

# LIFFEY COLLEGE



## ASSESSMENT HANDBOOK

**Liffey College 2023/2024**

**E.& O.E.**

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## 1 Introduction

This handbook has been developed in line with Liffey College's vision and assessment policies alongside QQI's criteria and guidelines:

1. Quality Assuring Assessment Guidelines for Providers (2013)
2. Assessment and Standards (2022)

### 1.1 Purpose

The handbook summarises the role and responsibilities of assessors and serves as a support in a readily accessible format, providing an essential reference point for assessment planning, design and implementation in order to ensure fair and consistent assessment of learners. It also aims to inform learners about relevant approaches and procedures in relation to assessment.

### 1.2 Principles

Liffey College's assessment policies and procedures are underpinned by the following principles of quality :

1. Validity – to ensure that a particular assessment format is the most appropriate for the intended purpose as the best way of achievement evidence in relation to the intended learning outcomes.
2. Reliability – for accuracy and consistency of skill or achievement measure by different assessors to produce reliable assessment decisions.
3. Fairness – To ensure inclusiveness and justice based on the provision of equal opportunities to learners with additional/particular learning needs.
4. Transparency – to ensure clarity and understanding about the assessment process including how marking occurs.
5. Authenticity – to promote correlation of assessments with employability skills after completion of the course of study through emphasis of the real-world relevance of assessment activities.
6. Academic Integrity – to maintain and enable fundamental values of behaviour including honesty, trust, fairness, respect and responsibility in academic communities to translate into action.

## 2 Quality Assured Assessment

### 2.1 The National Frameworks of Qualifications

The National Frameworks of Qualifications (NFQ) is a quality assured system of 10 levels ranging from the most basic (Level 1) to the most advanced (Level 10)

<https://www.qqi.ie/what-we-do/the-qualifications-system/national-framework-of-qualifications>.



Figure 1: National Framework of Qualifications.

The national standards of these awards identify the knowledge, know-how and skill and competence that learners are required to achieve in order to qualify for these awards as follows:

National Framework of Qualifications GRID OF LEVEL INDICATORS										National Framework of Qualifications	
	LEVEL 1	LEVEL 2	LEVEL 3	LEVEL 4	LEVEL 5	LEVEL 6	LEVEL 7	LEVEL 8	LEVEL 9	LEVEL 10	
<b>Knowledge Breadth</b>	Elementary knowledge	Knowledge that is narrow in range	Knowledge moderately broad in range	Broad range of knowledge	Broad range of knowledge	Specialised knowledge of a broad area	Specialised knowledge across a variety of areas	An understanding of the theory concepts and methods pertaining to a field (or fields) of learning	A systematic understanding of knowledge, at, or informed by, the forefront of a field of learning	A systematic acquisition and understanding of a substantial body of knowledge which is at the forefront of a field of learning	<b>Knowledge Breadth</b>
<b>Knowledge Kind</b>	Demonstrate by recognition or recall	Concrete in reference and basic in comprehension	Mainly concrete in reference and with some comprehension of relationship between knowledge elements	Mainly concrete in reference and with some elements of abstraction or theory	Some theoretical concepts and abstract thinking, with significant depth in some areas	Some theoretical concepts and abstract thinking, with significant underlying theory	Recognition of limitations of current knowledge and familiarity with sources of new knowledge; integration of concepts across a variety of areas	Detailed knowledge and understanding in one or more specialised areas, some of it at the forefront of a field of learning	A critical awareness of current problems and/or new insights, generally informed by the forefront of a field of learning	The creation and interpretation of new knowledge, through original research, or other advanced scholarship, of a quality to satisfy review by peers	<b>Knowledge Kind</b>
<b>Know-How &amp; Skill Range</b>	Demonstrate basic, practical skills, and carry out directed activity using basic tools	Demonstrate limited range of basic practical skills, including the use of relevant tools	Demonstrate a limited range of practical and cognitive skills and tools	Demonstrate a moderate range of practical and cognitive skills and tools	Demonstrate a broad range of specialised skills and tools	Demonstrate comprehensive range of specialised skills and tools	Demonstrate specialised technical, creative or conceptual skills and tools across areas of study	Demonstrate mastery of a complex and specialised area of skills and tools, use and modify advanced skills and tools to conduct, design, develop, research, professional or advanced technical activity	Demonstrate a range of standard and specialised research or equivalent tools and techniques of enquiry	Demonstrate a significant range of the principal skills, techniques, tools, practices and/or materials which are associated with a field of learning, develop new skills, techniques, tools, practices and/or materials	<b>Know-How &amp; Skill Range</b>
<b>Know-How &amp; Skill Selectivity</b>	Perform processes that are repetitive and predictable	Perform a sequence of routine tasks given clear direction	Select from a limited range of varied procedures and apply known solutions to a limited range of predictable problems	Select from a range of procedures and apply known solutions to a variety of predictable problems	Evaluate and use information to plan and develop investigative strategies and to determine solutions to varied unfamiliar problems	Formulate responses to well-defined abstract problems	Exercise appropriate judgement in planning, design, technical and/or supervisory functions related to products, services, operations or processes, including resourcing	Exercise appropriate judgement in a number of complex planning, design, technical and/or management functions related to products, services, operations or processes, including resourcing	Select from complex and advanced skills across a field of learning, develop new skills to a high level, including novel and emerging techniques	Respond to abstract problems that require and involve existing procedural knowledge	<b>Know-How &amp; Skill Selectivity</b>
<b>Competence Context</b>	Act in clearly defined and highly structured contexts	Act in a limited range of predictable and structured contexts	Act within a limited range of contexts	Act in familiar and unfamiliar contexts	Act in a range of varied and specific contexts involving creative and non-routine activities; transfer and apply theoretical concepts and/or knowledge to a wide variety of contexts	Act in a range of varied and specific contexts involving creative and non-routine activities; transfer and apply theoretical concepts and/or knowledge to a wide variety of contexts	Utilise diagnostic and creative skills in a range of functions in a wide variety of contexts	Use advanced skills to conduct research or advanced technical or professional activity, accepting accountability for all related decision-making transfer and apply diagnostic and creative skills in a range of contexts	Act in a wide and often responsible variety of professional levels and ill-defined contexts	Exercise personal responsibility and largely autonomous initiative in complex and unpredictable situations, in professional or equivalent contexts	<b>Competence Context</b>
<b>Competence Role</b>	Act in a limited range of roles	Act in a range of roles under direction	Act under direction with limited autonomy; function within familiar homogeneous groups	Act with considerable amount of responsibility and autonomy	Exercise some initiative and independence in carrying out defined activities; join and function within multiple, complex and heterogeneous groups	Exercise substantial personal autonomy and often take responsibility for the work of others under the direction of a manager or supervisor	Accept accountability for determining and achieving personal and/or group outcomes; take significant or supervisory responsibility for the work of others in defined areas of work	Act effectively under guidance in a peer relationship with qualified practitioners; lead multiple, complex and heterogeneous groups	Take significant responsibility for the work of individuals and groups; lead and initiate activity	Communicate results of research and innovation to peers; engage in critical dialogue; lead and originate complex social processes	<b>Competence Role</b>
<b>Competence Learning to Learn</b>	Learn to sequence learning tasks; learn to access and use a range of learning resources	Learn to learn in a disciplined manner in a well-structured and supervised environment	Learn to learn within a managed environment	Learn to take responsibility for own learning within a supervised environment	Learn to take responsibility for own learning within a managed environment	Learn to take responsibility for own learning within a managed environment	Take initiative to identify and address learning needs and interests effectively in a learning group	Learn to act in variable and unfamiliar learning contexts; learn to manage learning tasks independently, professionally and ethically	Learn to self-evaluate and take responsibility for continuing academic/professional development	Learn to critique the broader implications of applying knowledge to particular contexts	<b>Competence Learning to Learn</b>
<b>Competence Insight</b>	Begin to demonstrate awareness of independent role for self	Demonstrate awareness of independent role for self	Assume limited responsibility for consistency of self-understanding and behaviour	Assume partial responsibility for consistency of self-understanding and behaviour	Assume full responsibility for consistency of self-understanding and behaviour	Express an internalised, personal world view, reflecting engagement with others	Express an internalised, personal world view, reflecting solidarity with others	Express a comprehensive, internalised, personal world view, manifesting solidarity with others	Scrutinise and reflect on social norms and relationships and act to change them	Scrutinise and reflect on social norms and relationships and lead action to change them	<b>Competence Insight</b>

This 10-level grid of level indicators forms part of the determination of the National Framework of Qualifications under section 76(a) of the Qualifications (Education and Training) Act, 1999

Note: The outcomes at each level include those of all the lower levels in the same sub-strand.

