, minutes/report • Improvement Plan sign-off

plan which we monitor on an ongoing basis and sign-off before the next meeting of the RAP		
<p>We issue results to learners and submit them to the awarding body asap after sign-off by the RAP.</p> <p>We notify learners of the closing date for receipt of appeals and approximate date of issue of award certificates</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support Staff 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Issue of Results letter
We issue award certificates by post to learners (except those flagged as under appeal) asap after receiving them from the awarding body.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support Staff 	

Monitored By	Frequency	Method(s)	KPIs
Company Directors	Annually	RAP Reports, membership of the RAP, evidence of progress in relation to improvement plans, comparison of results against national and international indicators.	Number of improvements recommended

P6.15 LEARNER APPEALS

Title:	P6.15 Learner Appeals
Version & Date:	V2 February 2021
Purpose:	This procedure outlines how we communicate with our learners and trainers with regard to how and why learners can appeal any result that they feel is unfair, unjustified or invalid for any reason
Staff Involved:	Trainers; Support Staff; Appeals Assessor; QA Officer;

Supporting Documentation:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Appeals Request Form • Appeals Procedure • Trainer Handbook • Learner Handbook
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Method	Who Does it	Evidence Generated
We have a documented operational procedure for appeals.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • QA Officer 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Appeals Procedure
<p>Details of our Appeals Process/Operational Procedures are included in our Trainer and Learner Handbooks.</p> <p>Our trainers explain the appeals process as part of learner induction.</p> <p>We make a clear distinction between appeals and requests for re-marking in the Learner Handbook and in the Appeals Procedure</p> <p>Our support staff are also available to discuss our Appeals Process over the phone or via email from 9am to 5pm, Monday to Friday.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Trainers • Support Staff 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learner Handbook • Trainer Handbook • Appeals Procedure • Website
<p>When results have been signed off by the RAP we issue a statement of results to each learner.</p> <p>We remind learners in this communication that they can appeal their result within 7 working days.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support Staff 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Statement of Results Emails
<p>If a learner would like to make an appeal they must complete an Appeal Request form and explain in detail the grounds for the appeal.</p> <p>There are 3 stages to our appeals process as outlined in our Appeals Procedure : -</p> <p>Stage 1: Full Clerical Recheck</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • QA Officer • Internal Assessor 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Appeals Procedure • Appeals Request Form • Completed Marking Sheets from Internal Assessor • Confirmation email to learner

<p>We will check that all of the marks have been correctly counted, to make sure there have been no mistakes when calculating the final grade.</p> <p>Stage 2: Full Re-mark Our QA Officer will appoint an Internal Assessor with the required expertise, who is not the original Internal Assessor. They will be given the same assessment documentation and learner evidence as the original assessor.</p> <p>Stage 3: Appeal If the learner is still not happy with the result they may formally appeal their result. In this case our Results Approval Panel will review all the written evidence and make recommendations to our Head of Centre</p> <p>The results of the appeal will be communicated to the learner via email within 10 working days.</p>		
<p>Following an appeal if it has been identified that we were at fault our QA Officer will review and take appropriate corrective action.</p> <p>All details of the action taken are maintained on our Corrective Action Log</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • QA Officer 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Corrective Action Log

Monitored By	Frequency	Method(s)	KPIs
Company Directors	Annually	<p>Review all appeals and requests for re-marking and confirm that all have been closed off.</p> <p>Review success of corrective action taken</p> <p>Compare our appeals statistics to those of similar providers (if this information is available to us)</p>	<p>No. and % of Appeals</p> <p>No. and % of Successful Appeals</p> <p>Yearly comparisons</p> <p>Number of requests for re-marking</p>

P7. PROTECTION OF ENROLLED LEARNERS

In the unlikely event that a course cannot continue we are committed to making alternative arrangements that do not disadvantage the learner. We endeavor to make arrangements to enable learners to transfer to a similar programme without unreasonable delay and gain an equivalent qualification.

P7.1 LEARNER INFORMATION

Title:	P 7.1 Learner Information
Version & Date:	V2 September 2016
Purpose:	This procedure outlines how we provide adequate and accurate information to learners about the programme that they wish to pursue and about the protection in place for them in the event that the programme ceases prior to their completion.
Staff Involved:	Trainers; Support Staff;

Method	Who Does it	Evidence Generated
<p>Details of all the programmes we offer are published on our website www.dcmlearning.ie.</p> <p>We publish information relating to programmes leading to awards including details of the award type, awarding body and the relevant NFQ level in its title using the QQI Brand Guidelines as a reference</p> <p>Each programme on our website has the option to download a programme brochure which includes: -</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Programme title 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support Staff 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Programme BrochuresWebsite

