

Policy on External Authentication (FET)

Policy Procedure Protocol Guideline

Office of the Nursing and Midwifery Services Director (ONMSD): Consortium of Centres of Nursing and Midwifery Education (CCNME)

Title of PPPG Development Group:	Consortium of Centres of Nursing and Midwifery Education (CCNME)		
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1.0 Purpose

The CCNME is committed to providing Quality Assurance (QA) policies, procedures, and processes to underpin fair, valid and consistent Learner assessment in compliance with Quality Qualifications Ireland (QQI) standards. The authentication process ensures that QQI receive accurate and quality assured learner results for QQI FET accredited programmes. This involves External Authentication which provides an independent authoritative confirmation of fair and consistent assessment of learners and thereby establishes credibility of the CCNME assessment processes and ensures results are compliant with the requirements of the award (QQI, 2018).

2.0 Scope

This policy applies to the following:

Academic Council & Committees	Programme Board	Board of Examiners	CCNME Programme Teams	External Authenticator
✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

3.0 Policy Statement

The CCNME recognises the requirement to ensure a robust Authentication Process including External Authentication for QQI FET Components and Programmes which meet the requirement of QQI QA Guidelines and Standards (QQI, 2018).

4.0 Roles and Responsibilities

	Academic Council & Committees	Programme Board	CCNME Programme Teams	External Authenticator QQI FET
Responsible for Implementation	✓	✓	✓	✓
Responsible for Monitoring & Review	✓	✓	✓	✓

4.1 CCNME Academic Council

- 4.1.1 Creates and maintains a record of External Authenticators who meets the specified selection criteria (Appendix 1) and makes available to the Chairperson of Programme Board upon request.
- 4.1.2 Communicates with the External Authenticator(s) regarding their roles, responsibilities and Code of Practice (External Authenticator Code of Practice Form).

4.2 Programme Board

- 4.2.1 Identify an External Authenticator and forward name to Chairperson of Programme Committee prior to programme commencing.

4.3 **Programme Committees**

- 4.3.1 Formally communicates with the External Authenticator(s) identifying date(s) and agreed time(s) and venue(s) for Centre visit(s) for the External Authentication Process, in collaboration with the Programme Coordinator(s).
- 4.3.2 Communicate and agree with the External Authenticator(s) the date(s) by which the External Authentication Report(s) is completed.

4.4 **CCNME Programme Teams**

- 4.4.1 Ensure all relevant staff within the Centre are aware of and comply with this policy and associated procedures.
- 4.4.2 Ensure that the authentication process including Internal Verification and External Authentication, is completed.
- 4.4.3 The Programme Coordinator must;
 - 4.4.3.1 Be available as the contact person for the External Authenticator(s) on the date(s) of the Centre Site Visit(s).
 - 4.4.3.2 Prepare all documentation for the External Authenticator(s) to fulfil their role(s).
 - 4.4.3.3 Identify a sample of learners who have completed the programme/and or relevant staff to be available to meet with the External Authenticator on the day if requested.
 - 4.4.3.4 Receives the External Authentication Report(s) from the External Authenticator(s) following completion of the process.
 - 4.4.3.5 Ensure the External Authentication Report(s) is available for the Results Approval Panel at the Board of Examiners' meeting.

4.5 **External Authenticator**

- 4.5.1 Undertake the role of External Authenticator in line with the External Authenticator Code of Practice.
- 4.5.2 Confirming that they have the technical or subject matter expertise within the appropriate award area or/fields of learning.
- 4.5.3 Providing independent confirmation of fair and consistent assessment of Learners in line with the Centre's policies, procedures, protocols, guidelines and QQI requirements and ensuring consistency of assessment results with national standards.
- 4.5.4 Reviewing Internal Verification Report(s) and authenticating the findings/outcomes.
- 4.5.5 Applying a sampling strategy to moderate results consistent with QQI requirements.
- 4.5.6 Moderating assessment results for an award or across a number of awards within a related field or subfield as outlined in the Award Specification.
- 4.5.7 Attending the Centre at the agreed date(s) and time(s) and meeting with the appropriate staff and Learners.
- 4.5.8 Identifying any issues/irregularities in relation to the assessment process.
- 4.5.9 Recommending results for approval.

