

Quality Policies & Procedures Manual

Academic Appeals Policy.....	4
Academic Appeals Procedure	4
Academic Integrity Policy	6
Academic Integrity Procedure.....	6
Access, Transfer and Progression Policy.....	11
Access, Transfer and Progression Procedure	13
Assessment of Learners Policy	16
Assessment of Learners Procedure	17
Collaboration Policy and Procedure.....	32
Communications Policy	33
Communications Procedure.....	33
Complaints Policy.....	36
Complaints Procedure.....	36
Data Protection Policy.....	39
Data Protection Procedure	44
Document Control Policy	50
Document Control Procedure	50
Equality & Diversity Policy	52
Equality & Diversity Procedure	52
Equipment, Platforms and IT Services Maintenance Policy	54
Equipment, Platforms and IT Services Maintenance Procedure.....	54
Learner Information for Programmes Procedure	60
Learner Support Policy	63
Learner Support Procedure.....	63
Malpractice Policy.....	67
Malpractice Procedure	67
Other Parties Involved in Education Policy	69
Other Learners Involved in Education Procedure	69
Premises and Infrastructure Selection Procedure.....	71
Programme Design and Development Policy	74
Programme Design and Development Procedure	75
Programme Delivery Procedure.....	84

Programme Review Policy	86
Programme Review Procedure.....	86
Public information Policy.....	89
Public information Procedure	89
Quality and Continuous Improvement Policy.....	92
Quality and Continuous Improvement Procedure.....	92
Reasonable Accommodation Policy	103
Reasonable Accommodation Procedure.....	103
Recognition of Prior Learning Policy.....	108
Recognition of Prior Learning Procedure	108
Recruitment, Management & Development Policy	110
Recruitment, Management & Development Procedure	111
Risk Management Policy	116
Risk Management Procedure.....	116
Safeguarding Policy.....	119
Safeguarding Procedure.....	119
Self-Evaluation, Monitoring & Review Procedure.....	121
Strategic Planning Gap Analysis for Blended Learning Procedure.....	126
Teaching & Learning Policy	128
Teaching & Learning Procedure.....	131
Vetting Policy	135
Vetting Procedure	135

Academic Appeals Policy

It is Qualtec's Policy that learners are assessed in a fair and credible manner. Qualtec will facilitate learners to appeal academic decisions and results in a timely and efficient manner.

Academic Appeals Procedure

1. Purpose

The Academic Appeals Procedure reinforces the fairness and consistency of the assessment process in order to ensure the overall integrity of the process.

Only approved results may be appealed by the learner so the Academic Appeals Procedure can only be invoked once the Results Approval Panel has approved preliminary results.

2. Scope

Qualtec's Assessment Policy allows for appeals process in relation to assessment results or any perceived irregularities or inequality during the assessment process leading to an Award.

3. Responsibility

The Academic Board is responsible for monitoring and approving this procedure.

4. Records

Appeals Application Form, Marking Sheet

5. Procedure

5.1 Learner Information

All learners are made aware of their right to appeal the results of any assessment as part of the course induction and in the Learner Handbook.

5.2 Appeals Process

The Academic Appeals Procedure operates as follows:

- Once the learner has received his/her preliminary results then these may be appealed within 14 days of notification.
- The learner completes the Appeals Form and sends this to either their trainer or the Head of Training & Quality.
- Only assessment evidence previously presented by the learner may be considered for the purposes of the appeal. No new evidence may be submitted or considered.
- The Head of Training & Quality forwards the Appeals Form and supporting assessment evidence (including marking sheets) to the Independent Education and Training Expert for review.
- The Independent Education and Training Expert may engage the services of an external assessor to assist with its review if it considers this to be appropriate to maintain fairness and consistency within the specific circumstances of the appeal.
- The Independent Education and Training Expert notifies the learner in writing of the outcome of the appeal within 14 days of its review meeting (which may be a virtual meeting). At the same time the Head of Training & Quality will be notified of the outcome of the appeal.
- If the appeal by the learner is upheld, then the Head of Training & Quality is responsible for ensuring that the learner's result is amended prior to certification and the Results Approval Panel is informed.

The Academic Board will formally review the decisions in relation to the Academic Appeals Procedure at its next meeting and has the right to make observations and recommendations for corrective action in relation to such matters.

Academic Integrity Policy

It is Qualtec's Policy to assure the academic integrity of the Awards that they are responsible for. Qualtec take any breach of academic integrity very seriously.

It is a core quality requirement in training that all assessment is conducted in a professional manner and that it is fair and consistent. The primary aim of assessment is to determine whether a programme's learning outcomes have been achieved.

Academic misconduct occurs when the learner behaves in a way which undermines the integrity of the assessment (e.g., by cheating in an exam, engaging in plagiarism, use of artificial intelligence (AI) or generative AI, buying assessment materials or services from a third party). Therefore, academic misconduct can be regarded as any action which dishonestly uses information to gain an academic award or academic credit.

Plagiarism may be defined as: *the practice of taking someone else's work or ideas and passing them off as one's own.* (OED)

Since 2019, it has been against the law to facilitate cheating and QQI has provided guidance for learners and educators as this is a continuing area of concern across all education and training providers and regulators.

Academic Integrity Procedure

1. Purpose

The purpose of this procedure is to outline how Qualtec protects the underlying value of the awards it trains for by the prevention of cheating and other forms of academic misconduct.

Procedures in relation to prevention, monitoring and control of potential cases of academic misconduct are included in Sections 6 and 7 of this document.

2. Scope

This policy relates to academic integrity and related practices which

are intended to prevent plagiarism within Qualtec's teaching, learning and assessment activities across its programmes leading to accredited awards.

3. Responsibility

The Head of Training & Quality is responsible for ensuring that this policy is adhered to by all staff and any collaborative partners, e.g. contracted trainers.

The Academic Board has oversight of this policy in relation to academic and regulatory standards.

The Management Board has oversight of this policy in relation to training delivery, resources and supports.

4. Records

Risk Assessment

Risk Register

Plagiarism & AI Checker records

5. Procedure

5.1 Risks

At its most basic level, plagiarism is the practice of using or copying someone else's ideas or work and pretending that the learner or presenter thought of it or created it in the first place.

Plagiarism may include:

- Copying or paraphrasing without acknowledging the source failure to properly reference sources can give rise to a charge of plagiarism.
- Copying and pasting from the internet without proper referencing this can be both deliberate or accidental (e.g. failing to note the source of a quote or piece of information included within an assessment).
- Deliberate collaboration or collusion -a learner works with others to present the same content as the learner's original work.
- Recycling – a learner reuses or resubmits their previous work. This can occur when assessments are recycled and presented as new,

original work.