Figure 2: NFQ Standards of Awards Level 1 – 10.

## 2.2 Quality and Qualifications Ireland (QQI)

Quality and Qualifications Ireland <https://www.qqi.ie> is an independent State agency responsible for promoting quality and accountability in education and training services in Ireland. It ensures that learner achievement is assessed in a fair and consistent way in line with the national standards for the award. Assessment for QQI awards is criterion-referenced, where assessment is conducted against set criteria and learning is judged on the basis of achievement of those criteria that are expressed as learning outcomes. These learning outcomes are outlined in the Award Specification or Module Descriptors for every award. The Module Descriptors also includes identified valid and reliable techniques for the assessment of learner achievement.

## 2.3 Liffey College's Policy Statement for Assessment of Learners

Liffey College is committed to providing adequate and appropriate processes for the fair and consistent assessment and verification of learner's achievement.

All assessment will be carried out based on the following guidelines:

- The assessment process is in line with the Mission Statement of Liffey College and reflects the provision of quality education programmes in a tailored and flexible way.
- The assessment is valid and in line with the criteria and purpose of relevant certifying body awards.
- The marking of assessments is consistent with national standards.
- The marking of assessments is consistent within programmes.
- The results of the assessment are consistent across internal assessors within the institution. Assessment criteria are clearly understood by all staff and learners concerned.
- The internal assessment policies and procedures will ensure that the planning of assessment is carried out in a coordinated manner
- The policies and procedures will be communicated to staff and learners in a clear and transparent way.
- The assessment will be internally verified by appropriately qualified personnel to ensure consistency and appropriateness to the assessment procedures set out for the programme by Liffey College.
- The assessment will be externally authenticated by appropriately qualified personnel (as approved by accrediting bodies) to ensure consistency and appropriateness to the procedures.
- That all assessment material is securely stored.
- That reasonable accommodation is made to cater for the diverse needs of learners where appropriate.
- The provision of an appeals process for learners regarding the assessment process and/or their results.

## 2.4 The Role of the Assessor

The assessor is a qualified practitioner (teacher, trainer, lecturer, workplace supervisor, manager, team leader or any other qualified personnel) whose role is to evaluate learners'

achievement according to predetermined learning outcomes of knowledge, know-how and skill and competence as outlined in the Award Specification/Module Descriptors.

While assessors must be proficient in the subject area of assessment with relevant knowledge of the awards standards being assessed, they must also be familiar with QQI assessment policy and guidelines along with the college's assessment procedures.

Responsibilities of the assessor encompass:

- implementing the college's assessment procedures across all assessment activities including planning, making and recording assessment decisions
- upholding the key principles of assessment policies and procedure: validity, reliability, fairness, transparency, authenticity, academic integrity
- ensuring that learners are aware of current legislation relating to them and all concerned with their assessment, particularly equal opportunities and health and safety
- explaining the assessment process fully to learners and others involved
- following the college's and QQI's assessment and documentation procedures in line with requirements
- providing opportunities for learners to generate various forms of assessment and present appropriate evidence to meet the learning objectives
- ensuring that learners are aware of their own responsibility regarding collection of evidence
- designing assessment instruments that are fit for purpose
- devising clear and transparent marking schemes and grading criteria
- reviewing and judging evidence of learner competence against the standards and learning objectives
- ensuring that assessment decisions are matched against the appropriate level
- providing clear and accurate information and constructive written and oral feedback to learners
- maintaining accurate learner assessment and achievement records for submission to internal verification
- demonstrating commitment to confidentiality of information

## 2.5 The Responsibility of the Learner

While Liffey College's policies and procedures aim to ensure that assessments are consistent and fair to all learners, learners in turn are expected to attend to the following requirements, taking responsibility of:

- acquiring any information including assessment details that has been missed
- submitting assessments on time and in the requested format
- arriving on time for examinations
- bringing any support/special needs to the attention of the centre in a timely manner
- preparing for and participating fully in assessments and assessment-related activities
- ensuring clarity of all received assessment information
- familiarising with and adhering to all assessment regulations and procedures
- abstaining from plagiarism and submitting correctly referenced and own original work (See Appendix B)
- attending feedback sessions and requesting additional feedback as/if required
- keeping copies of all assessment materials

### 3 The Assessment Process

Assessment is the process by which learner achievement is judged in line with the national standards of knowledge, know-how, skill and competence for the award as outlined in the Award Specification/Programme Descriptor. It is the systematic basis through which inferences are made about the learning and development of learners. The process involves defining, selecting, designing, collecting, analysing, interpreting and using information aimed at increasing learners' learning and development. The assessment process at Liffey College encompasses five fundamental stages:

