

ECAC Quality Assurance Manual
designed to comply with the
requirements of Quality and
Qualifications Ireland (QQI) under
the Quality Assurance (Education
and Training) Act, 2012 & the
Qualifications & Quality Assurance
(Education & Training) Amendment
Act 2019

ECAC Quality Assurance Manual



Version 2.1.2



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Introduction

ECAC is a private limited company and is involved in the provision of training and consultancy services to the Refrigeration, Heat Pump and HVAC industries. The company has two directors, John & Therese Murphy.

We provide specialist, short duration training courses in a number of highly regulated sectors including pharmaceuticals. Our courses involve training on F-gas handling which is regulated by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA).

Consequently, it is critically important for us to have an effective quality assurance system and to have external verification of this. This is why we have had City & Guilds certification since 2007.

Our Quality Policy Statement

Quality is an integral element of our culture and our ethos. Quality is the responsibility of every person in our organisation.

In order to provide our learners and other stakeholders with external assurance of our quality and with internationally recognised certification we have been certified by City & Guilds since 2007.

This document defines our quality assurance system. This system is designed to comply with the requirements of Quality and Qualifications Ireland (QQI) under the Qualifications and Quality Assurance (Education and Training) Act, 2012 & the Qualifications & Quality Assurance (Education & Training) Amendment Act 2019.

We are committed to providing training services consistent with the aims outlined in the [Qualifications and Quality Assurance \(Education and Training\) Act 2012](#). The Act supports:

- the establishment of consistent standards in education and training
- the promotion of quality
- increasing access, transfer and progression opportunities
- protection for enrolled learners
- the ability to understand and compare qualification at home and abroad.



Since 2007 ECAC has been a City & Guilds registered training centre. We initially provided City & Guilds 2078 certification and have been providing City & Guilds 2079 certification since 2010.

In October 2019 we started preparation to become a QQI accredited centre. Our QQI Coordinator, Therese Murphy, worked with all staff to complete a self-evaluation of our programmes, quality assurance structures and procedures. A gap analysis was carried out and the programme was reviewed against the following documents:

- Quality and Qualifications Ireland Core Quality Assurance Guidelines
- Quality and Qualifications Ireland Sector Specific Guidelines for Independent and Private Providers
- Quality and Qualifications Ireland Topic Specific Guidelines for Providers of Blended Learning Programmes

ECAC's Quality Assurance System is documented in this Quality Assurance Manual.

We are committed to continuous improvement of our Quality Assurance System.

Quality Culture of ECAC

Since its inception as a training provider ECAC has strived to provide all of its learners and customers with a high quality, high value source of training and support. We actively seek to develop long term relationships with our learners and only provide training in a personal and supportive way. We believe that quality improvement is based on developing a quality mindset within ECAC.

We strive to provide training to small groups, up to six in theory classes and no more than four in practical classes. We believe in developing one to one relationship with our candidates and providing tuition to meet the learners' individual needs, the key person in our training will always be the individual learner.

We approach quality with a focus on a number of key elements.

1. We believe that ECAC, its customers, and its suppliers are all striving to achieve the same outcome which will ultimately provide everybody with a successful outcome.
2. Honesty in communication is vital. Where open, honest communication is the policy among all parties' people will function and learn at their best.
3. Open and honest dissemination of information throughout ECAC and its customers and learners is the key to improvement. It will provide direction and aid in achieving our goals.
4. Continuously improving our process, identifying, and resolving root causes when issues arise will further improve our quality culture.
5. Every event is a learning experience, we do the best we can based on our current experience, information, and understanding and adapt where necessary.
- 6.

Embedding a quality culture ECAC is committed to the active development of a culture which recognises the importance of quality, quality assurance, quality improvement and enhancement. To support the development of a quality culture, ECAC has developed a strategy for continuous enhancement of quality in all activities and measures the achievement of the objectives set, this includes but is not limited to:

- A quality system where all of ECAC's staff and learners are involved in quality assurance, and in which quality is accepted as a responsibility for all to improve upon. A willingness amongst staff to improve quality and an acceptance that all staff have a part to play in that improvement is seen as essential.
- The assignment of specific quality assurance responsibilities based on the subsidiarity principle. Policy and procedures are designed in consultation with all those involved in their implementation, as well as with key stakeholders such as our External Advisory Group
- A holistic approach towards quality assurance where continuous improvement is key. Procedures are integrated into the normal activities of ECAC, with minimum unnecessary administrative requirements.
- A commitment to the provision of adequate resources to enable and facilitate the implementation of the quality assurance procedures, the consistent application of these and quality improvement plans.
- A balanced, organisation-wide approach to the implementation of quality assurance procedures to ensure that:

- the burden of procedures does not obscure the purpose of establishing a quality culture.
- a standardised approach does not obscure the ownership and primary focus on quality improvement.
-

A Documented Approach to Quality Assurance

Documented policies and procedures: The quality assurance system is fully documented; there are robust, documented policies and associated procedures for the assurance of the quality and standards of provision. The documented quality assurance system sets out ECAC's commitment to quality in terms of programme provision, research, and related activities as appropriate. It also refers to arrangements for the internal evaluation or review and continuous improvement of the effectiveness of the policies and procedures. Policies and procedures are effective and fit for purpose. Quality assurance procedures are regularly self-monitored to ensure ongoing effectiveness as provider circumstances change. Policies and procedures found to be ineffective are amended or replaced.

Provider quality assurance policies and procedures:

- are informed by QQI quality assurance guidelines.
- are fully documented and available publicly (published); necessary information is available to staff and the public as required in usable formats.
- are fit for purpose and appropriate to ECAC's context.
- have formal standing within ECAC and form part of strategic management.
- include a role for learners and other stakeholders.
- promote a culture of quality.
- facilitate diversity and support innovation.
- cover any elements of ECAC's activities that are subcontracted to, or carried out by, other parties both at home and abroad.
- demonstrate accountability as a given, but always aim for continuous improvement.
- Are monitored by the External Advisory Group



1 Governance and Management of Quality

1.1 Governance

Our Quality Policy is:

Quality is an integral element of our culture and our ethos. Quality is the responsibility of every person in our organisation.

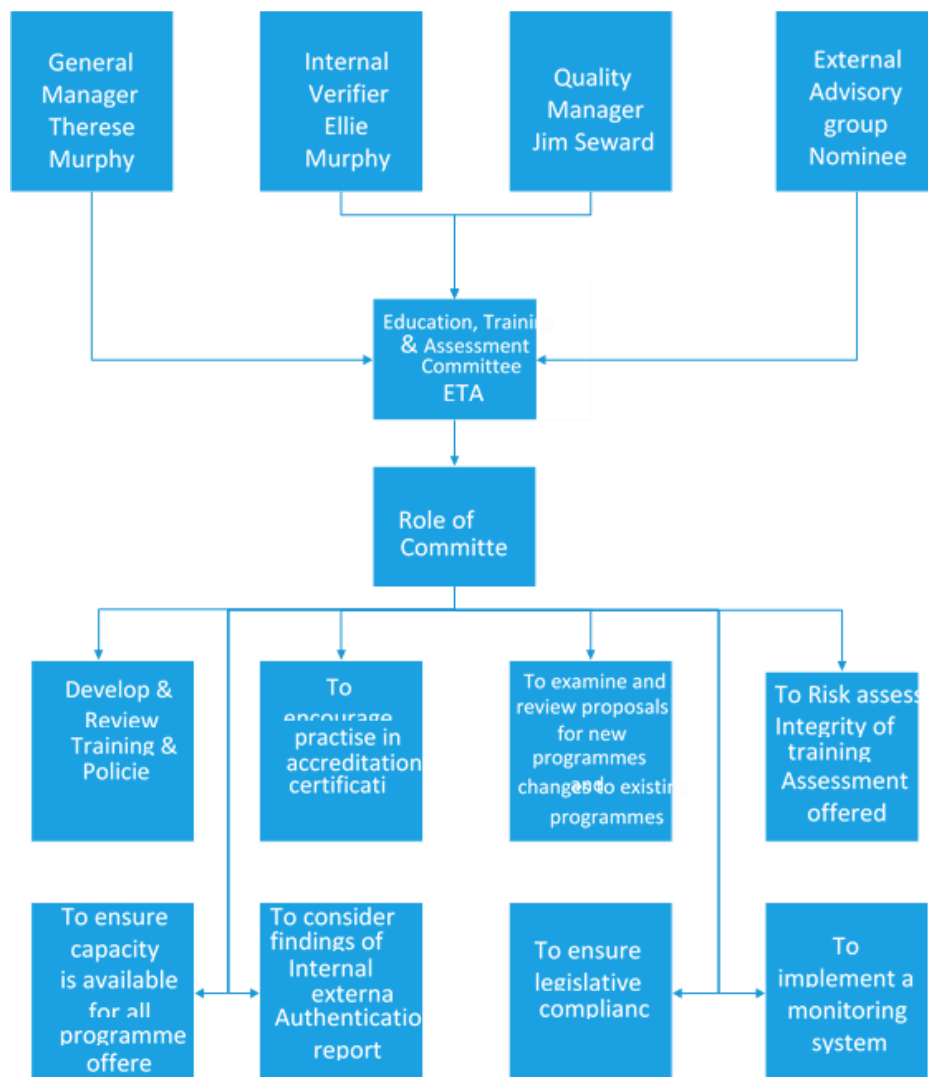
In order to provide our learners and other stakeholders with external assurance of our quality and with internationally recognised certification we have been certified by City & Guilds since 2007. We now wish to obtain QQI certification.

The Education, Training & Assessment (ETA) committee has responsibility and authority for governance in our organisation. The membership of the ETA committee is the General Manager, Quality Manager & External Advisory Group Nominee. The managing Director is excluded from this committee.

The terms of reference of the ETA committee are to:

- Determine our strategic direction and ensure that we achieve our mission and goals whilst delivering a quality assured service to all of our learners and stakeholders.
- Consider the risks associated with the integrity of the training and assessment provided to our learners.
- Ensure adherence with all legislative and regulatory requirements.
- Assure separation of responsibilities between those who produce/develop material and those who approve it.
- Assure effective oversight of education, training, and related activities including course and content development for submission for validation.
- Assure oversight of internal and external programme approval (validation).
- Assure oversight of all learner assessment activities including submissions for approval as qualifications/awards and for certification.
- Ensure that self-evaluation, continuous improvement and related quality assurance activities are undertaken and ensure that action is taken on the findings.

ETA Committee make up and role graphic as 1 Aug 2021



Given the scale of our organisation we are satisfied that we do not require further governance committees. This conclusion is based on our current certifications and our reputation with our learners and the sectors in which we operate.



1.2 Management of quality assurance

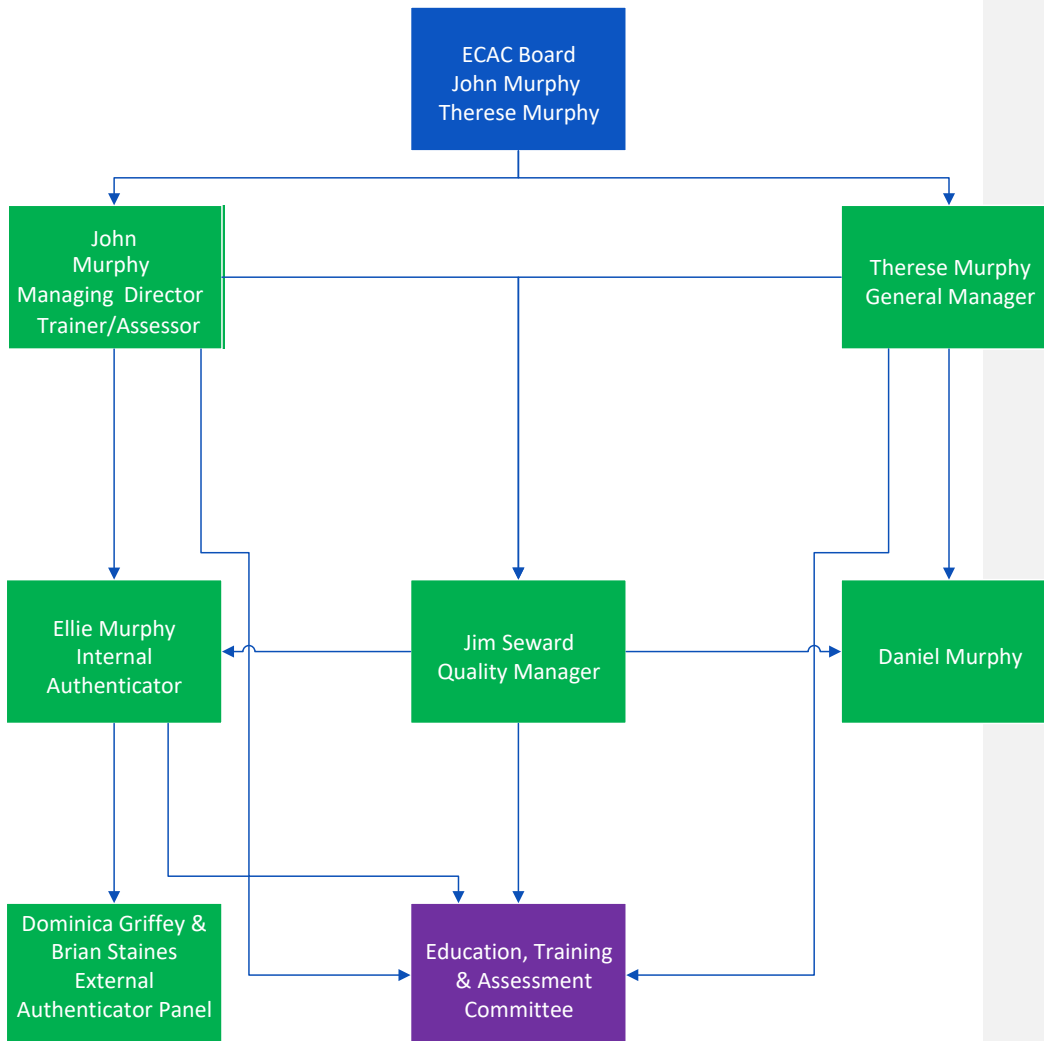
In accordance with our quality policy we have an integrated end-end quality assurance system. The system is documented in this manual and is a core element of our quality assurance culture.

Our quality management system includes, but is not limited to:

- Describing our processes and the quality assurance included in each process.
- Assuring that roles and responsibilities are clearly allocated with escalation and complaint components where necessary.
- Continuous improvement including self-monitoring and the management of key performance indicators (KPI's).
- Systematic analysis of QA findings from all sources and stakeholders. The ETA committee is responsible for ensuring a strategic, co-ordinated response to these findings.
- The ETA committee is also responsible for ensuring clear decision-making and follow-up.

Given the length of time that we have been providing training services we are satisfied that we have a sustainable resource base.

Organisational Chart





1.3 Embedding a quality culture

As noted earlier we are a small, owner-managed provider of training services.

Consequently, it is much more straightforward to embed a quality culture than it would be in a large multi-site organisation.

All staff are expected to strive for high quality in their activities. An ethos of individual pride and responsibility is encouraged in that responsibility for assuring the quality of ECAC's services rests with the individual staff.

Continuous improvement is a key element of our quality assurance system and is an integral element of the day-day activities of all staff.

2 Documented Approach to Quality Assurance

2.1 Documented policies and procedures

Our quality assurance system is fully documented in this quality assurance manual.

As described in section 1.1 our Quality Policy Statement is:

“Quality is an integral element of our culture and our ethos. Quality is the responsibility of every person in our organisation.

In order to provide our learners and other stakeholders with external assurance of our quality and with internationally recognised certification we have been certified by City & Guilds since 2007.

We now wish to obtain QQI certification.”

This is our commitment to quality across all parts of our organisation.

This commitment includes ongoing evaluation and review, internal and external, and this is documented in the relevant sections of this manual particularly section 11.

Our quality assurance system is:

- Designed to comply with QQI guidelines
- Fully documented, published on our website and available to all stakeholders
- Fit for purpose in the context of the scale of our organisation
- An integral part of our management approach
- Includes a role for our learners, companies in our sectors and other stakeholders
- Embedded in our culture
- Facilitates diversity (detailed in section 5.2.1) and supports innovation (documented in several sections)
- We do not sub-contract any of our activities, so our quality assurance system does not need to address this.
- Accountability is clearly demonstrated as is our approach to innovation and continuous improvement.
- Reviewed both on an ad-hoc and periodic basis to ensure continuing fitness for purpose
- Consistent with both QQI and EPA requirements.



2.2 A comprehensive system

Given the highly regulated sectors in which we operate (including the pharmaceutical sector) and the environmental importance of the training that we provide it is critically important for us both to have a comprehensive end-end quality assurance system and to demonstrate this to our learners and stakeholders.