- Commercial essay-writing/cheating services – where a learner uses professional essay-writing or similar paid-for services and presents this content as their own work. These services are widely advertised across the internet and such academic malpractice occurs when the learner pays for essay-writing or other cheating services.
- Use of artificial intelligence or generative AI. This is the use of online tools for the use of completing assignments.

5.2 Preventative Actions

On a practical level, a strong trainer-learner relationship can help to provide early warning of potential risks of academic misconduct. Therefore, Qualtec strives for open and supportive relationships between trainers and learners to help prevent the risk of academic misconduct.

Preventative measures include:

- Learner supports - include guidance on the risks of academic misconduct and how learners may avoid plagiarism. Examples include: guidance from trainers during induction; explanation to learners is what constitutes Plagiarism.
- Use of formative assessment – this helps learners to develop research and academic writing skills, with constructive feedback from trainers to support these skills and identify potential risks (e.g. failing to adequately reference materials). Opportunities are provided to discuss assignments and review progress before submission of the final assignment.
- Requiring our learners to use critical thinking and reasoning and requires learners to personalise their assignments.
- Requiring- students to use verifiable sources with a reference list. This helps verify sources.
- Assessment design - aim to develop materials and assessment instruments that are the less susceptible to cheating methods.
- Exam supervision and administration – monitor invigilation experiences and remain vigilant in monitoring the risk of cheating.

- Governance via the Academic Board should take a proactive approach to the risk of academic misconduct, reviewing feedback from trainers and assessors and providing guidance to trainers and administrators.
- Support for trainers and assessors – use of CPD training and practical workshops.
- Using technology tools helps to detect plagiarism (including use of AI) plus provide training for staff on how to interpret the results of these interventions.
- Raising learners' awareness of the sanctions for academic misconduct and maintaining records of such cases to assist in prevention.

The Academic Board will work closely with the Head of Training & Quality in maintaining and updating the Risk Register in relation to academic misconduct risks.

Learners are required to sign a Plagiarism declaration when submitting assignments through the VLE.

5.3 Sanctions and Learner Appeals

It is the trainer's responsibility to notify the Head of Training & Quality of any suspected case of plagiarism or other academic misconduct.

The Head of Training & Quality must notify the Academic Board of such cases in a timely manner. In any event, the Academic Board will monitor any risks arising from academic misconduct as part of its standing agenda.

Submission of plagiarised work (either in whole or in part) represents fraudulent activity and all suspected cases must be investigated and dealt with as part of the assessment process.

The trainer should verify the extent of suspect materials submitted by the learner, initially consulting with the Head of Training & Quality. The Academic Board should be alerted as described above. Depending on the circumstances of the individual case, the Academic Board may consult with external Subject Matter Experts for guidance as required.

From the learner's standpoint, the process is:

- If the learner admits to plagiarism, then the assessment

piece will receive a “zero” mark. The learner will be invited to resubmit the work in a non-plagiarised format and, if successful, will receive a “minimum pass” grade.

- In the event of a recurrence (“second offence”) then the assessment piece will be given a “zero” grade and the learner may be removed from the programme and no course fee will be refunded. This decision must be reviewed and confirmed by the Academic Board.
- In all cases, the learner has the ultimate right of appeal to the Academic Board before a final decision is confirmed.

References and other resources

OED, Oxford English Dictionary

QQI, CG 6.1, QQI Core Statutory Quality Assurance Guidelines, 2016.

QQI, Prosecution of contract cheating: <https://www.qqi.ie/what-we-do/quality-assurance-of-education-and-training/prosecution-of-contract-cheating>

QQI Academic Integrity Guidelines:

https://www.qqi.ie/sites/default/files/2021-11/academic-integrity_guidelines.pdf

Plagiarism, University of Oxford:

<https://www.ox.ac.uk/students/academic/guidance/skills/plagiarism>

Access, Transfer and Progression Policy

Access

Qualtec operates an open access and admissions policy for learners who meet the programme entry requirements. Entry details are specified in:

- Programme validation documents approved by PHECC/QQI, as appropriate.
- The course details page on Qualtec's website <https://www.qualtec.ie/courses> which includes clear details of course aims, objectives, certification basis, course resources and minimum entry requirements.

There is a fair and consistent approach in providing information on courses, including:

- Name of Awarding Body for certified courses (e.g., QQI, PHECC).
- Component award specification.
- National Framework of Qualifications award level, e.g., Level 6.
- Course delivery method (e.g., online and/or classroom; IT and practical skill requirements).
- Entry requirements including level of English on the [Common European Framework of Reference \(CEFR\)](#) A level of B2 + proficiency is required.
- Qualtec welcomes a diverse range of applicants in line with its Equality and Diversity Policy and Procedure, where reasonably practicable, Qualtec will accommodate learners with special or specific needs.

Qualtec reserves the right to refuse admission to a programme if the learner is deemed to be unsuitable and will inform applicants of the

reason for doing so. Unsuccessful applicants can appeal this decision through the Academic Appeals Policy and Procedure.

Transfer

Successful completion of a component award with QQI will allow the learner to transfer to a full QQI Major award using the credit gained from the original component. Guidance on possible transfer is available from the Head of Training & Quality.

Generally, Qualtec's courses are single component modules so transfer may not be relevant for most learners, although a component award may be used as credit with another training course outside Qualtec

Progression

Progression routes are detailed on the course/programme webpage.

Access, Transfer and Progression Procedure

1. Purpose

The purpose of this procedure is to outline how suitable candidates can access programmes, transfer and progress from programmes.

2. Scope

This policy relates to admission of candidates to Programmes within Qualtec leading to an Award by PHECC or QQI.

3. Responsibility

The Head of Training and Quality is responsible for making a final decision on accepting applicants.

The Academic Board has oversight of this policy in relation to academic and regulatory standards.

4. Records

Course Website

5. Procedure

Any course offered by Qualtec should be suitable for the learner and this will be supervised by the Head of Training & Quality who will verify that the learner has a reasonable expectation in meeting the course learning outcomes with a fair level of effort on their part. In addition to course information on the Qualtec website, learners may enquire about their suitability for the course by phone or email.

All relevant programme and award information is made available to prospective and current learners on the course webpage including the following:

- Name of Awarding Body for certified courses (e.g., QQI, PHECC).
- Component award specification (if applicable)
- Title of award
- National Framework of Qualifications award level, e.g., Level 6. (if applicable)
- Course delivery method (e.g., online (synchronous/ asynchronous) and/or classroom).

