Examinations:
Planning, Conducting and Concluding

DDLETB Assessment Procedures

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Principles of Assessment in relation to Examinations

Quality assured assessment ensures that in criterion referenced assessment "learners are assessed, and the assessment judgment is made based on whether the learner has reached the required national standards of knowledge, skill and competence for the award" (QQI, 2013 p.5[1]). Central to quality assured assessment is the assumption that learners are assessed in a fair and consistent manner in line with the award standard. Quality assured assessment ensures adherence to the principles of assessment.

The following sets forth the principles of assessment which apply to this document: these principles are based on the QQI (2013) principles for assessment[2].

1. Validity

Validity is a fundamental assessment principle ensuring that an assessment measures what it is designed to measure: the relevant standard of knowledge, skill or competence required for an award should be assessed.

Validity in assessment occurs when:

- Assessment is fit for purpose (i.e. a practical assessment assesses a practical skill)
- Learners can produce evidence which can be measured against the award standard
- Assessors can make accurate assessment decisions
- Assessment is accessible to all learners who are potentially able to achieve it

2. Reliability

Reliability in assessment ensures that assessment measurement is accurate: the knowledge, skills and competence which the assessment measures should produce reliable and accurate results. Reliability in assessment ensures that results are consistent under similar conditions.

Reliability in assessment occurs when:

- The assessment is based on valid assessment techniques
- Assessment conditions are consistent
- Learner evidence is reliable
- Results are consistent across various assessors, contexts, conditions and learners over time.

3. Fair

Fairness in assessment supports the validity and reliability principles and provides equal opportunity to all learners. Fairness in assessment ensures: learners have access to appropriate resources/equipment in

[1] QQI (2013) Quality Assuring Assessment Guidelines for Providers. Available at: http://www.qqi.ie/Downloads/Quality%20Assuring%20Assessment%20-%20Guidelines%20for%20Providers%2C%20Revised%202013.pdf [Accessed 28th February 2018]
[2] Ibid.

assessment; assessment design and implementation are fair to all learners; and policies and procedures exist to ensure fair assessment of learners.

4. Quality

Quality in assessment ensures that all assessment processes are quality assured.

5. Transparency

Transparency in assessment ensures that assessment policy and procedures provide clarity to all relevant stakeholders.

In order to ensure adherence to the principles of assessment, the following process should be followed in relation to planning, conducting and concluding examinations. This will thus ensure that assessment is fair for all learners along with being reliable and consistent across ETBs, programmes and modules.

1. Definitions

1.1 Examination

Examination refers to any theory based, oral, aural, online or practical examination **which occurs on a specific date and for a specific duration**. All other assessment techniques, including assignment, collection of work, learner record, project and skills demonstration are not informed by this document.

1.2 Assessment Resources

Assessment resources refer to any **permitted** resources which learners require in an examination as informed by the programme. Examples include, but are not limited to:

- Dictionaries (e.g. exam dictionaries which translate into other languages, but do not give explanations)
- Maths formulae and log tables
- Art materials
- Non-programmable calculators (see Appendix 1)

Some learners may require specific resources: these should be considered and approved under the *Reasonable Accommodation in Assessment* procedure.

1.3 Invigilator Pack

The Invigilator pack refers to the following documentation which should be used by all Invigilators in an examination:

- Examination Learner Instructions (Short Version) (Appendix 2)
- *Examinations: Planning, Conducting and Concluding* procedure and any other relevant Centre and specific awarding body assessment procedures
- *Assessment Malpractice* procedure (guidelines on what to do if a serious incident occurs)
- Examination documentation (e.g. examination papers, etc.)
- Sign-in sheet and Invigilator Report (can be a combined document). This document should list all learners sitting the examination along with a space for learners to sign. Additionally, the report should allow the Invigilator to record any incidents which occurred during the examination.
- Seating plan where appropriate
- Any specific resources needed for the assessment (e.g. printer paper, working computers, pens, papers, USB keys) and checked prior to the examination
- Door sign (Exam in progress; No unauthorised access)

The Invigilator pack is prepared by the Examinations Secretary or other person designated by the Examinations Secretary.