Given the scale of our organisation our system does not need to span multiple domains. Quality is embedded in all of our activities and embraced by all of our staff.

2.3 ECAC External Advisory Group

The purpose of the External Advisory Group is to help the ECAC gain new insights and advice, to solve problems or explore new opportunities by stimulating robust, high-quality conversations. It will fulfil the role by being independent of ECAC and will contribute to the independence of decision making around quality and Academic decision making. The role of the External Advisory Group is not to make decisions, but rather provide current Industry knowledge, critical thinking, and analysis to increase the confidence of the decision makers within ECAC. The Advisory Group does not have fiscal oversight, but they take an active role in helping the ECAC implement its goals and objectives.

The advisory group carries out a number of essential duties such as:

- Provide guidance that helps solve day-to-day problems.
 - Offer a forum for program stakeholders—Industry, regulatory authorities, contractors etc.
 - Support and represent the interests of a programs within ECAC,
 - Provides foresight into Industry training requirements.
- Provides Industry and regulatory body feedback.

Terms of reference for ECAC external advisory group

1. Function

The main function of the External Advisory Group is to provide insight and advice to ECAC with reference to its role as a training provider in the Refrigeration, HVAC, and



Heat Pump sector with particular reference to F Gas training and Certification. This will augment the governance already in place.

2. Membership

The Group will be comprised of:

- A Chair
- Up to 5 non-executive members representing Industry & Regulatory authorities
- Other people may be invited by the Chair to attend all or part of any meeting.

3. Appointments and Terms

- Appointments will exclusively be made through a selection process. Initially by the board of ECAC and subsequently members will be invited to join by the existing External Advisory Group.
- The Chair will be appointed by agreement of the External Advisory Group members.
- Appointments to the External Advisory Group are agreed on the basis of a skills, experience, and knowledge of candidates.
- Appointments will be for a three-year term. A member of the External Advisory Group may be re-appointed for a maximum of two additional terms subject to satisfactory performance as assessed by the External Advisory Group members.

4. Chair

In the absence of the appointed Chair in a meeting, the Group members will appoint a Chair for the duration of the meeting.

5. Secretary

The role of the Secretary is to support the Chair in ensuring the smooth functioning of the Management Committee. As of 27/09/2021

In summary, the Secretary is responsible for:

1. Ensuring meetings are effectively organised and minuted
2. Maintaining effective records and administration
3. Communication and correspondence

Although the Secretary **ensures** that these responsibilities are met, much of the work may be delegated.

6. Quorum

The quorum necessary for the transaction of business shall be one third of the members of the Group.

7. Frequency of Meetings

The Group will meet at least twice yearly or as required by the Chair. Meetings may be held virtually.

8. Notice of Meeting

Unless otherwise agreed, notice of each meeting confirming the venue, time, and date together with an agenda of items to be discussed and supporting papers, will be forwarded, or notified to each member of the Group and any other person required to attend, no later than five working days before the date of the meeting.

9. Conduct of Meetings

Any member of the Group who has a material interest relating to any decision to be made by the Group must declare his/her interest before the item relating to that decision is discussed and will not be entitled to speak or vote on that decision. The Chair will have the final ruling on whether or not the member is entitled to vote.

10. Reports

The Secretary of the External Advisory Group will report on key actions promptly after the meeting.

11. Duties and responsibilities

- Maintain a close advisory partnership with ECAC.
- Nominate members to the ETA Committee.
- Review of new Programme proposals
- To ensure the independence of review of quality decisions.
- To ensure the independence of review of quality decisions.
- To provide oversight into the separation of roles of those involved in awarding and reviewing assessment grades.
- Provide market insight and specific knowledge on key topics, and intelligence, to support planning and alignment ECACs strategic goals.
- To provide industry & regulatory body insight.
- Ensure objectives are aligned to the relevant European regulations and that these are communicated and understood by all ECAC staff members.
- Engage with non-member stakeholders.
- Ensure collaboration with Professional Groups.
- Ensure clear and transparent communications with other National Advisory Boards.
- Provide advice and support to ECAC regarding delivery of its business plan.
- Provide insight into the external market and political environment.
- Provide insight and intelligence on potential market opportunities and risks.

3 Programmes of Education and Training

Programmes policy

Our programmes policy is to ensure that programmes are designed to meet the needs of our learners. Programmes are critically assessed and continuously improved through self-evaluation, monitoring and review.

3.1 Programme development and approval

ECAC's programmes are underpinned by a learner-centred approach to programme development and delivery which addresses learner's goals and assists them in devising a learning plan which works towards these goals.

ECAC's training programmes are developed to ensure that learners have flexible access to a suite of learning materials and assessment with the support of one-to-one tuition if needed. The programmes are developed to ensure that learners achieve or exceed the minimum intended learning outcomes which are based on the knowledge, skills, and competence framework of the National Framework of Qualifications (NFQ).

ECAC is committed to a policy of monitoring on an ongoing basis and self-evaluation at key points in all our programmes.

Programmes are reviewed every three to five years or as needed.

3.1.1 New Programme Concept

We ensure that a new programme:

- has an identifiable need
- is feasible
- is in line with our strategy
- is sufficiently resourced
- has a clear set of objectives.

A new programme concept can originate from several sources including:

- Learners
- Clients with potential learners
- Our staff
- ETA Committee
- Government Policy
- Recommendations from evaluations

Our approach to programme development and approval ensures that programmes are:

- designed with overall programme objectives and programme strategies that are in line with our strategy and have explicit intended learning outcomes
- in line with the requirements of the National Framework of Qualifications
- designed with the involvement of learners and other stakeholders, this includes Industry and student representatives
- benefit from external expertise and reference points to ensure they fulfil vocational and legislative needs where appropriate
- designed to enable smooth progression for learners within and between programmes if appropriate
- clear about the expected learner workload
- compliant with internal and other regulatory or professional policies and requirements including legislative and health and safety requirements
- subject to formal internal approval processes against defined criteria
- subject to ongoing monitoring and periodic review

3.1.2 New Programme Proposal

Before a new programme is developed the concept will be evaluated as detailed in section 3.1.1. Once approval is given the proposed programme concept is developed. The proposer is responsible for writing a programme proposal and making financial projections if necessary. The programme proposal should cover the following:

- Rationale for development of programme including how it fits with our strategy
- Suggested programme format including intended audience, programme level, module composition and mode of delivery.
- Details of programme validation considerations. Programmes leading to a QQI award must be validated prior to commencement of the programme.
- Costings and timelines. This includes, but is not limited to, capital costs and any additional staff that may be required. Staff recruitment, if any, will be undertaken in accordance with section 4.1.1.
- Development process considerations such as:
 - Candidate background and skills
 - Accessibility
 - Assessment
 - Recognition of Prior Learning
 - Administration requirements and technical support

- Analysis of suitability of learning content for delivery and assessment.
- Analysis of progression options for learners.
- Feedback from relevant stakeholders including:
 - learners
 - Clients
 - Our staff
 - external experts.

3.1.3 New Programme Proposal Review

Programme proposals will be reviewed by the External Advisory Group and if changes are recommended it will be returned to the ETA Committee for approval. The ETA Committee will review a sample lesson where necessary. The sample lesson is produced by the development team where there are multiple topics in the programme. Recommendations can then be fed into the development of the full programme. If the ETA Committee approves the programme proposal, then programme development can commence.

3.1.4 New Programme Development

The ETA committee has overall responsibility for the development of new programmes and for ensuring that programmes are evaluated and reviewed. The membership of the ETA committee is the General Manager, Quality Manager & external Advisory Group Nominee. The managing Director is excluded from this committee.

The programme development team may consist of the following:

- Instructional Designer
- Subject Matter Experts
- Industry representatives

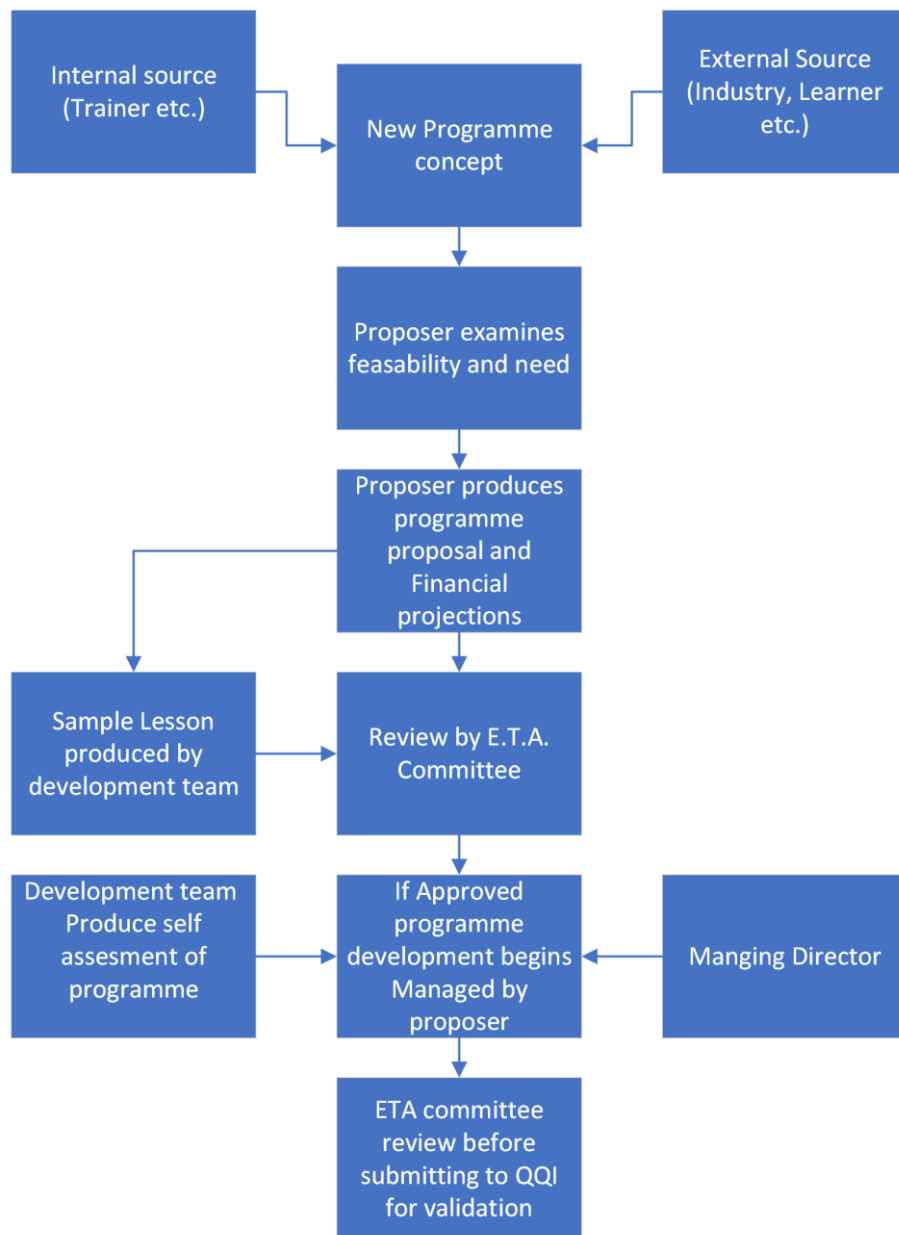
The development will include a detailed analysis of content including:

- How learning outcomes can be assessed
- Content for topics where feasible
- Details of the randomisation of assessments and whether assessment is required or feasible
- Interface for the new programme.



When the development is completed the ETA committee undertakes an internal review of the new programme to ensure impartial judgement on the standard and content of the new programme. The ETA Committee will seek expertise external to ECAC during this process.

New Programme development procedure Graphic



3.1.5 New Programme Validation

The ETA Committee will, where appropriate, approve new programmes before they are submitted for validation. The ETA Committee will request that a self-assessment report be prepared by the programme developer to show how the programme meets the validation criteria. This will form part of the application for validation. Once approved by the ETA Committee the application can be submitted to QQI.

The programme proposal will detail if the programme will be submitted for validation with QQI. See the current QQI policies and criteria in the [Policies and Criteria for the Validation of Programmes of Education and Training](#). This contains:

- Core Policies and Criteria for the Validation by QQI of Programme of Education and Training
- Policies and Criteria for the validation of programmes leading to Common Award System (CAS) awards

Applications must include:

- Summary details of the programme
- Detailed information on the programme using QQI's FET programme descriptor templates (available from Application for Validation FET on the QQI website)
- Self-evaluation of the programme against the validation criteria
- Fee cover note

Programme applications must be submitted via [QBS](#).

The new programme must be validated by QQI prior to delivery. The process takes up to 25 weeks from receipt of application. QQI will validate a programme where a provider has satisfied it that an enrolled learner who completes the programme will acquire the necessary knowledge, skill, or competence to justify an award of QQI being offered in respect of that programme. ([Policies and Criteria for the Validation of Programmes of Education and Training](#), p.18). If necessary, the validation process can be scheduled so the new programme is developed in time for the validation application.

3.2 Learner admission, progression and recognition

3.2.1 Admission

We review a learner's previous attendance on our training courses, their experience/qualifications and finally interview the learner before acceptance onto a training course.

3.2.2 Progression

Some of our courses require prior completion of another of our courses. This is checked during the admission process.

3.2.3 Recognition

Where appropriate our courses are certified by City & Guilds.

We are currently working to achieve QQI certification.

3.3 Programme monitoring and review

3.3.1 New Programmes

The Managing Director in conjunction with the External Advisory Group will complete a full review of the new programme before it goes live. Following the first delivery of the new programme the ETA Committee in conjunction with the External Advisory Group will undertake a review to ensure that it satisfies the objectives set out when it was approved.

3.3.2 Existing Programmes

The Managing Director is responsible for overseeing new/updated content in our existing programmes.

The process is:

- Review the feedback on content from learners, staff and other stakeholders obtained through questionnaires and focus groups.
- This feedback is analysed and, where necessary, a list of lessons and high-level objectives are prepared. If the lessons are linked to QQI levels the learning outcomes are followed.
- The list of lessons is approved by the M.D.
- The M.D. creates a change request to make necessary design changes.
- Authors write new content draft.
- The ETA Committee review the content and document changes.
- The final review is done by the M.D, trainer, and assessor.
- The M.D. approves all content.

4 Staff Recruitment, Management and Development

4.1 Staff recruitment

Note: There has been no recruitment of staff since the start-up of the company and no recruitment is envisaged in the future.

This section details the approach we will adopt to recruitment should it be necessary in the future. This approach will be reviewed to ensure compliance with recruitment best practice and employment law before any recruitment is undertaken.

ECAC is committed to providing a satisfying and productive working environment for staff. Where each individual is recruited for a role which is within their capabilities, according to transparent criteria and processes, in accordance with current employment legislation and where each individual is supported in their role by appropriate training, networking and management structures. Structures designed to enable them to carry out their job effectively, with a clear understanding of their rights and responsibilities.

Policy

The objective of the recruitment process is to appoint the most suitable person for the role. Recruitment will take place after evaluation of the need for the role against ECAC's needs, plans and budget.

This policy also ensures that:

- recruitment is in keeping with ECAC's equal opportunities policy.
- recruitment and selection of suitably qualified staff will be made from the widest possible field.
- Internal and external applications will be treated equally.
- Permanent positions will be advertised internally and externally.

Who is covered by this policy?

This policy applies to any person who applies for a position in ECAC, regardless of the outcome. This policy also applies to all ECAC staff involved in the recruitment process.

Roles and responsibilities

The following listed people are involved in ECAC's recruitment process; the Managing Director and the General Manager.

The responsibilities of each of the above listed people can vary depending on the role which is being filled. Shared responsibilities include creating a job and person specification, advertising the job, reviewing applications, shortlisting, interviewing, reference checks, induction and performance management.

4.1.1 References

All offers of employment are subject to receipt of two satisfactory references from previous employers or appropriate others, as decided by ECAC.

4.1.2 Pre-employment medical examination

All offers of permanent employment are subject to the completion of a satisfactory medical examination carried out by a doctor nominated by ECAC. The examination will take place in a location acceptable to both ECAC and the doctor. Information from the examination will be stored securely and will only be seen by the Managing Director.

4.1.3 Contracts of employment

An employment contract applies to all positions. Two copies of the contract will be issued, each to be signed by both the staff member and the Managing Director. The staff member will keep one copy and the other will be placed on their personal file.

4.1.4 Probation

All appointments are subject to satisfactory completion of a period of probation, which is normally for six months but can be extended for up to eleven months. Extensive absence can cause probation to be extended.

During probation, there will be ongoing review, including formal review meetings at two, four and six months. During probation, the contract can be terminated by either party with one week's notice. If the staff member successfully completes their probationary period, they will be notified in writing.

