

Invalid Learners with QQI - (QBS Online System)

A learner may return from QQI as invalid, where this instance occurs a member of the QA team will make contact with the learner or learner representative. This is to make sure the details we have on our system are correct. The learner may have to supply evidence of proof of identity which is sent directly to QQI for processing.

Learner Contract

Learners are asked to fully read the contents of their Programme Information Pack and make sure they understand the contents and any terms and conditions they are agreeing to by registering onto a programme with us. They will then be asked to sign a declaration which is located at the bottom part of our programme registration form. If a learner is unsure of any aspect of both the contents of the Programme Information Pack and learner declaration they are to seek clarification immediately from their trainer or head office. As part of this declaration learners will also be agreeing to our terms stated below under our assessment policy.

Learner Requirements Regarding Covid-19

How can I protect myself from getting Coronavirus (COVID-19)?

- Wash your hands regularly and avoid touching your face with your hands.
- Hand gels with at least 60% alcohol content can be used if soap and water are not available.

How to wash your hands with soap and water:

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wet your hands with warm water and apply soap. • Rub your hands together until the soap forms a lather. • Rub the top of your hands, between your fingers and under your fingernails. • Do this for about 20 seconds. • Rinse your hands under running water. • Dry your hands with a clean towel or paper towel. • A video demonstration is available at hse.ie/handhygiene | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • When coughing and sneezing, cover your mouth and nose with your bent elbow or tissue. Put used tissues into a closed bin and wash your hands. • Clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces. • Use regular household disinfectants to clean surfaces. |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If learners are showing signs of COVID-19 they must not come to training. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ If they attended training the day previous, training may have to be cancelled until the venue can be appropriately cleaned. ○ Please contact HCT Learning immediately if this is the case. • If Learners are using public transport to travel to and from the training programme, they will need to clean their hands before and after using public transport. • Learners will be asked to wash their hands-on arrival at the venue and at regular intervals throughout the day. This includes: • Learners should bring their own face covering if they wish to wear one. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Learners should be aware of how to put it on and take off properly. ○ https://healthservice.hse.ie/staff/coronavirus/safety-in-the-workplace/how-to-use-face-coverings.html | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ before and after eating and preparing food ○ after coughing or sneezing ○ after using the toilet ○ before smoking or vaping ○ where hands are dirty ○ before and after wearing gloves ○ before and after being on public transport ○ before leaving home ○ when arriving / leaving the workplace / other sites ○ after changing tasks ○ after touching potentially contaminated surfaces ○ if in contact with someone displaying any COVID-19 symptoms |

To reduce the number of touch points:

Social Distancing:

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learners will need to retain their booklets and ensure they bring them to training each day. The trainer is not allowed to take learners booklets each day. • Learners will be required to bring their own pens as sharing is not permitted. • The trainer will sign learners in each day and sign the exam sign in sheet. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learners must follow government guidelines of keeping 2 metres apart. • Learners breaks will be staggered to avoid crowding. |
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Learner Requirements

- Attend the programme in full, unless notified and pre-approval given from HCT Learning head office
- Seek missed information on the programme for days missed from the programme trainer
- Provide us with the required information for certification this includes: Full correct name, PPS number and date of birth

- Become familiar with the assessment criteria and marking scheme of their chosen programme
- Understand the assessment guidelines and assessment briefs for their chosen programme
- Seek clarification on any assessment concerns or queries from the programme trainer or HCT Learning head office
- Take part in all programme assessment activities in full and to the best of their ability
- Complete the participants declaration of assessments submitted
- Submit their assessments in line with HCT Learning's Submission of Assessment Policy
- Understand and follow the Alleged Compromise of Integrity of Assessment Policy on assessment malpractice
- Notify the head office or the programme trainer on any Reasonable Accommodation that may be required
- Meet the assessment deadline date that is provided by HCT Learning head office on your chosen programme

Class Representative

HCT Learning will engage with learners on each programme delivered in becoming a class representative. This chosen candidate will be the spokesperson for the group communicating any issues or feedback that may arise while the programme is running. As well as this being a crucial role to help and improve the learning experience on a programme, there are benefits to learners personally who will gain new skills and experiences from this role. After a course has finished a class rep may be asked to attend meetings and provide feedback on their experiences.

What will this role entail? The class rep may be asked to attend council meetings, may be contacted outside the training delivery and asked to provide us with feedback for programme enhancements and learning experiences in our Kilkenny office, main speaker for the group to voice questions, concerns and seek clarification, be invited to provide input into proposed changes which have been made in the learner, trainer and client feedback reports.

Pastoral Care Measures

This free personal support service is available to all learners that attend a programme with HCT Learning. This service will take into account any personal, social and academic difficulties that the learner may have and to promote self esteem and to help the learner set goals for their future both academically and personally. HCT Learning prides itself on promoting an educational environment that is positive, safe and secure. We will encourage learners to avail of this free service as a positive reinforcement support system.

