HCT Learning

Quality Assurance Manual

2020


**Programme of Education and Training**

# Contents

QAV1.10120

# 1   Programme of Education and Training

This section outlines the academic procedures, policies and guidelines used by HCT Learning to validate programmes or make changes to existing ones. It will outline the approval process for validation to deliver these programmes and also how programmes will be monitored to ensure the learner is provided with appropriate up to date programmes of study. It is essential that there are robust procedures in place to ensure that the development of new programmes are in line with QQI's policies and procedures and compliant with the strategic and academic plan of HCT Learning. The development of new programmes must take into consideration the resources and finances required in order to maintain high standards of academic quality in programme delivery.

All programmes offered by HCT are consistently reviewed to ensure they remain fit for purpose. Feedback from learners, trainers and clients is collected in order to monitor and review programmes to ensure their viability and suitability to our learners academic needs and that the programmes are in line with industry requirements for the local community.

The various stages of approval and monitoring of programmes are detailed within the following policies, procedures and outlines where responsibility lies for each step of the process.
All identified programmes of interest will satisfy centre approved scope of provision and will fit into our integral capacity. Extensive research and critical planning will be our primary focus to ensure the sustainable integration of programmes and services is preserved.

Pre-requisite planning will be required to meet the following fundamentals:
- **Mission**
- **Vision**
- **Company Ethos**
- **Management Principals**
- **Scope**

## 1.1   Programme Development

All programmes identified as possible programmes to offer will meet all statutory requirements and will comply with all the requirements of QQI's validation policies and criteria. HCT Learning will not engage in any programme delivery until we have gone through the full validation process and approval has been awarded.  Below outlines the stages involved in programme development.

### 1.1.1 Stage 1: Identification of Potential New Programme

HCT Learning will identify potential new training programmes on an ongoing basis through continuous monitoring and evaluation of programmes both informal and formal.

- Speaking with clients:  HCT Learning provides training mainly within the community and voluntary sectors nationwide and have worked with a number of our clients/learners for a number of years, as a result HCT Learning have built good relationships within those sectors. HCT Learning will inform our clients of our current services and programmes but will also engage with clients/learners to identify new potential programmes.

- Discussion with stakeholders:  We invite all trainers and other relevant stakeholders, to provide us with feedback and opportunities that they deem beneficial to our current portfolio of programmes and services.

- Course enquiry log (Sniffers): HCT Learning tracks programme need identification through an enquiry log, this will provide us with a systematic approach to determine possible programme development.

- Lead generation through email and website:  A list of email leads will be kept on file to identify new areas of development.

- Working Sector Report: This report has been established to allow us to record the sector our clients learners are working in. This will help us identify areas that we need to develop or in turn programmes no longer deemed as a requirement within our portfolio.

- Feedback: HCT Learning will ask for ongoing feedback from our learners, clients and trainers we will gather this through a range of methods including telephone, email and programme paperwork including:
    - Mid Participants Feedback Report
    - End Participants Feedback Report
    - End Submission Cycle Feedback
    - Mid Client Feedback Report
    - End Client Feedback Report
    - Mid Trainer Feedback Report
    - End Trainer Feedback Report

- Team meeting minutes: HCT Learning hold regular team meetings with staff and trainers and welcome any potential programme needs identified to be discussed.

- Complimentary programmes to pre-existing: HCT Learning will on an ongoing basis review and monitor programmes and services offered and where we can develop our capacity for

our learners to provide them with appropriate progression opportunities, will identify and bring forward for consideration.

- Government legislation:  HCT Learning will keep up to date on changes in policy and legislation and where legislative opportunities arise within our area of expertise, we may develop a programme based on meeting these legislative requirements.  HCT Learning will need to engage with subject experts in order to understand key requirements and then identify specific programme name, NFQ level, credit value, purpose, learning outcomes, assessment, and validation requirement ensuring that they are matching our fundamental values.

- Market research: If an enquiry is brought to the attention of HCT Learning, the programme will be researched establishing the specific programme name, NFQ level, credit value, purpose, learning outcomes, assessment, and validation requirement ensuring that they are matching our fundamental values.

All possible programmes identified will be logged and brought forward to the Quality and Monitoring Committee from office staff.

### 1.1.2   Stage 2: Quality and Monitoring Committee

Before the Quality and Monitoring Committee brings to the attention of the Academic Council a potential new programme they will need to carry out the following reports:

- Risk Register
- Feasibility Study
- Compatibility Study

**Risk Register**

A risk register is used to establish any risks or hazards and enable us to identify measures to control them. A risk is anything which has the potential to impact a programme both prior to and during delivery/assessment. Before applying for validation of a programme, HCT Learning will put together a risk register with the view of putting control measures in place. Each programme being delivered will have their own risk register. This will help to make a decision on whether we have the capability to run the programme. The risk register will be reviewed regularly and updated where required.

The identification and management of risks increases the probability that adverse events are less likely to happen. Awareness of risks and hazards becomes a strategic part of planning and developing a programme. This will improve decision making and will contribute to the more efficient use of capital and resources.

Risks can come from both internal and external factors. The management of these risk identified increases the probability of the successful delivery of a programme, reduce the financial losses and service disruptions.

Risks identified which may impact on HCT Learning successfully delivering a programme:
- Staffing – does the centre have the staff resources (including back office support) or the experience in order to deliver the programme
- Health & Safety – what risks and hazards are associated with the delivery of the programme, is our health and safety legislation fit for purpose
- Policies & Legislation – failure to comply with required legislation, e.g. GDPR, QQI policies etc
- Social – changes in learning trends, demographics and economy
- Seasonal – can this programme be delivered throughout the year or does it require specific seasonal periods, if so is there other methods of meeting the learning outcomes
- Contractual – failure to meet the terms of a contract with a client or learner, such as failure to supply materials, a venue or failure to complete a project
- Managerial oversight  – failure to ensure policies are implemented, failure to ensure staff are trained and developed adequately
- Logistics and back office support
- Access – is the location suitable

- **Risk Assessment**

    As part of our programme planning and development HCT Learning will seek consultancy from a Safety Officer who will design a risk assessment. This is a legal requirement in order to comply with health and safety legislation.  Each risk assessment will be tailored to each individual programme delivered and will look at all aspects of physical dangers that could

arise as part of programme delivery. The risk assessment will aim to implement a safety control system that will look at venue, equipment and environmental factors. It lists the various risks associated with running a particular programme.

There are six headings that will be completed in a risk assessment:

1. Identify the hazard
2. Person at risk
3. Assess the risk in proportion to the hazard
4. Put in place appropriate control measures to eliminate or reduce the risk
5. Identify the residual risks
6. Persons responsible to implement the risk

Through completing this we will identify any potential risks or hazards which may be associated or occur on a programme. A risk assessment will be compiled for each programme separately. This will help determine if it is feasible for us to run the particular programme. Once a programme has been validated the completed risk assessment will be uploaded to the trainers portal on MyHCT. This allows HCT Learning to communicate the potential risks that could occur during the programme delivery with the trainers who will be assigned to the programme. The template which will have been designed by a Safety Officer will be filled out by the trainer. This will streamline the risk assessments, ensuring everything is covered that needs to be by all trainers.

**Feasibility Study**

The Feasibility Study is carried out to determine if the programme is feasible to run. The study objectively examines the strengths and weaknesses of developing and offering a new programme and if it is viable to run. This study will determine if there are too many obstacles to developing the programme.

**Compatibility Study**

The Compatibility study will examine whether the proposed programme meets the following:

- Provide training programmes to the community and voluntary organisation nationwide
- Providing adult education to individuals who have been out of the education system for a number of years or those that want to update their skills and progress to a different area
- Training is practical and hands on
- Heavily focused on a supportive, practical, interactive learning environment

The following will be completed as part of this:

- **Learner Profile:** Comprehensive portfolio of the target learner audience expected to be interested in participation on the programme, to include the identification of the type of learners, specific entry requirements, and fluency in generic skills, literacy, numeracy and interpersonal skills in order to successfully participate on the programme.

- **Programme Profile:** Statement that is learner focused and meaningful to the programme being developed, details confirming programme structure including part time or full time, number of days and hours required for attendance, self-directed learning and identification of the field of learning that reflects on the award and level.

- **Programme Objectives:** Developed specifically for each programme developed and will be realistic and focused on the specific learning outcomes, content and assessment requirements for the programme from the component specification. Working with the chosen field experts, clear programme aims and objectives will be identified and established.