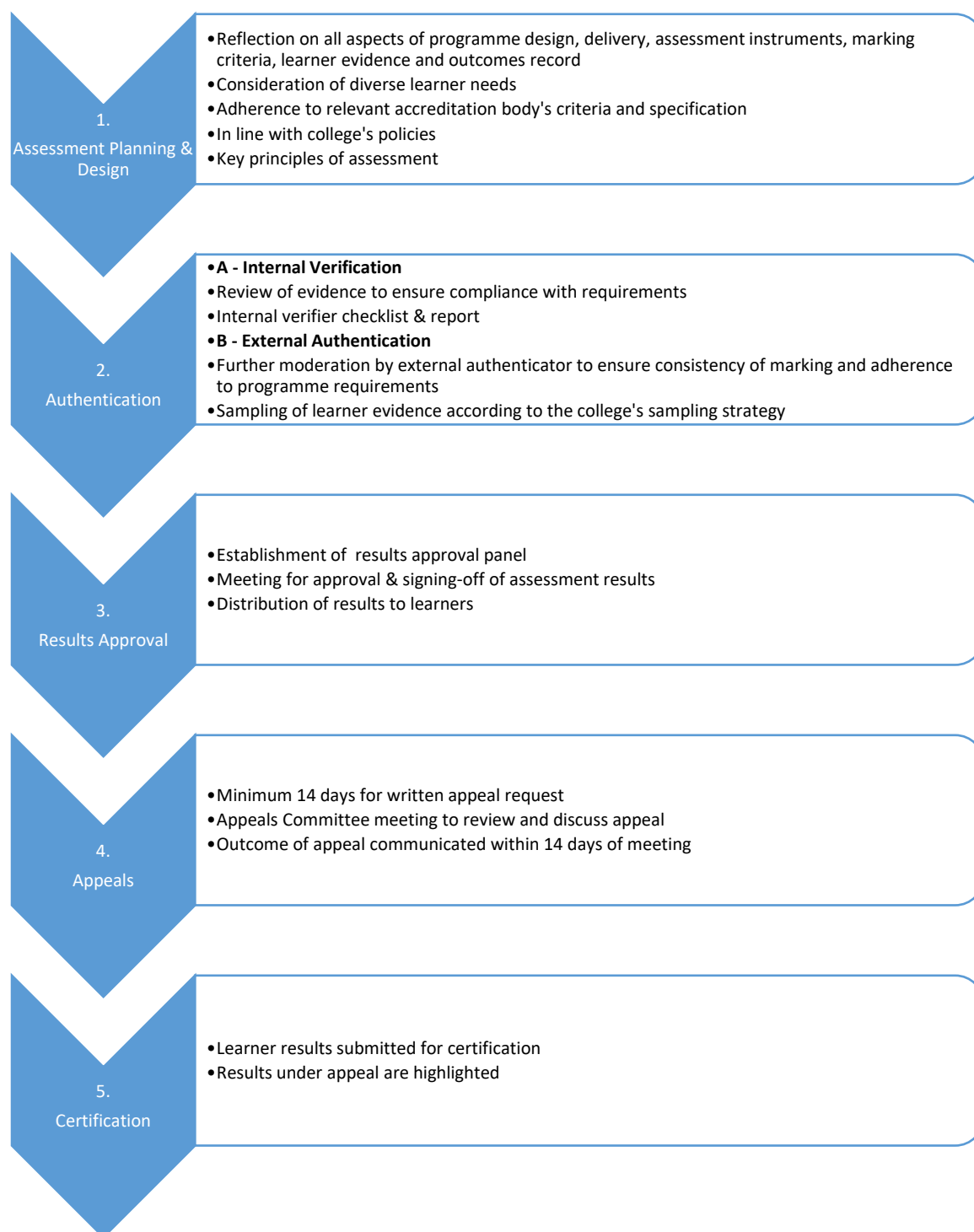


Figure 3: Overview of the Assessment Process



### 3.1 Assessment Procedures & Practice

In order to ensure fairness and consistency, assessment procedures are implemented according to the quality assured requirements of QQI (Assessment and Standards, 2022) as set out in Liffey College's QA document. Assessment procedures are expected to:

- be designed to measure the achievement of the intended learning outcomes and other programme objectives
- be appropriate for their purpose, whether diagnostic, formative or summative
- have clear and published criteria for marking
- be undertaken by those who understand the role of assessment in the progression of learners towards the achievement of the knowledge and skills associated with their intended qualification
- not, where possible, rely on the judgements of single examiners
- take account of all the possible consequences of examination regulations
- have clear regulations covering learner absence, illness and other mitigating circumstances
- ensure that assessments are conducted securely in accordance with the college's stated procedure
- be subject to administrative verification checks to ensure the accuracy of the procedures
- include maintenance of records to facilitate monitoring and reviews
- include appropriate steps for the promulgation of assessment results
- include appeals and complaints process by learners
- include the appointment of at least one independent expert external examiner for each award programme
- include clear and accurate information about the assessment strategy for learners being used for their programme, what examinations or other assessment methods they will be subject to, what will be expected of them, and the criteria that will be applied to the assessment of their performance

Furthermore, the concept of 'sustainable assessment' defined as "assessment that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of students to meet their own future learning needs" (Boud, 2000, p.151) is adopted as good practice in designing assessments. The concept of sustainable assessment comprises of four key features that all contribute to learning in a positive way as follows:

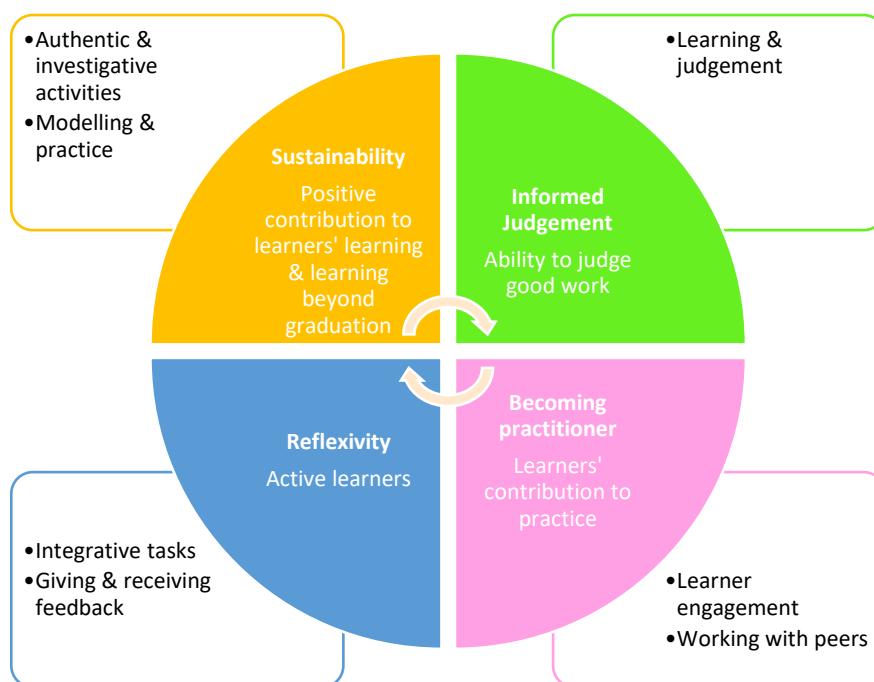


Figure 4: Framework for Sustainable Assessment Practice.

### 3.1.1 Assessment Planning

Assessment planning includes reflection on all aspects of programme design, delivery and assessment as well as diverse learners' needs so as to facilitate learners and to maximise the value of their assessment. Issues of equality and diversity are also considered when planning and developing assessment.

Assessments follow criteria set out by relevant accreditation bodies and are in line with the College's policies. All assessments are planned in advance of commencing learning and assessment activities, on the basis of the 6 key principles: Validity, Reliability, Fairness, Transparency, Authenticity and Academic integrity.

Assessment planning includes consideration about:

- the range of specific learning outcomes of the award to be assessed
- satisfying the specified criteria in the relevant Award Specification/Programme Descriptors
- ensuring that assessment is conducted at the correct standards of the National Frameworks of Qualifications
- selecting the appropriate assessment techniques and instruments as assessment evidence
- clear and transparent policy for timing and deadlines of assessments providing sufficient opportunities to learners to generate evidence of achievement standards of knowledge, skills and competence as well as consequences for failing to comply, late submissions and consideration for extenuating circumstances
- allocation of marks and application of assessment criteria
- assessment load through adoption of a holistic approach and avoiding over-assessment through assessment integration where possible, by combining delivery for several outcomes across a programme into a single coherent activity

- information pertaining to the award specification, assessment technique, process and deadlines, special requirements, assessment malpractice, grading and appeals to be made accessible to learners
- ways to ascertain reliability of learner evidence, e.g., authorship statement (See Appendix B), questioning, personal statements, etc.
- mechanisms to ensure the confidentiality and security of assessment-related processes and materials including recording, handling, storing, accessing learners' assessment records and submission for authentication
- procedures in place to investigate and security measures to deal with any form of assessment malpractice which could impact on the validity of assessment
- reasonable accommodation to meet the needs of learners through any means of adaptation of the assessment without significant alteration of the standard
- circumstances under which compassionate consideration may be given to learners
- opportunities for learners to repeat assessments to achieve a pass grade

### 3.1.2 Assessment Techniques and Instruments

Assessment techniques are strategies used to gauge learners' achievement of a particular range of learning outcomes while ensuring validity and reliability of those techniques.

Assessment techniques for QQI awards are grouped into the following six broad categories:

1. Portfolio
2. Assignment
3. Skills Demonstration
4. Project
5. Examination
6. Learner Record

The first three techniques are deemed most appropriate for the assessment of learners at Levels 1 – 3.

An assessment instrument is the specific activity/task or question(s) devised by the assessor based on the specified assessment technique.

All instruments devised by assessors must relate to one or more of these techniques e.g. a case study may be used as a part of an assignment, project.

For example, if the assessment technique specified in the Award Specification is an examination, the assessment instrument is the/an examination paper/ questions/case study.