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Details of associated awards including award type, level and details of awarding body • Programme outline including learning outcomes • Entry requirements if any • Assessment criteria including details of self directed learning and assignments • Fees payable • Transfer and Progression opportunities available on completion of programme <p>Learners can also contact us directly by phone or email and we can send them a digital or hard copy version of our programme brochures.</p>		
<p>We engage with applicants by phone and email and advise them with regard to programme choice. We train our support staff and trainers with regard to information provision. This way they can supply learners with the information they need or put them in contact with the correct person.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Trainer • Support Staff 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Training Materials
<p>When a learner enrolls on a programme they will receive a copy of our Learner Handbook which contains details of: -</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Programme outline • Pre-programme work/Independent Learning required • Assessment criteria and procedures • NFQ Information and progression opportunities • Our policy on Recognition of prior learning • Reasonable accommodation requests • Contact details for further assistance • PEL Information 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support Staff 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learner Handbook

P7.2 PROGRAMME CESSATION

Title:	P7.2 Programme Cessation
Version & Date:	V2 September 2016
Purpose:	This procedure outlines the steps we take to enable learners to transfer to a similar programme in the event that a programme ceases prior to their completion.
Staff Involved:	Support Staff; QA Officer;

Method	Who Does it	Evidence Generated
We contact each learner immediately to explain the situation and the steps we are taking to transfer them to a similar programme.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support Staff 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Email Correspondence
<p>We review our training calendar to see if there are suitable training courses scheduled that would allow learners to gain an equivalent qualification.</p> <p>All options are offered to learners to see if they would suit.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support Staff 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Email Correspondence
<p>We contact other Further Education providers that are offering suitable training courses that would allow learners to gain an equivalent qualification.</p> <p>All options are offered to learners to see if they would suit.</p> <p>If so we make the learners aware that we will be sharing their personal data with the other provider and make the arrangements to transfer the learner.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support Staff 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Email Correspondence
We contact the external awarding body to seek advise on other suitable providers that may be able to accommodate the learners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> QA Officer 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Email Correspondence

If we cannot arrange a suitable transfer for the learner we will issue a full or partial refund of the fees paid	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• QA Officer	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Accounts System
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P8. COLLABORATIVE PROVISION

Part of our mission is to make our programmes as widely available as possible and to open routes to accreditation for learners. We view collaborative provision* as being a way of expanding the delivery of our programmes and enhancing the quality and value of our programmes by involving additional subject matter experts in our programme delivery.

As the 'first provider' i.e. the provider with a quality assurance agreement with our external awarding bodies, we understand it is our responsibility to manage and ensure the quality of all programmes and services we deliver in collaboration with other providers. We understand that we have the same responsibilities to all learners; whether we deliver programmes ourselves or in collaboration with another provider.

** We use the term collaborative provision to describe the co-delivery of all or parts of a programme by us with one or more other providers*

P8.1 CONTRACT ARRANGEMENTS

Title:	P 8.1 Contract Arrangements
Version & Date:	V1 January 2016
Purpose:	This procedure outlines how we agree the contract terms with second providers we are collaborating with.
Staff Involved:	Head of Centre
Supporting Documentation:	Memorandum of Understanding template

Method	Who Does it	Evidence Generated
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<p>We will have a written Memorandum of Understandings (MOU) detailing respective responsibilities signed by both parties in place before we embark on any collaborative arrangement.</p> <p>The MOU will detail</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> the rationale for establishing the collaborative arrangement including the potential benefits for learners our responsibilities to our learners when a programme is being wholly or partly delivered / assessed by a second provider monitoring arrangements 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Head of Centre 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Signed MOU
<p>This agreement will be reviewed regularly and in the event of any party to the agreement failing to meet the responsibilities detailed, the agreed arrangements may be rendered void.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Head of Centre 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Correspondence with second provider

Monitored By	Frequency	Method(s)	KPIs
Company Directors	Annually and at the conclusion of any collaborative provision agreement	QA Officer prepares a report for the Board on the KPI's for each collaborative arrangement.	Learner satisfaction rates on programmes run collaboratively Number enrolled Number Completed Number withdrawn/non-submissions Number Certified

P8.2 REPORTING ARRANGEMENTS

Title:	P 8.2 Reporting Arrangements
Version & Date:	V1 January 2016
Purpose:	This procedure describes how we monitor programmes or parts of programmes being delivered by second providers and the reporting arrangements we have in place

Staff Involved:		Head of Centre; Quality Officer;	
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Method	Who Does it	Evidence Generated
We ensure that the second provider is familiar with our QAS and appreciate their responsibility in implementing it.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Head of Centre 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Copy of QAS signed by second provider
<p>The second provider submits progress reports to us at regular intervals – this will be agreed when the MOU is being drafted and dates will be set for the submission of the reports.</p> <p>Reports will include</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Evidence of implementation of our QAS Programme reviews Learner evaluation Trainer evaluation <p>Our QA Officer reviews each of these progress reports and highlights areas of concern and follows up on them with the second provider.</p> <p>Our QA Officer also highlights evidence of best practice which could be replicated in other programmes/collaboration arrangements.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> QA Officer 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Copy of progress reports Correspondance with second provider Meeting Minutes

Monitored By	Frequency	Method(s)	KPIs
Company Directors	Annually and at the conclusion of any collaborative provision agreement	QA Officer prepares a report for the Board on the KPI's for each collaborative arrangement.	Learner satisfaction rates on programmes run collaboratively Number enrolled Number Completed Number withdrawn/non-submissions Number Certified Number of progress reports received

P9. SELF EVALUATION AND IMPROVEMENT OF PROGRAMMES AND SERVICES

We are committed to reviewing and reporting on the quality of our programmes and services and on the effectiveness of our quality assurance system in a considered, systematic and structured way. Through consultation with staff, trainers, learners, graduates, employers, external advisors and other stakeholders, DCM can measure attainment of objectives and use resources productively and effectively.