2. Examination: Roles and Responsibilities

2.1 The Invigilator

The Invigilator must:

- Be in attendance **within** a **specific timeframe (minimum timeframe: at least thirty (30) minutes)** prior to the commencement of the examination
- Distribute examination papers and any other specific assessment instructions
- Note the actual start, duration and finish time on a white board/flipchart/other and read aloud same to learners
- Actively monitor the learners, for the entire duration of the examination, thus ensuring the proper conduct of the examination. The Invigilator is required to give their **entire attention** to the work of invigilating: the use of mobile phones for personal use, or personal music appliances; reading of newspapers or books; personal/work related activities; or engaging in any occupation other than invigilating, during the examinations, is strictly forbidden. The Invigilator should not bring in to the Examination Centre, any items (including newspapers, books, other personal/work related materials) other than those which relate to the examination.
- Deal with any problems which may arise. It is recommended that there is another member of staff available on site (or within close proximity) in the case of any emergency. The Invigilator may use their mobile phone to make contact with others where help is needed.
- Adhere to the guidelines in this document for when commencing, conducting and concluding an examination (see Section 3).
- Adhere to any other specific guidelines as specified by the awarding body

2.2 The Examinations Secretary

The Examinations Secretary must:

- Assign examination locations (e.g. rooms) and designate the Invigilator (ensuring no conflict of interest exists). Where possible, the Teacher should not be the Invigilator.
- Ensure that the room layout and relevant facilities are fit for purpose (see Sections 3.1.4 and 3.1.5)
- Assign the role of Invigilator Pack compilation to the Teacher or other designated person
- Ensure that all Teachers have submitted dates for examinations in advance of the programme commencing and that learners have been given sufficient notice of an examination taking place
- Ensure that the Invigilator is aware of any reasonable accommodation in assessment pertaining to the specific examination

2.3 The Teacher

The Teacher must:

- Ensure secure storage of assessment materials (examination papers, outline solutions and marking schemes, etc.) in line with the *Secure Storage* procedure
- Distribute the assessment plan including examination dates to learners at the earliest opportunity
- Prepare the Invigilator pack (if requested by Examinations Secretary)

Where possible, the Teacher, or person responsible for the paper, will ensure that s/he or a person capable of handling queries shall be available at the examination or by telephone when the event is underway.

2.4 The Learner

The learner must:

- Take responsibility to note carefully the assessment: date/time; duration; and examination location, as fixed on the timetable, for the examination in the modules in which the learner intends to present himself/herself
- Be responsible for making their own arrangements to ensure timely attendance at the examination.
- **Be in attendance within a specific timeframe (recommended timeframe: at least fifteen (15) minutes) before the hour stated in the timetable, subject to centre requirements.**
- **Not enter the examination after a specific timeframe (recommended timeframe: thirty (30) minutes** from the time at which the examination began (recommended time for 2-hour examination). Access to a learner will be denied after the specified time has elapsed.
- **Not leave the examination until a specific timeframe has elapsed (recommended timeframe: at least thirty (30) minutes)** from the time at which the examination began (recommended time for 2-hour examination). Permission to the learner will be denied until after the specified time has elapsed. Note: For shorter examinations, the arriving and leaving times may be adjusted accordingly.
- Present a valid photo ID (passport, driving licence, college ID or public services card) for inspection by the Invigilator where the learners are unknown (e.g. larger Centres)
- Not bring into the examination, or have in his/her possession or under his/her control or within his/her reach, whilst he/she is in such room:
  - Any resource, memorandum, notes, etc, except those as permitted under the particular examination
  - Any electronic equipment including iWatch or equivalent etc.
- Be responsible for their personal property. Where small bags (e.g. handbags) are permitted in the examination learners are responsible for their own property. Small bags should be placed away from learners on the floor, not accessible during the examination, and phones must be switched off. Bags must be placed on the floor and out of the reach of each learner
- Sit the examination/practical assessment at the published time
- Adhere to the guidelines in this document
- Be aware of the implications of any malpractice
- Sign and submit all assessment materials after the examination

No learner shall be permitted to leave the examination **in the final ten (10) minutes** of the examination time (recommended time for 2-hour examination).