- **Entry Criteria:** Clear identification of required knowledge, skills and or competence that learners should have prior to starting the programmes will be set and made clear. All obligations will be met in this statement under the policy and criteria for access, transfer and progression in relation to learners.

### 1.1.3    Stage 3: The Board

Once these reports have been completed they will be passed to the Board to complete the following:

- Cost Based Analysis

- Statement of Programme Needs Report

**Cost Based Analysis**

This will be completed to ensure that the programme is commercially viable in the long term. The purpose of the cost-based analysis is to identify the benefits of developing the programme whilst ensuring that the investment required in order to develop the programme is achievable. Elements of the cost analysis will consist of expected investment in order to develop and validate the programme the proposed cost per person, based on the provision provided by the Board, the minimum number of learners required to attend the programme, expected trainers rate, material/resources needed to deliver, expected programme development and validation cost, pack printing, courier delivery,

marking and certification postage. The cost analysis will ensure that the benefits to develop and deliver the programme outweighs the time and investment requirements.

**Statement of Programme Needs Report**

This will be required to be completed before a programme can be approved for development and will consist of the following information:

- Programme Name/Programme Title: HCT Learning have a policy to only use the name of the programme stated in the programme component specification (QQI Award Specification) as they believe the name of the programme developed is accurate and reflects the content of the programme. If a situation ever arises where HCT Learning believes by changing the title of the programme, it will enhance the learning or be beneficial, company approval will need to be sought.

- Programme code, NFQ level, award type, awarding body.

- Major Award's programmes linked to: HCT Learning to date only offer minor awards and do not envision deferring from this area. A clear range of subject areas have been identified within our capacity to deliver and we will only validate programmes under these identified areas. If the situation arises where our business changes or diversifies, HCT will be required to seek approval.

- Where the need originated from: a clear statement of where the contributing factors that has brought this programme to our attention, for possible consideration for validation, has arisen from.

- Identification of how the programme fits into our current position: A rational statement of how this programme is fit for purpose based on our current portfolio of programmes.

- Expected duration to include directed and self-directed: This includes how we anticipate running the programme, including: if the programme will be full time or part time, expected hours of delivery, recommended days per week, credit value, mode of delivery and delivery methodologies.

- Programme aims and objectives: HCT Learning will be required to identify at this stage of the process 5 aims and objectives that are relevant to the award we are proposing to offer.

- Assessment criteria: These are developed from QQI's component specification.

- Programme costing: A proposal of expected initial programme costing will need to be presented.

### 1.1.4    Stage 4: The Academic Council

The Academic Council will review the Risk Register, Feasibility Study and Compatibility Study. The Academic Council will review and approve the programme to go forward for design. The Programme, Development and Review Committee will then be brought together to carry this out. If the programme is not approved, it will go back to stage 1 for further research.

- The statement of programme design will be signed to declare the programme has been accepted for development from the Academic Council.

### 1.1.5    Stage 5: Programme Development and Review Committee

The Programme Development and Review Committee will be required to complete a comprehensive, carefully designed review of the programme according to a pre-set template. The point of the committee is to provide specialised guidance and support within the development of a programme within the remit of HCT Learnings agreed QA obligations. The committee will govern programme content, learning outcomes and assessments, aiding the centre to meet national standards. The QQI Programme Evaluator will Chair this committee and coordinate tasks required. They will come from a further education and training background in order to ensure focus is placed on pedagogical issues. They will also attend the Academic Council meeting and act as a connection between all committees (Quality and Monitoring committee, Programme Development and review Committee).

The external members of the Programme Development and Review Committee will have no interest in the company's financial gain, have experience of the National Framework of Qualifications, will have experience delivering programmes similar to the programme that is being developed, will hold practical experience within the subject we are developing, will be academically qualified, holding a minimum of a degree in the area as well as a training qualification (minimum Level 6). This will allow them to provide us with independent, informed and expert advice. The component specification for the selected programme will be used as the foundation towards building any new programme.

### Identification of Resources Equipment Required Form

The Programme Development and Review Committee will devise a comprehensive facilities checklist covering any and all requirements necessary for the programme to be delivered. This will include the venue specification for centre based learning along with the practical session and simulated work environments which will include material, tools, PPE and possible project contents in order to satisfy

our identified delivery mode. This checklist will lay the foundation for us to meet the basic programme requirements, however, additional resources may be added, as programme delivery methods may vary between groups.

The Programme Development and Review Committee will complete the following during programme design:

- **Programme Model Assessment:** Based on the assessment breakdown provided in the QQI component specification. The centre will devise a comprehensive document which clearly sets out the assessment breakdown in easy to follow steps. The developed document will include the assessment type, definition, overall weighing, the assessment criteria instruction and marking criteria for each activity.

- **Assessment Brief and or Assessment Booklet:** Assessment briefs and or booklets will be devised for learner completion in order to achieve the successful completion of the programme, assessment briefs are used where learners are required to complete assignments, in most other situations assessment booklets are devised. These booklets are developed as a step by step guide explaining each activity in clear and easy to understand language. Booklets are used to accompany trainers marks to provide evidence of understanding of activity.

- **Mapping Learner Outcomes:** Before assessments are final, the learning outcomes are required to be mapped in order to ensure that all learning outcomes are being assessed, and to ensure that the same learning outcomes are not being over assessed.

- **Programme Module Outcomes/Indicative Content/Lesson Plan:** As part of our pre-validation process a detailed account of programme content will be required to be completed. HCT Learning have a template in place that they require to be completed for all programmes they are involved in delivering. The content criteria will be consistent with the learning outcomes identified in the component specification along with any extra programme specific learning outcomes that are applicable.

- **Other Supporting Documentation:** HCT Learning has a range of programme standardised supporting documentation that they develop for each programme they engage in the development and delivery of. This supporting documentation is tailored to the programme requirements and have been created in order to maintain transparency of assessments ensuring that they are fair and consistency between trainers delivering.

- **Course Index Confirmation Log:** A Course Index Confirmation Log will be developed for all programmes booked in. This will monitor the progress of the programme ensuring that all obligations are being met during the programme duration, if they are not it will trigger a red flag upon completion.

- **Programme Pack:** Each programme identified as part of our portfolio of programmes to be offered will require a programme pack. The programme pack will consist of the programme content that will be used during the programme as a teaching aid, but also as part of learners own self-directed learning. The programme pack will be designed to the appropriate programme level and will be clearly formatted so that information can be understood. Information presented will be planned around the programme delivery and will be comprehensive to the learning and assessment requirements. It will outline the following:
    - Programme name
    - NFQ level
    - Programme code
    - Award type
    - Credit value
    - Programme purpose
    - Programme learning outcomes
    - Assessment requirements
    - Programme content

- **Sample Answers:** Where there are exam requirements for the programme, sample answers will be designed in order to prepare for the assessment of learners. Once programme validation has been approved, that will highlight how the evidence is to be graded. The questions and sample answers will be designed by the subject experts and will measure the learners ability to recall and apply knowledge, skills and understanding within a set time frame. Questions could cover one or several learning outcomes depending on the level and will meet the Quality Assurance Assessment Guidelines for Providers by:
    - Reflecting a range of learning outcomes as outlined in the Award Specification
    - Is clear and unambiguous
    - Indicates the percentage weighting of the project
    - Takes into account availability of resources and/or materials that will be required by learners such as access to research sources
    - Including notice of agreed deadline for submission of evidence

- o Including relevant information such as; requirements for presentation of the project, guidelines on group or collaborative work.
- **Assessment Specification:** All programmes devised will be required to be accompanied by an Assessment Specification. The purpose of this is to provide those involved in the planning, delivery and assessment of the programme with a comprehensive understanding specific to the programme, along with relevant HCT Learning policies on the assessment of learners requirements. These include:
  - o Programme name, code, NFQ level, major award programme is linked to
  - o Programme profile
  - o Learner profile
  - o Programme purpose
  - o Facilities requirements
  - o Equipment requirements
  - o PPE requirements
  - o Material and training tools provided by centre
  - o Trainer requirements
  - o Policy on Programme Paperwork Requirements
  - o Learners responsibilities
  - o Policy on Submitting Assessments
  - o Tutor Group Work Verification Policy
  - o Tutor Demonstration Verification Policy
  - o Learners Skills Competency Log Policy
  - o Learner Tutor Meeting Policy
  - o Photographs and videos for assessments
  - o Assessment Receipt Policy
  - o Referencing
  - o Plagiarism
  - o Request for Reasonable Accommodation
  - o Programme learning outcomes
  - o Assessment instrument overview
  - o Assessment mapping towards learning outcomes
  - o Definitions of assessment instruments being used
  - o Assessment criteria and marking scheme

- **Individual Candidate Marking Sheet:** HCT will devise an individual learner marking sheet for each programme delivered, this will be presented in a standardised format however will be personalised to the particular programme being developed, information will include:
  - Programme name
  - Code
  - Assessment technique
  - Weighing
  - Candidates name
  - PPS number
  - Centre name and number
  - Name of particular assessment, maximum mark, candidates marks break down
  - Total marks
  - Internal Assessors signature and date
  - External Authenticators signature
- **Programme Verification Booklet:** All our programmes developed will be accompanied by a Programme Verification Booklet – for each programme the trainer will be provided with and required to complete this booklet as part of the supporting evidence for certification of the learners. The following are located in the Programme Verification Booklet.