A continuous improvement approach enables us to implement best practice measures which help to guarantee a quality service to our learners. Our self-evaluation exercises will have a large focus, will be a significant undertaking and will be relatively infrequent.

We will set out an overall five year plan for Self- Evaluation to ensure a continuous cycle of Self-Evaluation. Within the five year cycle we will evaluate all programmes and related services.

P9.1 ASSIGNMENT OF RESPONSIBILITY

Title:	P 9.1 Assignment of Responsibility
Version & Date:	V1 January 2016
Purpose:	The Head of Centre is responsible for ensuring that responsibility for the process of Self-Evaluation is delegated to a staff member who has the time, expertise, training and resources to manage and implement the process fully and effectively.
Staff Involved:	Head of Centre; QA Officer; Board of Directors;

Method	Who Does it	Evidence Generated
Our Head of Centre assumes full responsibility for assigning responsibility for self-evaluation exercises.		
We agree to the delegation of responsibility for the process at a Board Meeting (Quality Officer unless otherwise agreed).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Head of Centre Board of Directors 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Board meeting minutes
We also agree on the allocation of resources to, and a timeline for, the process		
The QA Officer arranges a kick-off meeting with all staff involved so they can be briefed on the process.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> QA Officer 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Kick-off meeting minutes Briefing notes

Monitored By	Frequency	Method(s)	KPIs
Company Directors	Upon start and completion of every Self-Evaluation process	<p>Review of the performance of each member of the Review Panel.</p> <p>Review of the final resources and final timeline compared to what was proposed</p>	Submit a high standard Programme Evaluation Report & Improvement Plan to the monitoring body within the given time frame and resource allocation.

P9.2 LEARNER AND STAKEHOLDER INVOLVEMENT

Title:	P 9.2 Learner and Stakeholder Involvement
Version & Date:	V1 January 2016
Purpose:	This procedure describes how we ensure that learners and other stakeholders are aware of and involved in the self-evaluation process in a meaningful way at appropriate stages.
Staff Involved:	QA Officer; Support Staff; Trainers;

Supporting Documentation:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learner Feedback Forms (Sample) • Trainer Feedback Forms • Learner Questionnaire
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Method	Who Does it	Evidence Generated
We continually review all feedback received through our End of Programme Learner and Trainer Feedback forms and analyse these in our Monthly Metrics Report	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • QA Officer • Support Staff 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • End of programme Learner Feedback forms • End of programme trainer feedback forms • Monthly Metrics of Programme Evaluations Report
We have regular informal and formal meetings with learners, and operate an open-door policy for learners to make contact with any member of staff.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Trainers • Support Staff 	
In the period leading up to a self evaluation: - <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We invite our trainer, clients and past learners to complete questionnaires 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Trainers • Support Staff • QA Officer 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Completed Trainer, Client and Learner questionnaires

Monitored By	Frequency	Method(s)	KPIs
Company Directors	Upon completion of the Self Evaluation Process	Review the data received through feedback questionnaires to see how useful it was in preparing the final Self Evaluation Report and	Findings and Recommendations in reports can be linked back to the feedback received.

		Programme Improvement Plan	
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P9.3 SELECTION OF EXTERNAL EXAMINER

Title:	P 9.3 Selection of External Examiner
Version & Date:	V1 January 2016
Purpose:	This procedure describes the criteria we use to select an External Examiner; they must be independent of our centre, knowledgeable in the field of learning/processes they are evaluating and able to contribute positively to the enhancement and development of the programmes and services being evaluated.
Staff Involved:	Head of Centre; QA Officer;

Method	Who Does it	Evidence Generated
We compile and maintain a database of qualified evaluators detailing professional qualifications and relevant experience	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> QA Officer 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Database of External Examiners
<p>The Head of Centre appoints our External Examiners based on their:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Education, training or industry experience in the field of study or the process being evaluated Experience in certification systems Experience in one or more of the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Programme Design Programme Delivery Programme Evaluation Cross Moderation of Standards External Verification of Standards Auditing of Quality Systems 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Head of Centre 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> References from other providers C.Vs. of External Examiners/s on file Letter of engagement with External Evaluator Correspondence with External Examiner on file External Examiners report and Programme Improvement Plan

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Centre Accreditation • References/referrals from other providers • Recommendations from our existing External Examiners • Our own knowledge and connections with subject matter experts 		
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Monitored By	Frequency	Method(s)	KPIs
Company Directors	Upon completion of Self Evaluation Report	Review of External Examiner input and performance when self evaluation is completed in their area of expertise	The evaluation report submitted meets the guidelines and standards set down by the external awarding body