Request for Reasonable Accommodation

HCT Learning welcomes learners with special educational needs. A reasonable accommodation is a process that helps to support learners who may have a disadvantage due to a medical condition, impairment, learning difficulties, hidden disadvantages or other extenuating circumstance in order to provide equality of access and opportunity for all. This accommodation has been designed to assist learners in demonstrating his or her achievements in their assessments. They have not been designed to compensate for a possible lack of achievement arising from a disability or other factors of disadvantage, but, however should not give the learner an advantage over others. All reasonable accommodation granted will maintain the integrity/ status and reputation of assessment.

There are various types of reasonable accommodation accessible to learners, these include:

- Modified presentation of assignments/examination papers e.g. enlargements
- Scribes/Readers/ dictaphone
- Spelling/grammar wavier
- Use of sign language
- Practical assistants
- Rest periods – resulting in extra time being allocated to qualifying learners
- Adaptive equipment/software
- Use of assistive technology
- Altered exam settings – Learners will be accommodated by our reasonable accommodation policy below all requests will be dealt with case by case.
- Extra time

Examples of circumstances where reasonable accommodations may be requested:

- A temporary, permanent or long-term disability or chronic or disabling condition such as epilepsy, glandular fever, or other incapacitating illness of the learner
- A physical injury or emotional trauma during a period four to six weeks previously
- Learning disabilities involving problems with reading, writing, math, reasoning, listening, and speaking
- Recent bereavement of close family member or friend
- Severe accident
- Domestic crisis
- Terminal illness of a close family member
- Other extenuating circumstances outside the control of the learner.

The Equal Status Acts 2000 to 2008; The Education Act 1998, Qualification Act 2008, The Education of Persons with Special Educational Needs 2004.

HCT Learning's procedure for granting Reasonable Accommodation: HCT learning will set sufficient timeframes in which learners can submit assessments to us. Learners are required to notify the office and/or programme trainer of any special requirements needed to enable us to see how best to accommodate him/her during or after assessment.

They can do this in the following ways:

- On initial booking the programme coordinator will discuss the specific needs and requirement of the learner and if necessary will complete the special requirement section on the booking form
- During the completion of the registration form on the 1st day there will be an option to request reasonable accommodation
- Learners may meet and consult with their programme trainer
- Learners can apply for reasonable accommodation through our website
- By contacting our office staff or QQI Coordinator.

If learners require reasonable accommodation for completion of an assessment while the programme is running the following details will be required:

- What are the circumstances most relevant to your situation?
- What are your reasonable accommodation request requirements?
- This form is to be submitted along with supporting documentation, for example, a doctor's certificate

Granting Reasonable Accommodation:

- The QA team will assess the accommodation request to ensure that the integrity/status and reputation of assessment is upheld, ensuring that the request made is reasonable and just
- HCT Learning will then proceed to identify the adaptation/accommodation needed and how best to implement this ensuring that they do not give the learner an advantage over others

The QA Team will note all requests for Reasonable Accommodations and the outcome.

Scribe Assistant Policy

HCT Learning will provide all learners with the opportunity of equal access to assessments. Learners who may need support with their assessment will be offered the opportunity to avail of a Scribe to assist them with the completion of their written assessment i.e. Workbook or exam.

Reading Assistant Policy

HCT Learning will provide all Learners with the opportunity of equal access to assessments. Learners who may need support with their assessment will be offered the opportunity to avail of a Reader to assist them with the completion of their written assessment i.e. Workbook or exam.

Submission of Assessment

Learners are asked to submit their assessments to us in the following way:

- Assessments are to be submitted by the approved deadline date for submission, it is not the responsibility of HCT Learning to contact learners in the event that an assessment is not submitted or received on time
- When submitting assessments to our head office our address is to be clearly posted on the front of the pack or envelope and a return address is printed on the rear side of the envelope or pack. We recommend learners posting in assessments must do so by registered post, allowing enough time before the allocated deadline date and it is the learners responsibility to make sure that the correct postage is applied
- Either the 1st page of the booklet or form is to be attached and completed in block capitals- clearly stating the programme name, learners name, PPS number and date of birth and attached to a hard copy of the learners assessments- Please note- HCT Learning will not accept assignments electronically, falling apart or illegible. It is a requirement that they are hard copies, stapled or bound using a treasury tag. Please do not use plastic folders or plastic sleeves. Any additional evidence or paperwork handed in by learners must have their name clearly printed and numbered in the correct order. We recommended that learners save and retain a copy of all work submitted.
- Where a learner has submitted part completed assessments it will be accepted accordingly and put forward for submission. Only in situations where the programme is a level 3 and the learner is required to be successful in all areas or there is a critical fault on the marking criteria set will a learner fail based on what they have submitted
- In the case of a skills demonstration assessment it is the learners responsibility to check all information has been provided in full on their booklets before sending in to us
- Assessment's submitted after the agreed programme submission deadline date will not be accepted by HCT Learning for correction, except where the learner has followed our Extension Request Policy
- Where a Reasonable Accommodation Request or Extension Request has been sought from a learner, it is that learners responsibility to make sure that the appropriate forms are submitted
- It is the learners responsibility to make sure that all assessment material that has to be submitted must be submitted to either the trainer or head office by the allocated deadline dates

Assessment Receipt

Learners are given an Assessment Receipt to complete and attach to their assessment material when submitting assessments back to our office or trainer. It provides learners with information in relation to submitting their assessment to us. It allows for tracking of the programme they have completed for our centre staff on receipt. It also acts as a learner declaration of their work completed as learners will have to read a declaration and sign if in the event any cases of plagiarism are found.

