

Procedure: External Authentication

QSI Section: S6: Assessment of Learners

Purpose: The purpose of the authentication process is to ensure fairness, consistency, and validity of assessments and of the outcome of assessments for learner results across each major, minor, special purpose, or supplemental award. To ensure that the appointed External Authenticator is aware of the LWETB process for authentication enabling the process to be conducted appropriately within each centre.

Scope: This procedure applies to further education and training provision provided by Longford and Westmeath ETB colleges and centres or by organisations funded/contracted by LWETB to provide further education and training. Within LWETB there are numerous categories for training provision e.g. In-centre Day and Contracted Training (including SST, Short Courses, Traineeship, Foundation and Bridging Programmes), In-centre Night (Evening Courses), Apprenticeship, CTC, STP and Others (LTI and Justice), which delivers programmes towards numerous Major, Special Purpose and Supplemental Awards across all award levels. For Apprenticeships the SOLAS QA procedure will apply. The remaining training provision will ensure that External Authentication occurs for each programme at least once across a two-year cycle in line with the EA sampling strategy outlined below.

LWETB Staff Involved:	Coordinator/Centre Manager FETQS Educator/Assessors AEO TSO	Others Involved:	External Authenticator (EA) Internal Verifier (where applicable) QOG
Related Documents:	Internal Verification Procedure Results Approval Panel Procedure	Related Templates:	External Authenticator Report QOG Results Ratification Review Template Data Protection Procedures

Approach used to carry out procedure		Responsibility	Evidence Documentation
1. Before External Authentication			
1.1	<p>Further Education</p> <p>The FETQS unit will liaise with the EA and FET Coordinators/Centre Managers to arrange Authentication dates for each centre coinciding with the centre's Annual Certification Plan. Once EAs confirm booking dates with FETQS a contract of engagement will be issued to the EA. The EA will review, sign and return the contract of engagement via eapanel@lwetb.ie.</p> <p>Briefings will be conducted with External Authenticators within the LWETB EA Panel by FETQS/TSO before EAs commence the authentication process. These briefings will be conducted through teams at a scheduled date/time.</p> <p>The FETQS will provide the EA with a TEAMs link containing:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • LWETB support documentation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ EA procedure ○ Sampling Strategy ○ EA Briefing PowerPoint ○ EA Authentication Report Template ○ LWETB Invoice Template ○ Contingency Measures • ETBI supporting documentation • Contingency measure documentation <p>The EA must make arrangements for the visit in a timely manner with the dates agreed with the FETQS unit well in advance of the visit. The dates, times, volume of work, paperwork to be completed for payment purposes, deadlines for</p>	<p>FETQS/TSO</p> <p>External Authenticator and FETQS Unit</p>	<p>Emails/phone calls</p> <p>Emails/phone calls</p>

<p>reporting, onsite or online authentication and any other EA requirements should be discussed & agreed in advance of the Authentication process. The EA must apply the sampling strategy provided by LWETB.</p> <p>Training</p> <p><u>Interim EA process for Training; in-centre</u></p> <p>The TSO will appoint an EA from the LWETB EA Panel (legacy EA panel can be used if there is no subject matter expert within LWETB EA Panel only, TSO should start HR proceedings to place this EA onto the current LWETB EA Panel) where possible and will</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use the LWETB EA Panel • Review Panel members for an SME (Subject Matter Expert) • Allocate an EA & make contact with the EA to agree a date to visit and to provide assessment documentation and assessment evidence for named/identified learners in the selected sample. • Once EAs confirm booking dates with the TSO a contract of engagement will be issued to the EA. The EA will review, sign and return the contract of engagement via epanel@lwetb.ie • Ensure contract is signed by appropriate Manager/Coordinator • Provide the EA with the F12s (minus PPSNs & learner names) • Organise a secure room and make the assessment records & evidence available for all the learners in the sample requested by the EA. The material to be authenticated must be organised by programme, by Learner name and in alphabetical order by surname as per F12. <p><u>Interim EA process for training; Contracted & Community Providers</u></p> <p>The TSO will use the contractors Authentication Plan to reserve dates for authentication. An EA will be chosen from the LWETB EA Panel. The relevant TSO should complete the section with the External Authenticator's name. The</p>		
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	contractor is responsible for making the arrangements and facilitating the site visit with the nominated EA. Any changes required should be notified to the training centre and the appropriate action, if any, taken.		
1.2	<p>The FET Coordinator/Centre Manager/TSO must prepare for the visit of the EA by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensuring that the Internal Verification Process is completed • Ensure all documentation is available and stored securely • Where evidence is presented online organise a meeting with the EA through TEAMS to assist in the walk through of online folders where applicable • Email all necessary documentation relating to the folders numbers, hardcopy/online number in advance of the Authentication process (where applicable) • Ensure the room is laid out securely and in an orderly manner for the authentication process • Ensure that the EA has internet access, where evidence is presented online two screens are made available (where possible) when conducting onsite authentication of online learner evidence. • Where applicable all necessary software should be in working order and any auditory or video recordings can be clearly heard/viewed. • Ensure that all staff are available for any questions, queries or clarifications that may arise during the EA visit (in person or via phone) 	FET Coordinator/Centre Manager/TSO	EA Report IV Report