P9.4 IMPLEMENTING THE PROCESS

Title:	P 9.5 Implementing the Process
Version & Date:	V1 January 2016
Purpose:	This procedure describes the methodologies we employ to implement our self-evaluation process to produce a Self-Evaluation Report and Programme Improvement Plan which will document our findings and recommendations for improvement
Staff Involved:	Head of Centre, External Evaluator, Self-Evaluation Panel (SEP)
Supporting Documentation:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Programme Improvement Plan template • Self Evaluation Resource (FESS)

Method	Who Does it	
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<p>We determine an Action Plan for the process which details: -</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The overall timeline for the process • Responsibilities of the staff on the review team • What is to be evaluated • The aims and objectives of the self evaluation • The data required to complete the review • The measurement criteria to determine the level of success, e.g. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demand for programmes • Completion numbers • Results and certification • Learner feedback • Trainer feedback 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Head of Centre 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Action Plan
<p>We gather and analyse all the data as determined in the action plan and prepare the draft Self Evaluation Report documenting the findings, conclusions and recommendations and provide this to our External Evaluator for review.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review Team • External Evaluator 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Draft Self Evaluation Report
<p>We prepare a final draft to be reviewed by our Self Evaluation Panel which is responsible for the scrutiny of the documented findings contained in Self Evaluation Reports (SER) and signing off on the final report.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review Team • Self Evaluation Panel 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Final Self Evaluation Report
<p>We prepare a Programme Improvement Plan(s) based on the recommendations in the report which details: -</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Actions agreed • Person responsible for that action • Deadline for implementation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Head of Centre 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Programme Improvement Plan
<p>We submit the Self-Evaluation Report (SER) & Improvement Plan signed off by the SEP to the monitoring body.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Head of Centre 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Correspondence with the monitoring body.
<p>To complete the Self-Evaluation exercise we: -</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Head of Centre • QA Officer 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Relevant paperwork on file • Updated QA system

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • File all relevant paperwork/evidence and make it available for monitoring if requested • Disseminate the findings, recommendations and feedback from the monitoring body to all contributors to the process • Update/amend our Quality Assurance System as needed • Implement the Programme Improvement Plan • Monitor the progress of the implementation 		
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Monitored By	Frequency	Method(s)	KPIs
Company Directors	Upon completion of every Self-Evaluation process	Involvement in whole process	Submit a high standard Programme Evaluation Report & Improvement Plan to the monitoring body that will be accepted & approved.

P9.5 REPORTING AND PUBLICATION

Title:	P 9.5 Reporting and Publication
Version & Date:	V1 January 2016
Purpose:	This procedure describes how we ensure that the outcomes of our Self-Evaluation exercises are communicated to the relevant stakeholders in a timely and constructive fashion and to ensure that our evaluation reports are produced and published in accordance with recommended guidelines as set down by the monitoring body
Staff Involved:	Head of Centre, QA Officer

Method	Who Does it	Evidence Generated
We submit a copy of the Self-Evaluation Report (SER) which documents our findings and recommendations for improvement and	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Head of Centre 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Correspondence with Monitoring Body

the Programme Improvement Plan signed off by the Self-Evaluation Panel to the monitoring body on completion		
<p>We will list issues identified, innovations made and actions taken as a result of Self Evaluation in our Annual Quality Report.</p> <p>This report will be published on our website and other appropriate forums.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • QA Officer 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Annual Quality Report • Website

Monitored By	Frequency	Method(s)	KPIs
Company Directors	Upon completion of the Self Evaluation process	Review summarised Evaluations, External Evaluators Report and monitoring body feedback	Positive feedback from monitoring body

GLOSSARY OF TERMS

Term	Definition
Access	Refers to a learner's ability to avail of appropriate opportunities to enter and succeed in programmes leading to awards, with recognition of learning already achieved.
Assessment	The process by which evidence of performance is collected and compared with the standards of knowledge skill or competence required and a judgment is made on the learner's achievement of the standards.
Assessor	The assessor devises assessment instruments/marking schemes and assessment criteria, provides opportunities for learners to generate evidence, judge's learner evidence and makes an assessment decision.
Assessment Technique	An assessment technique is a valid and reliable way of assessing learner evidence for a particular range of learning outcomes, e.g. practical skills should be assessed in a practical manner e.g. by a skills demonstration.
Assessment Instrument	An assessment instrument is the specific activity/task or question(s) devised by the assessor based on the specified assessment technique.
Authentication Process	The process by which providers will quality assure the devising, recording and verification of the assessment procedures. This process will include both internal verification and external authentication.
Award	That which is conferred, granted or given by an awarding body and which records that a learner has acquired a standard of knowledge, skill or competence.