**Standard Programme Documentation Requirements will include:**
- Group work- During any programme that learners work as part of a group to complete a task or demonstration, the programme trainer must complete group work verification, stating what learners took part in, the exercise and what this included. This is highly important when HCT Learning comes to assessing the learners work and failure to do so could result in the learners losing marks due to plagiarism concerns.
- Competency Log- A learner skills competency log is provided for each manual or skills based programme and must be completed where any tools or equipment are used. This confirms that the trainer has demonstrated the safe use of this equipment and has witnessed the learners using the equipment correctly and safely. This is a form of assurance, for a trainer in the case where a learner on a later date may cause harm or injury to himself or others while using this equipment.

- Learner/Trainer Meeting- This allows the trainer to document any meetings held with a learner during the programme- it is a brief summary of the minutes of that meeting –It allows the office to document all programme findings when it comes to the IV process.

- Trainer/Learner Sign Over of Assessment- Where a trainer is collecting learners assessment/s, they will be required to complete the sign over of the assessment. This will communicate to the centre what assessment was collected and when. This is highly important as this will provide the centre with traceability of assessments for each learner.

- Reasonable Accommodation- This allows the trainer to highlight if a learner has received any accommodation while the programme is ongoing.

- Class Representative – There will be a section for learners to fill in their information if they wish to nominate themselves as class representative.


**Assessment Programme Documentation Tailored to Programme Requirements:**

Once the programme has been validated the Programme Verification Booklet will be uploaded to MyHCT. The following personal information will be provided per programme delivered:

- Skills Demonstrations- Learners are required to complete skills demonstrations which are assigned based on certain learning outcomes as per component specifications. Trainers will be provided with a table template listing the learners name, skills demonstration to be assessed and what mark it is allocated, they will then record the grade on the table provided.

- Exam Seating Plan- Trainers are required to complete an exam seating plan for programmes where written exams are taking place. This is to check for possible plagiarism within the group. We need to see where learners are seated so an assessor or IV can cross check for possible plagiarism. They will indicate by drawing a diagram and giving the learners name – thus illustrating where each learner was seated during the exam.

- Examination Guidelines – These will outline all information required by learners and trainers for the completion of the exam.

- Examination sign in/out – There will be a section for learners to sign in and out of the examination to track learners in attendance.

- There is a comments section in the booklet- This allows the trainer to provide any comments to us on the overall standard of the group and highlight any concerns or areas of good knowledge to us here at head office.

- Scribe/Reader Policy – This will provide all information for trainers and learners as to the guidelines for using a Scribe or a Reader for the examination or for assessment booklets.

- Recording Video/Photograph Guidelines – This will give clear instruction to the trainer as to how these are to be captured and presented to HCT Learning.

- Timetable for completion of skills/exams

- Marking Grids

### 1.1.6 Stage 6: Pedagogical Peer Review

HCT Learning understands the importance of external input at all stages of the validation process in order to gain full understanding of the programme and service requirements in order for learners to gain certification and meet national standards whilst making sure that educational concerns are fully considered in line with commercial decisions. The centre will be required to seek other outside expertise in order to ensure that standards are achieved once all the final documentation has been developed by the Programme Development and Review Committee. This person will be identified as a Pedagogical Peer Reviewer. They will check for compliance with legislation/guidelines and perhaps to add value to the delivery/approach/assessment/risk assessment. They will liaise with the QQI Programme Evaluator who has come from a further education and training background.

Pedagogical Peer Reviewer Requirements:
- Review all documentation procedures as part of the programme development process
- Recommend where improvements are required and complete an independent risk register
- Provide overall clearance on when the programme is fit for purpose and learner ready

Pedagogical Peer Reviewer Criteria
- Highly qualified within the field that is being developed level 7 or above
- Practical experience within the field that the programme is being developed
- Qualification within the training and education sector level 6 or above
- Experience of delivering training programmes within the field being developed

The Pedagogical Peer Reviewer will be required to complete a final comprehensive, carefully designed review of the programme according to a pre-set template; New Validation Peer Reviewer. This template will ask for confirmation or explanation on the following criteria:

**(A)Compatibility with QQI Specification?**

Does the proposed programme content cover all of the LO's from the QQI specification?

Are the correct assessment techniques developed in the correct ratios?

Are there any validation requirements, if so are these observed?

Is the proposed duration appropriate in terms of directed and self-directed learning?

Is the proposed method of delivery suitable?

**(B) Programme Pack**

Has relevant programme content been added to the programme pack as part of supporting documentation towards learning?

Do all other forms of media match the programme pack content?

Is the language used in the pack suitable for the level of learning?

Is the format, font and programme pack layout presentable and eligible for the learners?

**(C) Assessments**

Are there assessment briefs – are these suitable/compatible with the module?

Are there candidate marking sheets?

Is there a marking scheme – compulsory for L4 programmes and upwards?

Where required have sample answers been devised?

**(D) Risk analysis**

Has a risk assessment been identified and developed ensuring the correct control measures have been implemented?

**(E) Facilities Checklist**

Have all requirements necessary for the programme to be delivered been identified to include materials, tools, PPE and budget requirements?

**(F) Suggestions for Improvement**

Are there any improvements that could be made to the programme?

**(G) Overall does this programme pack have the ability to deliver the said programme?**

### 1.1.7 Stage 7: Approval from The Academic Council

Once the Pedagogical Peer Review process has been completed and the report finalised, the Academic Council will be required to complete their final review where the discussion of the final approval for submission will be agreed. Where final approval is not accepted or there are recommendations for alterations or amendments to be made the programme will go back to Stage 1 for further research.

### 1.1.8 Stage 8: Final approval from The Board

When the Academic Council are satisfied with the outcomes of reports and documentation generated, approval for submission will be made and details will be forwarded to the Board for final approval. Once approved by the Board the Quality and Monitoring Committee will complete the application for validation with QQI.

### 1.1.9 Stage 9: Application for Validation

In preparation of the validation application to QQI the following documentation is to be provided:

- Completed application form together with the documentation required to support the questions asked in the application form
- Self-evaluation report
- Payment of appropriate fee

HCT Learning will wait for feedback from QQI in relation to programme approval and when required will facilitate a meeting with a QQI panel, during the meeting HCT Learning will provide transparent answers to questions raised.

**Responding to an Independent Evaluation Report**

The provider may agree with or dispute the accuracy of any evaluation report submitted to QQI. Additionally, they are invited to make a brief response to the findings and/or submit documentation regarding proposed changes to be made to the programme in response to any evaluator concerns about meeting QQIs requirements.

Where further information is required from QQI, the Programme Development and Review Committee will be required to meet again in order to implement the recommendations received. HCT Learning will be required to possibly request clarification from QQI panels on the exact nature or reasons in which they are requiring further information.

In the event that QQI refuse the application made for programme validation. HCT Learning will be required to restart the entire process from the start back to the Academic Council for consideration and planning.