The design of assessment instrument(s) must:

- be appropriate to the technique and fit for purpose
- allow learners to generate sufficient evidence
- enable evidence to be generated which can be measured against the learning outcomes outlined in the Award Specification
- enable reliable assessment decisions by assessors
- be selected to make the best use of available resources, i.e., practicable

A summary of the various assessment techniques and instruments is provided in the table below:

Table 1: Assessment Techniques

Assessment Technique	Appropriate Level	Assessment Instruments	Assessment of Learning Outcomes
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Portfolio/collection of work	<b>Particularly appropriate for levels 1 - 3</b>	Brief/instructions/tasks, guidelines on compiling portfolio, marking scheme	Knowledge, know-how and skill, competence
Assignment	Level 1 - 6	Assignment brief, marking scheme	Knowledge, know-how and skill, competence
Skills demonstration	Level 1 - 6	Instructions, tasks, activities or brief, marking scheme	Particularly appropriate to know-how and skill and competence
Project	Level 4 - 6	Project brief, marking scheme	Knowledge, know-how and skill, competence
Examination	Level 4 - 6	Examination paper, marking scheme, examination questions, instructions for learners e.g. Time allowed	Theory based examination is particularly suitable for the assessment of knowledge outcomes. Practical examinations can be used to assess know-how and skill and competence
Learner record	Level 4 - 6	Brief/instructions, guidelines for learners on format of the record, marking scheme.	Knowledge, know-how and skill, competence

### 3.1.2.1 Portfolio

A portfolio is a collection of work and/or selection of pieces of work produced by the learner over a period of time that demonstrates achievement of a range of learning outcomes. Guidelines and instructions devised by the assessor(s) are used by the learners to compile a collection of their own work. The collection may either be self-generated or generated in response to a particular brief or tasks/activities devised by the assessor. Portfolio/collection of work is particularly suitable for the assessment of learners at levels 1, 2 and 3.

The assessor should ensure that learners are provided with:

- a clear and unambiguous brief and instructions that reflect the range of learning outcomes being assessed
- guidelines on the extent and range of evidence a learner is expected to compile
- guidelines on the format and presentation of the evidence in the collection
- the assessment criteria
- the weighting of the portfolio/collection of work in the context of the total assessment of the award
- relevant information on resources and/or materials required

A clear marking scheme including assessment criteria should also be devised that indicates how the evidence is to be graded.

### 3.1.2.2 Assignment

An assignment is an exercise carried out in response to a brief with specific guidelines as to what should be included. An assignment is usually of short duration and/or may be carried out over a specified period of time. Assignments may take the form of a practical activity, e.g., a practical assignment or a research activity/evaluation following investigation of a particular topic e.g. a written assignment. An assignment should reflect a range of learning outcomes.

A brief should be devised for each assignment. The brief should be accompanied by guidelines and or instructions. The assignment brief and guidelines should be clear and unambiguous. The assessor should ensure that the assignment brief:

- reflects a range of learning outcomes as outlined in the Award Specification
- is clear and unambiguous and contains all instructions required to complete the task
- indicates the percentage weighting of the assignment
- takes into account the availability of resources and/or materials required by the learner
- contains clear assessment criteria and appropriate weighing
- indicates the percentage weighting of the assessment technique
- includes information regarding evidence and submission deadlines.

A clear marking scheme including assessment criteria should also be devised that highlights how the evidence is to be graded.

### 3.1.2.3 Skills Demonstration

A skills demonstration is used to assess a wide range of practical based learning outcomes including practical skills and knowledge, such as laboratory skills, interpersonal skills or oral language skills.

An assessor must devise a brief or set of instructions and/or tasks for learners.

Sufficient learner evidence must be made available from the skills demonstration for internal verification and external authentication.

In the case of a practical task based demonstration this may include a range of the following:

- product/outcome of the tasks where applicable i.e. computer print out
- photographic or video evidence of learner completing the task
- learner account of task

#### 3.1.2.3.1 Skills Demonstration in Simulated vs Workplace/Live Environment

A skills demonstration may take place in the workplace, i.e., in a live environment or in a simulated environment, as appropriate to the requirement of the Award Specification. In some specific cases the demonstration must take place in a real / live environment.

Table 2: Skills Demonstration in Simulated vs Workplace/Live Environment

<b>SKILLS DEMONSTRATION</b>	
<b>Simulated Environment (e.g., role play or simulated scenarios)</b>	<b>Workplace/Live Environment (as part of the learner's normal work routine)</b>
<p>When using simulated environment observation the assessor should ensure that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the learner receives clear instructions and guidelines on how the assessment will proceed and what will be assessed e.g. duration, inclusion of oral questions as appropriate.</li> <li>• the environment is carefully prepared and the necessary equipment and/or materials are available to the learner.</li> <li>• the tasks and conditions should be as realistic and close to the 'actual' environment as possible.</li> </ul>	<p>In this environment the assessor may be the trainer or workplace supervisor, mentor or job coach. Skills demonstrations in the workplace may be part of on-the-job training where the following applies:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the learner is observed performing tasks within the workplace to the required standard and within a specified time.</li> <li>• the best practice guidelines outlined above should be adhered to and sufficient learner evidence must be generated.</li> <li>• all issues related to workplace health and safety should be applied.</li> </ul>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• learner evidence to be generated is identified.</li> </ul> <p>A clear marking scheme including assessment criteria should also be devised that highlights how learner evidence is to be graded.</p>	
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#### 3.1.2.4 Project

A project is a response to a brief devised by the assessor. The project is usually carried out over a period of time specified as part of the brief. Projects may involve research, require investigation of a topic, issue or problem or may involve process such as a design task, a performance or practical activity or production of an artifact or event.

The assessment instrument for a project is the project brief. This is the specific 'brief' or instruction to the learner. The brief for the project should reflect a range of learning outcomes.

Where projects are undertaken by a group or as a collaborative piece of work the individual contribution of each learner should be clearly identified and procedures should be implemented to ensure the reliability of learner evidence.

Projects enable learners to demonstrate achievement of a range of learning outcomes which includes: understanding and application of concepts, use of research and information, the ability to design and evaluate and the ability to produce or construct.

The assessor should ensure that the project brief:

- reflects a range of learning outcomes as outlined in the Award Specification
- is clear and unambiguous
- indicates the percentage weighting of the project
- takes into account availability of resources and/or materials that will be required by learners such as access to research sources
- includes notice of agreed deadline for submission of evidence
- includes relevant information such as; requirements for presentation of the project, guidelines on group or collaborative work.

A clear marking scheme including assessment criteria should also be devised that highlights how the evidence is to be graded.

#### 3.1.2.5 Examination

An examination provides a means of assessing a learner's ability to recall and apply knowledge, skills and understanding within a set period of time and under clearly specified conditions. Examinations are a form of assessment which normally require a fixed timeframe and a sight unseen question paper and range of questions. The assessment instrument for examinations is the examination paper, i.e., questions or tasks devised for the learner.

Examinations may be:

- practical; assessing specified practical skills demonstrated in a set period of time under restricted conditions
- interview style; assessing learning through verbal questioning, one-to-one or in a group
- aural testing; assessing listening and interpretation skills

- theory-based examination; assessing the learner's ability to recall, apply, recognise and understand concepts and theory. This may require responses to a range of question types, e.g., objective, short answer, structured essay. These questions may be answered in different media for example in writing or orally.

When devising an examination the assessor should ensure that:

- questions or tasks reflect the learning outcomes as outlined in the Award Specification
- instructions are clear and unambiguous
- where appropriate; examinations have a cover page outlining details such as; date, duration, choice and number of questions
- answer books/paper for learners to complete their answers should be provided where appropriate
- confidentiality is maintained during preparation and handling of examination documents
- groups of learners being assessed at different times are provided with different examination questions
- specific resources or equipment required are available and in good working order
- the allocation and weighting of marks is clear to the learner
- the learner is aware of the weighting of the examination in relation to the award
- learners are given a quiet environment in which to complete the examination

A clear marking scheme should also be devised that highlights how specific marks are to be allocated.