Awarding Body	A body issuing qualifications (certificates, diplomas or titles) formally recognises the learning outcomes (knowledge, skills and/or competences) of an individual, following an assessment and validation procedure.
Award Standards	Standards of knowledge, skill or competence that must be demonstrated by the learner for achievement of the award
Award Type	Refers to a class of named awards sharing common features and level. These include major, minor, special purpose and supplemental award types. Different award types reflect different purposes of award and allow for the recognition of all learning achievement.
Centre	An organisation or consortium accountable to an awarding body for the assessment arrangements leading to a qualification.
Certificate	The record of attainment in a qualification issued by an awarding body.
Client	Those who engaged our training services, not the learners.
Competence	One of the framework strands (outcomes of knowledge, skill and competence). It refers to the process of governing the application of knowledge to a set of tasks that is typically acquired by practice and reflection. It is the effective and creative demonstration and deployment of knowledge and skill in human situations. Such situations could comprise general, social and civic ones as well as specific occupational ones.
Corrective Action	Refers to an action taken/implemented by the provider to correct/deal with any errors, omissions or deliberate acts by staff or learners that may impact on the validity of the assessment process.
Criterion referenced	Criterion-referenced assessment has set criteria to be achieved; meeting/not meeting these criteria is the most important aspect. The driving test is a good example of a criterion-referenced assessment. The standards of knowledge, skill and competence are specified in the Award Specification and learners

assessment	reach them or fail to do so. FET awards are criterion referenced.
External authentication	.The means by which learners, providers, assessors and QQI will be independently assured that the application of the provider's assessment procedures is carried out effectively.
External authenticator	.Appointed by providers to provide independent authentication of fair and consistent assessment in line with QQI requirements.
Fields/subfields	There are 9 groups or fields of learning within FETs classification of awards. See Standards Policy. Fields of learning (e.g. Business) are subdivided into sub-fields (e.g. Marketing) and then domains (e.g. International Marketing). There is a wide range of domains.
First Provider	When co-delivering any or all parts of a programme with one or more other providers, the 'first provider' is the provider with the quality assurance agreement with the relevant external awarding body.
Instrument of Assessment	A means of generating evidence of a learner's knowledge and/or skills.
Internal verification	.A process or series of processes designed to check the presence and completeness of learner assessment work and the accuracy and completeness of assessment records
Knowledge	One of the framework strands (outcomes of knowledge, skill and competence). It is the form of outcome commonly identified with declarative knowledge i.e. the cognitive representation of ideas, events or happenings...It can comprise description, memory, understanding, thinking, analysis, synthesis, debate and research.
.Learner	A person who is acquiring or who has acquired knowledge, skill or competence.

Learner Evidence	Material produced by the learner to demonstrate achievement of the standards for the award.
Malpractice	Learners using the assistance or work of others and passing it off as their own for assessment purposes.
Major award	A major award is the principal class of award made at each level. It represents a significant volume of learning outcomes. A major award will prepare learners for employment, participation in society and community and access to higher levels of education and training e.g. Level 5 Certificate in Childcare
Minor award	A minor award is an award that is derived from, and must link to, at least one major award. Minor awards are smaller than their parent major award(s). Achievement of a minor award provides for recognition of learning that has relevance and value in its own right e.g. Word Processing, Safety and Health at Work. In the FET awarding system they are referred to as components.
National Framework of Qualifications	The single nationally and internationally accepted entity through which all learning achievements may be measured and related to each other in a coherent way and which defines the relationship between all education and training awards. The Framework has 10 levels, reflecting all learning from introductory to doctorate levels.
National Qualifications Authority of Ireland	The National Qualifications Authority of Ireland, also referred to as the Authority or the NQAI, established in 2001 arising from the Qualifications (Education and Training) Act 1999, with responsibility to establish and maintain the National Framework of Qualifications.
Norm referenced assessment	Norm-referenced assessment expresses the learners' scores in rank order, based on a distribution of scores. It is comparative. Normal distribution curves are often associated with norm-referenced assessment.
Outcomes	Identify what the learner is able to do on successful completion of a learning experience.

Programme	A programme is a learning experience designed and offered by a provider based on predetermined national standards and leading to a QQI award.
Progression	Refers to a learner's ability to move to another programme leading to an award at a higher level of the framework, having received recognition for knowledge, skill or competence acquired.
Provisional Results	This refers to learner results which have not yet been authenticated or finally approved through the results approval process.
Quality Assurance	The system(s) put in place by a provider to maintain and improve the quality of its programme(s).
Reasonable Accommodation	The adaptation of assessment as necessary to cater for the needs of learners whose personal situation means that the assessment would otherwise be unfair e.g. learners with a disability, and/or other learners covered by equality legislation (Ref QQI Quality Assuring Assessment Guidelines for Providers Revised 2013).
Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL)	Recognition of Prior Learning i.e. recognition of learning that has taken place but not necessarily been assessed or measured prior to entering a programme. Such prior learning may have been acquired through formal, non-formal or informal routes.
Skill	One of the framework strands (of knowledge, skill and competence outcomes). It reflects know-how and skill and involves demonstration by the learner of ability in terms of mastery of skill or application of knowledge. The level and degree of skill are reflected in the level indicators in the framework.
Special Purpose	A special-purpose award is made for specific relatively narrow purposes. It does not have to link to a major award e.g. Fork Lift Truck Driving.
Staff	All the people who are employed by the company and all the people contracted by the company to design, develop, deliver, review and assess our training programmes and who offer support to our