4.1.5 Induction

All new staff members will take part in an induction programme at the start of their employment. The programme sets out to help staff settle into the position as soon as

possible and to make sure they have all the information necessary to carry out their role effectively. The duration and content of induction will vary according to the needs of the staff member and the position.

4.2 Staff communication

Efficient internal communication systems are in place to ensure that different opinions are heard, and that the views and ideas of our staff are utilised. This facilitates staff participation and pride in their own work, is used to achieve our vision and mission, and increases work efficiency. Efficient internal communication also supports good external communication, in which the staff act as ambassadors for the organisation.

A copy of the employee handbook is provided to all staff to facilitate communication.

4.3 Staff development

In line with our role as a training provider we are fully committed to the continuous development of our staff, just as we are committed to the continuous development of our training programmes.

4.3.1 Development objectives

Our staff development objectives are:

- Ensure that staff have a sufficient level of knowledge and skill to fully perform their role
- Encourage staff to develop within their current role
- Look for potential and find ways for staff to demonstrate potential
- Create a learning culture by providing opportunities for learning and growth.

4.3.2 Identification of development needs

We identify our staff development needs by:

- Reviewing new programmes during the development phase
- Obtaining feedback, both formal and informal, from our learners
- Obtaining feedback, both formal and informal, from our stakeholders
- Encouraging suggestions from our staff
- Assessing performance issues that are development related
- Assessing technological changes in our sectors

- Reviewing legislative changes
- Reviewing regulatory changes and feedback from both QQI and the EPA
- Obtaining feedback, both formal and informal, from learner assessment
- Assessing issues arising during self-evaluation, monitoring and review

The development needs identified from this are reviewed at ETA meetings and an action plan is agreed and implemented.

4.3.3 Authorisation

All training and development activities must be authorised by the Managing Director.

4.3.4 Training records

The Internal Support Coordinator maintains all staff training and development records.

4.4 Role Specifications

4.4.1 Trainer

Prepares candidates to accomplish the required course learning outcomes and prepares them for both theoretical and practical assessments.

The primary role of the Assessor/Trainer is to train and assess learners' performance and related knowledge in a range of tasks and to ensure that the competence and/or knowledge demonstrated meets the requirements of the Standards.

The key role of the Trainer is centred around the delivery of teaching and assessment of learners in line with the ethos and guidelines as provided by ECACs Quality Assurance process. These guidelines capture fundamental responsibilities such as integrating relevant and current published research into course delivery and assessment processes, contributing to the development, planning and implementation of a high quality curriculum, liaising with administration and management staff as necessary on an on-going basis, grading of assessments where relevant as well as providing feedback and mentoring to learners within the agreed timescale of the assessment activity and participating in other meetings and committees as assigned by the organisation

Technical Trainer Job Duties:

- Conducts training needs assessment by collecting information pertaining to the candidate's job-specific functions and tasks.
- Design's training manuals by identifying the learning outcome requirements of the course; submits initial versions for review; revising and editing final copy.
- Maintains safe and healthy training environment by following organization standards and legal regulations.

- Conducts training classes by presenting course specific materials, procedures, and exercises, both theory and practical.
- Ensures safe operation of equipment by completing preventive maintenance requirements; following manufacturer's instructions; troubleshooting malfunctions; calling for repairs; maintaining equipment inventories; evaluating new equipment and techniques.
- Maintains quality service by establishing and enforcing organization standards.
- Evaluates training by evaluating effectiveness of training to specific Learning Outcomes.
- Maintains technical knowledge by attending educational workshops, reviewing publications.
- Contributes to team effort by accomplishing related results as needed.

Trainer Skills and Qualifications:

In addition to Technical skills, knowledge and experience in the Refrigeration & HVAC Industries the trainer will have the following attributes: Presentation Skills, Written Communication, Training, Training Management, , Self-Development, Technical Leadership, Presenting Technical Information, Self-Confidence, Microsoft Office Skills

As the trainer may also be the Assessor the role may also include

The Assessor The role of the assessor is to evaluate learner evidence and make the assessment decision/judgment on whether the outcomes of knowledge, skill or competence, as outlined in the Award Specification, have been achieved.

The specific responsibilities of the assessor are to:

- implement ECAC's assessment procedures across all assessment activities
- provide opportunities for learners to generate appropriate evidence
- design assessment instruments
- devise marking schemes and grading criteria
- review and assess learner evidence
- make the assessment decision
- provide information and feedback to learners.

4.4.2 Administrator

The Administrators key responsibility with regard to training provision is the day-to-day coordination of programmes. Key responsibilities of the Course administrator include programme planning and support, learner registration and assisting with programme monitoring and review, complaints (where appropriate) and record keeping.

The role of the Administrator in addition to normal business requirements

- Participate in creating and implementing training programs.
- Maintain training records (e.g., trainee lists, schedules, attendance sheets)
- Book classrooms and ensure they are properly set up.
- Prepare and disseminate material (e.g., instructional notes, feedback forms)
- Act as a point-of-contact for vendors and participants
- Resolve issues as they arise onsite.
- Submit reports on training activities and results.
- Recommend improvements or new programs.
- Ensure employees and vendors follow established policies.

4.4.3. Quality Manager

The Quality Manager develops, communicates and implements quality assurance plans and policies. He#/She establishes service excellence and performance improvement measures. He/she coordinates with all employees of ECAC to monitor and maintain quality standards. He/she ensures compliance with national and international standards and legislation. The quality manager monitors adherence to environmental, health and safety standards. He/she identifies and implements appropriate quality-related programs and measures institutional performance by collecting data and producing statistical reports of customer satisfaction.

Responsibilities include:

- devise and establish a company's quality procedures, standards and specifications.
- review customer requirements and make sure they are met.
- work with purchasing staff to establish quality requirements from external suppliers.
- set standards for quality as well as health and safety.
- make sure that all processes and in particular training processes meet international and national standards.
- define quality procedures in conjunction with operating staff.
- set up and maintain controls and documentation procedures.
- monitor performance by gathering relevant data and produce statistical reports.
- review existing policies and make suggestions for changes and improvements and how to implement them.
- measure performance and identify any areas of weakness, recommending and implementing improvements.
- liaise with other managers and staff and provide training, tools and techniques to enable others to achieve quality standards.
- assess the effectiveness of changes made.
- make sure the company is working as effectively as possible to keep up with competitors.

4.4.4 Role of the Communications Officer (Therese Murphy)

- To develop and implement an effective communications strategy.

- Write, edit, and distribute content, including publications, press releases, website content, annual reports and marketing material that communicates ECACs activities, products and/or services.
- Act as a spokesperson for the organization.
- Seek opportunities to enhance the reputation of ECAC and coordinate publicity events as required.
- Maintain records of media coverage and collate analytics and metrics.

5 Teaching and Learning

Teaching and Learning Policy

We recognise the critical role of high-quality teaching and learning.

As a long-established provider of technical training to the Refrigeration, Heat Pump and HVAC industries we continuously seek to develop and expand our teaching and learning strategies in order to optimise the educational experiences of our learners.

We seek not only to facilitate learner's acquisition of the knowledge and skills required to progress in employment, but also to guide learners towards recognising their own competencies and aptitudes and to develop confidence in their abilities to progress their own learning.

N.B. We are a training provider, we do not undertake any form of research with the exception of market research.

5.1 Teaching and learning

As noted in our Teaching and Learning Policy above the quality of the learning experience is very important to us.

This is continuously monitored through:

- Self-monitoring
- Monitoring feedback from learners

Our approach to this is detailed in the sections below and in section 6.

5.1.1 Course Evaluation

There is an ETA Committee (ETA is introduced in section 1.1) to oversee the evaluation of courses. Courses are evaluated on a rotating basis and recommendations from these evaluations are considered in the planning of the delivery of courses for the following academic year.

At the end of each course review by the internal verifier/external authenticator trainers have access to reports and external authentication reports. Based on these, trainers prepare an analysis of results and a plan of action to implement recommendations or improve delivery of courses.

Trainers use a variety of assessments techniques and tailor these to specific learners where appropriate.

Schemes of work may clearly outline:

- (a) learning outcomes
- (b) course content
- (c) proposed teaching methodologies
- (d) methods of assessment of and for learning.

Class preparation leads to quality teaching and learning. Trainers are encouraged to prepare lessons diligently for example keeping, in advance, a daily diary of intended lesson content. Classes should be evaluated, and plans altered where necessary to reflect actual reality. Trainers should have high quality course materials prepared in advance of their presentation to learners.

5.1.2 Course Assessment and Feedback

Learners need to be given the best opportunity to display the skills they have acquired in each course to the required level through appropriate assessment.

- Trainers must provide clear assessment briefs to their learners with clear guidelines for learners on how to approach these briefs. Briefs should match assessment guidelines and marking schemes provided by course descriptors.
- Trainers must compile course assessments in accordance with course guidelines and marking schemes. Assessments should be refreshed regularly and be administered and corrected in accordance with QQI policies.
- Learners must be given quality feedback on work in a timely manner. Feedback should be given in a constructive and sensitive manner.
- Trainers must submit learners' work for assessment in accordance with ECAC policy and practice on internal verification and external authentication.

5.2 A provider ethos that promotes learning

5.2.1 Respect for diversity

We:

- Recognise that our candidates come from diverse backgrounds and that our teaching and learning strategies should be adapted when necessary to recognise this diversity
- Recognise that our staff come from a variety of educational backgrounds and disciplines and that each member of staff has something to offer
- Provide guidelines for staff with regards to how teaching and learning can be best approached in the field of technical education
- Provide guidelines for staff on how they can support learners

5.2.2 Delivery Modes

- Trainers will adhere to best practice guidelines in the delivery of their course
- Trainers should endeavour to use a variety of teaching methods appropriate to subject content and the learning needs of their learners and refer learners for additional supports where deemed necessary
- Trainers will make subject notes and other materials available to the learning and academic support area, where necessary, in order for the staff there to offer meaningful support to learners
- Expected learning outcomes or objectives of the session, should be explained and displayed at the beginning of class
- Content should follow a clear and logical sequence and employ a range of effective and engaging teaching methods
- Trainers will engage in reflective practice and review and evaluate courses on an ongoing basis

5.2.3 Variety of methods

We use a variety of teaching methods and these methods are, evaluated, monitored, and adjusted on a regular basis.

Our approach to this is discussed in sections 5.1.1, 5.2.1, 5.2.2, and is also reflected in our Teaching and Learning Policy.

5.2.4 Autonomy and guidance

Our Teaching and Learning Policy highlights our approach to developing learner autonomy while also providing support as, and when, required.

We also ensure that trainers:

- Maintain high standards of practice in relation to student learning, planning, monitoring assessing, reporting and providing feedback

- Plan and communicate clear, challenging and achievable expectations for learners
- Create an environment where learners can become active agents in the learning process and develop lifelong learning skills
- Develop teaching, learning and assessment strategies that support differentiated learning in a way that respects the dignity of all learners
- Inform their professional judgement and practice by engaging with, and reflecting on, student development, learning theory, pedagogy, curriculum development, ethical practice, educational policy and legislation

5.2.5 Mutual respect

Mutual respect within the learner-teacher relationship is an integral element of our Teaching and Learning Policy.

We also expect our trainers to:

- Expected learning outcomes or objectives should be explained, demonstrated and displayed at the beginning of the session so that learners are clear on what they are required to do during the class
- Once learners begin to work the Trainer should quickly do a 'round' of all learners to ensure that no student is unclear of what they are expected to do
- Trainers should endeavour to spread their time evenly between learners or groups of learners
- Questioning should be used extensively to assess student understanding and learning
- Learners experiencing difficulties should be sensitively supported
- Be caring, fair and committed to the best interests of the learners.
- Acknowledge and respect the uniqueness, individuality and specific needs of learners
- Be committed to equality and inclusion and to respecting and accommodating diversity including those differences arising from gender, civil status, family status, sexual orientation, religion, age, disability, race, ethnicity, membership of the Traveller community and socio-economic status, and any further grounds as may be referenced in equality legislation in the future.

5.2.6 Learner complaints

Our complaints procedure is detailed in section 7.



5.2.7 Learner appeals

Our learner appeals procedure is detailed in section 6.

5.3 National and international effective practice

We are a small, specialist training company and, as noted earlier in this section, we do not undertake academic research.

As detailed in section 10.1.2 we collaborate extensively within the industry sectors in which we operate in order to assure the effectiveness of our training services.

5.4 Learning environments

Our training courses are a blend of theory, practice, and sample assessments.

The theoretical part of the training can be done in the training room in our offices or on-site in a company training room. No specialist equipment is required.

The practical part of the training is done only in the fully equipped workshop in our offices.

5.4.1 The many contexts in which learning opportunities emerge

As noted above learners receive the practical element of their training in our fully equipped workshop where they can, for example, work under supervision on the commissioning and decommissioning of a working piece of equipment.

5.4.2 Different learning environments

We do not engage in distributed learning and, as noted in section 10.2, we do not work with other providers.

5.4.3 Learning off-campus

Our training courses do not involve off-campus learning.

5.4.4 Physical premises, equipment, and facilities

As described in section 10.1.2 we engage in regular collaboration with the sectors in which we operate. If this identifies any changes required to our workshop, we will implement these changes.

6 Assessment of Learners

Assessment of Learners Policy

ECAC is committed to ensuring that learners are assessed constructively in a manner which supports the teaching and learning process. Assessment processes gather information and supply evidence of learners' progress towards their individual learning goals, including those that involve working towards certification.

Assessment processes are underpinned by the principles of adult education. Learners are active participants in the assessment of their own learning. Assessment processes are reliable, secure and provide learners with appropriate feedback on their progress.

6.1 Assessment of learning achievement

The assessment of learners measures or infers the achievement of learning and therefore the assessment must be fair and consistent, always undertaken professionally and take into account the extensive knowledge that exists about testing and examination processes.

Analyses of assessment results can provide information about the effectiveness of the programme, teaching and learner supports.

The General Manager will ensure that learners are informed about the assessment opportunities available to them and that assessments are secure, reliable, and delivered in a timely manner. We will also ensure that learners are actively involved in their own assessment and that assessment is fair and consistent. We always respect learners' privacy and confidentiality.

6.1.1 Security of assessment

We ensure that all learner material, including work produced for the assessment of teaching and learning and for certification is kept secure and confidential. All staff adhere to the Information and Data Management Policy, detailed in section 8, and have attended training on data protection.

6.1.1.1 Security of Physical Material

Assessment material is reviewed by the Internal Verifier on a regular basis. All assessment outcomes are recorded on the administration system.

6.1.1.2 Security of eLearning material

Information on learners' details, assessments and results are stored in the administration system. Access to this is restricted to staff. Each learner is given a

unique identification number and all communication about learners is done through this number. Each staff member has their own login and password which enables their access to be monitored.

6.1.2 Consistency of Assessment

Assessment is an integral part of our programmes and is designed to ensure that the learner can demonstrate the appropriate learning outcomes. All assessment results are recorded on the administration system.

Assessors follow guidelines to ensure that all work is assessed fairly and consistently. The Internal Verifier oversees all additional assessment activities and reviews these on a regular basis.

Assessments are subject to our internal verification process, detailed in section 6.1.4, and an external authentication process detailed in section 6.1.5.

6.1.3 Reasonable Accommodation

We aim to support learners to assist them in achieving their educational goals. We implement the principles of equality and support for people with a wide range of needs. In so far as is possible, we will endeavour to assist learners who need special accommodation to carry out assessments. This reasonable accommodation will be implemented in a fair and impartial manner and will neither advantage nor disadvantage the learner.

If a learner requires special accommodation the trainer will be notified and will determine how best to accommodate their needs in assessment. A Reasonable Accommodation in Assessment Application Form is available.

6.1.4 Internal Verification Process

We typically run two rounds of verification each year. The Internal Verification panel is made up of the Internal Verifier, a member of management, members of the administration team and a representative of our ETA Committee.

6.1.4.1 Results Approval Panel

The Results Approval Panel is convened to review adherence with our Quality Assurance system and to sample submissions. The Assessor cannot be a member of the Results Approval Panel but may be consulted by the panel for any necessary clarification.

Results Approval

A results approval panel will be established by the ETA to ensure assessment decisions and results are reviewed, assessed, and processed in a fair, consistent and transparent manner. The role of the Results Approval Panel is to.

- meet as required to review and approve assessment results.
- review reports of the internal verification and external authentication process
- agree to the submission of final results to QQI to request certification.
- identify any issues arising in relation to the results and make recommendations for corrective action.

The membership of the Results Approval Panel may include members of the ETA committee, Quality manager, and other senior staff members. The Internal Verifier and external authenticator reports should be considered by the panel. The membership of the Panel must be such as to ensure separation of separation of roles for those involved in awarding and reviewing assessment grades.