#### 3.1.2.5.1 Theory-based Examinations

Theory based examinations may be used to assess the ability of the learner to recall, apply and understand specific theory and knowledge.

Theory based examinations may comprise a range of question types such as:

- short answer questions require a response of limited length and may take a number of forms. Some short answer questions may seek specific words or phrases in the response
- structured questions are divided into a number of related parts and generally require the learner to demonstrate more in-depth knowledge and understanding of a topic. Structured questions may also seek evidence of cognitive skills such as ability to discuss, compare, analyse, evaluate, translate or solve an issue, problem or topic
- essay type questions, like structured questions require the learner to demonstrate an in-depth knowledge and understanding of a topic. Essay type questions usually focus on one particular area of knowledge and seek evidence of cognitive skills such as ability to discuss, compare, analyse, evaluate, translate or solve an issue, problem or topic
- multiple choice tests/questions may be used to test factual knowledge, comprehension, application, analysis, problem-solving and evaluation. As MCQs are not open-ended, they are not useful in assessing communication skills such as the ability to organise and express information and to write fluently and quickly

To ensure national consistency and to avoid excessive demands on the learner the duration and format of the theory-based examination should generally fit within the appropriate range

in the table below. It is recommended that written examinations should not exceed 3 hours in duration. When deciding on the duration and format of the examination, the percentage weighting of the examination needs to be considered.

Table 3: Time Allocation Guidance for Theory-based Examinations

Time Allocated	Number of questions/range of options	Percentage weightings need consideration when deciding on duration and format of examinations.
45 mins - 1.5 hours	10/12 short answer questions (s/a)	
	15/18 s/a	
	5/6 s/a and 1/2 structured questions (str)	
	7/8 s/a and 1/2 str	
1.5 - 2 hours	18/22 s/a	
	10/12 s/a and 1/2 str	
	10/12 s/a and 2/3 str	
	5/6 s/a and 3/4 str	
	3/5 str	
2 - 3 hours	10/12 s/a and 3/4 str	
	15/18 s/a and 2/3 str	
	3/4 str	
	4/6 str	

### 3.1.2.5.2 Practical Examinations

Practical examinations are generally used where a set period of time is allocated to learners to demonstrate their practical knowledge, skills or competency.

To ensure that learners are adequately prepared for a practical examination they should be provided with a set of instructions outlining:

- the location and duration of the exam (the duration will depend on the nature of the task)
- details of the learning outcomes that will be assessed and/or instructions to carry out the assessment e.g. file names
- materials and/or equipment that the learner is required to have or that will be provided
- allocation of marks.

Table 4: Examples of Practical Examinations

Aural Examinations	Interview-style Examinations
<p>Aural examinations may be used where listening skills and competencies are being assessed; for example in language awards. To ensure that learners are adequately prepared for an aural examination, they should be provided with a set of instructions, generally in writing outlining:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the title, location and duration of the examination</li> <li>• details of the learning outcomes being assessed</li> <li>• how the examination will proceed, for example learners may have a set period of time to read text prior to commencement and the tape may be played a set number of times</li> <li>• details on dictionaries or other reference materials learners may use</li> <li>• allocation of marks.</li> </ul>	<p>When using an interview-style examination the assessor should ensure that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the full range of potential questions devised are clear and unambiguous and are based on the specific learning outcomes</li> <li>• the learner is aware of the outcomes being assessed and how marks are allocated</li> <li>• open questions that require a detailed answer and provide an opportunity for the learner to demonstrate their knowledge of the topic(s) are used</li> <li>• the interview adheres to a similar format and length for each learner</li> <li>• the answer to a question is not prompted by the question or sequenced in a way that one question provides the answer to the following one. This is known as leading.</li> </ul>



<p>When devising a practical examination the assessor may be required to prepare material for use by the learner e.g. an audiotape. When preparing this type of material the assessor should ensure that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• adequate instructions and information is provided for learners</li> <li>• an introduction is included with each task with clear instructions regarding the requirement of the separate elements/tasks</li> <li>• individual tasks are clearly identified by number</li> <li>• a slight pause is left between each task and clear unambiguous diction, tone and pace is used</li> </ul>	<p>Leading questions either assume or suggest a particular answer</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• supplementary questioning is used to understand why a learner has done a task in a specific way. This may also be used to ensure reliability of learner evidence.</li> </ul>
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### 3.1.2.6 *Learner Record*

A learner record is the learner's self-reported and self-reflective record in which he/she describes specific learning experiences, activities, responses and skills acquired.

The record may take a number of forms. It can be:

- a structured logbook
- a diary
- a selective record of events or experiences over a period of time
- a learning journal
- a lab notebook (to record specific tasks or activities carried out and the analytical results obtained by the learner)
- a sketchbook (may contain learner's original drawings, paintings or sketches and can provide evidence of the process of reaching a finished art, craft or design piece)

When using a learner record the assessor should ensure that:

- the learner has a clear brief or set of instructions on the format of the record and is aware of what details should be included
- the brief is based on a range of learning outcomes
- the learner is aware of any requirements on the presentation of the learner record, e.g., format
- a process for maintaining and updating the record is agreed with the learner

### 3.1.3 *Assessment Design*

Different techniques must be outlined in the Award Specification and must be appropriate and valid to generate different forms of learner evidence for a range of specific learning outcomes.

For each technique the assessor is required to devise:

- an assessment instrument e.g. examination paper/ questions or assignment brief
- accompanying instructions
- assessment criteria
- a marking scheme

### 3.1.3.1 Assessment Briefs

In order to ensure fair and consistent assessment of learners it is essential that learners receive clear and accurate instruction in the form of an assessment brief in advance of assessments. An assessment brief is a set of written instructions given by the assessor to the learner outlining the requirements and assessment criteria of each piece of an assessment. The brief provides learners with all of the information they need to demonstrate achievement of a range of learning outcomes.

Briefs are required for every assignment, project, portfolio/collection of work, learner record, skills demonstration (i.e., every assessment technique apart from examinations where an exam paper is used). The briefs should be clear and unambiguous and should contain accompanying instructions/guidelines on the production and presentation of evidence, e.g., information on size, length, scale, number of words, duration and media. See Appendix A for an Assessment Brief template.

### 3.1.3.2 Marking and Grading

Assessors should devise marking sheets for all techniques identifying the assessment criteria and a range of specific marks linked to each criteria. It should be clear from the marking sheet how marks are being allocated to each criteria and how the grade is to be awarded. Where possible the total assessment marks allocated should be out of 100 or multiples of 100, since this eliminates the need for complicated calculations by assessors.

#### 3.1.3.2.1 Assessment Criteria

Assessment criteria are the standards or tests by which a learner's performance in an assessment task is judged. Assessment criteria state in qualitative terms what the learner must achieve in that assessment activity to attain a particular mark. The assessor devises assessment criteria and an appropriate marking scheme for each assessment activity.

It is essential that:

- the assessment criteria are consistent with the learning outcomes in the Award Specification as a whole
- there is a clear link between the assessment criteria and the learning outcomes
- the phrasing of assessment criteria are consistent with all criteria expressed in the same grammatical format
- the marks allocated for each criterion facilitates the assessor to mark efficiently

Please see Appendix C for a Sample Marking Sheet outlining the Assessment Criteria.

#### 3.1.3.2.2 Grading Scheme

Grading is an assessment process. Everything that applies to assessment applies to grading. Grading should be criterion-referenced (based on learning outcome criteria). Grades should be awarded on the individual's performance. They should never be norm-referenced (e.g. have quotas for each grade).

QQI awards are graded and classified as follows:

1. Awards at level 1, level 2 and level 3 are classified as Successful where a learner has achieved all the outcomes for the award.
2. 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.