	learners throughout their learning experience.
Standards	Standards identify the knowledge, skill and/or competence that must be attained in order to achieve an award.
Supplemental	A supplemental award is an award to recognise learning which involves updating/ up-skilling and/or continuing education and training with specific regard to occupations e.g. Gas Installation
Transfer	Refers to a learner's ability to move from one programme leading to an award to another, including at the same level of the framework, having received recognition for knowledge, skill or competence acquired
QQI	Quality and Qualifications Ireland is a national agency responsible for the external quality assurance of further and higher education and training. They validate programmes and make awards.
Quality	The standard of something as measured against other things of a similar kind
Validation	Validation is the Process through which an awarding body determines that the programmes devised by providers will enable learners to achieve the standards required for an award.

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Appendix 1: Blended Learning Strategy

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Introduction

This Blended Learning Strategy has been developed in line with DCM's strategic goals for 2019 to 2020, and strengthens and supports the following strategic goals: -

- Strategic Area 1: Transformation through Digital Technology
 - Implement advanced systems and services
 - Provide an inclusive and accessible learning experience
- Strategic Area 2: Increased Accreditation and Recognition
 - To develop DCM as an innovative and cutting-edge training provider

From the beginning DCM has always strived to make efficient use of technology behind the scenes to enhance our QA system and learner supports. However, with the increased number of people working remotely and recent challenges presented by the COVID 19 pandemic we recognise more than ever before the need to provide our learners with the option of blended learning.

In addition, we have observed over the years the need to provide certified programmes, at level 6 to learners nationwide that may not have the opportunity to access the same programmes locally or the ability to travel, even for a short time, to more built up areas where the programmes are typically provided.

With this in mind the aim of this strategy is to “*Bring learning to people instead of people to learning.*”.

We have identified 3 levels of at which technology can be used to enhance our training and supports: -

1. Level 1

At this level, technology will be used to support course management and learner support. For example, to provide programme information and resources to learners; to collaborate on the development of programme materials with subject

matter experts; to perform supporting administrative functions.

2. Level 2

At this level, technology is used to enhance the learning experience by providing interactive, online learning activities in addition to typical face-to-face classroom activities. For example, delivery of online course content via videos, live webinars, online quizzes, online tests etc.;submitting assessments online.

3. Level 3

At this level, technology is used to support learning that is largely self-directed and delivered fully online.

By the end of 2021, we aim for all existing programmes to achieve level 2 status. Any new programmes developed during this time will also be developed to level 2.

We have also identified a number of smaller, uncertified training courses that could be offered at level 3.

To ensure that this strategy is a success we recognise the need for the following key enablers: -

1. Reliable IT

From content creation, programme development, programme delivery and learning support, the IT systems we choose to use must be state of the art, reliable and within our budget.

2. Partnership with learners

Through increased collaboration with and feedback received from our learners we can measure the impact of blended learning programmes and support and seek to make continuous improvements where needed.

3. Development of our team

Supporting our staff in developing knowledge and skills in blended learning approaches and in the design and delivery of quality blended learning experiences is a key priority. We will strive to create a culture where optimum performance and

development is supported. All members of our team will have access to internal and external resources to allow them to build their knowledge and skills relevant to our blended learning offerings. Individual team members will be encouraged to share skills, knowledge and examples of excellence. Where gaps are identified we will hire new team members with the required skills or consult with external experts, whichever is most appropriate.

4. Increase our learner population

Larger numbers of learners will allow us to benefit from economies of scale by delivering and supporting training more efficiently and effectively and the additional fees will allow us to invest the best technologies available and to invest in our team. Also, as we recruit more learners from non-traditional groups and communities here in Ireland we recognise the benefits to all of our learners of being part of more diverse and multi-cultural cohorts.

5. Finance

We must develop a multi-year financial plan that encompasses all cost categories and provides a clear path for financial sustainability. Underinvestment in key areas such as professional development or systems integration could undermine success. Financial planning should include cost estimates for: -

- Infrastructure - broadband; remote classrooms;
- Devices/Equipment - desktops; mics; cameras; lighting;
- LMS and VLE Systems Integration
- Development of Digital Content
- Professional Development of existing team
- Human Capital - hiring of new staff; consultancy fees;

Why blended learning?

Further Education is facing a number of challenges that affect teaching and learning. Learner numbers are increasing, while the staff/student ratio has decreased. The student population is increasing in diversity and there are demands for increased flexibility in when and how learning opportunities are provided. Digital devices and applications are ubiquitous..

For DCM we recognise blended learning as

A training programme where learners at least in part learn through online delivery of content and instruction with some element of learner control over time, place and pace.