### 1.1.10 Stage 10: Programme Launch

Once approval has been provided from QQI, HCT are now at a stage to offer this programme to our learners and clients. The below final information will be presented to the Academic Council along with the following information from QQI, this will be completed by the QQI Programme Evaluator:

- The Panel Report
- The providers response if required
- The panels response if any
- Email of approval

**Changes which can be made to a Validated Programme**

QQI expects that some minor changes may be made to a validated programme from year to year. The programme does not have to be resubmitted for validation as long as the changes are not extensive. The definition of an extensive change can vary depending on the procedures which the provider has put in place to ensure that the change does not substantially impact the programme. For example, if a robust procedure is in place to help deal with a change of venue then this change will likely not significantly impact the programme, and it will not have to be resubmitted for validation. The decision regarding what constitutes a significant change is made entirely at QQIs discretion.

Office Staff

Quality and Monitoring Committee

Board

Academic Council

Programme Development and Review Committee

Peer Reviewer

Board

Quality and Monitoring Committee

Research/Suggestion of Programme Development

Risk Register

Feasibility Study

Compatibility Study

Cost Analysis

Programme Needs Identification Completed

Review and Approve Programme Design and Launch

Programme Development

Pedagogical Peer Review

Board Approval

Preparing and Submission of Application for Validation

Programme Approval or Amendments

Programme Launch

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## 1.2 Programme Launch

 Once a programme has been validated we shall then prepare and complete final checks on all necessary standardised resources for the launch of the programme, in order to ensure that all necessary information is communicated and programme requirements implemented. All resources for the programme can then be easily accessed by those involved in programme delivery or attendance. Before any information is made public final approval is needed. For this the programme is internally checked and the Whole Checklist – New Programme Launch is completed.

### 1.2.1 Programme Outline

Once a programme has been approved a programme outline will be developed. The programme outline will include information in relation to individual courses and allow potential learners to make an informed decision on training participation. Once developed and approved our course outlines are added to MyHCT, website and programme brochures. This includes:

- Programme titles code, content, aims and objectives, assessment breakdown, duration and key dates.
- Programme entry requirements, exemptions and required fluency in general skills, and specific supports available.
- Major Awards which the programmes are linked to.
- Award type, National Framework of Qualifications (NFQ) level, and credits which will be achieved on completion of the course.
- Progression opportunities.
- Guidelines for directed and self-directed duration ranges in hours.
- Reviews generated from previous learners.

### 1.2.2 New Pack Validation Report

Before final approval and before the programme pack is printed and distributed for programme delivery, final checks will need to be completed. The QQI Programme Evaluator will be required to confirm relevant information regarding programme information, marking, progression, learning outcomes met from pack, policies and procedures along with formatting and proofing.

### 1.2.3 Assessment Guideline Pack

The purpose of this pack is to provide all relevant information regarding the validated programme to all involved in the assessment process including staff, trainers, assessors, Internal Verification and an External Authenticator. The aim is to provide the person with clarification of a transparent, in-depth understanding of the programme requirements in order to achieve fair and consistent assessment of learners.

This pack will be presented to an EA with all validation information; it contains all the assessment material with ease of access for authentication purposes.

The programme information pack includes:

- New programme registration form
- Statement of Programme Needs
- Statement of Programme Design
- The component specification
- Assessment specification
- QQI application forms
- Self-Evaluation Plan
- Assessments e.g. skills demonstration booklet
- Exams
- Exams sample answers
- Marking sheet
- New Pack Validation Report
- Pack
- Programme outline


### 1.2.4 Whole Checklist – New Programme Launch

The Whole Checklist New programme launch is completed before any programme is offered. Once validation is approved this will be completed to ensure all required documentation has been established for the delivery of the programme. This list consists of emails which will self-generate from the MyHCT once a programme is added. HCT will further develop the other documents. Listed below are those included:

- Assessment Specification
- Programme Outline
- Risk Assessment

- Client Portal/Booking form

- Programme Information Email

- Pre-Programme Client Information Email

- Pre-Programme Confirmation Email

- Programme Network Email

- Brochure

- Programme Pack (Handbooks, Assessment Booklets, Exams etc.)

- Sample Answers (if applicable)

- Tutor Lesson Plans

- Marking sheets (Tutor and Centre)

- Programme Verification Booklet

- Results Letter and Information Pack

- Trainers Portal New Programme Details

## 1.3  Learner Admission, Progression and Recognition

**Learner Admission, Progression and Recognition:** HCT Learning is committed, where practical, to facilitate the admission of all applicants who meet the minimum requirements for entry onto our programmes. We believe all learners should be able to make an informed decision regarding their academic careers. All applicants are treated in a fair, equal and consistent manner. HCT publishes admissions criteria for entry to our programmes annually. This information will be made readily available on our website and is supplied in hard and electronic copy to learners upon request. We strive to ensure the best fit between the learner and the programme. HCT Learning will make the following information available to learners prior to registration:

- Admission – we shall make transparent decisions in a fair, equal and consistent manner. We shall inform learners of the minimum entry requirements for each programme.

- Progression – we shall make clear information available for learners of the transfer or progression routes available to them.

- Recognition – we shall inform learners who do not meet the minimum entry requirements based on academic achievement how they may be considered based on the knowledge and skills they possess through life and work experience. We shall provide information to learners of how they can gain entry to a programme due to their prior learning.

HCT Learning is committed to increasing the opportunity for educational development for people with disabilities and certified medical conditions. We work in a large part with individuals who have been out of education for a number of years. These reasons should not hinder the progress of a learner in achieving success on a programme. Once a learner has informed us of any such disability etc. prior to admission, we can put in place reasonable accommodation where possible to ensure all students have equal opportunity to succeed on our programmes.

HCT Learning engages in an approach that is fair, systematic and transparent in relation to its entry arrangements onto their programmes. We will acknowledge prior learning for entry appropriately where required and provide reasonable accommodation towards facilitating individual needs, without compromising the integrity of the awards standard. Through research and history of programmes delivered from our core client base, we have identified our 7 main areas of expertise which is the delivery of programmes ranging from level 3-6, within the areas of:

- Horticulture NFQ Level 4
- Horticulture NFQ Level 5
- General Learning NFQ Level 3
- Employability Skills NFQ Level 3
- Employment Skills NFQ Level 4
- Business NFQ Level 6
- Special purpose awards in Training and Development

These 7 main areas have been developed – based on clients and learners requirements on the foundation that we specialise in offering component only awards at provision industry request and will work towards offering a collaborative, collective approach towards minor awards within the context of practical educational achievements. We offer part-time educational opportunities within the community and its voluntary organisations who's funding may be limited and may not be able to access funds in order to achieve full major awards. Individuals who attend our programmes may still wish to access a clear progression route in which they may choose to complete in time under the sector umbrella.  As a result HCT benchmark the entry criteria for their programmes against the following criteria set out in information to learners/guidelines for providers and NFQ.

### 1.3.1 Admissions Procedures (Access)

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. We shall ensure this information is provided in a clear and transparent manner. HCT Learning offers a range of awards at different levels across that National Framework of Qualifications within a number of different sectors. HCT Learning will communicate its programmes offered through a variety of methods including:

- Website
- Programme brochures
- Programme Information Email
- Course outlines
- Prospectus and tenders
- Programme network emails
- Pre-programme confirmation email
- Social media

### 1.3.2 Entry Requirements

In order to gain access onto any QQI programme, HCT are required to ensure that learners are selected and entered onto the programme in a fair and consistent manner. We will endeavour to inform a learner of any prior learning which is recognised as meeting the criteria for access to a programme. It is not in the interest of an applicant to be admitted into a programme of study on which they are unlikely to be successful because of lack of English language competency or lack of the necessary skill set. The following outline some requirements the learner must meet to gain entry:

- All our programmes will require a level lower than the programmes they are completing, a Leaving Certificate or equivalent and/or relevant life or work experience.
- In order for learners to be admitted onto our courses they must have some generic skills such as literacy, numeracy and interpersonal skills.
- Proficient in written and spoken English, RRA support can be provided but must have a basic understanding.