Grade Breakdown

HCT Learning delivers programmes from level 3-6. Grades do not apply to level 3 as this is set as successful or unsuccessful. For levels 4- 6 the following applies:

D (Distinction)	M (Merit)	P(Pass)	U (Unsuccessful)
80 – 100%	65 – 79%	50 – 64%	0-49%

Procedure for Security of Assessments

Prior to assessment

HCT Learnings responsibility:

- Once exam dates are set the exams will be released to the trainer
- Programme material will either be collected by the trainer or shipped by courier to the trainer only. The exams shall be in a separate sealed envelope when shipping

Learner responsibility:

- Learners will be required to sign in for the exam, if they arrive 30 minutes late they may not be allowed to sit the exam
- Late learners may not be given extra time to complete the exam
- Learners must leave all coats, bags etc in the designated area as instructed by the supervisor
- Learners must ensure they have all materials needed for examinations. For practical skills they must have the appropriate PPE required. For written exams they must ensure they have pens etc and that their equipment is in good working order
- Learners will not be permitted to use a mobile phone as a calculator or for time-keeping
- A learner will not under any circumstances be allowed to communicate with another learner during a written examination
- Any learner who disrupts an examination will be asked to leave and shall be reported to their supervisor and a report shall be given to HCT Learning

Upon completion of assessment

Trainer responsibility:

- Once the exam has finished the trainer must instruct learners to stop writing
- The trainer will be required to collect all assessment related documentation
- The trainer will then be required to submit all assessments to HCT Learnings head office
- Under no circumstances should any programme related documentation be left unattended

HCT Learnings responsibility:

- To receive the exams and workbooks, count them and check them in
- The exams shall be separated and bundled together with the learners other work submitted
- These assessments are kept in a secure lockable location until the deadline has passed
- They will be sent to an Assessor for marking
- Once corrected the exam scripts are held in secure storage at head office

Assessment Malpractice

Examples of assessment malpractice activities include:

- 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

All allegations of Assessment Malpractice will be fully investigated by our QA team. All assessment booklets given to learners from HCT Learning will have a plagiarism declaration statement which is to be signed by the learner directly. This indicates that the work presented is that of the learners, these are found on the Assignment Brief. Where a trainer,

Assessor or member of the QA staff detects a suspected instance of plagiarism in a learners' assignment or examination the following will apply:

1. The alleged instance will be documented in all IV reports - informing and outlining the outcome
 2. If a learners grades are altered due to an alleged instance by 20% or more the learner or learner representative is contacted directly and the learner is given an opportunity to dispute the allegation and the Alleged Compromise of Integrity of Assessment Report Form
 3. All learners that have taken part in plagiarism will automatically be deducted marks.
 4. A review and discussion of the situation by Management will take place.
 5. The following course of action may be followed:
 - a. Discussion directly with the learner on the issue. The learner is then required to resubmit their assignment along with an administration fee of €50.
 - b. The learner will not be submitting an assignment for the programme in discussion.
- All instances of plagiarism are documented in all IV reports and will be noted to the EA upon their visit to our centre

HCT's policy on Alleged Compromise of Integrity of Assessment

HCT Learning understands plagiarism to be the inclusion of another persons' writings, ideas or works, in any formally presented work (including projects, examinations or presentations) which form part of the assessment requirements for a module or programme of study without due acknowledgement either wholly or in part of the original source. The same applies to any form of copies of work from other learners or work copied given from trainers.

Plagiarism is a form of academic dishonesty where ideas are presented falsely as being the original thought of the author and is taken extremely seriously by HCT Learning. All learners are responsible for being familiar with HCT Learnings policy on plagiarism and are encouraged if in any doubt to contact HCT Learning directly. Any alleged instances of plagiarism will be examined thoroughly by the trainer, Internal Assessor and QA staff to establish the facts and relative context of the alleged offence taking into account the nature and extent of the plagiarism and penalties will apply where plagiarism is confirmed to have taken place.

Submission of Assessments Receipt

Once a deadline date has passed on each programme, all assessment materials are prepared for an Assessor to mark. The QA team will send out assessment receipts to all learners or learner representatives. This email will confirm the learners that are being submitted for that submission period with QQI for certification. It will highlight the learners full name and the assessment type that the learner has submitted. We will ask the recipient to check the learners details as this is what will be submitted to QQI for certification. We will once again provide information on all areas of Reasonable Accommodation, Extension Requests, programme deadline dates, payment information and possible progression routes applicable to that particular programme.