3. Examination: Guidelines for staff

3.1 Planning an examination

3.1.1 Reasonable accommodation in assessment

Please refer to *Reasonable accommodation in assessment* procedure. The Invigilator should be notified by the Examinations Secretary of any reasonable accommodation in assessment pertaining to the specific examination.

3.1.2 Keeping assessment materials secure

All Teachers are responsible for the secure storage of assessment materials (examination papers, outline solutions and marking schemes, etc.) in line with the *Secure Storage* procedure. They should make the assessment materials available for the Invigilator in line with the Centre policy.

3.1.3 Examination Timetable/Examination Learner Instructions

Sufficient notice of examination timetables should be given to the learners.

While the assessment plan should be made available at the commencement of the programme, the examination dates should be published using the Centre's communication system (e.g. notice board, Moodle, email, etc.) within a **specific timeframe (recommended timeframe: at least one (1) month)** prior to the examination, or as appropriate to the profile of the learners.

A copy of the Examination Learner Instructions (Short Version) (Appendix 2) should be distributed to the learners in advance of the assessment.

3.1.4 Room Layout/Facilities

- The room layout and relevant facilities need to be checked so that they are fit for purpose. Sufficient space around learners must be available in order to maintain assessment integrity.
- All posters/diagrams/wall materials etc. (which may impact the validity of the specific assessment) should be removed prior to the examination
- A working clock should be available and visible

3.1.5 Examination Resources (Centre)

Any examination resources needed for the assessment (e.g. printer paper, working computers, internet access, pens, papers, USB keys) should be provided and checked prior to the assessment.

All examination resources provided by the Centre need to be checked to ensure the integrity of the examination.

3.1.6 Prearranged Seating Plan

In some instances (e.g. awarding body requirement), a seating plan may be required prior to the examination.

3.2 Conducting an Examination

3.2.1 On the day of the Examination

3.2.1.1 Invigilator Check

The Invigilator should sign out the Examination materials from the secure storage location and this should be co-signed by the Examinations Secretary or designated person.

The Invigilator should take the Invigilator Pack to the Examination.

The Invigilator must report on any issues which may arise using the materials/reporting template located in the Invigilator Pack.

3.2.1.2 Learner Identification

In some examinations where the learners are not known to the Invigilator, learners may need to verify identity. Examples of learner identification include but are not limited to:

- Photo ID (Passport, Driving Licence or Public Services Card)
- Teacher verification (or Principal, Examinations Secretary**)**

The Invigilator should confirm the identification of each learner.

3.2.1.3 Examination Equipment/Resources (Learner)

All examination resources provided by the learner (e.g. dictionaries) must be submitted to the Invigilator by the learner: these resources are checked by the Invigilator to ensure the integrity of the examination.

3.2.1.4 Reasonable Accommodation

If reasonable accommodation is provided to a learner, care must be taken to ensure that the integrity of the assessment and adherence to the standards is maintained at all times. See *Reasonable Accommodation in Assessment* procedure.

3.2.1.5 Seating Plan

All learners are required to sit in the designated seat according to the pre-arranged seating plan if a pre-planned seating plan is required.

3.2.1.6 Mobile Phones/Internet Enabled Devices/Bags

Mobile phones and/or internet enabled devices must be switched off and placed at a distance from the learner. If a learner is found to have a mobile phone and/or internet enabled device, that is switched on, in his/her possession i.e. not on the floor, it will be confiscated and reported as a breach of the examination.

Bags must be placed out of the reach of each learner.