Results Approval Panel Membership

Chair: Mr Jim Seward

Secretary: Therese Murphy

Members: Ellie Murphy Internal verifier
Robbie Burns ETA committee

6.1.4.2 The role of the Internal Verifier

The role of the internal verifier is to:

- Confirm that our assessment methods are implemented across all programmes and assessment activities.
- Ensure fair and consistent assessment of learners to across all aspects of assessment practices.
- Confirm that learner evidence matches the assessment requirements of the award standard by confirming assessment techniques used are appropriate.
- Consult the component specification(s) which indicate(s) the assessment technique(s) that are used by the assessor to assess the learners.
- Confirm that these are the techniques that were used to assess the learner.
- Confirm that learner evidence has been generated as agreed within the validated programme.

- Consult the validated programme which describes how assessment evidence will be generated by the learner in terms of the technique to be used, the weighting of each technique, the time allocated to the learner to complete the assessment, the format the assessment will take and broad assessment criteria which will be applied when marking the assessment material. Confirm that the learner evidence produced is in line with the above information.
 - Confirm that information on assessment was provided to learners, this may include:
 - information on dates for submission of assessment material
 - examination dates, times, locations, conditions, regulations
 - skills demonstration dates, times, conditions, regulations
 - other information as required
- Evidence that this information was given to learners may be found in the:
 - assessment plan for the programme
 - assessment briefs issued to learners which will include submission dates, examination timetable(s), learner handbook
- Confirm that appropriate documentation was issued to learners:
 - This includes, as appropriate, assessment briefs, assessment criteria, examination papers
- Confirm assessment results by:
 - Checking learner evidence exists
 - Confirming marks and grades are recorded accurately
 - Checking that the QQI facility for gaining exemptions for other certification is properly implemented
- Complete an internal verification report

The internal verifier must also confirm with the ETA committee what s/he should do in case an error, omission, irregularity, or other issue arises. The internal verifier must be aware of the action to be taken when an issue arises during the internal verification process.

6.1.4.3 The Process of Internal Verification

Internal verification is undertaken prior to the external authentication process and the results approval process.

There are six assessment techniques associated with QQI awards. Each of the techniques requires the assessor to develop an assessment instrument, outlining what the learner is required to do, by what date and how the work will be marked.

For an assignment, a project, a collection of work, a learner record and a skills demonstration the assessor must devise a brief. The brief should include information on submission dates, guidelines on how the assessment work should be produced and assessment criteria outlining how the work will be marked.

While the assessor may not make a detailed marking scheme available to the learner, it is important that each brief is accompanied by a detailed marking scheme and that the internal verifier confirms that both the brief and marking scheme are available for the external authentication process.

For an examination, the learner should receive an examination paper.

While the assessor may not make a detailed marking scheme available to the learner, it is important that each examination paper is accompanied by a detailed marking scheme and a set of outline solutions and that the internal verifier confirms that these are available for the external authentication process.

Confirm that appropriate documentation was used to record learner results. Each portfolio of assessment must have a marking sheet(s) completed and attached to the front of it. The marking sheet(s) must be signed and dated by the assessor.

The Internal Verifier must be provided with a copy of the authentication report (results sheet from the QBS) with all the learners listed together with their mark and grade.

The Internal Verifier must confirm the existence of this documentation and confirm that it is properly completed.

The Internal Verifier must confirm for ALL learners requesting certification that:

- results are recorded for ALL learners

- evidence is available for ALL learner results recorded
(Confirm that there is a result recorded for every learner listed on the authentication report.)
- Confirm that there is a portfolio of assessment for each learner for whom there is a result recorded on the authentication report.
- Learners who are registered as 'W' on the authentication report should not be included in this process as they have been withdrawn and will not be seeking certification at this time.

Please note: Confirming that the work is marked in accordance with national standards is not generally the role of the internal verifier.

If the Internal Verifier finds that evidence is missing, s/he must inform the ETA committee so that appropriate action can be taken.

Any findings concerning missing evidence and details of corrective action taken should be noted for inclusion in the internal verification report.

The Internal Verifier must confirm that, for a sample of learners:

- marks are totalled, and percentage marks calculated correctly
- marks are transferred correctly from learner evidence to learner marking sheet/record
- percentage marks and grades allocated are consistent with QQI grading bands

The Internal Verifier must note errors and record corrections made. The ETA committee must provide the Internal Verifier with a sampling strategy indicating how to choose which learner portfolios to check.

Levels 4, 5 and 6

For each portfolio included in the sample the Internal Verifier must:

- Add up the marks that the learner has achieved. This is normally done on the marking sheet(s).
- Check that the mark on the marking sheet(s) is the same as the mark entered on the authentication report.

- Check that the grade allocated to the learner is consistent with QQI grading bands. If the authentication report has been printed from the QBS then the grades will have been automatically assigned by the QBS.
- Errors or miscalculations must be noted, and appropriate action taken to rectify the error. If the Internal Verifier makes any changes due to errors in calculations this must be communicated to the Quality Manager so that the error can be corrected on the QBS.
- Identify any irregularities, notify the Quality Manager and take agreed corrective action.
- In accordance with QQI Quality Assuring Assessment, Guidelines for Providers, Revised 2013, the Internal Verifier will confirm that evidence is available for learners presented for an award. This includes confirming that evidence for all minor awards is available for the major award, as appropriate.

The relevant structure for each major, special purpose and supplemental award should be made available by the ETA committee. This information is also available on www.qqi.ie.

If an issue arises relating to this or if another irregularity or issue arises it should be included in the internal verification report so that it is brought to the attention of the ETA committee and subsequently to the attention of the external authenticator and the results approval panel.

Issues and irregularities should also be reported to the Quality Manager.

It is important that corrective action be taken to remedy any errors, omissions or irregularities identified. This is the responsibility of the ETA committee.

Check, where results were attained through an exemption process, that:

- results entry procedures are applied correctly, and the code assigned by QQI is appropriately entered in the certification system at time of entry
- all original documentation relating to the exemption (including QQI correspondence) is available. Learners may use prior certification to gain an exemption from completing some elements of a programme.

- In some cases, QQI may decide to grant an exemption to a learner based on a specific request from the ETA committee.
- If a learner is using previous certification to gain a credit for a QQI award, then the original certificate OR a copy of the original certificate, signed by the Principal/Director or designated person, must be available for the authentication process. Any correspondence from QQI, relating to an exemption, should also be available.
- The internal verifier should confirm the existence of the relevant certificate in lieu of a portfolio of assessment.
- The internal verifier should also confirm that the learner has been graded as E for exemption on the authentication report when using previous certification

Completing an internal verification report:

- The Internal Verifier must complete an internal verification report.
- Once completed by the Internal Verifier, this report should be made available to the Quality Manager who in turn will make it available to the external authenticator and the results approval panel.
- The internal verification report should also be used for self-evaluation and internal monitoring and made available to the QQI monitoring process on request.

6.1.5 External Authentication Process

External Authentication is a key process in the fair and consistent assessment of learners. This process provides the External Authenticator(s) with a structure for carrying out their role and ensures that the process is done in a systematic, coherent, professional, and transparent manner.

In addition to this document the External Authenticator will also need to be familiar with the following QQI documents:

- Quality Assuring Assessment Guidelines for External Authenticators (2015)
- Effective Practice Guidelines for External Examining (2015)
- QQI Quality Assuring Assessment Guidelines for Providers (2013)

6.1.5.1 Selecting the External Authenticator

ECAC appoints an independent External Authenticator to moderate results for all awards.

The External Authenticator may be selected from the QQI external authenticator panel or through our own selection criteria. This process is carried out every four years or sooner if necessary.

In selecting the appropriate External Authenticator, we will ensure that s/he:

- Has technical and subject matter expertise within the appropriate award area or field of learning.
- Has experience of delivering programme assessment in the field.
- Agrees to undertake appropriate training and to attend appropriate briefings.
- Has the qualities necessary to interact with learners, assessors, and senior staff members, as appropriate.
- Due to the specialist nature of our programmes it may not be possible to source an external authenticator with the appropriate subject matter expertise, therefore we will ensure that our internal verifier has sufficient technical expertise and the external authenticator will have the necessary experience and qualifications.
- Can undertake to operate within the code of practice and guidelines issued by QQI, as appropriate.
- Is available at appropriate times.
- Is independent.
- Informs us of any potential conflict of interest that may compromise their role.

The Internal Verifier is responsible for the selection, and appointment of the External Authenticator.

6.1.5.2 Timeframe for External Authentication

We typically run two rounds of verification each year. External authentication takes place after the internal verification process and before the results approval process. In planning for external authentication consideration will be given to the following:

- The other assessment related processes: internal verification, results approval, requesting certification and appeals
- QQI certification deadlines and key dates

6.1.5.3 Location of External Authentication

External authentication takes place in our office. All documentation and necessary equipment is made available to the External Authenticator. The External Authenticator meets with staff and a learner representative who sits on the External Authentication Panel.

6.1.5.4 Items to be made available for the External Authentication process

The following items will be available:

- Relevant award specifications and validated programme modules.
- All relevant assessment instruments and appropriate supporting documentation.
- All assessment evidence in the learners' portfolio. All soft copy evidence will also be available to the External Authenticator. This evidence is grouped into folders on the External Authenticator's computer for ease of access.
- All physical learner assessment evidence.
- Appropriate equipment to moderate assessment evidence produced in a multi-media format must also be provided, as appropriate.
- Our sampling strategy.
- Statistics spreadsheet with number of learners and number of awards
- Previous External Authentication meeting minutes.

6.1.5.6 Conducting External Authentication

The External Authenticator will work through the following stages of the process:

1. Confirm arrangements with the Internal Verifier including the date of the visit, the numbers of learners and the number of awards.
2. Conduct the authentication process.
3. Moderate the assessment results by reviewing the learner evidence yielded by our sampling strategy.
4. Attend the External Authentication Panel meeting.
5. Complete the External Authentication report.
6. Any other activities s/he considers necessary.

6.1.5.7 External Authentication Panel

The External Authentication Panel is composed of the External Authenticator, Internal Verifier, a member of management, a member of the administration team and a representative from the ETA Committee.

The External Authentication panel is convened to review adherence to Quality Assurance procedures and to sample submissions. The External Authentication panel has the following responsibilities:

- to confirm the results have been verified internally
- to confirm that the evidence has been assessed in accordance with the techniques outlined in the award specification

- to confirm that the results presented are consistent with national standards for the award.

6.1.5.8 Check List for External Authenticators

Preparation for External Authentication	
Attend external authenticator briefing(s), as required	Q
Be familiar with relevant external authentication guidelines	Q
Be familiar with QQI Quality Assuring Assessment, Guidelines for Providers, Revised 2013	Q
Be familiar with QQI award structures	Q
Be familiar with QQI award standards: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Component specifications QQI grading criteria QQI grade bands Grid of level indicators from National Framework of Qualifications (NFQ) 	Q Q Q Q
Be familiar with QQI assessment principles and techniques	Q
Be familiar with QQI's Recognition of Previously Certified Learning arrangements	Q
Agree approach: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Dates/times/venues Volume of work – award(s) (names, code and levels) and numbers of assessment portfolios to be authenticated by each authenticator Paperwork to be completed and the time allocated to this The date by which the external authentication report will be completed Other responsibilities – for example, providing feedback to appropriate personnel and availability to the results approval panel 	Q Q Q Q Q
Confirm the availability of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Validated programmes ALL relevant assessment instruments and appropriate supporting documentation (assessment briefs, examination papers, marking schemes, outline solutions and assessment plan(s)) ALL learner assessment evidence ALL learner assessment results recorded on appropriate results sheet(s) List of assessors per programme module and/or class group Internal verification report(s) The sampling strategy Appropriate equipment to moderate assessment evidence produced in a multi-media format, if required 	Q Q Q Q Q Q Q Q
Conducting External Authentication	
Meet with appropriate personnel	Q

Review the internal verification report	101
Apply the sampling strategy	101
Ensure that the selected sample:	
o is sufficient in size	101
o reflects the spread of grades including results that are borderline between the grades	101
o includes evidence from each assessor and programme	101
o reflects ALL centres	101
Read the assessment briefs, examination papers and associated documentation	101
Ensure any special requirements related to the award are documented	101
Determine the cut-off points by moderating results at the borderline marks:	
o Pass/Unsuccessful (Referred)	101
o Distinction/Merit	101
o Merit/Pass	101
Transfer moderated marks to appropriate column on appropriate results sheet(s)	101
Sign the marking sheet(s) in the portfolio	101
Complete the moderation process for the remainder of the sample	101
Sign the appropriate results sheet(s)	101
Authenticate the findings/outcomes of the internal verification report(s)	101
Identify any issues arising, concerns, examples of good practice and areas for improvement for inclusion in the external authentication report	101
Document ALL changes made during moderation (to be attached to the external authentication report)	101
Give constructive feedback to appropriate personnel	101
Concluding External Authentication	
Complete external authentication report by agreed date	101
The external authenticator must directly contact QQI if s/he has serious concerns regarding the integrity of the assessment process	101
Attend results approval panel meeting	10

6.1.6 Learner appeals

Learners can appeal assessment results with which they disagree. All learners receive a copy of the appeals procedure which informs learners of their right to make an appeal.

All assessment results are verified and recorded on the administration system. Learners are informed that results are not confirmed until the Internal Verification and External Authentication process has taken place. The results are then communicated to learners. All learners who wish to appeal a result are referred to the Internal Verifier. The Internal Verifier will be responsible for informing the ETA Committee of all learner appeals.

ECAC will acknowledge a learner appeal within five working days. If possible, we will give a full response within 20 working days of receiving a learner appeal. A record of appeals is kept on our complaints log.

6.1.6.1 Learner Appeals Process

In accordance with [QQI Quality Assuring Assessment, Guidelines for Providers, Revised 2013](#), we have a process to allow a learner to appeal an assessment result, and or the assessment process, if the learner perceives there to be irregularities or inequalities in its implementation.

We will inform the learner of the appeals process and provide the learner with sufficient time to enable him/her to lodge an appeal. A minimum of 14 days will be allowed for a learner to appeal an assessment result and/or the assessment process.

The appeal assessor will not be the original assessor and the outcome of the appeal will be communicated to the learner and to QQI within an agreed timescale.

During the appeals process we will:

- inform the learner of the process
- retain learner evidence until the time during which a learner can lodge an appeal has elapsed
- record the submission of an appeal.
- decide who will evaluate the appeal, while noting that the original assessor cannot be the appeals assessor
- communicate the outcome of the appeal to both the learner and QQI. The internal verifier and external authenticator should also be notified.

6.1.7 Corrective action (assessment processes)

We have a process to deal with errors, omissions and other actions which may affect the validity of the assessment processes. When an issue is identified an investigation will take place. The Internal Verifier will take whatever action s/he considers necessary to resolve the issue. The Internal Verifier will contact the appropriate party and will allow the appropriate party time to respond. The Internal Verifier will agree the action to be taken and this will be documented and sent to the ETA Committee. The Internal Verifier will notify QQI if necessary.

6.1.8 Results approval

We ensure that all learners' work is fully quality assured and approved, as detailed in sections 6.1.4, 6.1.5 and 6.1.6, prior to submission to QQI for certification.

The ETA Committee oversees the results approval process, detailed in 6.1.8.1, and reviews actions from Internal Verification, External Authentication, and the Results Approval Panel.

Once the results are approved by the Results Approval Panel the data is submitted to QQI.

6.1.8.1 The Results Approval Process

The results approval process is a key stage in the assessment process and ensures that appropriate decisions are taken regarding the outcome of the assessment and authentication processes. This is done in accordance with [QQI Quality Assuring Assessment, Guidelines for providers, Revised 2013, p. 28](#)

The results approval process follows the completion of the authentication process which includes both the internal verification process and the external authentication process. The results approval process must, inter alia, include consideration of the internal verification and external authentication reports.

Results must be approved before submission to QQI, i.e. it is the responsibility of the results approval panel to agree that the results can be forwarded to QQI.

The results approval panel has a responsibility to recommend/take corrective action where appropriate.

The Results Approval Process comprises of the following steps.

1. Planning and methodology for the results approval panel
2. Developing terms of reference for the results approval panel
3. Establishing the results approval panel
4. Roles and responsibilities of the results approval panel
5. The results approval panel report
6. Recommendations for good practice in conducting the results approval process
7. Concluding the results approval process

6.1.8.1.1 Planning and Methodology for the Results Approval Panel

The results approval panel is established to undertake results approval.

The purpose of the results approval panel is to confirm that assessment of learner evidence and authentication of assessment results (including internal verification and external authentication) has been undertaken in accordance with our quality assurance

system. The panel confirms fairness and consistency in our assessment process and assures the validity of the results.