Extension Request Policy

HCT Learning assigns deadline dates on all its programmes and these dates are made available to all its learners. In cases where a learner requires an extension for their assessments contact is made to head office to discuss the nature of their request and the following may be granted under this policy:

- Hand in extension: 3 working days: compassionate consideration will be considered based on the learners personal experience, failure to meet agreed deadline will result in a denial of request
- Regular extension/2 week extension: Unable to meet deadline due to medical/learning or unexpected external factors, evidence of this is required, failure to meet agreed deadline will result in a denial of request
- Extenuating circumstances/2-6 weeks outside a programme assessment deadline: When a learner falls outside 2 week extension, due to medical/learning or unexpected external factors, extreme situation, evidence will be required, failure to meet agreed deadline will result in a denial of request
- Extensions falling outside 6 weeks: Granted in cases of major extenuating factors, depends on the nature of the request and time lapsed since programme deadline date, administration charges of up to €40 will apply

All learners are to note that extension requests are dealt with on a case by case basis and they depend on the nature, practical and/or operational issues involved in the assessment activity.

The following would **NOT** normally be considered as a valid extenuating circumstances under our extension policy:

- Computer or printer failure
- Bunching of deadlines
- Job interview
- Falling behind due to paid employment
- Illness such as coughs and colds
- Illness after the deadline has passed
- Attendance at weddings and other "rites of passage" ceremonies
- Religious festivals (unless they cover a significant portion of the assessment period or fall on the day of an examination, in which case the learner is expected to give reasonable advance warning)
- General feeling of anxiousness/depression unless backed up by medical evidence

- Holidays
- House moves
- Ignorance of rules and regulations

Granting Extension Requests

There will be only one of two outcomes to an extension request:

1) Compassionate consideration- will be granted where the learner has shown examples of:

- A temporary, permanent or long term disability or chronic or disabling condition such as epilepsy, glandular fever, or other incapacitating illness of the learner
- A physical injury or emotional trauma during a period four to six weeks previously
- Learning disabilities involving problems with reading, writing, math, reasoning, listening, and speaking
- Recent bereavement of close family member or friend
- Severe accident
- Domestic crisis
- Terminal illness of a close family member
- Other extenuating circumstances outside the control of the learner.

2) Repeat Assessment- Learners will be notified of this circumstance if, following a meeting with the QQI Coordinator and the Centre Manager:

- The learner has not supplied enough evidence to support their case
- The learner is unsuccessful in their assessment
- The learner has only submitted part of their assessment or only part completed the programme

Assignment Holding Policy

HCT Learning will store all learners' assessment booklets in a secure location on site for a period of up to 6 months after the certification date. Learners may wish to request their assessments to be returned to them. For learners who require this service there is an administration and handling fee of €15. All other assessments are securely destroyed 6 months after the certification date. In the case of plagiarism, assessments will not be returned to the learners.

Results Information Pack & Letter

HCT learning will issue out results letters to all learners/learner representatives that have paid all balances in full after each submission period with QQI. It will state the learners name as per their cert, programme name, result and grades. It will explain the breakdown of the final grade. Learners will be also provided with appeals procedures and our repeat of assessment activities and fees applying to that procedure. HCT Learning will also provide the representative a receipt of payment for their records. Results will not be released for payments outstanding with us, payment is required 30 days after the programme has finished. Results will be issued after the submission date with QQI, they will be checked again 14 days later and results will be issued out for payments received. Payments will not be checked again until 2 days before certs are due from QQI and another release of results are sent.

HCT Learning Assessment Appeals procedure

HCT offers an appeals process to any learner that wishes to query their result or requires assistance in understanding a result breakdown. Only approved results can be formally appealed by the learner. Consequently, the HCT Learning appeals process is enabled when:

1. All results have been approved through the Results Approval Process
2. Learners have been issued with the approved results flagging the opportunity to appeal
3. A request for an appeal has been received within 14 days of the issue of approved/final results

A Learner requests an appeal of results by completing the HCT Learning Appeals Request Form and paying the appropriate administration fee of €50.00 of which €25.00, is refunded if the appeal is successful. This form is obtainable directly from our head office. The only evidence which may be presented by the learner at appeal is that which has already been presented for assessment. New evidence may not be added by the learner for the appeal. HCT Learning is committed to notifying a learner of the outcome of an appeal within 5 working days.