- Time commitments – face to face, synchronous and asynchronous, workplace (as appropriate)
- Capacity to Succeed statement
- Course duration
- Eligibility requirements and learner suitability (e.g., online learning and digital skills)
- Hardware and software requirements.
- Procedures for access, transfer and progression
- Entry requirements including level of English on the Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR) A level of B2 + proficiency is required.

For Blended Learning programmes, the course page on the website outlines the information required to learners successfully complete the course and achieve the learning outcomes.

This can include information in relation to:

- The structure of the courses and the blend of learning.
- The prerequisites for participating on the course including the pre-knowledge and the technological skills that the learners will need.
- The extent of the autonomous learning and the supported elements of the training.
- The realistic commitment required to complete the programme, including independent learning.
- The hours when academic and technical support is available.
- The hardware and software required, and the time that learners are expected to commit to independent learning in order to complete the programme successfully.
- The specific level of engagement expected for different elements of the blend.
- The extent to which face-to-face attendance is part of the blend is made clear to learners and/or other stakeholders such as funding, recognition or validating bodies.

The course webpage outlines entry requirements including English Level proficiency and time commitment to successfully complete the course.

There are also Reasonable Accommodations arrangements in place for learners with specific needs which are detailed in the Reasonable Accommodation Policy and Procedures in the Learner Handbook.

The candidate is required to inform Qualtec or the instructor if English is not their first language in advance of the course.

Bookings will be reviewed by the person taking the booking to ensure that all candidates are suitable for the course. If there is any doubt or concerns in this area, the candidates will be contacted by the instructor or Head of Training & Quality to assess their suitability. For those for whom English is not their first language or if their level of English is in doubt, they may be required to complete a English Language proficiency test. All applications are considered in a transparent manner, on a fair and impartial basis.

If the person is unsuccessful, the applicant can appeal the decision through the Appeals Policy & Procedure.

Assessment of Learners Policy

Qualtec is committed to ensuring that assessment is fair, transparent, consistent, valid, and reliable and in line with the requirements of the relevant awarding body. Assessment relates to QQI/PHECC standards and may take place in a range of settings, e.g. classroom-based examinations, workplace-related skills demonstrations. Therefore, Qualtec aims to assess learners in the context of occupationally relevant tasks and knowledge, in line with module descriptors and standards.

Qualtec applies a systematic approach to assessment to ensure that learners have full information on assessment techniques to be used in a programme and their respective responsibilities. Learners are provided with sufficient opportunities throughout each programme to reach the specific learning outcomes consistent with the minimum intended programme learning outcomes.

Assessment instruments are designed to meet the needs of the programme content and Qualtec's learner profiles. Assessments for learners are designed so that a fair judgement can be made on learners' achievement of the required national standards of knowledge, skill, and competence for the award. Learners should be given adequate opportunity to generate the evidence to demonstrate the standards of knowledge, skill and competence required for the assessment.

Qualtec embraces diversity and provides reasonable accommodations for learners who have specific needs or requirements.

Qualtec also implements measures to ensure validity, transparency and reliability of assessment. This includes detailed internal verification, external authentication, results approval processes and the facility for learners to appeal results.

Assessment of Learners Procedure

1. Purpose

The purpose of this procedure is to ensure that learners are assessed in a quality assured, fair, consistent and transparent manner.

2. Scope

This procedure relates to all assessments leading to a recognised Award.

3. Responsibility

The Head of Training & Quality is responsible for this assessment procedure. The Academic Board monitors the conduct and outcomes of assessment to ensure overall quality assurance within the assessment process.

4. Records

The assessment record for each learner may include the following records and documentation:

- Learner data (name, PPSN, contact details, programme and awarding body, any specific learner requirements, results/grade, appeals, etc.)
- Assessment methods (assignment briefs, exams, skills demos, marking schemes, model answers, etc.)
- Assessment Schedule (location and date, assessor details, internal verifier, external authenticator, RAP details, etc.)
- Programme Descriptor
- Lesson Plan.

5. Procedure

5.1 Design & Planning of Assessments

Assessment for each individual module is planned and designed during the Programme Design & Development process, ensuring that all Learning Outcomes are assessed.

At this planning stage the following areas will be considered:

- The range of specific learning outcomes to be assessed as per module descriptor/standard.
- Integration of assessment should it be relevant.
- Assessment methodologies and instruments (Summative Assessments, Exams, Skills Assessments) will be chosen based on their suitability to the learning outcomes outlined in the Course Standard/Programme Descriptor.
- Evidence requirements to meet the standards for the award,
- The timing and scheduling of assessment activities including deadlines and due dates,
- How assessment criteria are applied,
- How marking criteria are applied,
- Exams and Skills Sheets templates.
- Marking sheets, model answers and grading guidelines for each assessment activity.
- An assessment schedule is devised for each module.

For blended learning, all assessment and feedback practices should:

- reflect the principles of Assessment OF/FOR/AS Learning and involve a variety of individual and/or group-based formative and summative assessment tasks that enable learners to achieve the programme learning outcomes.
- integrate, where appropriate, the technical and pedagogical affordances of digital tools and platforms in enabling learners to achieve the programme learning outcomes.
- reflect good practice and value learners as partners in the co-design of assessment, where they have opportunities, if appropriate, to use digital tools and platforms (e.g., e-portfolio) to critically reflect on their progress in achieving the programme learning outcomes.
- clearly map how formative and summative assessment in individual units or modules of study engage learners in a variety of tasks that contribute to the programme learning outcomes.
- provision appropriately challenge learners in meeting the learning outcomes and follow the principles of good formative and summative assessment.
- adopt consistent protocols for the electronic submission of assessment and the return of feedback to learners.

All of the above will be reviewed by the Programme Development Team which is created as part of the Programme Design & Development process.

For PHECC courses all learners are assessed in accordance the assessment procedure agreed with PHECC for the course and outlined in the course standard/ descriptor.

5.2 Learner Examination & Assessment Invigilation

All learners are supervised through invigilation when completing the tests/assessments to ensure credibility and security. It is the instructors' responsibility maintain the integrity of the assessment process and to ensure that learners are assessed fairly and consistently. The instructors' full responsibilities are outlined in the Organisation Structure.

Learners are informed of the dates, times, and duration of scheduled examination including face-to-face and online. This schedule is provided on the course webpage, on the booking email and on the learners' induction.