The role of the panel is to:

- Review and approve assessment results
- Review all internal verifications reports and external authentication reports
- Sign off on approved results
- Agree to the submission to QQI of results and request for certification
- Identify any issues arising in relation to the results and make recommendations for corrective action.

A results approval report must be completed and filed for our self-evaluation and internal monitoring and be made available to QQI on request.

In planning/reviewing the process we will consider the following:

- Terms of reference for the results approval panel
- The composition of the panel
- Procedures for panel members in conducting the process

In planning/reviewing the process we will specify the approach for addressing and documenting issues arising, decisions made, and actions taken.

Before the panel commences its work, consideration must be given to how it will proceed in dealing with issues which may arise, for example:

- Where the views of panel members disagree with the findings and recommendations of the external authentication report, including changes to assessment grades
- Where there is conflicting information between the internal verification report(s) and the external authentication report(s)
- Where serious cause for concern has been identified in relation to the fair and consistent assessment process and /or the validity of the assessment results
- Where corrective action is warranted
- Other matters arising in relation to assessment

The work of the panel must be conducted in a fair and transparent manner, while maintaining confidentiality around learner information.

6.1.8.1.2 Terms of Reference for Results Approval Panel

The panel determines its own terms of reference which must be fully consistent with section 6.1.8.1.1.

The work of the panel must be conducted in a fair and transparent manner, while maintaining confidentiality around learner information.

6.1.8.1.3 Roles and Responsibilities of Panel Members

The composition of the results approval panel must be appropriate to context and have the capacity and authority to make final decisions.

We ensure that the panel is briefed/ trained on its role.

Members of the panel must be clear about their responsibility prior to each meeting.

Consideration should be given to:

- Agreeing terms of reference for the panel
- Confidentiality statements
- How decisions are to be taken
- Chairing the meeting
- Minute taking for the meeting
- The Agenda
- Documentation for the meeting
- Reporting on the meeting

6.1.8.1.5 Results Approval Schedule

The results approval process may take place in a relatively tight time frame. A clear structure for the process and meetings must be defined. The ETA committee will determine when, and how often, the results approval panel will meet.

6.1.8.1.6 Membership of the Results Approval Panel

The Managing Director, General Manager, Quality Manager, External Authenticator are members of the results approval panel.

Number of Results Approval Panel Members

We will consider the optimum number of results approval panel members, ideally a minimum of three members. A quorum may be specified as the minimum number of panel members required to be present to carry out the functions of the panel effectively.

Criteria for Results Approval Panel Membership

We will establish our own criteria for appointing members of the results approval panel following QQI guidelines.

Results approval panel membership criteria may include expertise/experience in:

- Field of learning/National Framework of Qualifications (NFQ) Level
- Education with specific experience in assessment
- Delivery of the module/programme under discussion
- Assessment of the module/programme under discussion

Selection of Members

Members of the results approval panel will be appointed in accordance with our quality assurance system. Membership **may** include representatives from the following:

- Managing director
- Assessors
- External authenticator(s)
- QQI Coordinator/General manager
- Internal verifier(s)
- Programme coordinator
- Quality Manager
- Relevant external experts (workplace/field of learning/National Framework of Qualifications (NFQ) level expert)
- Other relevant personnel

6.1.8.1.7 Procedures for Results Approval Panel Members

Voting rights of panel members:

Voting rights will be determined by the ETA committee, for example:

- It may not be deemed appropriate for assessors on the panel to have voting rights
- The chair may be allocated the role of casting vote

Confidentiality:

We will establish procedures for ensuring that confidential information is protected throughout the process for example:

- A statement of confidentiality to govern the work of the results approval panel
- Members will be requested to confirm their compliance with the confidentiality statement at the commencement of all results approval panel meetings (section 6.1.8.1.9 Results Approval - Sample Confidentiality Statement for Panel Members)
- Procedures for dealing with written information and documents

Conflicts of interest:

All conflicts of interest will be addressed by the ETA committee.

Panel members must disclose potential conflicts of interest which may include:

- Family relationship
- Personal relationship
- Grievance/similar issue
- Other issues

Responsibilities of the Results Approval Panel

The results approval panel will ensure that results are fully quality assured in accordance with our quality assurance system. It must approve and sign off on the results and agree to the submission of them to QQI for certification. This process includes:

- Reviewing all learner results recorded
- Reviewing the internal verification and external authentication reports.
- Judging the outcomes and recommendations of the reports (including changes to assessment grades) made
- Reaching agreement on any response/ actions required
- Reaching agreement to approve the authenticated results and sign off on them
- Agreement to the submission to QQI of final results to request certification.

Results Approval Panel Report

The ETA committee will decide the format of the final results approval panel report; this is based on the minutes of the panel meeting(s) with a template including:

- Matters arising
- Decisions made
- Recommendations or actions taken.

Procedures followed in reaching decisions in situations where disagreement arose should also be documented.

The results approval panel report must be filed for self-evaluation and internal monitoring and also be available to QQI.

Procedures for Good Practice in Conducting the Results Approval Process

In determining the methodology for the work of the results approval panel, we may consider the following:

- Assurance of impartiality.
- Assurance of confidentiality.
- Defined approach for arriving at decisions
- Defined actions to be taken where disagreement arises
- How final decisions are agreed, for example by:
 - Consensus
 - Majority vote
 - Executive decision making
- The schedule for the process, for example, the order in which learner results will be grouped and presented
- The schedule for staff members and others who will report to or advise the panel in relation to results for learner groups
- How procedures and outcomes are to be documented and reported in the results approval panel report
- Procedures for agreeing the contents of the results approval panel report
- Procedures in relation to corrective actions, including:
 - documenting actions agreed
 - determining roles
 - responsibilities and the timescale involved in actions agreed
 - reporting and follow-up
- Panel members may complete a statement of procedural compliance to confirm that the results approval procedures were adhered to throughout the process

Concluding the Results Approval Process and Issuing Results to Learners

We will issue a statement of results to learners. The QBS allows ECAC to produce individual statements of results for learners.

Learners must be informed of our appeals process and given a minimum of 14 days from the date of issue of a statement of results in which to lodge an appeal.

Requesting Certification

Following the decision of the results approval panel all approved results must be forwarded to QQI.

We will:

- Enter approved results on the QBS and make a request for certification. At the point of requesting certification for learners we will confirm that we have implemented all elements of the authentication process including internal verification and external authentication and have adhered to our quality assurance system.
- We will ensure that there are checks in place to ensure that the correct learner results are submitted.

6.1.8.1.8 Comparison of City & Guilds & QQI processes

As ECAC intends to be a provider of both City & Guilds and QQI certified training with regard to F Gas certification we believe it is important that candidates understand the different assessment procedures between each award. Consequently, we have developed the table below.

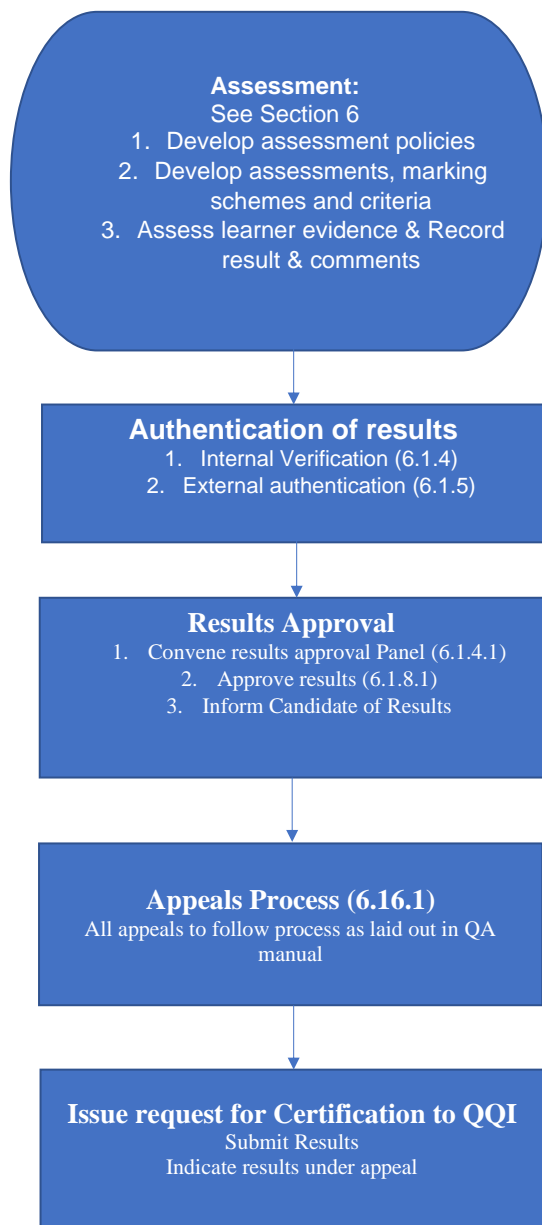
Process	City & Guilds	QQI
Award name	City & Guilds 2079 Cat. 1, 2,3 & 4	Level 5 Special Purpose Certificate in F-gas Handling in Large RACHPT&T Systems Category I
Learning outcomes	All learning outcomes are currently aligned with the specified requirements of EU No 517/2014	All learning outcomes are currently aligned with the specified requirements of EU No 517/2014
Assessment development	Assessments are specified and provided by City & Guilds and are currently	Assessment material is developed by the training centre and is aligned with EU No 517/2014

	aligned with EU No 517/2014	
Theory Assessment	Online Assessment using City & Guilds E-volve platform, each paper is randomly generated to align with EU No 517/2014	Assessment is produced by the training centre to align with EU No 517/2014 & the requirements of QQI
Practical Assessment	City & Guilds specified to align with the requirements of EU No 517/2014	Training Centre generated to align with the requirements of EU No 517/2014 & the requirements of QQI
Marking (Theory)	The theory Assessment carried out online is automatically marked by Evolve	The theory Assessment is marked by the training centre
Marking (Practical)	The practical Assessment is marked by the training centre	The practical assessment is marked by the training centre
Grading	City & Guilds provides only pass/fail results. Both the theory & Practical assessments must be passed	<p>QQI results:</p> <p>Pass 50% - 64%</p> <p>Merit 65% - 79%</p> <p>Distinction 80% - 100%</p> <p>It should be noted that a pass mark from QQI is acceptable with regards to EU No 517/2014</p>
Certification	E certs are available within 5 days of completion of assessment	Certs may take up to 3 months to be provided



Validity of certification	Since Brexit this is only valid in the United Kingdom	Valid throughout the EU but not in the United Kingdom
Results Verification/Authentication	City & Guilds require both an Internal Verifier (Provided by ECAC) and an External Authenticator provided by City & Guilds	QQI require both an Internal Verifier (Provided by ECAC) and an external Authenticator independent of ECAC

6.1.8.1.9 QQI Assessment Procedures



How we devise Assessments

In order to comply with the requirements of QQI learners are assessed by the use of valid and reliable assessment techniques. We will use a variety of techniques which are both valid and appropriate to the award to generate different forms of learner evidence for the specified learning outcomes. The assessment technique(s) are outlined below.

For each technique ECAC will devise the following.

- An assessment instrument e.g., examination paper/ questions & practical assessments
- Assessment instructions
- Assessment criteria
- A marking scheme.

ECAC Assessment Techniques

ECAC will follow the assessment techniques as devised by QQI. These are grouped into the following six broad categories:

- Assignment
- Project
- Portfolio
- Skills Demonstration
- Examination

Assessment instruments

Assessment instruments are documented activities or tasks design to to support the assessment method and collect the evidence of candidate competence.

An assessment instrument could include:

- oral and written questions
- observation/demonstration checklists
- projects, case studies, scenarios
- recognition or workplace portfolios
- workplace portfolios

Due to the nature of the courses we offer not all of these assessments are appropriate. Our courses are of a short duration and therefore assessment techniques such as Projects, Portfolios and Assignments are not appropriate as these techniques are devised for longer courses.



Our assessments come under to Skills demonstrations & Theory examinations.

ECAC will ensure that the design of assessment instrument(s) will

- be appropriate and fit for purpose.
- generate sufficient evidence of the candidate's competence
- be representative of the learning outcomes
- be reliable and repeatable
- is achievable using available resources

our candidates are required to sit both a theory examination and a skills demonstration (Practical)

Theory Examinations

A Theory examination is a test that examine a person's knowledge of the theoretical aspects of a subject or area of study. It is typically made up of a range of questions which can be designed in a number of ways. The nature of our courses makes both short answer questions and multiple-choice questions suitable.

Short-answer questions

These are open-ended questions that require candidates to create an answer. They are commonly used in examinations to assess the basic knowledge and understanding of a subject.

Typically, short answer questions may require answers such as complete the sentence or supply the missing word or involve short description answers. Answers are short and can be anything from one word to a few lines. form.

Multiple Choice Questions

multiple choice question type allows the respondent to choose one or multiple options from a list of possible answers. They are suitable for assessing the factual knowledge of candidates. They are not open ended or ambiguous questions.

Our multiple-choice questions will be clear, concise and have 4 possible answers.

Below is an example of a typical multiple-choice question used in our assessments.

Q.

The purpose of a liquid receiver is to:

A

- a) supply sub cooled liquid to the evaporator*
- b) supply saturated liquid to the liquid line*
- c) supply saturated liquid to the evaporator*
- d) supply sub cooled liquid to the liquid line*

Skills demonstration (Practical)

Practical skills demonstration is a demonstration of a skill by a candidate to enable the assessor assess the skills and competency of the candidate. At ECAC you will be provided with a brief or set of instructions and tasks to carry out. You will also be asked to complete paperwork and record operating conditions as part of this skills demonstration. This will be used as evidence of completion of the assessment.

The skills demonstration will take place in our purpose-built workshop. We will ensure that each candidate receives clear instructions and guidelines on the assessment and the duration,

All equipment will be made available to the candidate. Below is a typical practical assessment sheet.

Date of Assessment				
Candidate Name				
Registration number				
Centre Number				
Assessor's name				
Internal Verifier's name				
F gas ASSESSMENT DOCUMENTATION CATEGORY 1 & 11 – assessments need only differ in terms of the weight of the charge.				
Ref	Task	Description	Task taken (yes/no)	Result (pass/fail)
10.01	1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fabricate brazed joint – installation into test rig <i>Notes: Fabricate, Weld, braze and/or solder leak free joints, fit to system with mechanical joints.</i> Comments		
10.02	2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Examination of pipe work on test rig system <i>Notes: Candidate shall check pipe work, rig components, and pipe supports.</i> Comments		
3.02	3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Determines appropriate pressures to EN378 Comments		
3.03	4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Carries out strength test Comments		
3.04	5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Carries out leak and pressure tests (low & high side) <i>Note: Test rig should have a leak present prior to fitting fabricated brazed joint – candidate should find, fix and record in F Gas log.</i>		

		<p><i>Leak test direct and indirect to be carried out in line with EU Commission Standard Leak checking requirements</i></p> <p><i>Comments</i></p>		
3.05	6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evacuates system to below 2 Torr / 2000microns / 2.7mbar / 270Pa <p><i>Comments</i></p>		
	7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Completes Records: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>F Gas Log</i> • <i>Leak, pressure and strength test</i> • <i>Vacuum</i> 		
5.02	8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identifies gas in system, charges zeotropic blend into system – records weight charged <p><i>Comments</i></p>		
5-05	9	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Runs system <p><i>Comments</i></p>		
	10 11	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identifies state of refrigerant in cylinder prior to charging • Identifies state of refrigerant in system while running 		
4.03	12	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Visually checks system for leak <p><i>Comments</i></p>		
4.06		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Uses gauges / thermometer / refrigerant comparator / liquid sight glass and refrigerant log book to determine that charge is correct by indirect leakage check <p><i>Comments</i></p>		
4.07		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Uses electronic leak detector to carry out direct leak check <p><i>Comments</i></p>		

4.08		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Completes leak check records <i>Comments</i>		
5.01	16	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Connects and disconnects gauges to / from running system with minimal refrigerant loss (by reducing gauge pressures to safe minimum loss) • Service valve <i>Comments</i>		
	17	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Schraeder valve <i>Comments</i>		
5.02	18	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Safely recovers refrigerant from system into recovery cylinder <i>Comments</i>		
5.03 5.06	19	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Records weight of refrigerant recovered <i>Note: Candidate completes waste transfer note</i> <i>Comments</i>		
5.04	20	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Drains oil from a compressor <i>Note: Candidate completes waste transfer note</i> <i>Comments</i>		
Candidate Feedback				



Passed	Yes/No	Result	
Candidate signature			Date
Assessor's signature			Date
Internal verifier's signature			Date
External verifier's signature			Date
No of candidates to assessor on rigs			
No of candidates on rig			



6.1.8.1.8 Results Approval - Sample Agenda

ECAC Results approval panel meeting for

Date of meeting:

Time of meeting:

Venue for meeting:

1. Apologies for absence
2. Confirmation of quorum and membership
3. Declaration of Interest
4. Confidentiality statement

Members of the results approval panel are reminded that the proceedings of the panel are confidential, and that all documentation is the property of the panel and should be returned at close of meeting.