Outcome of an appeal:

1. If there is no change in grade then the learner is so informed
2. If there is a change in grade to anything other than a distinction then the learner is so informed and the opportunity to appeal further, if still not satisfied. QQI will be informed of the change in grade and a request is made for an amended certificate
3. If there is a change in grade to a distinction then the learner is informed of this outcome. QQI will be informed of the change in grade and a request is made for an amended certificate

Repeat of Assessment Activities

This is available to learners who have:

- A learner has missed part of the assessment due to nonattendance
- Failure of an exam paper

- A misunderstanding of assessment criteria
- Missed an extension deadline date with no valid reason
- A learner has not submitted an assessment on first round and would like to add to their assessment grades

The following Instances have been put in place for learners:

Regular Repeat of Assessment (Maximum 2 weeks): Missed the programme assessment deadline date and wishes to submit, Charges of €20 will apply for this request

Extreme Repeat of Assessment (At the discretion of HCT Learning): Missed the programme assessment deadline date and wishes to submit up to 2- 6 weeks after deadline date. Charges of €40 will apply for this request

Extensions falling outside 6 weeks programme deadline date: Missed the programme assessment deadline date and wishes to submit outside of the 6 week deadline date. Cost range between €50- €150 will apply for this request: Note that HCT Learning will only hold information on learner assessments for a period of 6 months under our assessment holding policy.

Following a Programme Fail

The learner has not achieved a pass grade or has not fully submitted their assessments and wishes to add to their grade. Costs of up to €150 will apply for this case - the nature of the assessment type and any other operational issues that may arise will be taken into consideration.

Learners are to note: Learners will only be able to avail of this policy a maximum of 3 times. Firstly in the event of a non submission for first repeat, second repeat following a fail and finally a third repeat - there will be costs occurring for each request as they will be treated as individual requests.

Feedback to Learners

HCT Learning has a policy in place to ensure that if a learner requires feedback on their assignment, it is done so in a timely manner. This will be constructive feedback on the marking received on their assessment. Feedback is initially carried out by the QA Team; they will go through the learners marks from the centre marking sheet. The QA Team will inform the learner of the appeal's process or repeat of assessment activities.

Formative Feedback

HCT Learning provides learners with formative feedback at the midway point of their course. Formative feedback ensures the learner is completely aware of their strengths and weaknesses, and how they can work to improve them. Formative feedback will provide the learners with the opportunity to enhance their overall learning experience. If the learner feels they need to, the opportunity to discuss the feedback with their trainer in a more detailed manner will also be available. By discussing the feedback with the trainer, the learner can then reflect on their feedback in more detail and work towards improving their weaknesses and enhancing their strengths. Formative feedback is a great benefit to the trainer also. By completing formative assessments, the trainer can use the feedback created to understand the group of learners and what accommodations they may require going forward. This enables the trainer to plan and structure their lesson plans in a way that is most appropriate and beneficial for the learning group.

Learners are assessed under four different headings and on a six-point scale. Learners are given a short, but detailed description of each point. This will provide the opportunity for the learner to understand in full, what is expected of them going forward on the course.

Below the six-point scale is outlined:

1	2	3	4	5	6
Unsatisfactory	Considerably less than is expected	Average	Good	Very good	Excellent

Certificates

HCT Learning generally receives certs 3 workings days from the issues date given by QQI. We will endeavour to receive, sort and distribute them out as quickly as possible. The turnaround time for this will depend on the volume of certs received. All certs are placed in pre-addressed, hard back; please do not bend envelopes with a return address on the back. Failure to notify us of an address change may result in your certs going to the wrong address. We will record the date and the address that the cert has been sent to.

Certificates Errors

Where it has been found that there are changes required to a cert in the form of name changes, spelling errors etc. Learners are requested to notify all cert errors to our head office within 5 working days. Changes that fall outside of this, will incur charges of up to €20 per cert. The original cert must be sent back to us, along with a copy of their ID, once

received the QQI Coordinator will inform QQI of the changes through the Q-Help system. Certificate reissues can only be completed at the next certification period.

Lost Certificates

If a learner has lost or misplaced their cert, HCT Learning can offer a Record of Awards and a letter to state that they have completed such programme with us. QQI do not reissue certs they will offer the same record of awards. Learners are required to contact our head office to request a Record of Awards, they will be asked to complete a form which will be sent to them to complete and send back to us along with proof of identification, only one application form is required for application and this is regardless of the amount of awards achieved with us. Proof of identity is a mandatory requirement with this request. The cost associated with this request is €7 which is to be paid on submission of the application to us. The learner will then receive a hard copy in the post and a soft copy to their supplied email address.

HCT Learning Health and Safety Statement

It is the policy of Hughes Consultancy and Training to promote high standards of health and safety within the centre and venues of training and to ensure that the Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Act 2005 and its associated legislation are adhered to. In addition to our commitment to the safety of our staff and learners, it is the aim of Hughes Consultancy and Training Ltd, to achieve a working environment, free from work related accidents and ill health.

The Management team will therefore ensure that the following is carried out:

- Identifying hazards in the workplace, assessing the risks related to them and implementing appropriate preventative and protective measures
- Providing and maintaining work equipment
- Establishing and enforcing safe methods of work
- Recruiting and appointing personnel who have the skills, abilities and competence, matching with their role and level of responsibility
- Ensuring that tasks given to employees are within their skills, knowledge and ability to perform
- Ensuring that technical competence is maintained through the provision of refresher training as appropriate
- Promoting awareness of health and safety and of good practice through the effective communication or relevant information.
- Source sufficient funds needed to meet these objectives

All members of the centre are expected to demonstrate their commitment towards a safe and healthy work and study environment by complying with the centres health and safety policy and associated procedures.