Learners are also informed of the meaning of Academic Integrity and that use of Cheating Sites is prohibited how breaches of rules will be handled and how their identity must be authenticated. This is included in the Learner Handbook, explained during Learner Induction and prior to examinations and skills assessments.

The instructor must always give their full attention to the supervision of the learners and be able to observe learners fully.

The instructor will inform learners of the Examination regulations at the course induction, in the Learner Handbook and before commencement of the exam. This includes the following rules:

- It is a closed book examination and that learners are not allowed to consult with other learners or look at other learners' answers.
- Learners are not allowed leave the examination room and return to the examination room without a genuine reason and that they will need to be supervised during their absence.
- Learners are required to put their name and examination date on their answer sheet. They must provide photo identification.
- Learners are instructed not to read the examination questions until told to do so.

- Learners are not allowed to leave the exam until 30 minutes from the commencement or the Exam.
- Learners will be given warnings on time remaining 15 minutes and 5 minutes before the end.
- Learners must remain seated until all answers are submitted.
- Learners must always comply with invigilators instructions. This includes instructions to leave the examination if requested.

Prior to the examination the instructors will ensure that learners desk surfaces can be viewed by them and that they are separated so that other learners cannot see their answers.

5.3 Skills Assessment

Skills assessments must be planned and set up properly by the Instructor. It is the responsibility of the instructor to ensure that all skills assessments are safe, fair and credible. The instructor will inform learners during the induction module on when the Skills Assessments are scheduled for.

The instructor will set up the room for assessments. The instructor will brief the learners in advance of what the assessment criteria is and will provide skills sheets in advance. They are also informed of the Skills Assessment rules. The trainer must use the prescribed assessment skills sheet. The instructor assesses how well the assessments were carried out on the Instructor/Trainer Report.

5.4 Assessment of learners for Blended Learning

All assessments Blended Learning courses are completed in the classroom in person and invigilated in the normal way. Learners must provide photo identification in order to verify them.

5.5 Reasonable Accommodation

Requests for reasonable accommodation are dealt with in accordance with the [Reasonable Accommodation Policy and Procedure](#).

5.6 Compassionate Consideration

Qualtec supports learners who face extenuating circumstances where assessment opportunities may be otherwise compromised and to ensure no learner becomes unfairly disadvantaged.

Qualtec considers the following examples of circumstances that they will consider whilst granting compassionate consideration.

- Physical or emotional injury 2 weeks prior to course commencement
- Incapacity or illness preventing the learner commencing the course
- Bereavement of a close family member
- Domestic crisis
- Terminal illness of close family member
- Other extenuating circumstances.

Learners must apply to the Head of Quality and Training for consideration of extenuating circumstances. Compassionate consideration may also be applied where a learner feels they are unable to complete the assessment task by the deadline due to circumstances beyond their control. An extension on a submission or a new deadline date may be issued in exceptional circumstances.

Possible outcomes for compassionate consideration are:

- Short extension (up to five days)
- Longer extension (up to seven days)
- Deferral (considered on an individual basis)
- Refund of fees

All information regarding compassionate consideration can be accessed in the Learner Handbook.

A final decision will be made by Head of Quality & Training and communicated to the learner on receipt of the learner's application within 2 working days.

Special consideration will be given in specific circumstances such as if the learner is absent on the day of examination due to an approved special circumstance, they will be accommodated to sit the exam at the next available date where possible.

If a learner becomes unwell or incapacitated on the day of the examination or during the exam and is considered compassionate circumstance, they will be accommodated to sit the exam at a later date. Medical certification by a medical practitioner will be required to support this.

5.7 Assessment Instructions & Evidence

All instructions relating to assessment must be contained within an assessment brief. Assessment briefs will include the following:

- Submission deadlines and possible sanctions for missing them
- Grounds for compassionate consideration
- The learning outcomes for the assessment
- The percentage weighting or marks associated with the assessment.
- Clear instructions of what task or activity the learner is required to complete.
- Clear details of the evidence required to successfully fulfil the requirements of the brief
- Other requirements as relevant e.g., format, word limits or guides that may apply,

- A Declaration of Original Work that the learner will be required to sign.

For QQI assessments skills will be videoed/photographed for evidence and this must be handled in accordance with the Data Protection Procedure.

Learners will be informed of this fact. This recorded evidence is stored securely in a OneDrive folder.

Learners must have valid Identification with them for the formal classroom assessments.

Learners are marked/ graded using model answers for exams and the marking criteria for skills.

5.8 Security of Assessment Materials

Assessment material such as tests/briefs and questions are stored securely in the relevant folders.

There are two examination papers for each module that will be assigned randomly to each learner group. Learners are informed at the start of the course what the assessment criteria are, the assessment timetable and the assessment methodology.

Assessment documentation is stored on a secure OneDrive folder are only accessible by instructors and administration staff. in accordance with Qualtec's Data Protection Procedure.

The instructor is responsible for ensuring the security of exam papers.

Only the exact number of exam papers required should be printed. These must be always kept in the possession of the trainer.

Instructors are responsible for securely storing all exam answers and marking sheets until they are returned to the Qualtec office by email.

Learners are required to keep their own copy of assignments submitted.

Learners are required to submit completed assignments within the agreed by through the LMS system. Learners will receive confirmation of receipt of same.

Records or learner assessment such as completed Skills Sheets and Test Sheets are stored securely by the Course Administrator in the learner folder on OneDrive.

All submitted papers must be stored in a secure OneDrive folder only accessible by the trainer and administration staff.

Learner material is held for no longer that two examination periods and then it is destroyed/deleted securely.

The certification system is managed by the Course Administrator.

Instructors and administration staff must ensure security and confidentiality of submitted work, feedback to individual learners and the digital recording of marks or grades.

5.9 Assignments

Assignments are saved into the Learner's OneDrive folder.

Assignments are marked by the trainer and the score recorded on the Marking Sheet.

Assignments are checked using Turnitin by the trainer for the purpose of checking Academic Integrity and to identify any potential plagiarism or use of AI.

The instructor will mark and enter the overall mark and comments on the learner marking sheet.

The assignment mark and comment are added to the assignment on the marking sheet. This feedback and mark is provided to learners through the LMS

Learner feedback is encouraged on the course assessment and the assessment criteria is reviewed based on this.

5.10 Feedback, Remediation and Appeals

Learners are given timely feedback on how they performed.

If unsuccessful the instructor must explain any remediation possible

This may include reviewing any examination questions that they submitted. The instructor can seek clarification on any answers given to ensure fairness of assessment. If the learner is still unsuccessful, they will be reminded of the Academic Appeals Procedure.