- In all our programmes we would expect learners to take part in some independent learning outside the course i.e. practical work and/or reading.
- We also expect learners to have access to the internet, reading material, tools and equipment.

| Award Level | |
|---|---|
| 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, qualities and achievements and learning relevant to a variety of progression options. <br><br> 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. <br><br> 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 personally 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 recommend 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 recommend 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. |

### 1.3.3    Transfer

HCT Learning, where possible, supports learners who wish to alter their academic career paths. We shall provide the relevant information to learners, however it is the learner who is responsible for initiating transfers. We strive to find the best fit between leaner and programme. Each request for a

transfer is examined on its own merits. Below are procedures which are in place to consider and, where appropriate, to facilitate requests from learners to transfer from one programme to another:

- As our programmes are short in duration, learners must notify us on day one that they wish to be transferred to another programme free of charge
- There must be a vacancy in the course for which the learner has applied
- We shall ensure the learner meets the required minimum entry requirements for the new course
- The learner will have to fill out a programme transfer form
- If the learner does not notify us on day one of their wish to transfer, we shall still facilitate the request, if possible, but the learner will need to pay the new programme fees also
- Where a learner requests a transfer to a programme not currently offered by HCT Learning, we will offer them information and guidance on other providers within the community we have links with. This will be subject to our cancellation policy

### 1.3.4 Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL)

HCT Learning will provide information regarding recognition of prior learning to learners before application for a programme. RPL will be considered for access to all programmes where appropriate and we may, if required, offer a learner a place on a programme based on their prior learning by making a list on competences needed to succeed in the programme. We will state where RPL is offered, the entry requirements to the programme. RPL is a tool that allows learners to gain formal certification for knowledge skills and competence that they already have achieved. This can be through the following ways:

- Formal learning which could include: school, colleges or adult education centre
- Informal learning which could include: work base training and informal learning which takes place through life and work experience
- Receive credits/exemptions from coursework/assignments completed prior
- A learner can be awarded a QQI certificate on the basis of past learning both formal and informal

The benefits to having RPL recognised for entry to a programme are:

- to gain access onto a programme without having the certificate requirements for entry
- to gain exceptions within a programme

- can attain an award which could be a major or minor award based on experience which they don't hold a formal qualification in

In order to be considered for recognition of prior learning, learners may be required to demonstrate or prove their learning through interview and or by compiling a portfolio. HCT Learning has developed a specific application procedure where if the situation arises, we can consider RPL and where evident gain approval. HCT Learning will not engage in any RPL activity unless approval has been gained, and we will specify the named award to be offered on the bases or RPL.  HCT Learning do not engage in the delivery of major awards, therefore we don't foresee

RPL arrangements needing to be required, however HCT Learning will generate a range of evidence and will apply to QQI if we ever wish to deliver any programmes through RPL:

- List of competence required to access the programme
- Learners evidence which could include: CV, references, record of programmes attended or samples of work
- Recognition of Prior Learning Application form
- Programme information pack
- Credit exemption processed documentation
- Email correspondence
- Guidelines for assessing prior learning on file
- Learner record of completing the programme and assessment requirements

### 1.3.5   Learner Progression

 HCT learning will communicate progression opportunities in a range of marketing material and as part of programme introduction and induction. HCT Learning deliver programmes under 7 main major awards although don't engage in the delivery of these awards, credit allocation as well as programme follow ons and major awards will be explained to learners. We will use our links with the wider community in order to offer the learner information and guidance on progression. HCT learning will track learners progression routes that they undertake with HCT Learning. Staff at HCT Learning will facilitate the development of individual education plans on request.  MyHCT provides two main feature that allows us to develop and advise on educational plans, these include:

- History of programmes attended accessed through clients home page.
- History of learners attendance of a programme and assessment results and major award programme was linked to.

All notes will be updated and maintained regarding the learner and the plan developed on a secure, password protected system.

### 1.3.6 Facilitating Learners in order to support diversity

HCT Learning will adapt our approach to delivery of our programmes in order to cater for the diversity of learners that have been granted access onto them.  Learners will be provided with the information and opportunity to advise us of any special learning requirements in order to successfully complete the programme. Where required, HCT will make adaptions to their programme delivery in order to personalise the programmes to facilitate the diversity of our learners. This could include:

- Altering the durations of the programme being delivered

- Provide adapted packs and assessment briefs/exam times, individual examinations

- Provide a Reader/Scribe to assist the learner

HCT learning will action these adaptions through their programme planning however will take immediate action through the duration of the programme if information received requires us to make amendments. HCT Learning have developed Reasonable Request of Accommodation (RRA) Guidelines in which they clearly communicate to all staff, stockholders, clients and learners our services and support systems in place.

We will seek clarification of required accommodation through a range of methods including:

- Pre-programme set up stage, where staff will offer guidance/advice with clarification of programmes and services

- Pre-programme confirmation email confirming venue requirements and checklist

- Pre-programme client appointment

- Pre-programme tutor meeting (Highlights any issues that could have implication on learners achieving certification if no accommodation provided)

- Booking form

- Pre-programme client information

- Programme registration form

- Mid client, participant and trainer feedback

- Programme Verification Booklet

- Learner/trainer meetings (for private and confidential meetings and advice)

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HCT Learning keeps a record of granted reasonable request of accommodation and monitor at regular intervals. HCT learning is able to identify:

- The framework level where RRA is being requested in
- A breakdown of learners granted RRA by award offered
- Examine trainers facilitation of RRA

### 1.3.7    Equality Policy

It is the policy of HCT Learning to ensure that the highest standard of equality is practiced at all times when considering learners for entry onto our programmes. We aim to promote equality, harmony and respect amongst individuals and to eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation of all kinds. 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
- Family status
- Age
- Sexual orientation
- Religious beliefs
- Disability
- Race
- Membership of the Traveller Community

In order to ensure equality of assessment for all learners we shall provide the following:

- Standardised programme assessment material throughout the country (assessment booklets, packs, lesson plans, programme information pack).
- Assessment deadlines are the same for every programme delivered.
- All programmes contain the same content.
- A pre-programme visits will be conducted for all programmes to ensure that they can meet the required standardised level.

HCT Learning will ensure that our admission policies and procedures are communicated through a range of comprehensive public information that demonstrates our fair and consistent approach to how learners are selected for entry onto our programmes. These include:

- Programme brochures
- Course outlines
- Prospectus and Tenders
- Websites

MyHCT has been developed in order to provide several pre-defined emails that communicates our admission and certification of awards requirements. These include:

- Programme network emails
- Pre-programme confirmation email
- Pre-programme client information
- Invoice and introduction pack
- Programme completed email
- Assessment receipt

Full content of information communicated can be found in the Public Information and Communication section of our QA document.

### 1.3.8 Learner Introduction

Once all programme material has been developed, HCT will be ready to introduce the programme to our clients and learners. HCT Learning will communicate a range of supports and services available through a range of material that has been developed:

- The programme name, NFQ level, credit value, major award the programme is registered under, the duration and credits allocated
- Programme aims and objectives
- Content and learning outcomes
- Admission onto programme to include: access, transfer and progression for the programme, RPL, entry requirements and RRA
- Information on supports available to learners
- Details on protection of enrolled learner arrangements
- Assessment criteria break down
- Support services available

- Data Protection

This information will be provided through a range of media including:

- Direct one to one calls with our clients

- CE scheme brochure

- Programme course outline

- Programme network emails

- Pre-programme confirmation email

- Learner introduction pack and invoice

### 1.3.9 Booking onto Programme

HCT Learning ask for our clients to identify their learners experience in order for us to grant them access onto our programme. HCT Learning communicates the following information on initial booking:

**Sector Of Work and/or Education Qualification Explained**

In order to gain access onto any QQI programme HCT are required to ensure that learners are selected and entered onto the programme in a fair and consistent manner, learners are required to have a minimum of a level lower than the programme they are wishing to attend and/or have relevant life or work experience in their chosen subject.

**Special Requirements**

Clients will also be asked to advise us as to whether we need to put any provision in place in order to cater for learners with diverse needs on the programme. All information received will be taken with great care and consideration for the proposed learner to ensure they have a positive learning experience.

Our clients will input the information in order for HCT Learning to collect and grant access for the programme, once completed MyHCT will notify us that information is now ready to be imported. HCT will require all learner information a minimum of 7 days before commencement of the programme, failure to supply the information could result in the delay of programme commencement. This information will be used to monitor learner entry by means of generating a Working Sector Report – Learners which will be monitored and evaluated during the Programme Monitoring for Submission Cycle Report and Programme Review laid out below.