Table 5: Grading Criteria for Awards at Levels 4 – 6.

Distinction	80% Over	Learner has substantially exceeded the minimum requirements
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<b>Merit</b>	65 – 79%	Learner has exceeded the minimum requirements
<b>Pass</b>	50 – 64%	Learner has attained the minimum standards
<b>Referred</b>	Below 50%	Learner has not achieved the minimum standards

### 3.1.4 Assessment Administration

In order to be fair and consistent across all assessment activities for all learners, Liffey College operates a strict deadline policy for the submission of assessment material, unless there are proven extenuating circumstances.

#### 3.1.4.1 Assessment Deadlines

Liffey College facilitates and gives due consideration on its own merits, to a learner who provides evidence of extenuating circumstances. The College also facilitates late submissions to give a chance to learners who have missed a deadline and do not have any proven extenuating circumstances. Nonetheless, to be fair to learners who submit on time, penalties are imposed for late submission of assessments at levels 4, 5 and 6 as follows:

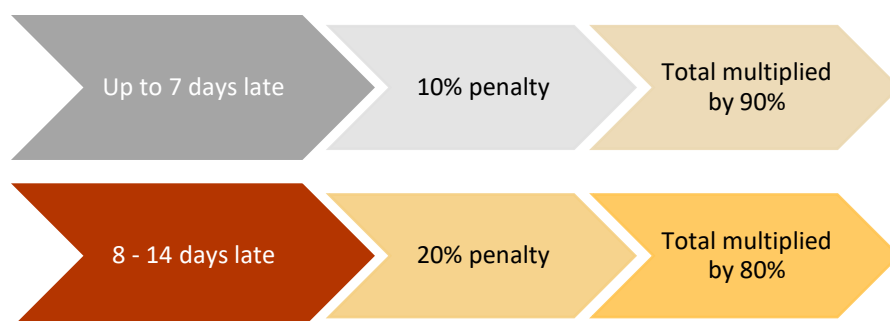


Figure 5: Penalties Imposed for late submission of assessments.

#### 3.1.4.2 Extenuating Circumstances

In relation to assessment, Extenuating Circumstances are exceptional conditions that temporarily prevent a learner from completing an assessment activity or that would seriously impair a learner's performance in an assessment. Extenuating circumstances must:

1. be unexpected
2. be beyond learners' control
3. have a significant impact on an assessment performance

Some possible extenuating circumstances are:

- physical injury or emotional trauma during a period four to six weeks previously
- physical disability or chronic or disabling condition such as epilepsy or other incapacitating illness of the learner
- recent bereavement of close family member or friend
- severe accident
- terminal illness of a close family member
- serious medical problems (either physical or mental)
- victim of serious crime
- transport difficulties such as an accident
- legal proceedings requiring learner's attendance
- other extenuating circumstances

Poor time management, minor illnesses and self-diagnosed stress are not considered extenuating circumstances.

Where a learner is aware of an extenuating circumstance in advance of the assessment deadline, the Programme Manager should be contacted as soon as possible. In the advent of an unpredictable extenuating circumstance, the Programme Manager should be contacted within 2 weeks of the assessment deadline.

A revised schedule for the assessment activity will be agreed between the assessor and the learner. Every attempt to facilitate this in the current assessment period will be made. However, due to time constraints, and/or resources, this revised schedule may roll into a subsequent assessment/certification period.

#### *3.1.4.3 Reasonable Accommodation*

In the context of assessment, reasonable accommodation is the term for the adaptation of assessment as necessary to cater for the needs of learners whose personal situation means that the assessment would otherwise be unfair e.g. learners with a disability, and/or other learners covered by equality legislation.

Any adaptation of the assessment by the assessor should facilitate the learner to demonstrate their achievement of the standards without significantly altering the standard.

Liffey College aims to do all that is reasonable to provide accommodation in examinations and skills demonstrations to enable learners with specific learning needs to demonstrate their level of actual attainment, in as far as is possible, without undermining the validity of the assessment.

Applications for reasonable accommodations can be made on the following five grounds:

1. Learning Difficulty
2. Hearing Difficulty
3. Visual Difficulty
4. Physical Difficulty
5. Mental Health or Behavioural Difficulty

The accommodations available depend on the specific disability or learning need. They may include the following:

- Use of a word processor or a recording device
- Assistive technology
- A scribe in exceptional cases
- A reader
- A colour identifier
- A waiver from spelling, grammar and punctuation in language subjects
- Additional time
- Enlarged papers
- A personal loop system or Irish sign language interpreter
- A separate examination centre

The implementation of these adaptations will ensure that all learners are assessed on an equitable basis. Liffey College is responsible for their implementation and any associated costs incurred.

#### *3.1.4.4 Assessment Submission*

When submitting assessments learners need to use the Template for Assessment Cover Sheet (Appendix B), that has been given to them by their assessor.

This is required for each assessment and must be attached to the front of each assessment submitted (Examinations are not included in this requirement). The cover sheet includes a declaration by the learner that the work is their own work and that they have been informed about Liffey College's assessment procedures. This form is to ensure consistency across all programmes. This requirement also applies to assessments submitted online through a virtual learning environment.

Learners are requested to keep copies of all assessments submitted as work may not be returned after the assessment process has concluded.

#### *3.1.4.5 Assessment Malpractice*

An assessment malpractice is any act or practice, which brings into question the validity, or integrity of the assessment process and which normally arises due to one or more non-accidental factors. Malpractice committed by a learner during the course of the assessment process includes but not limited to plagiarism and inappropriate behaviour.

If an Assessor suspects assessment malpractice, he/she should report it immediately to the Centre Director/Programme Manager for investigation. Where an Assessor suspects assessment malpractice at the draft stage of assessment, he/she should indicate such to the learner and give them an opportunity to amend/alter the work. If a learner fails to amend the assessment material submitted for the final deadline, then the learner's work will be withdrawn and the learner will be informed.

Examples of assessment malpractice activities include:

- Learner plagiarism i.e. passing off someone else's work as the learner's own with or without permission. This may involve direct plagiarism of another learner's work or getting another individual to complete the assessment activity.
- Any source, published or unpublished, should not be copied without proper acknowledgement.
- Copying a written source with only minor changes should be acknowledged. Any information taken from a website must be acknowledged.
- Impersonation of another learner Fabrication of evidence
- Alteration of results
- Wrongly obtaining secure assessment material e.g. examinations
- Behaving in any way such as to undermine the integrity of the Assessment Process

#### *3.1.4.6 Repeating Assessments*

Liffey College aims to facilitate repeat assessment as fairly as possible within the constraints of the programme and the resources and time available where a learner has failed to achieve the minimum requirements. Opportunities to repeat an assessment activity are dependent on the nature of the activity and the practical and/or operational issues involved.

Assessors are responsible for making assessment available for repeat assessments as appropriate.

## 3.2 Authentication

The purpose of the Authentication Process is to ensure fairness, consistency and validity of assessment and of the outcome of assessment i.e. learner results across each major, special purpose, or supplement award. The Authentication Process will ensure that QQI receive accurate and quality assured learner results.

The Authentication Process established by the provider must include internal verification and external authentication.

### 3.2.1 Internal Verification

Internal Verification is the process by which Liffey College ensures that assessments are marked, graded, computed and correctly recorded in accordance to its assessment policies and procedures as well as the national standards.

Internal Verifier checks that assessment procedures and associated administrative tasks have been done correctly, monitor assessment results on a sample basis and produces the Internal Verifier Report.