Feedback on presentation delivery for instructors is recorded on the learner's Marking Sheet. The feedback is then emailed to the learner.

Assessor Comments:	Good presentation. Good introduction. Aim and learning outcomes set out clearly. Information correct, well explained. Good interaction with learners, plenty questions asked, ensure they are easy to answer and try use space in the classroom, move a bit.	TOTAL:	8.5	10
Assessor Comments:	Very good principles, decent technique. Watch Palm Grip/ arms pushing. Skipped principles lifting from table.	TOTAL MARKS FOR SKILLS:	50	Max Marks: 50

If unsuccessful learners will be informed of any remediation possible.
If dissatisfied with the assessment outcome, learners can appeal in accordance with the Academic Appeals Procedure.

Internal Verification

The results are verified by the Internal Verifier in accordance with the Internal Verification Procedure.

This verification procedure includes the monitoring consistency between online and face to face assessment outcomes.

The Internal Verification Report is then forwarded to the External Authenticator.

External Authentication

Results are authenticated by External Authenticator (EA) on every submission. The External Authenticator will carry out a 30% sampling of the course assessment records. If there is fewer than nine pieces of

evidence presented, then a minimum of 3 pieces of evidence must be sampled.

- Each class group must be sampled
 - Where several internal assessors are assessing within an award each assessor should be included within the overall 30% sampled
 - The actual sample learner evidence submissions are chosen by the External Authenticator at their visit, within the above rate guidelines.

An External Authenticator Report will be compiled detailing:

- Observations on the application and effectiveness of the Internal Verification process
- Observations on assessment and consistency with national standards
- Evidence of consideration of previous External Authentication recommendations
- Good practice observed
- Areas to improve
- Overall recommendations from the authentication
- Summary of external authentication findings (Effective / Unsatisfactory)
- Recommendation on whether the learners' results should be submitted for certification.

EA will forward the EA Report to the Office Manager who will convene the Results Approval Panel.

The EA report will be reviewed by the Academic Board and the Board of Directors at the subsequent meetings.

Results Approval

Prior to submission of results the Internal Verification Report and the External Authenticator Report are reviewed by the Results Approval Panel. The Results Approval Panel will approve and sign off on the assessment results.

Learners will then be informed of their results.

Learners have up to 14 days to appeal their result. Appeals will be dealt with in accordance with the Appeals Process.

Academic Misconduct

The following are a non-exhaustive list of Academic Misconduct:

- Plagiarism
- Misrepresentation
- Bribery
- Falsification
- Impersonation

Penalties for Academic Misconduct include:

- Loss of marks in the assessment, or part of the assessment, in which the offence was committed.
- Ineligibility for an award during the year of the breach.
- Suspension of the candidate, from all activities of the institution, for a fixed period.
- Expulsion for the course

In cases of suspected Academic Misconduct, the Trainer will raise the matter with the learner. If the learner response is unsatisfactory, the instructor must report the situation promptly to the Head of Training and Quality.

The evidence will be reviewed by the Results Approval Panel (RAP) who will decide in terms of the remedial action to be taken (if any).

If a member of the RAP has been directly involved in the suspected instance of misconduct, they must not be involved in the decision. The outcome of the RAP deliberations will be communicated to the learner by the instructor. The learner has the right to appeal the RAP decision and may request an Appeal Form from Qualtec Administrator/IQA. The Appeal will be considered by the Academic Board and their decision will be final. The decision of the Academic Board will be advised to the learner by the Head of Training and Quality.

Monitoring of Metrics

A Report detailing Completion Rates and scores/grades are generated by the Internal Verifier each assessment period. This report indicates mode of delivery/ assessment in order to compare effectiveness.

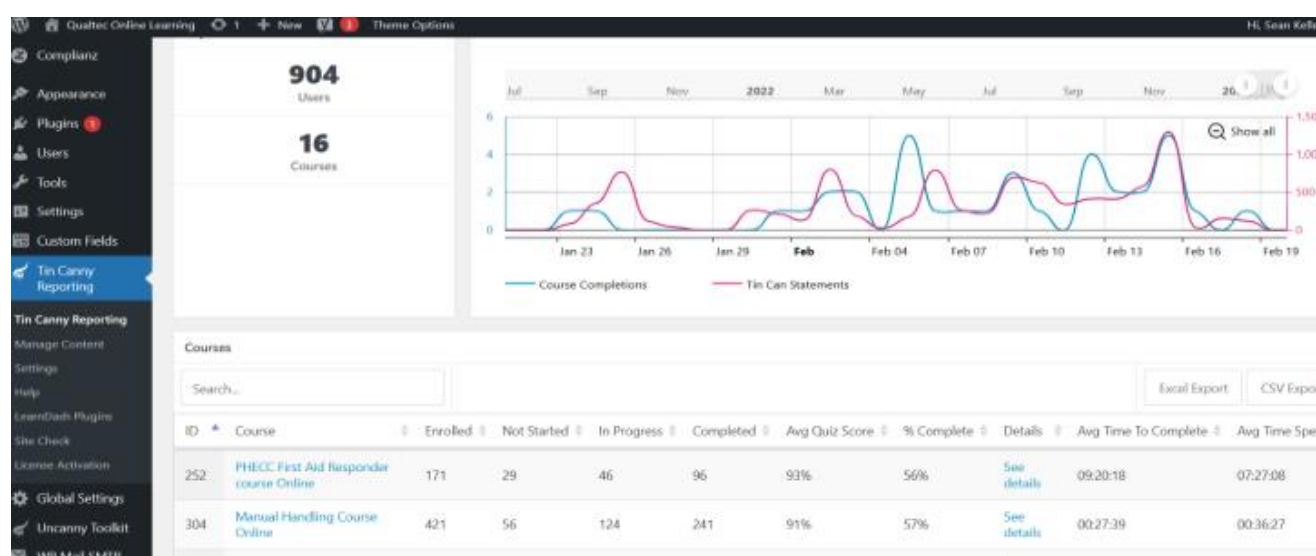
Monitoring of learner engagement

Asynchronous online learning

Qualtec's uses Articulate for the design and delivery of its asynchronous training. Each programme is developed to ensure learner interaction and engagement. Each module is designed in accordance with the Programme Development Procedure that requires course developers to use Articulate's interaction exercises such as Graded Quizzes, Hotspots, Sequencing, matching and Drag and Drop to ensure learner interaction and engagement and so they can check their progress. These procedures ensure that courses are designed to that do not allow the learner to progress until they have completed these exercises. This interaction and progress can be monitored through reports generated by the VLE (LearnDash).