At least in part at a supervised brick-and-mortar location away from home

The key is that learners get to drive their own learning to at least some degree, while still having the expert guidance of an instructor to lead them down a path to understanding. By carefully planning lessons, monitoring learner progress and leveraging the appropriate technology, our trainers can engage learners in the material while also building critical thinking skills and nurturing intrinsic motivation that is vital to building a lifelong learner.

However, blended learning should not just be about using technology because it is available; blended learning should only be offered if it can successfully support learners by providing them with the best possible learning experience and help them to achieve the learning objectives for their chosen programme.

Used correctly, blended learning can: -

- Support the provision of information and resources to learners

-
- Support the administrative elements of learning e.g. including enrolment, communication, assessment, marking and feedback
 - Broaden the opportunity for learning as it is always available, allowing learners to learn at their own pace
 - Be personalised to an individual's role, ability, needs and skills gaps
 - Measured using analytics to track learner engagement with learning, shares, drop-off points, user comments and lots more.

In many cases the act of “blending” achieves better learner experiences and outcomes, and more efficient teaching and course management practices. It can involve a mix of delivery modes, teaching approaches and learning styles. Advances in technology provide new opportunities for trainers to design and deliver their courses in ways that support and enhance their role, the learners' individual cognitive experiences, as well as the social environment; three key elements in successful learning and teaching.

Guiding Principles

In recognition of the fact that Blended Learning must be more than an addition of online modes of learning, it must involve programme design that is centered on the learners needs and pedagogic practices we have defined 5 guiding principles.

These principles are based on the research conducted by the Enhancing Digital Teaching & Learning in Irish Universities (EDTL) project and The EDTL Approach they have defined - <https://edtl.blog/the-edtl-approach/>.

1. **Always consider our learners**

This strategy places the learner at the centre of its objectives, and aims to provide an inclusive learning experience.

2. **Pedagogy First**

The decisions we make will not be technology led, instead we will ask what are the pedagogical needs of our learners and how can technology be used to support these needs.

3. **Communication and Engagement**

Communication with our learners must be clear and unambiguous at all times and learners need to know how to contact their tutors and should be encouraged to communicate with us when needed. We will not assume that our learners have the knowledge required and we will use simple accessible language always. We will also explore ways to build in collaborative structures into the course to promote learner-to-learner interaction.

4. **Content and Activities**

Learning is not a passive activity and our programmes will encourage active learning. We will provide a variety of course materials and activities to ensure our learners can actively engage with the content in thoughtful, purposeful ways.

5. **Assessment and Feedback**

All learners should have the opportunity to receive formative and summative feedback on their chosen programmes. We will build in a variety of continuous assessment activities to allow learners to gauge their progress and where possible, provide a range of assessment techniques to allow learners to meet the learning outcomes for their programme.

Implementation

Technology

A reliable technology infrastructure is required for the successful implementation of blended learning. This includes a dependable telecommunications network, software, and hardware devices that can be accessed and utilised by learners and trainers. In addition to the technology infrastructure, learners and trainer need effective technology support to maintain positive momentum in teaching and learning in a digital environment.

Key Questions to Ask Regarding Technology

We need to consider the following questions about technology:

- What technology, hardware, software, and networking, will be needed to run successful blended learning?
- What technology infrastructure is currently available to support blended learning?
- What investments need to be made to the current infrastructure, including but not limited to bandwidth, hardware, software, devices, and network?
- What technical support for learners and trainers is needed to maintain technological infrastructure?

Hardware & Software Needs

1. Broadband

Broadband bandwidth will dictate the quantity of learners that can get online and the quality of their individual connections.

2. Equipment

The equipment needed to deliver quality sessions may include laptops, desktops, interactive whiteboards, webcams, mic/headsets.

3. Facilities

Delivering training remotely and developing online video content will require different facilities than our traditional class-room training delivery.

4. LMS Platform

Firstly we decided to go with a cloud-based system as all data would be securely stored in the cloud and the platform would be frequently upgraded with no extra cost for DCM. We researched three systems - Moodle, LearnUpon and TalentLMS.

We have chosen to move forward with TalentLMS, an award-winning cloud-based solution, for a number of reasons: -

- Fully customize with user-friendly interface
- Responsive design that fits any device so lessons can be presented on smartphones, tablets, and desktops
- Courses can be imported and updated and duplicated quickly
- Supports blended learning with virtual classroom video conferencing integration
- Supports formative and summative feedback with assessments engine
- Supports communication with personal messaging and forum features
- Conforms to WCAG-2 accessibility requirements
- Supports the latest industry-standard in content interoperability - SCORM & xAPI
- Offers short-term contracts and flexible pricing plan depending on number of active learners
- Customer support - offer 24/7 phone and email support as well as extensive online knowledge base and tutorials

5. VLE Platforms

We researched three systems - AdobeConnect, Zoom and GoToTraining.