5. Consideration of internal verification reports
6. Issues arising from internal verification reports
7. Consideration of external authentication reports
8. Issues arising from external authentication reports
9. Confirmation of amendments to results
10. Recommendations for approval of final results for all learners
 - a. All results are read
 - b. Final results sheets are signed by the Chair
 - c. Agree to submit final results to QQI
 - d. Confirmation of decisions by Chair
11. AOB

Please ensure that all documents are returned to the general manager on close of meeting

No results approval documents should be taken from the meeting



6.1.8.1.9 Results Approval - Sample Confidentiality Statement for Panel Members

Results approval panel meeting for *insert programme title(s) here*

I, the undersigned, agree to abide by the results approval procedures described in the ECAC quality assurance manual.

I agree to participate in the results approval process as outlined in these procedures.

As a member of the results approval panel, I confirm that it is my understanding that the proceedings of the panel are confidential and that all documentation is the property of the panel and should be returned at close of meeting.

Signed: _____ Date: _____

Name (in block capitals): _____

6.1.8.1.10 Checklist for the Results Approval Process

Planning the Results Approval Process	
Plan methodology for results approval process	
Appoint results approval panel members	
Assign roles and responsibilities for the panel members	
Formulate terms of reference for the results approval panel	
Brief results approval panel members on the process	
Plan time frame for the process <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Dates for results approval panel meeting(s) ○ Deadline for completion of the process ○ Date for forwarding results to QQI and learners ○ Deadline for appeals 	
Ensure that all relevant documents are available including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Internal verification report(s) ○ External authentication report(s) ○ All learner results (original and moderated) 	
Prepare and circulate results approval panel agenda	
The Results Approval Panel Meeting	
Review internal verification report, discuss any issues arising and recommend action where appropriate	
Review external authentication report, discuss any issues arising and recommend action where appropriate	
Results approval <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Review final moderated results for all Learners ○ Approve results as appropriate ○ Document the rationale for decisions made ○ Sign off on approved final results – in accordance with our quality assurance system. ○ Ensure all points on the agenda have been covered ○ Ensure that all relevant documents have been signed. 	
Record minutes of the meeting	
Concluding Results Approval Process	
Ensure that any decisions or recommendations requiring follow up are reported as appropriate.	



Ensure that all appropriate records and documentation relating to results approval process are stored in accordance with our quality assurance system and are available to the QQI monitoring process	
Ensure all copies of confidential material are destroyed or securely stored as appropriate	
Follow up for Approved Results	
Forward results to QQI using the QBS and request certification	
Issue results statement to learners	
Notify learners about the appeals process	

6.1.9 Assessment feedback

We assess learners regularly and constructively to support the teaching and learning process. Feedback is used to provide useful information on learner progress in meeting their own learning goals and in meeting national standards.

6.1.10 Assessment review

We regularly review assessment materials to improve the learning experience, this includes the review of assessment materials relating to content, learning outcomes and technological considerations.

The review of assessment materials related to changes in learning outcomes takes place when required.

Reviews are considered in more detail in section 11.

6.2.1 Internal Verifier

The role of the Internal Verifier is to systematically check that ECAC's assessment procedures have been applied consistently across assessment activities and to verify the accuracy of assessment results.

The internal Verifier(s) will:

- check that ECAC's assessment procedures were adhered to.
- monitor assessment results on a sample basis
- produce an internal verification report.

The internal verification process will ensure.

- ECAC's assessment procedures are adhered to.
- learning has been assessed using the techniques and instruments as indicated in the validated programme.
- assessment results are documented and recorded as per ECAC's procedures.

Verification of assessment results

The internal verification process will involve the verification of assessment results on a sampling basis. This involves checking that assessment evidence is available for

all learners presented and that results are recorded, and grades are assigned according to QQI requirements. This is achieved by applying systematic checks of the evidence presented by a sample of learners to ensure that:

- evidence is available for learners presented for an award (i.e., evidence for all minors is available for the major award)
- evidence is generated as per the technique identified in the Award Specification and using appropriate instruments as indicated in the validated programme.
- assessment results are available for each learner.
- that marks are totalled and percentage marks are calculated correctly.
- the percentage marks and grades awarded are consistent with QQI grading bands.

In devising an effective internal verification process ECAC should consider the following:

- the number of assessors
- the number of learners
- the number, range and diversity of awards being offered.
- the number of centres within the provider's remit.

A sample of assessment results are internally verified prior to being submitted for external authentication and results approval.

6.2.2 External Authenticator

External authentication provides independent authoritative confirmation of fair and consistent assessment of learners in accordance with national standards. It establishes the credibility of ECAC's assessment processes and ensures that assessment results have been marked in a valid and reliable way and are compliant with the requirements for the award.

External authentication is undertaken through the assignment of an independent external authenticator by ECAC for each major, special purpose and supplemental award.

- The external authenticator must be independent of the centre to which they are assigned.
- The external authenticator will moderate assessment results for an award or across a number of awards within a related field or sub-field of the major, special purpose, supplemental of learning.
- The external authenticator will have subject matter expertise in the appropriate field or subfield to which they are assigned.
-

The outcome of the external authentication process is an external authentication report which will comment on the effectiveness of the application of the assessment process and 26 procedures and in particular comment on the extent to which the marks/grades conform to national standards. The external authenticator's reports will be made available to the QQI monitor.

Role of the external authenticator

The role of the external authenticator is to provide independent confirmation of fair and consistent assessment of learners in line with QQI requirements and to ensure consistency of assessment results with national standards.

External authenticators will:

- confirm the fair and consistent assessment of learners consistent with ECAC's procedures and with QQI policy on quality assuring assessment.
- review internal verification report(s) and authenticate the findings/outcomes.
- apply a sampling strategy to moderate assessment results consistent with QQI requirements.
- moderate assessment results in accordance with standards outlined in the Award Specification.
- visit the centre and meet with appropriate staff and learners.

- participate in the results approval process as per ECAC's agreed procedures.
- identify any issues/irregularities in relation to the Assessment Process.
- recommend results for approval.
- produce an external authentication report (Appendix 11)
- be independent of ECAC.

The Internal Verifier is responsible for ensuring that assessment decisions are consistent across the programme by checking that assignments are fit for purpose, standardising assessors, and sampling assessment decisions.

Anyone involved in the delivery and assessment of the programme can be an Internal Verifier but cannot internally verify their own assessment.

On request, Internal Authenticators may be required to attend the Quality Management Review meeting to provide:

- verbal evidence of how centre systems and procedures are understood and implemented at programme level
- evidence of programme management of Awards in the subject area

Standards Verification responsibilities

Internal Authenticators need to ensure that all assessment plans, assignments, and assessment decisions have been internally verified and that assessors take appropriate action based on their feedback.

External Authenticator

An External Authenticator is responsible for external verification and qualification approval activities under the conditions, timescales and arrangements set by ECAC. The prime role is to participate in verification of qualifications in the subject area(s)



concerned to ensure that standards are maintained. These activities will be under the direction of the Senior External Authenticator and staff from ECAC.

Outline of duties

- Participate in central verification events, carry out external verification visits and/or participate in postal verification visits as required.
- Participate in prior verification of centres' internally devised instruments of assessment.
- Assist Internal Assessment Delivery and Quality Assurance staff with policy and subject specific enquiries from ECAC.
- Deliver and participate in external Authenticator training events.
- Additionally, External Authenticators may be asked to undertake the following activities. These activities will attract additional payments.
 - Act as a Vetter for internal assessment materials in the subject area concerned.
 - Participate in ECAC organised events where External Authenticator input is required.
 - Contribute to the Understanding Standards activities

Selection Criteria

Successful candidates must:

- Be a current practitioner and have up-to-date verifiable subject knowledge.
- Be currently assessing and/or verifying assessments across the range of courses, levels, qualification types, and the areas for which they are appointed.
- Be able to demonstrate excellent interpersonal skills and be able to engage positively with all members of their team.
- Be able to communicate confidently, effectively, and professionally at briefings, meetings and in writing (reports)
- Be able to work co-operatively and professionally with other centre staff.
- Be able to demonstrate excellent organisational and administrative skills with and provide an attention to detail.

- Have an in-depth understanding of all documentation, duties, tasks, and procedures associated with the verification area for which they have responsibility.
- Have a home computer or laptop with broadband internet connection and a private e-mail address.
-

Key Performance Measures for External Authenticators

Each year on completion of the duties outlined in the External Authenticator contract specification, the External Authenticator will be measured against the following key performance measures and informed of the outcome in relation to their performance in that year.

1. Demonstrate an up to date and sound knowledge of the occupational standards and qualifications/courses/units and make sound judgements about the quality of assessment and the assessment process.
2. Demonstrate current understanding of ECACs QA policies and processes that are relevant to the QA activity.
3. Complete scheduled allocation of QA activity within conditions and timescales for ECAC.
4. Complete QA reports as per ECAC quality standards and within agreed timescales.
5. Engage with all members of the team, ECAC centre's personnel and with all members of ECAC staff displaying ECACs values.
6. Submit a current Personal Development Plan (PDP) and CPD record within agreed timescales where appropriate.

7 Supports for Learners

Support for learners' policy

To ensure that learners are supported throughout their engagement with us.

Our learners come from diverse backgrounds with a wide variety of learning goals, strengths, needs and interests. Support for the learner is built into all elements of our programmes.

Our learner support systems take cognisance of the fact that our training courses are a maximum of 4 days.

7.1 Supports for learners

7.1.1 An integrated approach from the perspective of the learner

Our administration team ensures that all learners are informed about resources and supports available to them and that these are delivered in an integrated, timely manner.

We respect learners' privacy and confidentiality.

All learners are provided with a copy of the learner handbook to assist them.

We support learners with disabilities to assist them in achieving their educational goals. Learners with disabilities can include learners with learning difficulties, physical disabilities, mental health issues, ongoing illnesses or short-term illness or injury. In so far as is possible, we endeavour to assist learners to avail of our programmes and resources and to achieve their educational goals.

7.1.2 Pastoral care

Given the short-term nature of our training courses our learners do not require pastoral care.

7.1.3 Access to services related to programmes

As detailed in section 3.3 our training programmes are reviewed on a regular basis. This is a holistic review which ensures that all services required for the programme are available and optimised. This includes, but is not limited to, our workshop equipment.

7.1.4 Learner representation

Given the short-term nature of our courses and the relatively small number of learners we have at any time we do not consider it necessary to have any form of students' union.

We are committed to gaining feedback from our learners in order to improve the quality and effectiveness of our programmes and services. We provide several feedback channels to learners to allow them to give feedback in a variety of ways. We believe that our learners should take an active part in defining their learning needs and directing the content of study.

The Managing Director has overall responsibility for ensuring that feedback from learners takes place and recommendations are used to improve the service and inform practice. The General Manager is responsible for gaining and monitoring feedback from learners.

We actively seek feedback from learners, staff, and other stakeholders on an ongoing basis.

We organise learner questionnaires and consult industry representatives to provide feedback as part of the self-evaluation process and external evaluation process.

7.1.4.1 ECAC Complaints Policy

ECAC works hard to maintain and improve the standard of service we provide. If learners are not happy with some aspect of our service, they are encouraged to inform us. We welcome comments as a means of helping us to continue to improve our services.

We aim to acknowledge and investigate complaints promptly, fully, and fairly. If an investigation shows that our procedures are inadequate, we will change them as soon as practicable.

Any individual or organisation may make a complaint and we will treat all complaints in the strictest confidence. If you make a complaint, it will not affect the type of service you receive from us.

To help you make a complaint, this policy describes what types of complaints we can and cannot deal with, and the steps involved in making and resolving a complaint.

What can I make a complaint about?

You can make a complaint about a service ECAC provides or about the actions of a member of our staff. Complaints about ECAC's general activities, or services not provided by ECAC are not covered by this policy.

How do I make a complaint?



Our complaints procedure has three stages:

- First, you should contact the appropriate ECAC staff member directly (Stage 1).
- If you are not happy with their response, you can make a formal complaint to ECAC's General Manager (Stage 2).
- If you are still not satisfied, you can ask the Managing Director of ECAC to review your complaint (Stage 3).

We aim to resolve as many issues as possible in Stage 1.

Stage 1

Contact the staff member that you were dealing with when the incident that caused you to complain occurred. Please make contact within two weeks (that is, 10 working days) of the incident. If you just want to make us aware of a problem and do not expect a detailed response, please tell us this.

We will acknowledge your complaint within 5 working days. If we can, we will give you a full reply within a month (or 20 working days) of receiving your complaint. If we cannot give a full reply within this period, we will write to tell you that we are considering your complaint.

If we cannot resolve your complaint or if you are not happy with our final reply in Stage 1, you can complain to our Communications Officer. This is dealt with in Stage 2 of this policy.

Stage 2

If you contact the General Manager at this stage, we see this as you are making a formal complaint. Because of this, we ask you to put it in writing.

You should contact the General Manager within 10 working days of receiving the final reply from the staff member contacted in Stage 1.

The General Manager will acknowledge receiving your complaint within 5 working days. They will then investigate and will aim to give a full reply within 20 working days. If a full reply is not possible, the General Manager will write to let you know that ECAC is dealing with your complaint. If we are at fault, we will let you know what we are doing to put the matter right so that the issue does not arise again.

If you are not happy with the General Manager's final reply in Stage 2, you may ask for the matter to be reviewed by the Managing Director of ECAC. This is dealt with in Stage 3 of the complaint procedure.

Stage 3

If you are not satisfied with the Communications Officer's response, please contact the Managing Director of ECAC within 10 working days of receiving their final reply (In the event of a conflict of interest the Managing Directors role is assumed by the ETA Committee.)

Please put your complaint in writing. If this is not possible, you can make an appointment to meet the Managing Director to discuss your concerns.

Contact the Managing Director at



Managing Director
ECAC
Stabannon
Co Louth
A91 VK44

and include a copy of your complaint details as well as any letters or emails sent to or from ECAC about the original incident. The Managing Director will acknowledge your letter within 5 working days, where possible.

The Managing Director will investigate your complaint by talking to the staff member(s) you dealt with earlier and may contact you to clarify any points. The Managing Director will raise the issue at the next available meeting of ECAC's ETA Committee. The members of the ETA Committee will review the matter and agree a final reply.

The Managing Director will aim to give you the final reply to your complaint within 10 working days of the ETA Committee meeting.