Online Synchronous training

Qualtec uses Zoom for the delivery of its online synchronous training. Each programme is designed to allow trainers to interact with learners. These programmes include learner exercises such as Case Studies, Questions, Recap Quizzes/Polls and Breakout Rooms to ensure learner interaction and engagement. Training is delivered in accordance with the Training Delivery Procedure which requires trainers to use these exercises. Learners are required to complete the training in a location on their own and have their microphones and cameras on to ensure learner interaction and engagement. Activity Reports can be generated from the Zoom account.



Monitoring and flagging of issues.

Issues are flagged by learners using their feedback form and also through emails. These issues are investigated by the Head of Training & Quality, address the issue and will respond to the Learner. If he cannot, the issue is escalated to the Software Support company.

Collaboration Policy and Procedure

Collaboration Policy

It is Qualtec's Policy to develop collaborative arrangements with other parties that are mutually beneficial to all parties.

Collaboration Procedures

Peer relationships with the broader education and training community

Qualtec has a peer relationship a number of other training organisations in order to keep abreast of organisational best practise and Awarding Body Standards. Qualtec are in constant contact with these peer organisations and exchange idea with respect to use of technology, assessment arrangements and QA systems development.

External partnerships and second providers

Qualtec do not allow secondary providers deliver their QQI Programmes.

Qualtec have Collaboration arrangements with secondary providers for PHECC courses.

A Memorandum of Agreement is in place for these secondary providers.

Secondary Providers are provided with our Learner Handbook, QA Manual, QualityPolicy and Procedures Manual and a Instructor/Trainer Handbook outlining the quality assurances arrangements in place and both their Qualtec's responsibilities for quality.

Expert panellists

Employers are consulted with respect to programme development and review.

Expert panellists such as in Instructional Design are also used in programme development and review where required.

They are required to disclose any conflict of interest.

Communications Policy

It is Qualtec's policy to ensure the information published is clear, accurate, objective, up to date and easily accessible. Information published in respect of programmes of education and training complies with the spirit and requirements of the 2012 Act, including the requirements specified on preparing and reporting on quality assurance procedures; publishing quality assurance procedures; information relating to accreditation/validation of programmes and (in particular) programmes that are non-accredited or do not lead to awards; the completion of programmes and attainment of standards; procedures for access, transfer and progression; the International Education Mark; information for enrolled learners; the register of providers and the database of awards and programmes maintained by QQI/PHECC.

Communications Procedure

1. Purpose

The purpose of this procedure is to ensure that all communications related to QQI and PHECC programmes are timely, accurate and correct.

2. Scope

This procedure relates to all communications related to Programmes leading to an Award by PHECC or QQI.

3. Responsibility

The Head of Training and Quality is responsible for ensuring that this procedure is adhered to.

4. Records

Learner Handbook, courses webpage, emails,

5. Procedure

Public information

Course information is made public on the company website www.qualtec.ie. The Managing Director is responsible for ensuring that all information on the website is up to date.

Relevant quality assurance procedures include Access, Transfer and Progression, Information for enrolled learners, Appeals Process and Customer Complaints Procedure and Recognition of Prior Learning Procedure will be posted on the organisation's website under QQI/PHECC Quality Policies & Procedures.

Reports of results of quality evaluations including a quality improvement plan will be published on the company website.

Learner information

The following information related to awards is made available to programmes and awards is made available on the course webpage including the following:

- whether or not a programme leads to an award
- the name of the awarding body
- the title of the award; the award type and NFQ level
- whether the programme is subject to procedures for access, transfer and progression and if so, what these are
- Publication of quality assurance evaluation reports

Students are encouraged to communicate freely with both the trainer and administration staff. This begins from the initial contact with the company continues after the course.

Once an enquiry is made students are replied to immediately and are encouraged to follow up with emails and or phone calls if they require any further information.

This is made clear at the commencement of each class. Trainers make themselves available at break times. Students are given the trainer's email address and phone number and are encouraged to call if they need any assistance.

On completion of the course students are requested to complete an Evaluation form and are asked to contact the company or the trainer if they require any further assistance.

Trainers/Instructors

Trainers/Instructors are provided with a folder containing the resources required to deliver their content and the relevant procedures they must follow.

Trainers will be issued with memos regarding important changes that they need to be aware of, any changes to procedures and any areas for improvement.

Trainers are required to communicate any issues through the Trainer Course Report or through emails.

Administration staff

Administration staff communicate through email (Outlook). Any issues for staff members are flagged in Outlook using the staff member's colour code. A Management Review Board Meeting is held every year to discuss issues.

Other Stakeholders (Employers)

Emails are sent to other stakeholders such as employers monthly updating them on courses that we run and any other information of note to them.

An Employer Feedback form is sent to employers every year looking for their feedback.

The result of this feedback is analysed at the Management Meeting and Academic Board Meeting.

Complaints Policy

Qualtec endeavors to provide a quality training and certification service through our Quality Management System. If our training or certification service falls below our customer's expectation, we will facilitate the customer in making a customer complaint. We will take all complaints seriously and to ensure they are dealt with in a timely and effective manner.

Feedback is an essential part of evaluating our systems and continuing this excellent service. We welcome complaints as they provide an indication of areas where we need to improve our practices. All complaints are carefully evaluated, in the strictest of confidence, and where necessary action plans are put in place to rectify the situation. All efforts are made to resolve the situation without further upset to any party. Learners, staff and stakeholders have the right to make a complaint about the service, should they be unsatisfied with their experience. No person is disadvantaged as a result of having lodged a complaint. Complaints can be made by following the steps outlined in the complaint's procedure. Each complaint is investigated in a timely manner. The subject of any complaint has the right to be informed of the complaint made against him or her and has the right to respond to any allegations made against them.

Complaints Procedure

1. Purpose

To ensure that all customer complaints are taken seriously and dealt with in a timely manner.

Feedback from learners, employers and other stakeholders is an essential part of how Qualtec evaluates its training delivery and quality assurance.

Complaints are considered as part of customer feedback and are to be treated seriously as they can provide an opportunity to improve Qualtec's services and internal procedures.

It should be noted that the Complaints Procedure covers all of Qualtec's services but any issue arising from assessment is subject to the separate Academic Appeals procedure.

2. Scope

All complaints related to courses leading to Awards from Learners and customers.

Qualtec endeavours to provide a quality training and certification process based around its quality assurance system.