3.2.2 Commencing the examination

3.2.2.1 Attendance/Sign-in

The Invigilator will distribute the attendance/sign-in sheet and ensure that all learners in attendance have signed. This will be done in conjunction with the ID check (see 3.2.1.2)

3.2.2.2 Examination Papers

The opening of the examination papers is witnessed and signed by a learner, where required by the awarding body: The Invigilator co-signs.

The examination papers and answer books (if required) will be distributed face down by the Invigilator at the commencement of the examination. Learners are not permitted to commence reading the instructions until permitted by the Invigilator. If required, computers and other equipment may need to be switched on or learners logged in prior to the commencement of the assessment.

3.2.2.3 Commencement of Assessment

The salient points from the **Examination Learner Instructions (Short Version)** (see Appendix 2) should be **read aloud** to all learners before the time for the examination commences.

The specified examination start time, duration and end time will also be **read aloud** to learners and **written on** whiteboard/flipchart/other.

Learners may then commence the assessment. The assessment starting time will be noted on the Invigilator Report.

3.2.3 Conducting assessment

3.2.3.1 Guidelines on conducting assessment

- Only learners sitting the examination and authorised personnel can be present in the room
- No learner may be authorised **to enter the examination after a specified timeframe (recommended timeframe: thirty (30) minutes)** from the time at which the examination began (recommended time for 2-hour examination)
- No learner may be authorised **to leave the examination until after a specified timeframe (recommended timeframe: at least thirty (30) minutes)** from the time at which the examination began (recommended time for 2-hour examination). Permission to the learner will be denied until after the specified time has elapsed. Note: For shorter examinations, the arriving and leaving times may be adjusted accordingly
- Strict silence must be observed in the examination. (Due to the nature of some specific events (for example, oral assessments, some practical assessments), this guideline may not apply).
- Each learner should check that they have the correct examination instructions (e.g. examination paper, task list)
- A learner should raise his/her hand if he/she wishes to attract the attention of the Invigilator during the examination
- A learner shall not, while in the examination

- Use, or attempt to use, any book[3], memorandum, notes or paper (save the examination paper and such answer books, etc., as shall have been supplied to him/her by the Invigilator); or
- Aid, or attempt to aid, another learner; or
- Obtain, or attempt to obtain, aid from another learner, or Invigilator; or
- Communicate, or attempt to communicate, in any way, with another learner within the Centre or by electronic means with a person outside the Centre

- A learner shall:
  - Not take out, or attempt to take out, of the examination, any answer books, whether used or unused
  - Not take out examination paper (if applicable)
  - Shall not damage the examination premises or its furniture

3.2.3.2 Learners leaving the examination

A learner may not be permitted to leave the examination and return during the examination period unless the Invigilator is satisfied that the learner's need to leave the examination is genuine, (e.g. because of illness, urgent need to visit the toilet, etc.). A learner who leaves the examination during any period of said examination shall not be re-admitted during that period unless the learner has been in the care of a representative of the Centre. The learner must hand the examination material/documentation to the Invigilator on leaving the examination. In the event of a practical assessment, computers and other equipment may need to be switched off. The Invigilator should record on the cover of the answer book the time of departure from and return to the examination and the reason for the absence; the time lost by the learner may not be compensated for at the close of the assessment period. Particulars of any such occurrence should be reported on the appropriate Invigilator Report.

3.2.3.3 Erratum notice

Where an error in the examination has been noted, the Invigilator will seek clarification from the Teacher (or other subject matter expert if Teacher is unavailable) who should be available to clarify the query. This amendment will be communicated all learners and noted on the Invigilator Report. **The integrity of the examination must be maintained at all times.**

3.2.3.4 Unexpected event during an examination

- When an unexpected event occurs during an examination (fire alarm, medical emergency, etc.), the Invigilator must ensure that integrity of the examination is maintained
- Any unexpected events should be noted in the Invigilator Report
- In some instances (e.g. critical illness, fire, etc.), the examination may need to be abandoned

3.2.3.5 Learners who have completed at least ten (10) minutes before the concluding time

No learner shall be permitted to leave the examination in the final ten (10) minutes of the examination.