The booking form also identifies for that specific programme where learners are being booked:

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- The credits allocated for that programme towards the major awards

- The major award HCT Learning has validated the programme under and its associated information

- An explanation of the credit value system

- Other programmes we offer under the progression route determined by the centre

- The link to QQI in order for them to access other awards that the programme being delivered is associated with

### 1.3.10 Pre-Programme Client Information Call and Email

72 hours before a programme is due to start, staff at HCT Learning will make contact with our clients. This is an opportunity for guidance/advice/clarification of programmes and services. Clarification of learner admission will be confirmed in relation to:

- Venue location

- Trainers name

- Dates of programme and times

- Number of learners booked

- Learners accessing the programme details

- Specific support required for learners

- Assessment deadlines

### 1.3.11 In-Programme Information for Learners

A Programme Information Pack, an assignment booklet, and a programme pack are provided. The trainer reiterates all the information contained in these documents; introducing learners to HCT Learning's policies and procedures, and ensuring that the learners understand the awarding body, the programme title award-type, framework level designated to the award, transfer and progression opportunities associated with the award and that all assessment requirements are fully understood. Trainers will be required to discuss with learners information regarding the credits that are allocated to the programme, major award the programme has been validated under and progression opportunities for learners.

### 1.3.12 Learner Induction

The first day of every programme will include a learner induction. This ensures that the learners understand HCT Learnings policies and QQI requirements. Through this induction learners will gain an understanding of what will be covered in the programme, the assessment process and what is required of them. This is a valuable process as it gives the learner clear understanding and direction. During this induction learners will be provided with information on where and how their data will be used and where they can access relevant policies. They will sign to confirm that they understand and agree to these requirements.  What is covered during the induction is listed below:

- Health and safety; fire exits, assembly points, equipment, material and PPE requirements for the programme etc.
- The trainer will introduce the programme name, NFQ level, credit value, major award the programme is registered under, the duration and credits allocated. The learners will also be provided with a Programme Information Pack which will contain this information and inform them of which submission they will be going through.
- Programme content and delivery, programme aims, objectives and learning outcomes expected to be achieved.
- Access, transfer and progression for the programme, RPL and entry requirements.
- Learners are provided with their pack. They will receive a programme booklet and their skills demonstration booklet (if applicable).
- The learner will be required to fill out a programme registration form. This will capture information needed for certification such as full name, PPS number and date of birth. It will also include their address, occupation and previous education, learners will be required to sign to say that they understand and agree to HCT Learnings policies and procedures.
- Equality, bullying, harassment and complaint procedures.
- The trainer will explain the assessment process to the learners. The assessment plan will be given to the learners and a schedule for skills demonstrations, exams etc. will be established. They will discuss the assessment procedures and guidelines, what support is available for learners, reasonable accommodations, assessment plan, grade break down, deadlines, submission of assessment, assessment receipt, extension request, repeat of assessment, assessment malpractice and appeals procedures.
- Data Protection in relation to learners personal and assessment related documentation.
- The trainer will remind learners of any PPE required for skills demonstrations.

- A class rep will be elected as the point of contact for learners to communicate with the trainer or the office.

### 1.3.13  The Programme Information Pack

This details the range of services and facilities which are available to learners; and supplies any and all information required for the learner to successfully complete the course. The general information contained within includes assessment deadlines, key dates, and other programmes on offer. It also includes HCT Learning's policies on a number of issues as detailed below:

- Granting reasonable accommodation
- Repeating assessments
- Appeals procedures
- The gathering of learner feedback
- Equality
- Bullying and harassment
- Health and safety
- Data Protection
- Assessment holding
- Customers complaints
- Other programmes HCT Learning offer
- Formative Feedback explanation

Learners will be communicated what the centre expectations are in relation learners responsibilities within the assessment process.

Learner responsibilities within the assessment process:

- To attended the programme in full, unless notified and approval given
- To provide us with the required information for certification including correct name, PPS number and date of birth
- To become familiar with the assessment criteria and marking scheme
- To understand the assessment guidelines and assessment briefs
- To seek clarification from the trainer or centre on any concerns understanding assessments
- To take part in all assessment activity in full and to the best of their ability
- To complete the Learner Sign Over of Assessment
- To submit their assessments in line with HCT Learning's Submission of Assessment Policy

- To understand and follow the Alleged Compromise of Integrity of Assessment Policy

- To notify the centre on any reasonable accommodation that may be required

- To meet the assessment deadline provided by centre

### 1.3.14 Programme Registration

All learners participating on a programme delivered by HCT Learning will be asked on the morning of the 1st day of the programme to register onto the programme. The purpose of the registration process is to confirm that learners booked onto the programme are the learners attending the programme, confirm personal information that has been provided at booking is correct and to confirm that learners have understood our induction from our programme information pack.

Learners will be asked to confirm:

- The name of the programme they are attending

- Venue and location

- First name and surname

- PPS number and date of birth

- Personal details including the address, mobile and email

- Current occupation

- Scheme and supervisors name

- Confirm they can attend the programme

- Confirm highest level of education

They will be asked if they:

- Require any reasonable request of accommodation

- Understand their assessment deadline

- Understand the submission of assessment policy

- Understand policies: Appeals, plagiarism, authorship, submission and assessments

- Understand the awarding body, title, level entry, progression routes and supports available

## 1.4   Monitoring

**HCT Learning Introduction to Monitoring**

HCT Learning understands the importance of monitoring its programmes in order to identify provisions in order to enhance our programmes and services. HCT Learning only engage in the delivery of short part time minor awards programmes and as a result will take part in a number of

different levels of monitoring both on an independent programme basis, as a collective group at the end of each submission, annually and periodically. Findings from our monitoring are brought to the attention of our Academic Council, communicated to staff and other stakeholders as well as publishing information on findings on our website.

The purpose of HCT monitoring:

- To evaluative a programme's effectiveness in relation to planning, delivery, support and assessments
- To identify programme enhancements in order to improve programme delivery and learning gained
- To update/modify assessment templates in order to improve standards and evidence presented while still ensuring the programmes aims, learning outcomes and assessment strategy
- To confirm that we have the correct infrastructures in place to meet the National Framework of Qualification and standards of the awards are met and maintained
- To highlight feedback from learners, clients and trainers where the centre excels in order to identity the benchmark towards similar programmes and identify pitfalls where immediate attention is required
- To identify corrective action plans for quality assurance
- To evaluate the operational and management processes and procedures
- To aid us in the development of our strategic planning and governance

### 1.4.1   Ongoing Monitoring of Programmes

HCT Learning will monitor all current programmes delivered on an individual basis and if required take appropriate measures in order to ensure that learner satisfaction and expectations are met along with adhering to the national standards in order to achieve certification.  HCT Learning will collect a range of data for its programmes through the following methods set out below.

**The Programme**

| Methods | What is it | What we do with it |
|---------|-----------|--------------------|
| Attendance | HCT will monitor the attendance of a programme. | The Administrator will be required to track the |

| | Trainers are required to submit attendance to the centre at different intervals throughout the programme. HCT will track the differences between the learners that were initially booked, registered, attended, completed and submitted assessment for the programme | attendance from booked, registered, attended, completed and submitted assessment for the programme.

Where immediate action is needed, the Centre Director and Training Manager will be informed and required actions taken and the Corrective Action Plan will be implemented |
|---|---|---|
| Mid Participants Feedback | Where a programme is 4 or more days in duration, learners will be asked to complete a questionnaire that has been designed to gain specific information on programme content, resources received, support given, trainers approach, enjoyment, facilities and/or project and organisation of programme | The Administrator will upload feedback onto MyHCT for future statistical analysis, notes are made and where immediate action is needed, the Centre Director and the Training Manager will be informed and required actions taken and the Corrective Action Plan will be implemented

Feedback is taken from both a questionnaire format and also statistically |
| Mid Trainer Feedback | Where a programme is 4 or more days in duration, trainers will be asked to complete a questionnaire that has been designed to gain specific information on programme | The trainer and the Training Manager will be required to discuss the programme, the feedback will be uploaded onto MyHCT for future statistical analysis, notes are made and |

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|  | delivery, confirmation and understanding of assessment, attendance, special requirements, issues, explanation of policies and procedures regarding assessments, highlighted challenges if any, venue, resources requirements etc in order to achieve assessment, extra materials or supports | where immediate action is required, the Centre Director and the Training Manager will take required actions and the Corrective Action Plan will be implemented

Feedback is taken from both a questionnaire format and also statistically |
|---|---|---|
| Mid Client Feedback | Where a programme is 4 or more days in duration HCT Learning will make contact with the hosting client and ask them for feedback on specific information on programme delivery, trainer's time keeping, trainer report with group, organisation of programme, meeting expectations, programme improvements, trainers helpfulness, programme pace, challenges, attendance, duration of programme, services and supports provided | The Administrator will upload feedback onto MyHCT for future statistical analysis, notes are made and where immediate action is needed, the Centre Director and the Training Manager will be informed and required actions taken