The internal verifier systematically checks 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

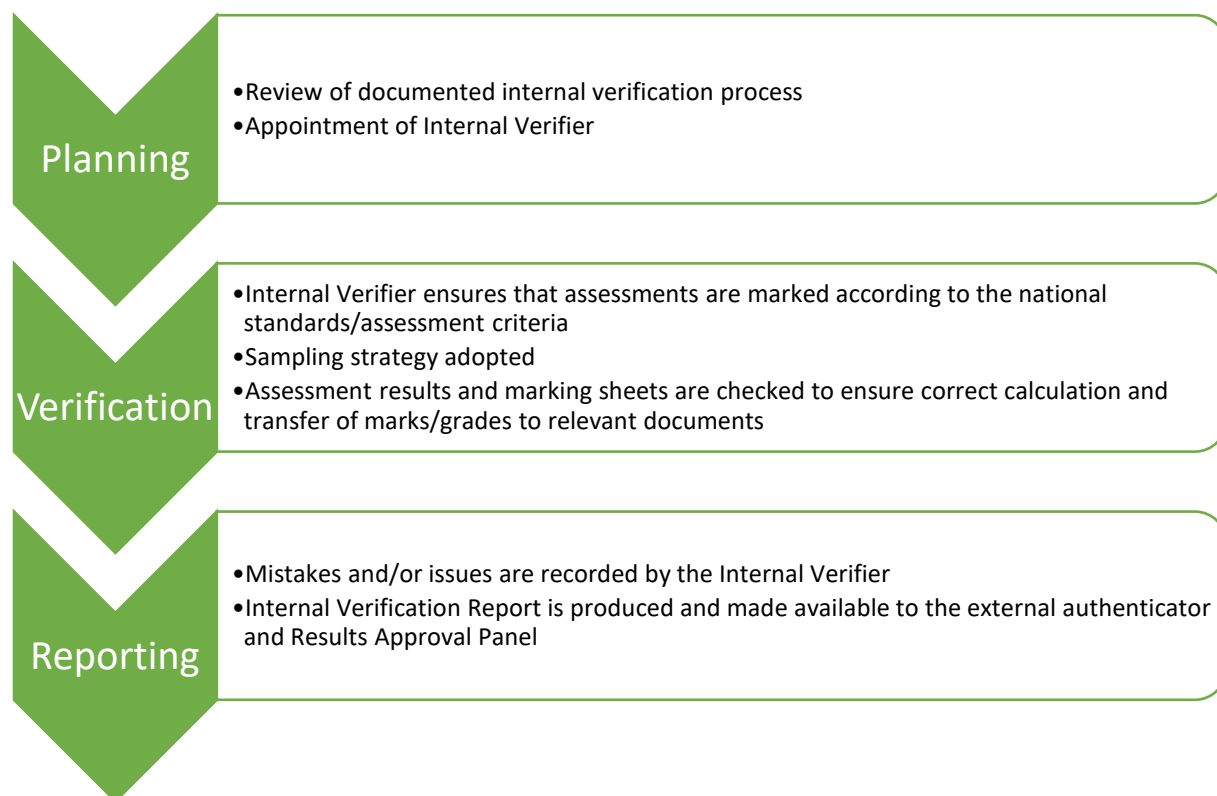


Figure 6: Summary of the Internal Verification Process

### 3.2.2 External Authentication

External authentication provides independent authoritative confirmation of fair and consistent assessment of learners in accordance with national standards.

It establishes the credibility of the provider'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.

Liffey College ensures that assessments marked by the College are in accordance with national standards and are externally authenticated. Independent external authenticators are appointed who are suitably qualified and experienced in the appropriate field according to the requirements of Accreditation Bodies.

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 the College'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 College and meet with appropriate staff and learners
- participate in the results approval process as per the provider's agreed procedures
- identify any issues/irregularities in relation to the Assessment Process
- recommend results for approval
- produce an external authentication report

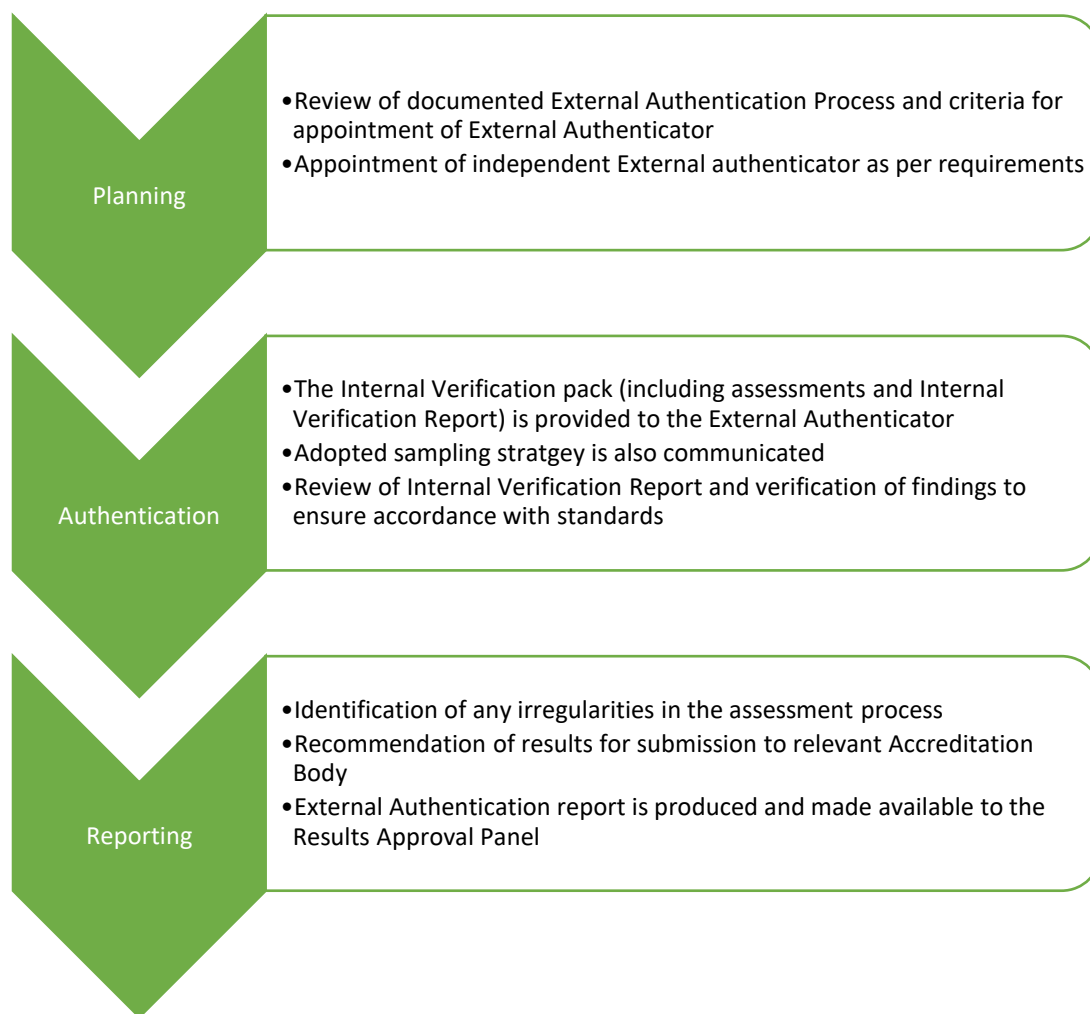


Figure 7: Summary for the External Authentication Process

#### 3.2.2.1 Results Moderation

External authentication involves the moderation of assessment results within an award or across a number of awards in a specific field or sub-field of learning. This is done by judging the marked evidence presented according to the standards outlined in the Award Specification.

The external authenticator will moderate results for awards in which they have relevant expertise in the field/sub-field of learning. Given their professional status it is expected that all external authenticators will possess the expertise necessary to moderate results in general award areas e.g. communications.

The critical points at which judgment is applied are the boundaries between bands/grades: Referred/Pass, Pass/Merit, Merit/Distinction.

Moderating assessment results involves:

reviewing results and checking the standard of evidence at each grade band; Successful (levels 1 - 3) Distinction, Merit, Pass (levels 4 - 6) by examining samples of evidence within each grade band and at the borders of grades.