This Health and Safety statement will be reviewed whenever there is a significant change in the matters to which it refers to ensure that it reflects changing needs and circumstances.

Health and Safety Learner Responsibilities

Learners have a legal responsibility not to endanger themselves or others by their actions. Thus learners must:

- Take reasonable care of their own safety and not endanger others by their acts or omissions
- Co-operate fully with all safety rules and regulations issued by the company
- Not interfere or misuse anything that is provided in the interest of health and safety
- Ensure equipment is operated in a safe manner and good housekeeping standards are maintained
- Use personal protective equipment (PPE), as necessary. (Learners are required to provide their own PPE i.e. safety glasses etc.)
- Use equipment only if properly trained
- Report accidents, dangerous occurrences, defective equipment or potential safety hazards to the trainer/centre
- Comply with requirements of the 2005 Act and all associated legislation
- Not be under the influence of alcohol or drugs or a combination of alcohol and drugs to the extent that he or she is likely to endanger his or her own safety, health or welfare at work or that of any other person
- Not engage in improper conduct or other behaviour such as violence, bullying or horseplay, which could endanger another person or his/her safety, health and welfare

Equality of Access to Programmes and Services

Admissions Procedures: It is the policy of HCT Learning, as far as is practicable, to admit all applicants who fulfil the minimum academic requirements for its programmes.

- HCT Learning publishes detailed admissions criteria, procedures and regulations for entry to all its programmes on an annual basis. These include those seeking additional supports or accommodations for reason of disability or medical condition. All documentation is published on HCT Learning's website and is supplied in hard and electronic copy to all applicants upon request.
- Where additional requirements are in place these procedures have been designed to ensure the best possible fit between learner and programme is found and to ensure the HCT Learning can adequately and appropriately provide supports to ensure that all learners have equal opportunity to succeed on their programme of choice.

Award Level

The Following is details of learner admission:

- **Level 3:** The level 3 certificate enables learners to gain recognition for, specific personal skills, practical skills and knowledge, basic transferable skills, the enhancement of individual talents and qualities and achievements and learning relevant to a variety of progression options. There are no minimum entry requirements for this programme. The learner wishing to gain access onto this programme does not need any formal qualification however it is recommended that learners do hold some relevant life and or work experience within this sector. Learners intending on accessing these programmes must have the personal capacity to take on new tasks following straight forward direction and moving towards independent learning in a range of areas of interest. Must be able to read basic short text in a non supportive environment and carry out unfamiliar tasks within a familiar setting or familiar task within an unfamiliar setting.
- **Level 4:** The level 4 certificate enables learners to gain recognition for the achievement of vocational and personal skills, knowledge and understanding to specified standards, the enhancement of individual talents and qualities and the achievement and learning relevant to a variety of progression options, including employment at an introductory vocational level, and programmes leading to a level 5 certificate. There are no minimum entry requirements for this programme. The learner wishing to gain access onto this programme does not need any formal qualification. However it is recommended that learners do hold either a NFQ level 3 or have relevant life and or work experience within this sector. Learners will need to be comfortable reading, drafting, preparing and understanding relevant information including quantitative information. Learners should have the capacity to solve familiar problems well, independently, as well as in a group. Learners will hold the ability to complete some work at home.
- **Level 5:** The level 5 certificate enables learners to develop a broad range of skills, which are vocationally specific and require a general theoretical understanding. They are enabled to work independently while subject to general direction. The majority of certificate/module holders at level 5 take up positions of employment. They are also deemed to meet the minimum entry requirements for a range of higher education institutions/programmes. Entry onto the programme does not need any previous formal qualification however it is recommended that learners do hold either a NFQ Level 4 or have relevant life and or work experience within this sector. Learners will need to be proficient at reading, drafting, preparing and understanding information across a broad range of topics, including quantitative information across a broad range of topics. Learners will need to be capable of solving problems well, independently as well as part of a team using a range of tools and procedures responsibly and learners will need to be able to complete some work at home.
- **Level 6:** An advanced certificate award enables learners to develop a comprehensive range of skills, which may be vocationally specific and/or of a general supervisory nature and require detailed theoretical understanding. Modules include advanced vocational/occupational skills, enabling certificate holders to work independently or progress to higher education and training. The majority of certificate/module holders at Level 6 take up positions of employment, some of whom may be self-employed. Entry onto the programme does not need any previous formal qualification however it is recommended that learners do hold either a NFQ level 5 or have relevant life and or work experience within this sector. Learners entering onto a level 6 must be able to read fluently, draft, prepare and understand complex information, including quantitative information that is personally relevant and reflecting a broad knowledge base. Learners must be able to solve problems independently as well as part of a group accepting personal responsibility for quality of outcome.