Feedback is taken from both a questionnaire format and also statistically, and the Corrective Action Plan will be implemented |
| End Participant Feedback | At the end of all programmes delivered, learners will be asked to complete a questionnaire that has been designed to gain specific information on programme | The Administrator will upload feedback onto MyHCT for future statistical analysis, notes are made and where immediate action is needed, the Centre Director and the |

| | content, resources, support, trainers knowledge, programme enjoyment, facilities/project, assessment and over all benefit | Training Manager will be informed, required actions taken and the Corrective Action Plan will be implemented

Feedback is taken from both a questionnaire format and also statistically, feedback can be given anonymously – in this respect the learners should not enter names on questionnaires |
|---|---|---|
| End Trainer Feedback | At the end of all programmes delivered trainers will be asked to complete a questionnaire that has been designed to gain specific information on the standard of learners, learners attendance, facilities/project, resources and support received from HCT Learning | The trainer and the Training Manager will be required to discuss the programme. The feedback will be uploaded onto MyHCT for future statistical analysis, notes are made and where immediate action is needed the Centre Director and the Training Manager will be informed and required actions taken and the Corrective Action Plan will be implemented

Feedback is taken from both a questionnaire format and also statistically |
| End Client Feedback | At the end of all programmes delivered HCT Learning will make contact with the hosting client and ask them for feedback on specific information on the overall | The Administrator will upload feedback onto MyHCT for future statistical analysis, notes are made and where immediate action is needed, the Centre Director and the |

| | programme, the trainers knowledge and approach, learner knowledge, support given to learners, benefit, content and assessment,  HCT Learning services and supports | Training Manager will be informed, required actions taken and the Corrective Action Plan will be implemented

Feedback is taken from both a questionnaire format and also statistically |
|---|---|---|
| Learner/Trainer Meeting Feedback | Trainers are required to complete centre tailor made documentation on any meetings or feedback provided between the learners and trainers | The Administrator will be required to note any correspondence between learners and trainer during the programme delivery, the Centre Director and the Training Manager will be informed and required actions taken and the Corrective Action Plan will be implemented |
| Programme Verification Booklet | The Programme Verification Booklet is required to be completed by the trainer for all QQI programmes delivered on the behalf of HCT Learning, trainers will be asked to provide notes on the learners that attended the programme to include the overall standard | The Administrator will be required to note anything received from the trainer in relation to the learners knowledge on assessment, supports and services offered

The Centre Director and the Training Manager will be informed and required actions taken and the Corrective Action Plan will be implemented |
| Programme Monitoring Visit | The QQI team will be required to complete monitoring visits in order to ensure the programme | The Centre Director and the Training Manager will be informed and required actions |

| | is being delivered to the required standard, a monitoring form will be required to be completed as part of this process and reported back | taken and the Corrective Action Plan will be implemented |
|---|---|---|
| Red Flag System | The Red Flag system has been developed to measure our performance in a range of areas, to manage and monitor our services and programmes offered | A red flag will be raised if any of the following arises. In each case the threshold is set and where that threshold is below the provision set it will raise a red flag. The advantage of this system is that it is statistically based – any failure in any category will trigger non-compliance and an automatic correction action response. It monitors: Learner attendance of a programme Changes or alteration to a programme Mid client, learner and trainer feedback End client, learner and trainer feedback Centre to trainer delivery feedback Booking from processing the End Submission Cycle Feedback A poor pass rate Poor completion rate |

| | | Consistency with grades – are grades fair and consistence |
|---|---|---|

All red flags raised will be dealt with firstly by the Corrective Action Plan and will also be considered at the next Academic Council meeting on the agenda for discussion. The Red Flag system itself will be continually developed and expanded to include other areas that are identified.

Where HCT Learning is presented with a situation where the programme is currently running and a red flag has identified an issue with the programme, the Quality and Monitoring Committee will be required to investigate the reason that led to the threshold not being met. Appropriate measures will be taken depending on the nature of the red flag, the investigation could include:

- Calling the client/learners to seek honest feedback
- Training Manager to speak with the trainer
- Visiting the venue in order to see the location and resources

Depending on the findings from the investigation, the Quality and Monitoring Committee may be required to implement a Corrective Action Plan.

### 1.4.2    Corrective Action Plan

This document has been developed in order to identify what measures may need to be implemented during the delivery of a programme, these actions once identified by the Quality and Monitoring Committee will take effect immediately and decisions will be made by the Centre Manager and or the Training Manager. However, it will be communicated to the Academic Council during their quarterly meeting.  These decisions can include:

- No amendments or alterations are required:  there may be a case where a red flag has been raised, however on completing the investigation, the findings presented required no change or alternation to the programme, cases such as human error with completing a form could cause a situation for a red flag to be raised, however no amendment or alteration will be required.
- Change in duration of programme delivery: There may be cases where as a result in the red flag being raised the duration of the programme is required to be extended, cases such as catering for learners with diverse needs, however not communicated at point of booking, could be a situation where the programmes duration is extended.

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- Change in venue: As a result of a red flag being raised and an investigation being carried out, a situation could arise in where the location of the programme may need to be changed. The reason for this happening could be that although agreed during the pre-programme meeting, the facility is not in agreement with expectations agreed.

- Change in trainer delivering the programme: Red flags being raised could result in HCT Learning having to make an amendment to the trainer delivering the programme. Where a situation arises; HCT Learning will revert to their contingency plan for programme cover. If a case is presented where an alternative trainer can't be found for the agreed dates, HCT Learning will propose one of the below as outcomes:

  - Programme dates altered in order to meet amendments: times for programme dates to be changed could be as a result of materials or resources not being at the venue. This would be something out of the centre control and as a result, HCT Learning will be required to reschedule the programme with agreements from both trainer and learners attending the programme. Programme date alterations could also be as a result of a change to a trainer delivering the programme.

  - Programme is ceased and invoices are void: A red flag could be raised and as a result of HCT Learnings investigation, a situation could arise where a programme is ceased and invoices voided. HCT Learning will take any programme ceases as serious and will only make these decisions in order to put our learner's academic integrity over a financial gain.

In the case where corrective action has to be taken immediately through the duration of a programme, the Quality and Monitoring Committee will decide following an investigation, the procedure required in order to rectify the red flag that has been raised. An authorised person in the centre has the capacity to provide the procedure with the 'all clear' and assign tasks in order for the implementation to be taken, however will be brought to the attention of the Academic Council for discussion at their next meeting. These changes will be logged and where required will be brought collectively to the Board and will be used in order to make suggestions or adaptions if required during our Submission, Programme or Annual reviews.

Where a corrective action has been identified, the monitoring of the procedure it is under will be an automatic response to a Corrective Action Plan and implementation where it affects our policies and procedures.

Our Monitoring of Procedure Template will consist of the following headings in which will require a response:

- Name of persons carry out the monitoring
- Date of monitoring
- Was the procedure enacted since the last date monitored
- If enacted did the procedure work well
- If not enacted is the procedure still fit for purpose
- Reason for monitoring e.g. scheduled, monitoring due to event /incident
- If due to an incident, give a brief account of the incident
- Suggest improvement to the procedure/any actions required
- People responsible, timelines and actions required
- Confirmation date of implementation
- Monitoring date completed and outcome

This information will be brought forward to the Academic Council for final approval, see *Monitoring of Procedures under SELF-EVALUATION, MONITORING AND REVIEW.*

### 1.4.3   Programme Monitoring for Submission Cycle Report

The Quality and Monitoring Committee will meet bi-monthly and as part of their agenda they will be required to reflect on all programmes delivered through the certification period.  As part of the certification process, HCT Learning will monitor programmes collectively in order to ensure that trainers are delivering to the same standards, that programmes are being delivered in a fair and consistent manner, to identify patterns in feedback, that actions may be required and to enable programme development and modification where required. All information and findings are presented to an external authenticator and used during the RAP meeting before final submission of results.

| Internal Verification Report | Data Information Sources |
|---|---|
| Each minor award will be grouped collectively and evaluated on all aspects of the | Number of programmes ran in that cycle<br>Number of learners that were booked onto programme<br>Number of learners that registered onto that programme |