In the event that the external authenticator has concerns regarding the results, he/she will submit a report to the College outlining their concerns and identifying the irregularities found. The College will then instigate appropriate corrective action.



### 3.2.3 Sampling Strategy

Sampling is the process of selecting a portion of learner results and learner evidence for the purposes of completing internal verification and external authentication of assessment, within each major/special purpose/supplemental award area.

As part of their quality assurance agreement, providers are required to devise an appropriate sampling strategy suitable to their provision. The sample must be fair and consistent and enable the provider to identify any deviation from best practice. The sample should help the provider to ascertain whether their procedures are being implemented appropriately.

Liffey College's sampling strategy is based on the formula  $\sqrt{n+1}$ , where n is the total population of assessed learners (which is more than 15) as shown in the examples below:

Table 6: Examples of Sampled Evidence.

Number of Assessed Learners	Sample Size Based on the Formula $\sqrt{n+1}$
0 – 15	All learners
16 – 24	5
25 – 35	6
36 – 48	7
49 – 63	8
64 – 80	9
81 – 99	10
100 – 120	11

### 3.3 Results Approval

The purpose of the Results Approval Process is to ensure that results are fully quality assured and signed off by the provider prior to submission to QQI.

The Results Approval Process ensures that appropriate decisions are taken regarding the outcome of the assessment and authentication processes. The process includes consideration of the internal verifier and external authenticator reports.

A Results Approval Panel is established to ensure that assessment decisions and results are reviewed, judged and processed in a fair, consistent and transparent manner. The membership of the Results Approval Panel may include senior staff member(s), heads of departments/sections and assessors. The internal verifier and external authenticator reports should be considered by the panel.

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

Once the results are approved, they are made available to learners and submitted to QQI.

Learners are given 14 days to lodge an appeal. QQI will then issue certificates for all the results received except those flagged as under appeal.

### 3.4 Appeals

Liffey College has an Appeals Committee that is convened by the Academic Coordinator in the event of an appeal filed against any academic matter involving learner progression,

examination, assessment grades and awards. The Appeals Committee's role is to ascertain fairness in following appropriate procedures in relation to the academic matter raised.

Its responsibilities are to:

- review appeals as per the appeals procedure (section 6.1.8) relating to learner progression, examination, assessment grades and awards
- consider the outcome of appeals following thorough investigation
- accept/reject appeal and determine appropriate actions to follow
- recommend actions

To facilitate learners to appeal the process and/or results which they deem to be unfair. Only results subsequent to the Results Approval Process may be appealed.

An appeal must be lodged within fourteen (14) days of the formal date of issue of results using the Result Appeal Form which is available on the learner portal through the College Management System.

The Appeals Process is available to all learners via the Learner Handbook and is also discussed during Induction.

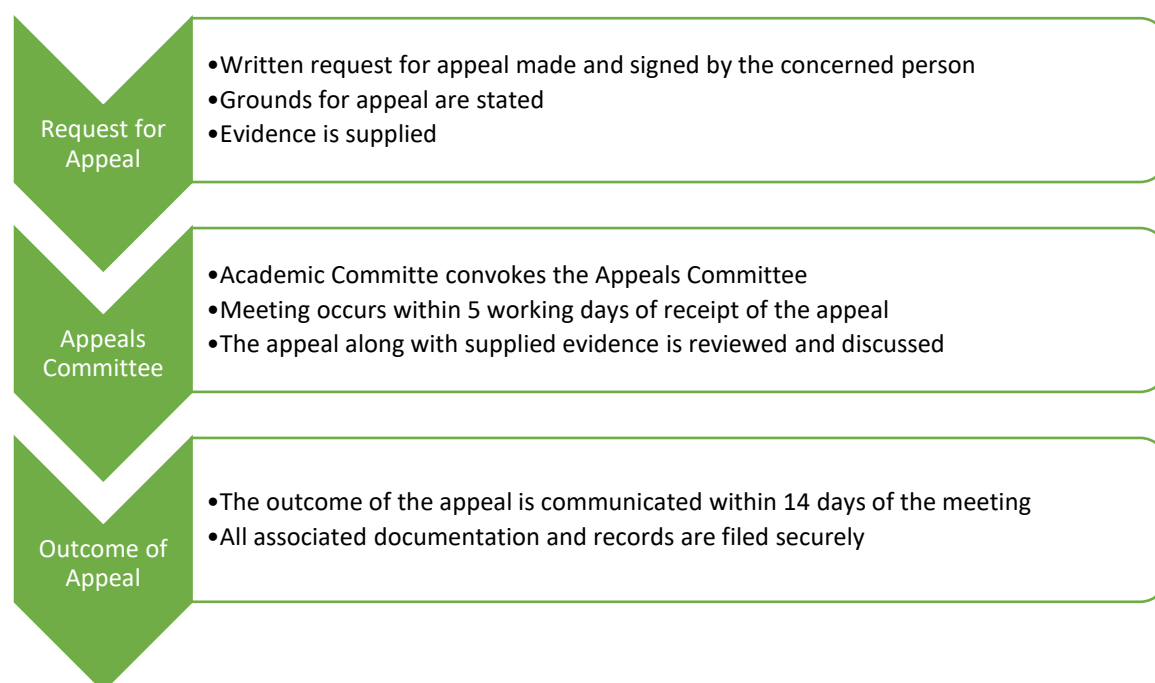


Figure 8: Summary for the Learner Appeals Process

# APPENDICES


## APPENDIX A

### TEMPLATE FOR ASSESSMENT BRIEF




<b>Programme Title</b>	
<b>Module Title</b>	
<b>Lecturer Name</b>	
<b>Assessment Release Date</b>	
<b>Learning Outcomes for this Module:</b> 1. 2. 3. 4.	
<b>Assessment Overview/Rationale:</b> This ( <i>assessment technique</i> ) allows you to ...	
<b>Assessment Guidelines:</b> Learners must produce and submit ...	
<b>Submission Process:</b> Please upload to the College's Management System by ( <i>time</i> ) on ( <i>date</i> ).	
<b>Assessment Criteria/Marking Scheme:</b> The ( <i>assessment technique</i> ) should demonstrate...	
<b>Please Note:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All (<i>assessment techniques</i>) must include a completed <u>Assignment Cover Page</u>. For your convenience a cover sheet is included at the end of this document.</li> <li>• Please include your name, student number and module title as a header on each page of your assignment before submission.</li> <li>• Late submission of work must have the prior approval of the lecturer and will only be approved for certified reasons.</li> </ul>	

## APPENDIX B

<b>TEMPLATE FOR ASSESSMENT COVER PAGE</b>	
	
<b>Module Title</b>	
<b>Name of Learner</b>	
<b>Learner ID Number</b>	
<b>Word Count/Presentation Length</b> (Please indicate both the word count and the number of pages in the assessment)	
<b>Declaration:</b> <i>By typing my name in the signature field, I hereby declare that this assignment is my own original work. I further confirm that I have been provided with information about Liffey College's assessment and appeals procedures and my responsibilities with regard to assessment.</i>	
<b>Signature</b>	
<b>Date</b>	
<b>Note to Learners:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Assessments will not be accepted without this cover sheet.</li> <li>Copies of all submitted assessments (where applicable) should be kept.</li> </ul>	

## APPENDIX C

<b>TEMPLATE FOR MARKING SHEET</b>				
				
Assessment Criteria	Achievement Descriptor	Allocated Marks	Learner Marks	Comments/Feedback
(Assessment Criteria 1)				
(Assessment Criteria 2)				
(Assessment Criteria 3)				
(Assessment Criteria 4)				
<b>Total Marks:</b>				<b>Overall Feedback:</b>
<b>Total Weighting</b>				
<b>Assessor's Signature:</b>  <b>Date:</b>				