Equality Policy

It is the policy of HCT Learning to ensure that the highest standard of equality is practiced at all times in the area of employment and service provision and anti-harassment. In doing so, staff will be suitably trained in the area of equality and will be aware of issues relating to the topic.

HCT Learning will comply with legislation which prohibits discrimination under the following grounds: gender, marital status, age, sexual orientation, family status, religious beliefs, disability, race and membership of the Traveller Community.

Purpose: The purpose of this policy is to promote equality of opportunity for all learners of HCT Learning by ensuring that all administrative, academic and other practices operate on the basis of the appropriate merits, qualifications, abilities and potential of individuals and do not discriminate against any individual.

Objective: The objectives of this policy are:

- To ensure that all staff are aware of their responsibilities as trainers, Assessors, administrators, managers and representatives of the company under the provisions of national legislation and the policies of the company
- To ensure that all applicants to HCT Learning are treated fairly, and in accordance with the published policies and procedures
- To ensure that HCT Learning affords all learners an equal opportunity to develop their full potential; the policies, procedures and practices of HCT Learning in relation to teaching, learning and assessment will seek to ensure equality of opportunity for all learners and as far as is practicable, practices will conform with the published procedures of HCT Learning.

Policy of Anti-Bullying and Harassment

HCT Learning does not/will not tolerate bullying in any form either within our offices or to and from the place of work. Hughes Consultancy and Training Ltd promotes an open approach to all their employees and learners in that they are

free at any time to approach the proprietor should they believe that they are being victimised, bullied, harassed or stressed by another/others.

Our Anti-Bullying Policy is based on the following points:

- Will seek always to foster an environment free from bullying
- We ensure a “reprisal free” approach to anyone who might have cause for complaint
- Acceptable behaviour includes: the right for a superior to administer authority and the need for a management or supervisor to exercise justified disciplinary matters
- Unacceptable behaviour includes: the unacceptable use of threats, shouting, repeated verbal abuse, repeated swearing, violent behaviour (assault, attack harassment) derogatory innuendo's, repeated sarcasm, unfair pressure tactics or anything related to this kind of behaviour
- All complaints will be dealt with immediately and will be recorded
- The result of a formal allegation is such that an accused person will be given the right to explain their side of the story. If they admit the allegations and are willing to apologise and retract from repeating the issue, this may be acceptable with possible disciplinary action. All cases will be dealt with individually and the outcome is subject to the seriousness of the actions/damage caused
- If the person is found to be guilty of bullying, that person, depending on the seriousness of their actions, could be disciplined, dismissed, reported to the authorities or even the Garda Síochána, Discipline may also include demotion, fines or suspension
- A person who is demoted, fined or suspended will be subjected to re-training at their own cost
- Should a person accused and disciplined/dismissed over an allegation feel that they are being dealt with harshly or even wrongly, they have the right to ask for an appeal hearing
- This may be achieved by writing to the proprietor within 14 days of the original disciplinary hearing
- Any or all victims or perpetrator of bullying will be directed towards counselling
- This policy shall be upheld by all employed, contracted or associated with Hughes Consultancy and Training Ltd

Complaints from our Clients and Learners

HCT Learning believes in delivering learner focus programmes and welcomes the opportunity to improve our services, delivery, resources and supports in order to provide the most fulfilling learner experience possible. As a result complaints are taken seriously and are the foundations in which we can continuously improve. HCT Learning will deal with complaints from their clients and learners professionally and swiftly. There are three ways in which complaints can be addressed. There is the “anonymously” ‘Informal’ procedure and the ‘Formal’ complaints.

Anonymous Complaints

Learners are given the opportunity during the programme they are attending to provide us with anonymous comments regarding their learning experience through the mid and end feedback. The QQI Administrator is required to read and report on feedback received on each programme delivered, where any negative comments or grievances have been expressed on a programme, the Centre Director or Training Manager are required to be notified and where required investigated.

Informal Complaints

HCT Learning believe whenever possible to deal with complaints on an informal basis using meetings, telephone calls and emails with the person making the complaint and other parties such as trainers, staff, other learners attending the programme, or in the case where it is in relation to physical factors i.e. equipment, venue. Depending on the nature of the complaint learners are asked to discuss their grievances with the trainer delivering the programme or with their programme coordinator who would have initially booked them onto the programme, with a view of resolving the issues. Informal complaints are documented and monitored and if required corrective measures will be put in place if a situation is identified as reoccurring.

Red Flag Monitoring System

Our Red Flag Monitoring system has been developed that once feedback has been received and is under 70% satisfaction rate it will automatically trigger a red flag system response.

Formal Complaints

Any learner on any programme which HCT Learning is engaging in the delivery of can make a formal complaint. Formal complaints are taken seriously as it can reflect on the centre negatively. HCT Learning believe in taking, where required, full accountability for their learners grievances based on service or treatment received and will ensure that where required corrective measures will be put in place in order to fit in with our mission, vision and ethos. HCT will always ensure that no complaint made will be used to disadvantage any person in the future.