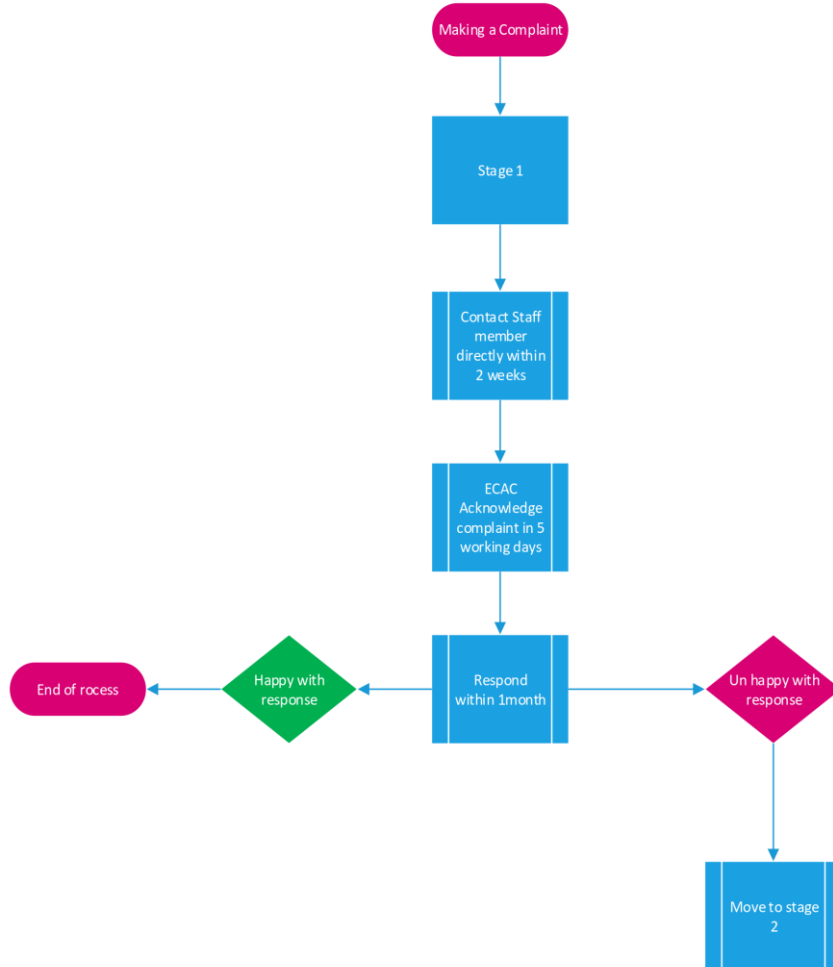
[7.1.4.1.1 How we learn from complaints](#)

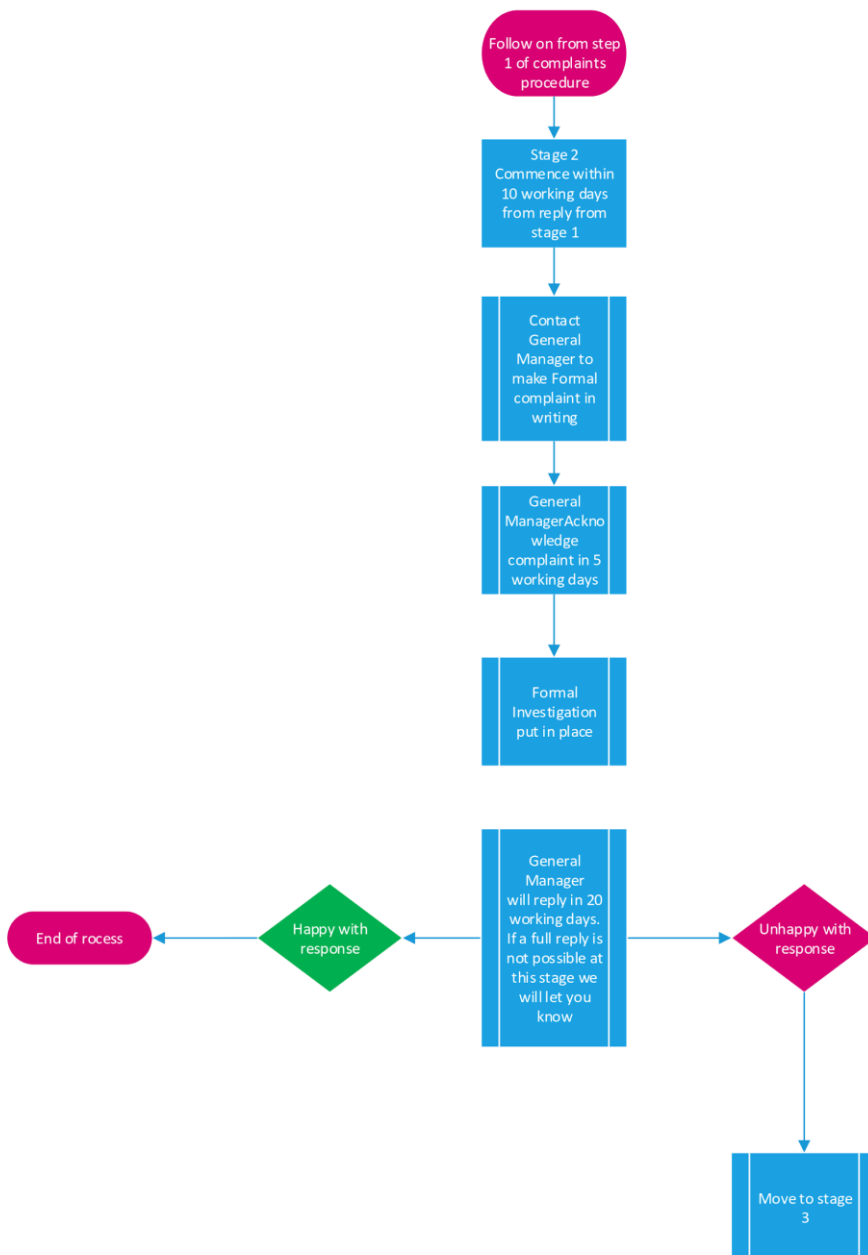
We are committed to learning from complaints, using them to improve our service and monitoring them at management and ETA Committee level.

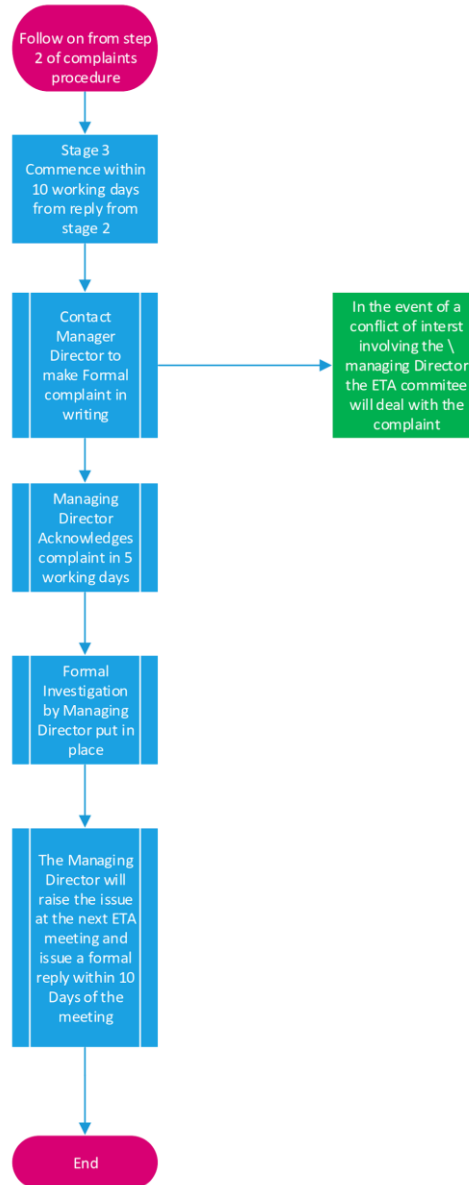
[7.1.4.1.2 Publication of QA manual and associated documentation](#)

We confirm that all relevant QA documentation will be published on our website, and this will be updated to allow for any future revisions. This will include any documentation for services for students

7.1.4.1.2 Making a complaint procedure chart







7.1.5 Guidance

It is in both the interests of our organisation, and the interests of our learners, that we provide accurate and relevant information on our programmes.

Typically, a prospective learner's first point of contact is our website and, as described in section 9.2, this provides learners with information relating to training programmes and awards.

Following on from that our learner information system, detailed in section 8.2, both provides additional information to learners and records our contacts with them.

Given the short-term nature of our courses it would not appropriate to provide information on career pathways.

7.2 Compassionate considerations

Procedures have been put in place to enable learners to apply for compassionate consideration in relation to their assessment. ECAC will enable learners who have been prevented from undertaking a specific assessment activity or who feel their performance is seriously impaired because of exceptional circumstances to apply to defer the assessment i.e. to be allowed to complete the assessment activity on another occasion.

The following are examples of circumstances under which ECAC may consider giving compassionate consideration to the learner:

- physical injury or emotional trauma during a period four to six weeks previously
- physical disability or chronic or disabling condition such as epilepsy, glandular fever, or other incapacitating illness of the learner.
- recent bereavement of close family member or friend
- severe accident
- domestic crisis
- terminal illness of a close family member
- other extenuating circumstances.
-

Any procedure in relation to compassionate consideration requires the learner to provide appropriate evidence/documentation e.g. a statement from a medical practitioner. ECAC will consider the severity of the circumstances, the nature of the assessment activity and the quality of past achievement of the learner where appropriate in making the decision to grant compassionate consideration.

Principles of Assessment in relation to Assessment Deadlines and Compassionate consideration Assessment is underpinned by the principles of assessment including the fair principle (equal opportunity for all learners) and consistent principle (consistency in approach to assessment across all programmes and modules). Assessment deadlines are dates that are planned in advance of assessment and should be adhered to.

In order to ensure the fair and consistent assessment of learners, the following procedures will be followed in relation to the deadlines for submission of learner evidence.

- ECACs Quality Assurance System overarches these principles and ensures learner achievement is assessed in a fair and consistent way in line with the national standards for the award.
- In order to ensure fairness and consistency across all assessment activities, learners may be granted an extension to an assessment deadline under extenuating circumstances. In these circumstances, the learner will not be unfairly disadvantaged as a result of extenuating circumstances. Furthermore, the learner will not gain significant advantage when compared with other learners.
- Learners may also apply for compassionate consideration in relation to their assessment. Such compassionate consideration could include deferring an assessment activity or providing an extension to an assessment deadline and will only be granted in extenuating circumstances with supporting relevant evidence/documentation. In these circumstances, the learner must not be unfairly disadvantaged as a result of extenuating circumstances. Furthermore, the learner must not gain significant advantage when compared with other learners.
- Compassionate consideration is subject to training centre resources and may be timeline restricted.

7.2.1 Short Term Extensions

Short term extensions

With regard to assessment ECAC will ensure that all Learners are treated equitably. In order to assist the transparency where Learners require additional/extended submission timelines, it is necessary for ECAC to have a policy that supports the request for information from the Learner so that an appropriate and sincere evidence base can be sought so as to inform the accuracy of judgement.

A learner may apply to defer an assessment event due to extenuating circumstances and do so by making a written Application to defer assessment due to Extenuating Circumstances. These circumstances may include:

unforeseen events which may have prevented a learner from attending a substantial number of classes and by doing so, has affected the ability to study for and complete assessments.

- The occurrence of unforeseen events which prevents a learner from attending a scheduled practical skills demonstration or examination assessment,
- The occurrence of unforeseen events which prevents a learner from completing written assessments shortly before and prior to a submission timeline,
- The occurrence of unforeseen events which has adversely affected performance in any assessments undertaken and submitted.
-

Extenuating Circumstances do not cover events which are foreseen, such as sporting, cultural or leisure.

ECAC considers the severity of the circumstances, the nature and weighting of the assessment activity and the quality of past achievement of the learner where

appropriate, in making the decision to grant compassionate consideration. This decision is final and is not subject to an appeal. Learners are notified of the decision within 5 working days.

7.3 Conduct and security of assessments (on and offsite)

The Assessment Process is the process of judging learner achievement in relation to the standards of knowledge, skill, and competence so that the successful learner may receive an award. Assessment takes place following a learning activity the learner undertakes through a validated programme.

The key parties to the Assessment Process and their respective roles are outlined below.

The role of ECAC is to develop and implement policies and procedures for the fair and consistent assessment of learners in line with the requirements of QQI.

ECAC is responsible for:

developing best practice assessment policies and procedures

- agreeing their assessment policies and procedures.
- implementing a quality assured assessment policy and procedures
- applying all QQI requirements
- ensuring appropriate assessment personnel are in place.
- establishing an Authentication Process which includes.
 - - internal verification
 - - external authentication, including setting criteria for the selection and appointment of external authenticators
- establishing a Results Approval Process
- establishing an Appeals Process.
- In addition, ECAC must ensure that the programme structure, content and assessment arrangements meet the requirements of the named Award Specification to which the programme is designed to lead.

The Assessor The role of the assessor is to evaluate learner evidence and make the assessment decision/judgment on whether the outcomes of knowledge, skill, or competence, as outlined in the Award Specification, have been achieved.

The specific responsibilities of the assessor are to:

- implement ECAC's assessment procedures across all assessment activities.
- provide opportunities for learners to generate appropriate evidence.
- design assessment instruments
- devise marking schemes and grading criteria.
- review and judge learner evidence
- make the assessment decision.
- provide information and feedback to learners.

Assessment Procedures As part of its quality assurance system ECAC have put in place procedures that demonstrate that the Assessment Process is fair and consistent and that learners are kept informed of what is expected of them and of their progress in achieving it.

Assessment Planning The assessment for each programme is planned in advance of commencing learning and assessment activities. This includes:

- a) the range of specific learning outcomes to be assessed
- b) the assessment techniques and instruments
- c) the timing of assessment activities
- d) any deadlines and due dates
- e) how marks are to be allocated and assessment criteria is to be applied.

Learners will be made fully aware of the QQI award to which the programme leads and of the assessment and grading requirements. Learners should have access to the following:

- the relevant Award Specification

- appropriate information in relation to the assessment techniques
- ECAC's policy on deadlines and key dates and deadlines for submission of evidence
- information for learners with disabilities or other special requirements
- information on ECAC's Appeals Process.

Security of Assessment

Our Assessment procedures and systems incorporate secure mechanisms for recording, storing and accessing learners' assessment records.

Specific assessment techniques such as examinations require secure mechanisms for storage and confidentiality to ensure their validity and consistency. Provision is made for storing secure material.

The potential for learner appeals of assessment results and the appropriate need for retention of learner evidence for a sufficient period of time has been taken into account, we retain records for 5 years. All assessment, verification records and documentation are available both for internal verification and external authentication.

The following may be contained within an assessment record for an individual learner:

- learner's name
- contact details
- title of the QQI award
- title of the programme (if different)
- any specific learner requirements
- name(s) of the assessor(s)
- name(s) of internal Authenticator(s) where appropriate
- dates and details of learner feedback; dates and results of assessment activities i.e., recorded grade (cross referenced to the appropriate award)
- outcome of Results Approval Process, including Appeals.
- date award received.

Assessment evidence submitted by the learner should be recorded as having been received to prevent any disagreement between the learner and the assessor. Learner receipts or signatures are mechanisms which may be used to record this.

7.3.1 Repeat Assessments

Where a learner is unsuccessful, on a first attempt in an assessment activity, we provide learners with an opportunity to repeat the assessment activity. Opportunities to repeat an assessment activity are dependent on the nature of the activity and the practical and/or operational issues involved.

7.4 Grading system to be applied.

Awards at level 4, level 5 and level 6 are classified as Pass, Merit or Distinction where a learner has achieved the standards for the award within the grading criteria.

A Pass is a grade awarded to a learner who has attained the minimum standard. To be awarded a pass grade a learner must have achieved a mark of between 50-64%.

A Merit is a grade awarded to a learner who has exceeded the minimum requirements. To be awarded a merit grade a learner must have achieved a mark of between 65-79%.

A Distinction is a grade awarded to a learner who has substantially exceeded the minimum requirements. For a learner to be awarded a distinction he/she must have achieved a mark of 80% or over.

When a learner has not achieved the minimum standards for an award the grade is recorded as Referred.

For competency-based awards or awards with specific legislative requirements regarding levels of competences the assessment will be weighted accordingly, and the grading criteria specified in the Award Specification will reflect the minimum standard of achievement required by the learner.

Grading criteria

Grading criteria describe what a learner must attain to achieve a particular grade for an award at a particular level.

Commented [JS1]: Is tis a repeat of what is on page 17?

Grading Criteria for awards at Level 4 - Level 6

Pass	Merit	Distinction
<p>A Pass indicates that the learner has:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> achieved the learning outcomes as outlined in the minor award - a pass is the minimum acceptable standard used the language of the vocational/specialised area competently attempted to apply the theory and concepts appropriately provided sufficient evidence which has relevance and clarity. 	<p>A Merit indicates that the learner has:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> achieved the learning outcomes as outlined in the minor award - a merit implies a good standard has been achieved used the language of the vocational/specialised area with a degree of fluency expressed and developed ideas clearly demonstrated initiative, evaluation and analytical skills presented coherent and comprehensive evidence. 	<p>A Distinction indicates that the learner has:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> achieved the learning outcomes as outlined in the minor award - a distinction implies that an excellent standard has been achieved used the language of the vocational/specialised area fluently and confidently demonstration-depth understanding of the subject matter demonstrated a high level of initiative, evaluation skills demonstrated analytical and reflective thinking expressed and developed ideas clearly, systematically and comprehensively presented coherent, detailed and focused evidence

Results Approval

A results approval panel will be established by the ETA to ensure assessment decisions and results are reviewed, assessed, and processed in a fair, consistent and transparent manner. The role of the Results Approval Panel is to.

- meet as required to review and approve assessment results.
- review reports of the internal verification and external authentication process
- agree to the submission of final results to QQI to request certification.
- identify any issues arising in relation to the results and make recommendations for corrective action.

The membership of the Results Approval Panel may include members of the ETA committee, Quality manager, and other senior staff members. The Internal Verifier and external authenticator reports should be considered by the panel. The membership of the Panel must be such as to ensure separation of separation of roles for those involved in awarding and reviewing assessment grades.

Results approval Procedures are in place to ensure that results are approved and signed off by the results approval panel. Once the results are approved, they should be immediately:

a) made available to learners

and



b) submitted to QQI. Learners should be given a minimum of 14 days to lodge an appeal. QQI will issue certificates for all the results received except those flagged as under appeal.

8 Information and Data Management

We are a small, stand-alone training provider offering a small number of specialist training courses. We have an information system that is fit for purpose and matches our scale. Further details are shown in the sections below.