[3] Exceptions include resources specifically required for the assessment event (e.g. exam dictionary which translates into other languages but does not give explanations, log books etc.)

3.3 Concluding Assessment

- The Invigilator will remind learners that there are **ten (10) minutes** remaining and that all learners should remain in the room until the assessment concludes
- At the end of the examination:
    - Learners are reminded to ensure that their names are on the exam papers, or all scripts are signed, as per local procedure
    - Learners must remain in their seats until all assessment material has been collected by the Invigilator
- Once all assessment materials have been collected, learners are permitted to leave
- The Invigilator is responsible for the collection and packaging of all examination material in the manner required by the Centre and transporting it to the designated member of staff for safe and secure storage

Appendix 1

Non-programmable calculators

- Programmable calculators are **prohibited**. The term "programmable" includes any calculator that is capable of storing a sequence of keystrokes that can be retrieved after the calculator is turned off or powers itself off. Note that the capacity to recall, edit and replay previously executed calculations does not render a calculator programmable, provided that this replay memory is automatically cleared when the calculator is powered off. Also, the facility to store numbers in one or more memory locations does not render a calculator programmable.
- Calculators with any of the following mathematical features are prohibited:
    - graph plotting
    - equation solving
    - symbolic algebraic manipulation
    - numerical integration
    - numerical differentiation
    - matrix calculations
- Calculators with any of the following general features are prohibited:
    - data banks
    - dictionaries
    - language translators
    - text retrieval
    - capability of remote communication

(State Examinations Commission, 2017[4])

See www.examinations.ie for full list of calculators which are allowed and disallowed in State Examination Commission examinations. This is a useful guide.

[4] State Examinations Commission (2017) *Candidate Information Booklet Leaving Certificate 2017.* Available at: https://www.examinations.ie/misc-doc/BI-CA-96791328.pdf. [Accessed 6th December 2017].

Appendix 2

Examination Learner Instructions (Short Version)

1. Mobile phones and/or internet enabled devices must be switched off and placed on the floor. If a learner is found to have a mobile phone and/or internet enabled device, that is switched on, in his/her possession i.e. not on the floor, it will be confiscated and reported as a breach of the examination.
2. Bags must be placed out of the reach of each learner.
3. No learner may be authorised **to enter the examination after thirty (30) minutes** from the time at which the examination began (recommended time for 2-hour examination).
4. No learner may be authorised **to leave the examination until thirty (30) minutes** from the time at which the examination began (recommended time for 2-hour examination).
5. Strict silence must be observed in the examination. (Due to the nature of some specific events (for example, oral assessments, some practical assessments), this guideline may not apply).
6. Each learner should check that they have the correct examination instructions (e.g. examination paper, task list)
7. A learner should raise his/her hand if he/she wishes to attract the attention of the Invigilator during the examination.
8. A learner shall not, while in the examination
   - Use, or attempt to use, any book[5], memorandum, notes or paper (save the examination paper and such answer books, etc., as shall have been supplied to him/her by the Invigilator); or
   - Aid, or attempt to aid, another learner; or
   - Obtain, or attempt to obtain, aid from another learner, or Invigilator; or
   - Communicate, or attempt to communicate, in any way, with another learner within the Centre or by electronic means with a person outside the Centre.
9. A learner shall:
   - Not take out, or attempt to take out, of the examination, any answer books, whether used or unused
   - Not take out the examination paper (if applicable)
   - Not damage the examination premises or its furniture
10. No learner shall be permitted to leave the examination in the **final ten (10) minutes of the examination**
11. At the end of the examination:
    - Learners will be reminded to ensure that all scripts are signed
    - Learners must remain in their seats until all assessment material has been collected by the Invigilator
12. Once all assessment materials have been collected, learners are permitted to leave.
13. A learner may be expelled from the examination if his/her behaviour is such as to jeopardise the successful conduct of the examination.

[5] Exceptions include resources specifically required for the assessment event (e.g. exam dictionary which translates into other languages but does not give explanations, log books etc.)