- The person making the complaint will be required to put their allegation or grievances in writing to the Training Manager or directly to the Centre Director within one week after the grievance has emerged. This can be done via letter or email
- Acknowledgments of receipt of the complaint will be given 5 working days after the complaint has been received
- All complaints received by HCT Learning will be handled in confidence and without prejudice

- Depending on the nature of the complaint HCT Learning will determine how to deal with the grievance most effectively
- In the case where it involves a staff member HCT Learning will be required to seek external advice from Peninsula who oversee our HR policies and procedures
- Where the complaint is based on the delivery of a programme HCT Learning may be required to be reviewed by the Academic Council
- HCT Learning will investigate all complaints within 30 working days of receipt, however if the process takes longer, we will keep you updated every 20 working days
- HCT will issue a clear and concise written response

If the learner is unhappy with the response they have received they do have the option to appeal the decision to the Centre Director within 10 working days, the Centre Director will review all findings and may need to meet with the learner or other parties involved to discuss the complaint. Depending on the complaint the Centre Director may need to seek external advice with the complainant's permission. The decision of the Centre Director will be communicated in writing after the investigation has been completed and is final.

Data Protection & GDPR

We are aware of the obligations placed on us in accordance with the Data Protection Act of 1998, and from the 25 May 2018, the EU General Data Protection Regulation 2016/679 (the GDPR) in relation to processing data lawfully and to ensure it is kept securely.

HCT Learning stores data both online and in hard copy. Our system has restricted, password protected access and meets global security encryption standards using a secure way of encrypting information. All hard copy assessment material is securely stored in a locked filing cabinet. These are destroyed six months after the certification period. HCT Learning at times may be required to disclose information to third parties. This type of data can include personal details (names, PPS numbers and dates of birth), reasonable accommodation requirements, past education and work experience. This will be shared with QQI for certification. Photographic and video evidence generated as part of assessment on a programme may be shared with an External Authenticator for authentication of results as part of the certification process.

You have a right, under the General Data Protection Regulation, to access the personal data we hold on you. You have the right to be informed how this data is being used, the right to correction of data held, erasure of data, restriction of data processed and object to the continued use of your data.

If you wish to exercise this right, you should do so by completing the Data Access Request Form which is located on the website or you can call the office. We may refuse to deal with your request if it is manifestly unfounded or excessive, or if it is repetitive. In addition, we may also charge a reasonable fee if you request further copies of the same information. A fee of €15 will apply to requests for the return of assessment materials.

In the event that we become aware of a breach, or a potential breach, an investigation will be carried out. We will then make the decision as to whether the Data Commissioner and individual need to be contacted.

Transfer

HCT Learning will facilitate transfer to another programme if requested by the learner. HCT must be notified on day one of the programme that you wish to transfer free of charge, after day one the fees for the new programme will need to be paid also. If HCT does not offer the programme you desire we shall provide information and guidance of other providers we have links to in the community. You must meet minimum entry requirements and there must be vacancy on the new programme. You will be required to fill out a Programme Transfer Form.

Progression

Level 3: Broken into 2 sections Horticulture and Maintenance related programmes, working towards a Major Award in General Learning 3M0874 AND Employability Skills 3M035

3M0874 General Learning	3M0935 Employability Skills
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Career Preparation • Operating Horticulture Equipment • Outdoor Vegetable Crop Production • Plant Identification • Plant Propagation • Planting and Potting by Hand 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Brick and Blocklaying • Floor and Wall Tiling • Painting and Decorating • Plastering

Level 4: Broken into 2 sections Horticulture and Maintenance related programmes, working towards a Major Award in Horticulture 4M1994 AND Employment Skills 4M0857

4M0857 Employment Skills	4M1994 Horticulture
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communications • Work Experience • Laying Kerbs, Flags and Paviers • Woodcraft • Work Place Safety 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establishing Ornamental Flowering Plant • Establishing Trees and Shrubs • Hard Landscape Construction • Plant Identification Care & Maintenance • Sports Surfaces Maintenance

• Home Repairs and Maintenance	• Safe Horticultural Practice
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Level 5: Broken into 2 sections Horticulture and Office Administration related programmes, working towards a Major Award in Horticulture 5M2586 AND Office Administration 5M1997

5M1997 Office Administration	5M2586 Horticulture
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communication • Customer Service • Reception and Frontline Office Skills • Retail Selling • Safety and Health at Work • Work Experience 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agricultural Mechanics • Boom Sprayer Pesticide Application • Chainsaw Operations • Handheld Pesticide Application • Landscape Construction and Maintenance • Mechanical Pesticide Application • Plant Protection • Felling and Processing Small Tress • Soil Science & Growing Media

2 Stand alone programme at level 6 Leadership PG17185, Training and Development 6S3372

• <u>6S3372 Training and Development Level 6</u>	• <u>Leadership Level 6</u>
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Our contact details are: **HCT Learning, Unit 2 Purcellsinch Business Park, Dublin Road, Kilkenny**
E-mail: info@hctlearning.ie Phone: 056 7770761