8.1 Information systems

We have key performance indicators (KPI's) that provide the information required for informed decision making by all staff.

8.2 Learner information systems

Our process for capturing learner information is shown below.

An initial query from a prospective learner is logged on the incoming queries file.

Learners who wish to proceed are then emailed relevant information and this is followed up by further emails and / or phone calls and the outcome noted. This is also logged on the incoming queries file.

Learners who wish to proceed with training are added to the active candidate list, course details and training dates are assigned, and acceptance of details are logged on the candidate file.

Learners who do not want to take up training immediately are moved to the contacts file.

Each candidate completes a GDPR form to allow storage and processing of their data.

A candidate application form is generated and a training file for each candidate is created containing all candidate and course details.



This candidate application form is then used to register the candidate with City & Guilds and is added to our register.

The candidate's City & Guilds Registration Number is recorded on their personal file together with course and exam details.

A copy of photo ID (e.g. passport, driving license) is taken from each candidate and attached to the candidate file.

On completion of exams all candidate and assessor's paperwork relating to each candidate is attached to their application form and GDPR form. Results details are also stored in the candidate file.

Any feedback from the candidate is noted on their file and actions taken (if any) are noted.

Records are retained for 5 years.

8.3 Management information system

Management information includes the learner data described in section 8.2 and management information including minutes of meetings, evaluation reports and management actions.

8.4 Information for further planning

Management information, learner information, and information obtained from external sources (described in section 10.1.2) is all taken into account for forward planning.

8.5 Completion rates

Completion rates are available from the learner information system described in section 8.3. This information is used for management analysis and is made available to external reviewers.

8.6 Records maintenance and retention

All records are maintained securely and retained for 5 years.



8.7 Data protection and freedom of information

8.7.1 Data Protection

ECAC is a data controller with reference to the personal data which it manages, processes and records.

Employees/clients of ECAC should refer to the guidance provided by the Office of the Irish Data Protection Commissioner (www.dataprotection.ie) as well as seeking professional advice regarding best practice in this area.

Objective

As a data controller, ECAC and its staff (hereafter referred to collectively as ECAC) must comply with the data protection rules set out in the relevant Irish legislation.

This Policy applies to all personal data collected, processed and stored by ECAC in the course of its activities.

In its role as an employer, ECAC may keep information relating to a staff member's physical, physiological or mental well-being, as well as their economic, cultural or social identity.

Personal data also include a combination of identification elements such as physical characteristics, aliases, occupation, home address, etc.

To the extent that ECAC's use of personal data qualifies as 'business to customer' processing, including the organisation's communications to its staff members, the organisation is mindful of its obligations under the relevant Irish legislation, namely:

- The Irish Data Protection Act (1988)
- The Irish Data Protection (Amendment) Act (2003)
- The EU Electronic Communications Regulations (2011).

Who is covered by this policy?

The policy covers both personal and sensitive personal data held in relation to its data subjects by ECAC. The policy applies equally to personal data held in manual and automated form. All personal and sensitive personal data will be treated with equal care by ECAC. Both categories will be equally referred to as personal data in this policy, unless specifically stated otherwise.

Definitions/ Roles and responsibilities

For the avoidance of doubt, and for consistency in terminology, the following definitions apply within this Policy.

Data	<p>This includes both automated and manual data.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Automated data is data held on computer, or stored with the intention that it is processed on computer. <input type="checkbox"/> Manual data is data that is processed as part of a relevant filing system, or which is stored with the intention that it forms part of a relevant filing system.
Personal Data	<p>Information that relates to a living individual, who can be identified either directly from that data, or indirectly in conjunction with other data which is likely to come into the legitimate possession of ECAC.</p>
Sensitive Personal Data	<p>Sensitive personal data is personal data which relates to specific aspects of one's identity or personality, and includes information relating to ethnic or racial identity, political or ideological beliefs, religious beliefs, trade union membership, mental or physical well-being, sexual orientation, or criminal record.</p>
Data Controller	<p>The legal entity responsible for the acquisition, processing and use of the personal data. In the context of this policy, ECAC is the data controller.</p>
Data Subject	<p>A living individual who is the subject of the personal data, i.e. to whom the data relates either directly or indirectly. For example, staff and students.</p>

Data Processor	A person or entity who processes personal data on behalf of ECAC on the basis of a formal, written contract, but who is not an employee of ECAC.
Data Protection Officer	<p>A person appointed by ECAC to monitor compliance with the appropriate data protection legislation, to deal with Subject Access Requests, and to respond to data protection queries from staff members and the general public.</p> <p>ECAC will not be appointing a Data Protection Officer as we do not meet any of the criteria that require a DPO.</p> <p>The Internal Support Coordinator at ECAC will be responsible for those tasks which typically come under the role of the data protection officer.</p>

ECAC as a data controller

In the course of its daily Organisational activities, ECAC acquires, processes and stores personal data in relation to living individuals. To that extent, ECAC is a data controller, and has obligations under the Data Protection legislation, which are reflected in this document. In accordance with Irish Data Protection legislation, this data must be acquired and managed fairly.

ECAC is committed to ensuring that all staff members have sufficient awareness of the legislation in order to be able to anticipate and identify a data protection issue, should one arise. In such circumstances, staff members must ensure that the Internal Support Coordinator is informed, in order to ensure that appropriate corrective action is taken.

Due to the nature of the services provided by ECAC there is a regular and active exchange of personal data between ECAC and its data subjects. In addition, ECAC exchanges personal data with data processors on the data subjects' behalf. This is consistent with ECAC's obligations under the terms of its contracts with its data processors.

This policy provides the guidelines for this exchange of information, as well as the procedure to follow in the event that a staff member is unsure whether such data can be disclosed. In general terms, the staff member should consult with the Internal Support Coordinator to seek clarification.



Third-party processors

This applies only if ECAC engages third-party service providers, or data processors, to process personal data on its behalf.

In each case, a formal, written contract is put in place with the processor, outlining their obligations in relation to the personal data, the security measures that they must have in place to protect the data, the specific purpose or purposes for which they are engaged, and the understanding that they will only process the data in compliance with the Irish Data Protection legislation.

The contract will also include reference to the fact that the data controller is entitled, from time to time, to audit or inspect the data management activities of the data processor, and to ensure that they remain compliant with the legislation, and with the terms of the contract.

The data protection rules

The following key rules are enshrined in Irish legislation and are fundamental to ECAC's data protection policy.

In its capacity as data controller, ECAC ensures that all data shall:

1. *Be obtained and processed fairly and lawfully (GDPR Principle: Lawfulness, Fairness and Transparency)*

For data to be obtained fairly, the data subject will, at the time the data are being collected, be made aware of:

- ☐ The identity of the data controller (ECAC)
- ☐ The purpose(s) for which the data is being collected.
- ☐ The person(s) to whom the data may be disclosed by the data controller.
- ☐ Any other information that is necessary so that the processing may be fair.

ECAC will meet this obligation in the following way:

- Where possible, the informed consent of the data subject will be sought before their data is processed.
- Where it is not possible to seek consent, ECAC will ensure that collection of the data is justified under one of the other lawful processing conditions – legal obligation, contractual necessity, etc.
- Where ECAC intends to record activity on CCTV or video, a Fair Processing Notice will be posted in full view, prior to the recording.
- Processing of the personal data will be carried out only as part of ECAC's lawful activities, and it will safeguard the rights and freedoms of the data subject.
- The subject's data will not be disclosed to a third party other than to a party contracted to ECAC and operating on its behalf, or where ECAC is required to do so by law.

1. Be obtained only for one or more specified, legitimate purposes (GDPR Principle: Purpose Limitation)

ECAC will obtain data for purposes which are specific, lawful and clearly stated. A data subject will have the right to question the purpose(s) for which ECAC holds their data, and it will be able to clearly state that purpose or purposes.

3. Not be further processed in a manner incompatible with the specified purpose(s) (GDPR Principle: Purpose Limitation)

Any use of the data by ECAC will be compatible with the purposes for which the data was acquired.

4. Be kept safe and secure (GDPR Principle: Integrity and Confidentiality)

ECAC will employ high standards of security in order to protect the personal data under its care. ECAC's Password Policy and Data Retention & Destruction Policies guarantee protection against unauthorised access to, or alteration, destruction or disclosure of any personal data held by ECAC in its capacity as data controller.



Access to, and management of, staff and customer records is limited to those staff members who have appropriate authorisation and password access.

In the event of a data security breach affecting the personal data being processed on behalf of the data controller, the relevant third-party processor will notify the data controller without undue delay.

5. Be kept accurate, complete and up to date where necessary (GDPR Principle: Accuracy)

ECAC will:

- ☐ Ensure that administrative and IT validation processes are in place to conduct regular assessments of data accuracy.
- ☐ Conduct periodic reviews and audits to ensure that relevant data is kept accurate and up to date. ECAC conducts a review of sample data every six months to ensure accuracy.
- ☐ Ensure that staff contact details and details on next-of-kin are reviewed and updated every two years, or on an 'ad hoc' basis where staff members inform the office of such changes.
- ☐ Conduct regular assessments in order to validate the need to keep certain personal data.

6. Be adequate, relevant and not excessive in relation to the purpose(s) for which the data were collected and processed (GDPR Principle: Data Minimisation)

ECAC will ensure that the data it processes in relation to data subjects are relevant to the purposes for which those data are collected. Data which are not relevant to such processing will not be acquired or maintained.

Not be kept for longer than is necessary to satisfy the specified purpose(s) (GDPR Principle: Storage Limitation)

Once the respective retention period has elapsed, ECAC undertakes to destroy, erase or otherwise put this data beyond use.

7. Be managed and stored in such a manner that, in the event a data subject submits a valid Subject Access Request seeking a copy of their personal data, this data can be readily retrieved and provided to them (GDPR Principle: Accountability)

ECAC has implemented a Subject Access Request procedure by which to manage such requests in an efficient and timely manner, within the timelines stipulated in the legislation.

Data Subject Access Requests

As part of the day-to-day operation of the organisation, ECAC's staff engages in active and regular exchanges of information with data subjects. Where a valid, formal request is submitted by a data subject in relation to the personal data held by ECAC which relates to them, such a request gives rise to access rights in favour of the Data Subject.

There are specific timelines within which ECAC must respond to the data subject, depending on the nature and extent of the request.

ECAC's staff will ensure that such requests are forwarded to the Internal Support Coordinator in a timely manner, and they are processed as quickly and efficiently as possible, but within not more than one month, with a possibility to extend this period for particularly complex requests.

Implementation

As a data controller, ECAC ensures that any entity which processes personal data on its behalf (a data processor) does so in a manner compliant with the Data Protection legislation through a formal Data Processor Agreement.

Regular audit trail monitoring will be done by the Internal Support Coordinator to ensure compliance with this Agreement by any third-party entity which processes personal data on behalf of ECAC.



Failure of a data processor to manage ECAC's data in a compliant manner will be viewed as a breach of contract and will be pursued through the courts.

Failure of ECAC's staff to process personal data in compliance with this policy may result in disciplinary proceedings.

8.7.2 Freedom of Information

This is not applicable as ECAC is not a public body.

9 Public Information and Communication

9.1 Public information

Our primary mechanism for public communication is our website.

The managing director controls the content of the website. This includes, but is not limited to, ensuring full compliance with the requirements of the Qualifications and Quality Assurance (Education and Training) Act 2012.

All of the information required to comply with the spirit and the requirements of the Act will be published as soon as practicable after it becomes available.

9.1.1 Our communication values

Our communication values are:

Honest

We must always communicate in an honest, timely and open manner and with courtesy and respect, while respecting confidentiality.

Responsible

Those most directly affected by any information must, whenever possible, be informed first.

Inclusive

We must actively listen to everyone who relies and works with us, encourage feedback and share information that will improve our performance and effectiveness.

Simple

The language we use must be clear, easily understood and in plain English.

Relevant

Information issued must be relevant to the target audience.

Professional

We must always communicate in a professional manner.

Coordinated

All external and internal communications should, as far as possible, be planned and carried out in harmony and with a common focus.

9.2 Learner information

Information relating to training programmes and awards is published on our website and is available to all learners and prospective learners.

As noted in section 8.2 prospective learners who contact us are sent all relevant information by e-mail with telephone follow-up as required.

9.2.1 Protection of Enrolled Learner (PEL)

The Qualifications and Quality Assurance (Education and Training) Act 2012 Act sets out (in Part 6) legal requirements for QQI and providers of education and training (providers) regarding the Protection of Enrolled Learners (PEL).

We confirm that arrangements are in place to comply with the act and the Amendment of section 65 of Principal Act (Arrangements by providers for protection of enrolled learners) of the in respect of students undertaking learning programmes that have durations of more than three months. All learning programmes for each examination must be completed within the 3-month period stated on the enrolment form.

The legal requirement ensures that learners enrolled on a programme of longer than three months duration and where fees have been paid, are not disadvantaged in the event of the programme ceasing prior to completion.

9.3 Publication of quality assurance evaluation reports

Whenever a formal quality evaluation is undertaken a written report and, where appropriate, a quality improvement plan will be prepared. Key findings from the report, and the plan, will be published on our website.



10 Other Parties Involved in Education and Training

10.1 Peer relationships within the broader education and training community

10.1.1 External Certification

We are City & Guilds accredited and the details of this are available on our website.

10.1.2 External Collaboration

We provide training to a number of industry sectors primarily Pharmaceutical, Data Centres and Industrial Service Providers. We proactively review their training needs and technological changes and we also obtain feedback on the training we have provided. To protect client confidentiality and assure GDPR compliance this information is not recorded on our website.

10.2 External partnerships and second providers

We are an independent training provider. We have no external partnerships or training providers.

10.3 Expert panellists, examiners, and authenticators

As noted in section 10.1.1 we are City & Guilds accredited.

We do not use any other expert panellists, examiners or authenticators.

11 Self-Evaluation, Monitoring and Review

11.1 Provider-owned internal review, self-evaluation, monitoring

11.1.1 Internal review

Given the scale of our organisation we review our activities on an ongoing basis. These reviews are informal, include discussions with learners and other stakeholders, and are documented where follow-up action is considered necessary.

11.1.2 Self-Evaluation

Self-evaluation is undertaken at each ETA meeting.

This typically includes, but is not limited to:

- Analysis of communications received from external organisations, for example, QQI and EPA
- Feedback from learners
- Feedback from other stakeholders
- An action plan is prepared if required and previous actions are reviewed.

11.1.3 Monitoring

This is detailed in section 11.2

11.2 Internal self-monitoring

We have a range of key performance indicators (KPI's) in place, including quality assurance indicators.

These include:

- Course attendances and bookings
- Course completion and certification rates
- Learner satisfaction and feedback
- Learner appeals and complaints
- Stakeholder satisfaction

Our KPI's are reviewed on a regular basis to ensure their continuing relevance to our organisation, our learners, and our key stakeholders. These reviews are undertaken at ETA meetings.

An action plan is prepared/updated and reviewed at ETA meetings.

11.3 Self-evaluation, improvement and enhancement

Self-evaluation is undertaken on an ongoing basis and is formally reviewed at ETA meetings.

Our self-evaluation activities include:

- The learner experience
The experiences of our learners are critically important to us and are evaluated both informally and formally. A key function of our KPI's is to assess the learner experience.
- Programme evaluation and review
Regular evaluation is a key element of course outcomes and results. We are committed to a policy of monitoring on an ongoing basis and self-evaluation at key points in the programme. Programmes are reviewed every three to five years or as needed.
- Programme monitoring
Programmes are continuously monitored to ensure that our programmes meet the needs of learners. KPI's are recorded and monitored.
- Programme Self-Evaluation
An annual report is prepared which details how our programmes supported learners in the past year and outline plans for the programmes for the next year.
- Usability Testing
Usability testing is undertaken within one year of a major redesign or new programme going live. Testing is done with a sample group of users to evaluate the programme and how it is used by learners. A usability report is written with recommendations to overcome any usability issues.
- Stakeholder engagement
As noted in section 10.1.2 we engage regularly with our stakeholders and take action on their feedback.

The outcome of these self-evaluation activities is a self-evaluation report/action plan which is reviewed at the next ETA meeting.

On an annual basis we undertake an in-depth evaluation using the Plan, Act & Observe, Reflect cycle.

11.4 Provider-owned quality assurance engages with external quality assurance

We recognise the importance of external certification for our learners, our stakeholders, and our organisation as it provides external assurance of the quality of our training and related activities.

We have been certified by City & Guilds since 2007 and we now wish to obtain QQI certification.

We welcome external audits of our quality assurance system and ensure that all relevant information is made available.

Our programmes are externally reviewed every three to five years or as needed. The review findings are considered at the next ETA meeting.