2. On Arrival		
2.1	<p>The FET Coordinator/Centre Manager/TSO or appointed liaison person must meet with the EA and ensure that the following documentation is available:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Current LWETB EA Report (section 1&2 pre-populated) · Internal Verification Report · Assessment conversion Form & Centre Report on Contingency measures (where applicable) <i>deadline certification August 2022</i> · Previous LWETB EA Report · LWETB Sampling Strategy · QBS/F12 Reports · All module award administrative documentation, educator/assessor materials and learner evidence & supporting documentation (refer to the Educator/Assessor Handover checklist) 	<p>FET Coordinator/Centre Manager/TSO</p> <p>EA Report</p>
2.2	<p>The EA will review IV Report(s); authenticate findings/outcomes; and note evidence of IV process and sign report(s) on completion of authentication</p> <p>The EA will review the previous EA report and discuss with FET Coordinator/Centre Manager/TSO (assessors/educators) as regards what progress they have made to resolve issues that had arisen in that report.</p>	<p>External Authenticator & FET Coordinator/Centre Manager/TSO</p> <p>EA Report</p>
3. Commencing the EA process		
3.1	<p>The EA must check to ensure that all necessary documentation identified in 2.1 is available to them</p>	<p>External Authenticator</p> <p>EA Report</p>

3.2	<p>Sampling - The EA will apply the LWETB sampling strategy and conduct the following for the completion of the Authentication Report:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reviewing the individual marking sheet for each learner to ensure there is sufficient learner assessment evidence available per technique for which marks are awarded. • Ensuring that the assessment materials are reflective of the national standard as per the NFQ Grid of Level Indicators • Read the first piece of assessment checking marks and assessment instruments, comparing the learner assessment evidence against the award/ programme standards and benchmarking the evidence against the QQI grading criteria and locally devised assessment rubric/marketing schemes. • Read the rest of the assessment evidence for that learner • Make a judgement as to whether the evidence meets the standard required at this grade. • Ensure new Educators/Assessors judgments/decisions are sampled at least once during the assessment cycle. 	External Authenticator	EA Report
4. Moderation of Results & Report Completion			
4.1	<p>To moderate the assessment results, the EA must:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review the award standards in the appropriate award specification • Review the grading criteria • Confirm assessment techniques and instruments are consistent with award requirements • Confirm assessment criteria and marking sheets are appropriate • Judge the required sample of learner evidence and results to ensure consistency with the award standard and grading criteria <p>· Repeat the process for the next learner to be sampled.</p> <p>· Determine cut-off points, as appropriate.</p>	External Authenticator	EA Report

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The grading criteria will describe what a learner must attain to achieve a particular grade for an award at a particular level for 4-6. 		
4.2	<p>The EA must:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Confirm the fair and consistent assessment of learners consistent with the LWETB procedures and with QQI policy on quality assuring assessment, including checking that the correct assessment instruments were used Complete a full and comprehensive, detailed and constructive EA Report. Submit to the FET Coordinator/Manager (please ensure you have relevant email address) & Quality Unit/TSO via eapanel@lwetb.ie within 2 days for FET/5 days for the Training Centre of completing the process. Rationale for any recommendations must be clearly explained and documented. <i>The EA Report should be based in appreciative inquiry, be evidence based, and deliver clear, detailed and constructive feedback. All sections of the EA report should be completed.</i> Confirm (a) good practice (b) recommend areas for improvement in the EA Report. In certain situations the EA may (c) identify issues which may threaten the integrity of the assessment or certification process 	External Authenticator	EA Report
4.3	If a comment results in a recommendation/area for improvement, please link comments to the relevant section comprehensively in order to provide clarity and direction.	External Authenticator	EA Report
4.4	No names or PPSN numbers should be listed in an EA Report. In the case of identifying the learner, use learner initials for QBS or the relevant number on an F12 including the learner group code. For staff members, please identify by roles and use initials only.	External Authenticator	EA Report
4.5	Adhere to the LWETB Data Protection Procedures	External Authenticator	EA Report/LWETB Data Protection Procedures
4.6	At all times during and post EA engagement, maintain confidentiality	External Authenticator	EA Contract of Engagement