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| programme offered. Each programme group will have its own data generated | Attendance rates |
|---|---|
| | Major award the programme has been registered under |
| | Certification period that programmes are associated with |
| | Dropout rates |
| | Dropout breakdown by trainers |
| | Programme assessment breakdown received |
| | Grades analysis |
| | Trainer appointed for programmes delivered |
| | Learners average marks allocated by the trainer on the programme |
| | Internal verification feedback identified as part of our full process |
| | Trainer feedback to be discussed and agreed during the meeting |
| | Collaboration of mid client, mid trainer and mid participants feedback received for this cycle |
| | Collaboration of end client, end trainer and end participants |
| | Area from the working sector report that learners entering onto the programme are coming from |
| | Progression/joint programmes delivered |
| | Reasonable accommodation identified and supports provided |
| | Break down of learners requesting reasonable accommodation based on trainer delivering the programme |
| | Extension requests received, approved and declined due to extenuating circumstances |
| | If any plagiarism has been identified |
| | Number of learners that repeated the assessment |

The purpose of the task is to identify areas for continuous improvement, to recommend where findings are presented, to make modifications where necessary, to ensure delivery of national standards are being achieved and are being delivered to the same standard throughout the country. Modification to a programme will be confirmed during the Academic Council meeting, with consultation from the programme head where required, unless a situation arises where immediate action is required. As a result an authorised person in the centre has the capacity to provide the amendment to the programme with the 'all clear' and assign tasks in order for the implementation this will only be the case for minor modifications that are identified.
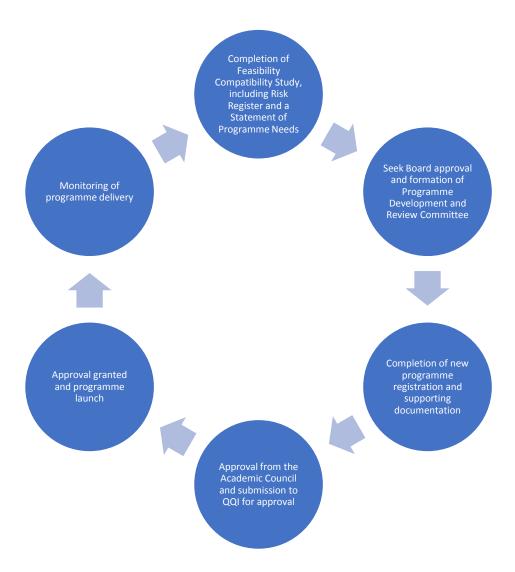
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**Examples of minor changes but not limited:**

- Formatting of assessment booklets or exams

- Change in style of questions in order to access learner information

- Phrasing of exam questions

- Update of content in programme pack

- Update on information being provided to learner/clients in relation to our approved policies and procedures

- Identification of training for centre staff or trainers

If a situation arises where major modifications are identified, only permission granted from the Academic Council can be given. In the case where extensive changes are required in order to meet standards, the programme must be pulled from offer immediately until an outcome has been found and implemented.

Where a situation arises following the Academic Council that a programme has been found to require extensive change, it may result in a programme requiring to be revalidated or be identified as no longer fit for purpose for the centre to commence training in. Where a situation arises from the above, the Academic Council will be required, where a need still exists, start the validation process by identifying that they meet the following:

- Provide training programmes to the community and voluntary organisation nationwide

- Provide adult education to individuals who have been out of the education system for a number of years or those that want to update their skills and progress to a different area

- Provide practical and hands on training

- Heavily focused on supportive, practical, interactive learning environment

- If the programme is feasible to run

- The risks associated with programme development, delivery and assessment has been identified and where required control measures put in place

- Complete a Statement of Programme Needs Report

Completion of Feasibility Compatibility Study, including Risk Register and a Statement of Programme Needs

Seek Board approval and formation of Programme Development and Review Committee

Completion of new programme registration and supporting documentation

Approval from the Academic Council and submission to QQI for approval

Approval granted and programme launch

Monitoring of programme delivery

They may decide that the programme is no longer fit for purpose to deliver and deactivating the programme from our portfolio of programmes by communicating the programme name, award level, major award and programme identification code to QQI to remove the programme from QQI's approved list of programmes to deliver.

## 1.5   Revalidation of Programme

Revalidation provides the opportunity to conduct a critical evaluation of all programmes of education and training. This is a statutory function of QQI but is also good practice. This process allows us to evaluate if our programmes are consistent with our mission and ethos. By reviewing our programmes we shall evaluate the feedback from learners, trainers and clients and the process for acting on this feedback, ensuring we are delivering relevant and current material to learners. We will

be able to analyse the continued effectiveness and efficiency of each validated programme. This is a very significant part of the quality assurance process as it delivers on the concept of continual improvement and development.

Programmes will be validated for duration of a 5-year cycle by QQI. Once the 5-year span of a programme has lapsed the Board will be required to identify whether the programme is still fit for purpose and still beneficial for our learners. As a result, before a programme is revalidated the Board will be required to examine:

- The number of programmes that have been delivered
- The number of learners that have been booked, registered, dropped out and certified under the programme over the last number of years
- The feedback received from clients, learners and trainers
- The number of red flags that have been identified as a result of programme delivery
- All programme monitoring completed as part of the submission cycle
- The working sector of learners entering onto our programmes
- The annual monitoring reports completed

The Board will then decide if the programme is going to be revalidated for the following 5-years. In the situation that the Board approves:

The Quality and Monitoring Committee will be required to complete:

- Feasibility Study
- Compatibility Study
- Risk register

The Board will be required to complete:

- Cost based analysis
- Statement of Programme Needs identification

And submit to the Academic Council, to match the programme against the following benchmarks:

- Relevance of programme against the company's fundamental values and strategic plan
- Consistency with scope of provision
- Review of other programmes offered within the area
- Learner profile
- Accreditation requirements including, name, level, credits, duration, award type and awarding body

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- Programme costing analysis

- Risk Register for programme

- Feasibility and Compatibility study

- Possible implications to centre: financial, HR, staffing and IT

Where there is approval for the revalidation of a programme the formation of the Programme Development and Review Committee will be put together to revalidate the programme and review all the supporting documentation.

# Appendix

| Programme of Education and Training | |
|---|---|
| Mid Client Feedback | A74 |
| Mid Participant Feedback | A75 |
| Mid Trainer Feedback | A76 |
| End Client Feedback | A49 |
| End Participant Feedback | A50 |
| End Trainer Feedback | A52 |
| End Submission Cycle Feedback | A51 |
| Feasibility and Compatibility Study | A54 |
| Statement of Programme Needs | A127 |

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| | |
|---|---|
| Statement of Programme Design | A126 |
| Assessment Specification | A13 |
| Marking Sheet Sample | A73 |
| Identification of Resources/Equipment Required Form | A59 |
| Programme Verification Booklet | A131 |
| Sample Answers | A121 |
| Lesson Plan | A70 |
| Brief Example | A16 |
| Skills Demonstration Example | A125 |
| Risk Assessment | A120 |
| New Programme Registration Form | A82 |
| New Programme Validation - Peer Reviewer Form | A83 |
| Programme Outline Sample | A100 |
| New Pack Validation Report | A80 |
| Brochure Example | A17 |
| Programme Network Email | A46 |
| Programme Information Email | A45 |
| Pre-Programme Confirmation Email | A43 |
| Pre-Programme Client Information Email – Hosting Supervisor | A42 |
| RPL Application Form | A108 |
| Programme Training Manager Call | A104 |
| Programme Information Pack | A96 |
| Pre-Programme Client Appointment | A92 |
| Pre-Programme Tutor Meeting | A93 |
| Clients Portal – Booking Form | A15/ A15.1/ A15.2 |
| Programme Registration Form | A97 |
| Invoice Package | A41 |

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| | |
|---|---|
| Assessment Receipt | A39 |
| Programme Completed Email | A44 |
| Course Participants – Learner Details | A33 |
| Course Participants - Final | A33.1 |
| Programme Monitoring Visit Report | A99 |
| Red Flag System | A114 |
| Corrective Action Plan Template | A31 |
| Monitoring of Procedure Template | A79 |
| Programme Monitoring for Submission Cycle Report | A98 |
| Programme Review Template | A101 |
| Course Index Confirmation Log | A32 |
| Working Sector Report | A138 |
| Whole Checklist – New Programme Launch | A140 |