All customer complaints are taken seriously and investigated in a timely and effective manner.

3. Responsibility

It is the responsibility of the trainer to make the learner aware of the process to making a complaint and to inform the Head of Training & Quality of any complaints.

It is the responsibility of the Head of Training & Quality to ensure that any complaints are fully dealt with and resolved.

The Management Board is responsible for monitoring and approving this procedure.

4. Records

Complaint Form

5. Procedure

5.1 Learner Information

All learners are made aware of the Complaints Procedure as part of their course induction, and they are also advised of this in the Learner Handbook. The aim is to make it as easy as possible for learners to raise any concerns or dissatisfaction with Qualtec's services, training delivery or learner supports so that matters can be dealt with promptly and courteously.

3.2 Handling Complaints

Qualtec welcomes feedback and if a learner or other interested party wishes to make a formal complaint then Qualtec will facilitate as follows:

- A learner or other interested party may raise concerns in an informal manner with a trainer or other member of staff and these concerns must be dealt with promptly, with the Head of Training & Quality being notified of the issue and outcome. These are saved to the Complaints folder in Outlook.
- If a learner or other interested party wishes to make a formal complaint, then they must complete the Customer Complaints Form.
- The Customer Complaints Form should be submitted to the Head of Training & Quality, using email or post.
- The Head of Training & Quality will acknowledge receipt of the complaint within 24 hours, using email.

- The Head of Training & Quality will then carry out an investigation to establish the facts of the case, gather relevant evidence, and consult with trainers and staff members as appropriate.
- The Head of Training & Quality will issue a formal response in writing via email to the complainant within 5 working days from the date of receipt of the formal complaint, including a copy to interested parties where relevant.
- If further time is required to properly investigate the complaint, then this time limit may be extended provided that the complainant is notified of this within the 5 working days timeline.
- Following the issue of the response, the Head of Training & Quality will contact the complainant to verify that the matter has been dealt with to their satisfaction. This must be done within 30 days from the issue of the response by Qualtec.
- All relevant correspondence will be saved to the Complaints folder in Outlook.

Any complaints relating to Teaching and Learning must also be copied to the Academic Board for review and follow-up as appropriate.

Any complaints regarding the Head of Training & Quality must be referred to the Academic Board and will be dealt with as above by the Chair of the Academic Board.

Data Protection Policy

Qualtec takes the protection of personal data very seriously and are committed to protecting it at all times. Qualtec operates the www.qualtec.ie website. We need to collect information and data on the individuals who use our services. This policy outlines how personal data will be processed* in accordance with the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR), the Data Protection Act Ireland 2018, Electronic Communication Regulation and other legislation.

There are three ways in which personal data can be collected:

1. directly from individuals
2. via our website
3. via cookies and other related technologies.

Information collected will primarily be used to manage membership subscriptions as well as provide end users with a personalized internet experience that delivers information, resources, and services that are most relevant and professionally helpful.

Qualtec fully respects your right to privacy and will not collect any personal information about you on this website without your explicit permission (where applicable). Any personal information which you volunteer to us will be treated with the highest degree of security, integrity and confidentiality and will not be shared without your explicit consent.

By accessing our websites and availing of our services, you agree to this Privacy Policy and to be bound by our terms of use.

What information do we collect and how is it used?

When you use our website to register for events or to maintain your membership subscription, the following information will be collected:

1. Names and email address(es)
2. home or work address
3. phone number(s)
4. profession/ job title/role
5. payment details
6. CPD credits for events attended or performed
7. Competencies, certifications etc.
8. Other information as deemed necessary

9. Survey responses (where relevant).

Communication

It should be noted that the primary mode of most communication is email and most of the communication from Qualtec shall be through this medium. Where required, other modes (e.g., communication via post/phone) will be considered. Certain communication will be required for the purpose of providing training etc. Other emails may advise you of upcoming events and training. To opt out of these emails and newsletters, click the "unsubscribe" link at the bottom of any email or e-newsletter from us.

We do not knowingly solicit data online from or market online to children under the age of 16. We do not collect special category data.

Disclosures

All information you provide to us will be treated with strictest confidence in line with national and EU data protection laws, unless mandated by law or with your explicit consent, Qualtec will not disclose any personal or personally identifiable information about you to a third party under any circumstances unless;

- disclosure reasonably necessary to perform a service or deliver a product or publication;
- you have given explicit consent
- disclosure is permitted under this Privacy Policy;
- disclosure is required by statute, regulation or court order
- disclosure is in the good-faith belief that such action is necessary to:
 1. conform to legal requirements or comply with legal proceedings served on Qualtec;
 2. protect and defend the legitimate rights of Qualtec
 3. protect the personal safety of Qualtec personnel or members of the public in urgent circumstances;
 4. enforce our Privacy Policy.

Online Activity Tracking Using Cookies

Rev: 4 Revised by: Sean Kelleher **Approved by:** Mark Taylor **Date:** 12.03.2025

Page: 40 of 136

Qualtec track website usage by both anonymous visitors and registered users who interact with the Qualtec website, using "cookies." A cookie is a small file or string of text on the site user's computer that is used to aid web navigation.

We use the following different types of cookies to monitor web activity:

Mandatory Cookies

Mandatory cookies enhance your browsing experience and are also required for the effective functioning of our website, services and applications.

Functionality Based Cookies

Functionality based cookies allow our website, services and applications to remember choices and preferences that you make (e.g., when you login) and provide more personalised features during browsing. These cookies can also be used to remember customisable changes made by you.

Performance Based cookies

Performance based cookies collect information about how visitors and members use our website, services and applications. Cookies of this nature typically do not collect personally identifiable information. All information these cookies collect are by default aggregated, anonymous and used to improve the way our website, services and applications work.

The table below explains the cookies we use and why:

Cookie Type Purpose

Google Analytics	These cookies are used to collect information about how visitors use our site. We use the information to compile reports and to help us improve the site. The cookies collect information in an anonymous form, including the number of visitors to the site, where visitors have come to the site from and the pages they visited. <u>Click here for an overview of privacy at Google.</u> To opt out of being tracked by Google Analytics across all websites visit <u>https://tools.google.com/dlpage/gaoptout</u> .
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Information Security

Qualtec has taken measures to protect and safeguard the integrity of your data by implementing appropriate technical and security measures to protect your personal data against unauthorized access to, unauthorized alteration, disclosure or destruction of data.