4.7	Bring any significant irregularity or serious issue identified to the attention of the Quality Unit and the FET Coordinator/Manager/TSO	External Authenticator	EA Contract of Engagement
4.8	Conduct a closing meeting with FET Coordinator/Managers/TSO and Educator/assessors to outline findings i.e. areas where educator/instructors could improve, areas of good practice	External Authenticator/FET Coordinator/Manager/TSO/Educator/Assessor	EA Contract of Engagement
4.9	Ensure all relevant documentation has been signed and dated	External Authenticator/FET Coordinator/Manager/TSO	EA Report
5. Grade changes & Issues Identified			
5.1	<p>Grade changes can be recommended by an EA, this should be discussed with the educator/assessor & FET Coordinator/Centre Manager/TSO</p> <p>When recommending a change in grade, the EA must discuss this with the Educator/Assessor involved where at all possible. The FET Coordinator/Centre Manager/TSO should also be informed in relation to the recommendation and reasoning. The FET Coordinator/Centre Manager/TSO will bring any grade changes that are recommended by the EA to the RAP where these will be discussed, and accepted or not, by members of the RAP Panel.</p> <p>It is important that the EA understands the rationale behind the educator/assessor allocation of marks in advance of making a recommendation & give the Educator/Assessor an opportunity to discuss the application of the standard, assessment techniques and the marking scheme applied.</p>	External Authenticator	EA Report
5.2	In the event that the Educator/Assessor is unavailable, the EA must discuss the recommended change in grade with the FET Coordinator/Centre Manager/TSO. <i>All such discussions should be referenced in the completed authentication report.</i>	External Authenticator	EA Report
5.3	<p>Recommended grade changes by the EA should be noted on the QBS authentication results sheet/F12 Report , initialled by the EA and dated.</p> <p>Where a grade change is recommended for an individual or cohort of learners subject matter expert reasoning should be given within the EA report and identified within the sections relevant (i.e. grade change section)</p>	External Authenticator	QBS Report

5.4	<p>Further Education</p> <p>The EA must return the report to the Centre Manager/FE Coordinator (please ensure you have FE Coordinators relevant email address) & simultaneously send report to FETQS via eapanel@lwetb.ie within 2 working days of the completed authentication. Coordinators & Centre Managers must distribute & discuss the relevant information within the report with educators/assessors. Educators/Assessors can seek clarification/feedback from the External Authenticator up to 4 days after completion of the authentication report.</p> <p>Training</p> <p>The EA must return the report to the Centre Manager/FE Coordinator (please ensure you have relevant email address & TSO via eapanel@lwetb.ie within 5 working days of the completed authentication</p>	External Authenticator	EA Report Email
6. Results Approval Panel Meeting			
6.1	The EA must ensure that they have completed section 4 'Feedback for RAP attention' summarising points that the EA feels is of importance to the RAP Panel	External Authenticator	EA Report
6.2	Attend the Results Approval Panel (RAP) meeting, if requested to do so	External Authenticator	EA Report/RAP Minutes

LWETB External Authentication Sampling Strategy

Please note the sampling strategies of other awarding bodies supersede this e.g. for apprenticeships and contracted training.

The sampling strategy for LWETB will be applied by the External Authenticator in respect of the following:

A minimum of 30% of every component must be externally authenticated while adhering to the criteria listed below:

- All component awards must be included in the sample
- All provision (full time and part time) must be included in the sample
- The sample size must be sufficient to enable sound judgement to be made about fairness and consistency of assessment decisions.
- Identifies grades that are borderline (-2 or +2) between grades e.g. learners who have not or learners who have only just achieved within the grading band
- The full range of available grades must be included in the portfolio selection process (where applicable) i.e.
 - The **lowest Distinction** and the **highest Merit**
 - The **lowest Merit** and the **highest Pass**
 - The **lowest Pass** and the **highest Unsuccessful**
- All educator/assessors must be included
- The remaining number of assessment portfolios will be randomly chosen, across all the grade bands, until the sample quota outlined in the above table is reached.

Where there are less than 12 portfolios being presented by a single centre, all must be internally and externally verified.

Once the above criteria has been met the remaining learner folders will be randomly chosen across all the modules and grade bands, until the minimum sample size is reached.

Identifying Sampled Portfolios – External Authenticator is required to use a different coloured pen than the educator/assessor & Internal verifier

External Authenticator The External Authenticator must identify each learner sampled during the authentication on the relevant documentation e.g. Summary Marking Sheet and QBS Authentication Report/F12 Report

FETQS Internal Review:

Procedure Review			
Review Date:	11 th March 2023	Review Log & Reason for Update:	
Version:	1.0	Quality System Index Code:	PR19
Appendix Overview:			
Appendix Txx:		Appendix Txx:	