We have chosen to move forward with GoToTraining, an award-winning cloud-based solution, for a number of reasons: -

- Customised registration with tailored questions for learners
- Join sessions from anywhere - supports smartphones, tablets, and desktops
- Engagement tools - test, polls, breakout-rooms, live chat, hand-raising
- Content Library for sharing course materials

- Detailed reporting including attendance, registration, test results and evaluations.
- Offers short-term contracts and flexible pricing plan depending on number of active learners
- Customer support - offer 24/7 phone and email support as well as extensive online knowledge base, tutorials and live training sessions

6. Content Authoring Tools

We have identified a number of tools and resources to be used in content development:

1. Slide Decks - MS PowerPoint and Google Slides
2. Course Manual, Workbooks & Guides - MS Word and Google Docs
3. Screen Capture - Screencast O'Matic
4. Video and Image editing - Adobe Creative Suite
5. Animation - Powtoon and GoAnimate
6. Interactive Elements - Articulate 360 & Rise 360

Technology Training

Content knowledge is only part of the equation for trainers to be successful in a blended learning environment. Training on how to utilize hardware and digital content for instructional purposes is critical.

We will need to provide training to instructional staff on the use of all chosen systems and the ideal IT setup and how to effectively use learner performance data and feedback to modify instruction.

We will also develop a range of supports and advise learners on the minimum and optimal setup they will need to have a quality learning experience.

Technology Support

We will also have dedicated eLearning support representatives who will ensure that all systems are performing correctly and will handle all queries from staff and learners in relation to their eLearning experience.

Participating trainers will be encouraged to share technology tips through regular communication and feedback.

Content

The decision to buy or build digital content is essential in the implementation of online and blended learning programmes. We may use content from an online provider, create their own, or a combination of both.

Key Questions to Ask Regarding Content

We need to consider the following questions about technology:

- How will content be acquired (build, buy, or borrow)?
- Is content aligned to learning outcomes of the programme?
- If developing content, what professional development will be provided for content developers?
- Which platform will be used to manage purchased and/or developed content?

For the duration of the current Blended Learning Strategy we will develop all of the content internally.

Staff Recruitment and Professional Development

To support this Blended Learning Strategy we must ensure we have a team with skills needed to design, develop and support blended programmes. This will involve developing the skills of our current team, hiring new people and working with external experts on a contract basis where needed.

Key Questions to Ask Regarding Recruitment and Professional Development

We need to consider the following questions about recruitment and professional development:

- What roles are required for successful design, development, delivery and support of blended learning programmes?
- What roles can we fill from our current team?
- What are the professional development needs of blended trainers?
- What are the professional development needs of supporting team members?
- How will professional development be delivered (online/face-to-face/blended)?
- Who will deliver professional development?

- How will ongoing professional development needs be identified and met?

Required Roles and Responsibilities

We have identified the following roles and responsibilities that are required to support blending programmes: -

- **Educational Technologist**
The role of the Educational Technologist is to analyse, design, develop, implement and evaluate the processes and tools we use to enhance our blended learning programmes.
- **Learning Content Designer**
The role of the Learning Content designer is to identify the training needs of our learners and work with subject matter experts to create learning activities and content using instructional design.
- **Graphic Designer**
The role of the Graphic Designer is to design guidelines for our overall brand, including style, layout, feel and usability and to create visual assets/content.
- **eLearning Project Manager**
The eLearning Project Manager guides the rest of the team through the design and development process efficiently and is responsible for planning, resourcing, budget, schedule and stakeholder management.
- **eLearning Support**
The eLearning Support Staff are specially trained in administering our chosen LMS and VLE systems and are responsible for supporting our trainers, learners and other team members with all aspects of our VLE and LMS use

The responsibilities for each of these roles has been expanded on in our QAM.

In some cases members of the team may span one or two of these roles depending on their previous experience.

Where we feel our skills may be lacking we will consult with external experts. This external input can be used to ensure quality blended learning and will help to upskill our internal team over time.

In addition to these roles we have identified a number of existing trainers with previous experience of designing, developing and delivering remote and online training. Initially, we will work with these trainers exclusively to deliver our blended programmes which give our other trainers the time needed to upskill.

Continuous Improvement

As with our class-room based programmes we must measure impact effectively and implement good continuous improvement plans.

Learners will be asked for feedback at various stages throughout their chosen programme.

In addition we have identified the following KPIs to monitor: -

- **Training Time**
This KPI (combined with completion metrics) will tell us which programmes learners are finding more engaging and easy to complete, or on the contrary, which programmes are time-consuming and difficult to follow and might benefit from a content revamp.
- **Average Time to Complete**
This KPI will show which are our most popular (and unpopular) programmes, which are especially hard or take a long time to complete.
- **Course Completion Rate**
This KPI will tell us how many learners have enrolled in a specific programme, and how many of them have progressed and completed. Again, this will help to identify our most popular (and unpopular) programmes and which ones are especially hard.

We can also use this information to reach out to learners that haven't completed their programme to get their feedback and offer more support if needed.

- **Test Pass Rate**
This KPI will allow us to evaluate our learners' performance and the overall effectiveness of the test: -

-
- A high fail rate may indicate a problem with the test or course content
 - A high pass rate may indicate that the test is not challenging enough

Are the test scores achieved compatible with the skills we expect learners to have?