4.5.10 Producing an External Authentication Report on the External Authentication Report and returning to the Centre by the agreed date in order to be available for the Results Approval Panel prior to Request for Certification from QQI.

5.0 Document Control

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	V.1.0	04/11/2022
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Supporting Documentation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Qualifications and Quality Assurance (Education and Training) Act 2012</i>. No. 28/2012 [online]. Available from: https://www.irishstatutebook.ie/eli/2012/act/28/enacted/en/html [accessed 31 January 2022]. • <i>Qualifications and Quality Assurance (Education and Training) (Amendment) Act 2019</i>. No. 32/2019 [online]. Available from: https://www.irishstatutebook.ie/eli/2019/act/32/enacted/en/html [accessed 31 January 2022]. • Quality and Qualifications Ireland (QQI). (2013). <i>Assessment and Standards, Revised 2013</i> [online]. Available from: https://www.qqi.ie/sites/default/files/2021-09/assessment_and_standards-revised-2013.pdf [accessed 30 January 2022]. • Quality and Qualifications Ireland (QQI). (2017). <i>Policies and criteria for the validation of programmes of education and training</i> [online]. Available from: https://www.qqi.ie/sites/default/files/2021-11/gp-17-policies-and-criteria-for-the-validation-of-programmes-of-education-and-training.pdf [accessed 2 January 2022]. 	
Related Policies & Procedures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Policy on Assessment of Learners [PDF, 8 Pages] • Policy on Reasonable Accommodation in Assessment [PDF, 5 Pages] • Procedure on Reasonable Accommodation in Assessment [PDF, 5 Pages] • Policy on Submission of Assessment [PDF, 4 Pages] • Procedure on Submission of Assessment [PDF, 5 Pages] • Policy on Security of Assessment [PDF, 4 Pages] • Procedure on Security of Assessment [PDF, 8 Pages] • Procedure on Regulations for the Conduct of Written Examinations [PDF, 8 Pages] • Policy on Grading and Certification of Learner Assessment [PDF, 6 Pages] • Procedure on Grading and Certification of Learner Assessment [PDF, 8 Pages] • Policy on Internal Verification as part of the Authentication Process (FET) [PDF, 6 Pages] 	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Procedure for Internal Verification as part of the Authentication Process (FET) [PDF, 4 Pages] • Procedure on External Authentication (FET) [PDF, 4 Pages] • Policy and Procedure on Board of Examiners: Results Approval Panel [PDF, 6 Pages] • Policy on Assessment Appeals [PDF, 7 Pages] • Procedure on Review, Recheck and Appeal of Learner Assessment Decisions [PDF, 6 Pages] • Policy on Promoting and Maintaining Academic Integrity [PDF, 7 Pages] • Procedure on Promotion of Academic Integrity among Learners [PDF, 5 Pages] • Policy on Data Protection, Usage and Management [PDF, 7 Pages]
Related Resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Criteria for Selection of an External Authenticator • External Authenticator Code of Practice • Internal Verification Report • External Authentication Checklist • External Authenticator Report

Appendix 1: Criteria for Selection of an External Authenticator (QQI 2018)

Prior to assigning an external authenticator the provider should devise a profile of the individual required. The following criteria should be applied when devising this profile: the external assessor should:

- have technical/subject matter expertise within the appropriate award area/field of learning
- have experience of delivering programme assessment or work in the industry/field
- agree to undertake appropriate training and attend appropriate briefings
- have the qualities necessary to interact with learners, assessors and senior staff members i.e. communication skills
- have administrative and IT skills e.g. report writing, time-management skills
- undertake to operate within the code of practice and guidelines issued by QQI (Appendix 13)
- be available to the provider at appropriate times
- be independent of the centre to which they are assigned
- the provider and inform them of planned visits and information required
- provide constructive feedback to the centre management and staff
- compile an external authentication report on time and based on an independent evaluation of the process and procedures.