In compliance with this requirement Qualtec has put in place physical and technical security measures to protect the confidentiality of personal data. Including, inter alia;

- Access to personal information is restricted to authorised staff on a “Need-to-know” basis and in compliance with the Data Protection Acts.
- Electronic personal data is protected by stringent access controls, passwords, access logs, audit logs, back-ups etc.
- Screens, printouts, documents and files showing personal data will not be visible to unauthorised persons.
- Appropriate facilities are in place for disposal of confidential waste.
- Personal manual data will be held securely in locked cabinets, locked rooms, or rooms with limited access.
- Special care will be taken if storing personal data on mobile computing and storage devices. Where deemed high risk, the data will be encrypted, and a record kept of the nature and extent of the data and why it is being stored on a portable device. Arrangements will be in place to fully delete the data on the portable device when it is no longer being used.

Access to personal information is restricted to Qualtec employees and partners on a need-to-know basis in order to operate, develop or improve our services. These individuals are bound by confidentiality and contractual obligations and may be subject to discipline, including termination and criminal prosecution, if they fail to meet these obligations.

Safeguarding Information

Qualtec understands the importance of technical and online security, and as such has taken a number of steps to enhance the protection of personal information sent to or from Qualtec over the Internet. Unfortunately, no data transmission over the internet can be guaranteed to be 100% secure. Accordingly, and despite our efforts and best intentions, Qualtec cannot guarantee or warrant the security of any information you transmit to us, or to or from our online products or services.

Links to Other Websites

Please be aware that despite efforts and measures we have taken to protect personal data, other Internet sites that link to the Qualtec site or to a Qualtec email may contain online privacy provisions that differ from these. To ensure your privacy is protected, we recommend that you review the Privacy Statements of other Internet sites you visit.

Privacy Statement Changes

We may occasionally update this Privacy Statement to reflect regulatory changes or industry best practices. Therefore, we would suggest you periodically review this statement to stay informed about how we are meeting our obligations under the Data Protection Acts. Your continual use of the service constitutes your agreement to this privacy statement and any updates. Qualtec will signal a change by revising the "Last updated" date at the bottom of this page.

Fraudulent Emails Warning

From time to time, you may be contacted by our Team for housekeeping purpose. Qualtec never contact you to request for your username and password by email or other medium. If you receive any emails purportedly from Qualtec requesting such information, do not respond to such requests. Instead, please contact us by telephone (01)-6289374 immediately.

Data Subject Rights

You have the following rights, in certain circumstances and subject to certain restrictions, in relation to your personal data:

Right to access the data – You have the right to request a copy of the personal data that we hold about you, together with other information about our processing of that personal data.

Right to rectification – You have the right to request that any inaccurate data that is held about you is corrected, or if we have incomplete information you may request that we update the information such that it is complete.

Right to erasure – You have the right to request us to delete personal data that we hold about you. This is sometimes referred to as the right to be forgotten.

Right to restriction of processing or to object to processing – You have the right to request that we no longer process your personal data for particular purposes, or to object to our processing of your personal data for particular purposes.

Right to data portability – You have the right to request us to provide you, or a third party, with a copy of your personal data in a structured, commonly used machine-readable format.

If you wish to exercise any of the rights set out above, please contact the Qualtec Data Protection Officer at info@qualtec.ie

Please note that in order to authenticate any request we may ask you for a copy of a current driving license or passport so that we may verify your identity. This information will only be used for verification purposes, not stored and securely destroyed once the query has been closed.

You also have the right to lodge a complaint with the Irish Data Protection Commission if you are not happy with the way we have used your information or addressed your rights. Details of how to lodge a complaint can be found at on the [Data Protection Commissioner website](#) or call the Data Protection Commissioner on Locall 1890 252 231.

* Processing includes the collection, recording, organisation, structuring, storage, adaptation, alteration, retrieval, consultation, use, disclosure, alignment or combination, restriction and the erasure or destruction of personal data.

Data Protection Procedure

1. Purpose

This procedure outlines how personal data is processed.

2. Scope

All personal data collected by Qualtec

3. Responsibility

The Data Protection (DPO) is responsible for ensuring that the procedures described in this document and the related activities are adhered to by all staff and any collaborative partners, e.g. contracted trainers.

4. Records

[Learner and Trainers Records List](#), GDPR training records, External GDPR Audit Report, Incident Log.

5. Procedures

5.1 Learner rights

The Learners Rights are outlined in the Learner Handbook which Learners confirm that they have read before providing information. Learners and trainers can request access to the information retained on them and can request that it be deleted or amended. All requests will be considered having regard to The Data Protection Policy and legislation.

5.2 Access to Personal Data

Access to learner data is limited through password protection and is limited only to those that require access to the data such as Administration Staff, Technical Support and Trainers, Staff and Subcontractors authorised from time to time by the company.

5.3 Requests to have information amended.

Learners can request to have the information retained amended and deleted. Requests must be received by email. The request is reviewed and considered by the Data Protection Officer and the Managing Director. The request will be responded to within one month.

This may include the amending or erasing the person's personal data. The person will be informed by email on the action taken.

5.4 Data Subjects - Learner & Trainer & Employees, personal data processed by Qualtec

Learner information is gathered when learners register on our courses. They are informed through the Data Protection Policy in the Learner Handbook of the purpose of gathering the information and consent to it being gathered on the when agreeing to the terms and conditions on the booking form.

Trainer information is gathered when the Qualtec PHECC Institution Affiliation Form/ or Memorandum of Agreement is signed.

Staff information is gathered when they signed the contract between Qualtec and employee.

Records containing personal data belonging to learners, trainers, and employees are listed on the Learner and Trainers Records List.

These details are: Record Name, Data retained, Purpose for its retention, where it is stored, who has access to it, how access is controlled, where it is backed up to and when it is deleted/purged.

Personal data such as Personal Public Service (PPS) PPS Number and Date of Birth (DOB) are purged from the system once the information is submitted to QQI.

The learners email address is used as their Personal Identifier. This is retained in the Database.

Learners can opt out of email reminders and have their email address changed or deleted on request.

Videos of learners for the purpose of record of skills assessment are deleted from the learner folder.

A Data Protection Officer has been appointed and has received specific training for this role.

The Data Protection Officer is responsible for reviewing and monitoring the privacy practice of the organisation and to ensure that all data gathered is used for the purpose required and it's retained for that specific purpose and is deleted once it's no longer required.

All files are deleted from the relevant OneDrive folder. Any hard copy records are shredded by an approved contractor and a certificate of destruction is received as per GDPR policy.

An external audit of Qualtec's data protection practices is conducted annually as a means of ensuring full, ongoing compliance with GDPR requirements. The GDPR Compliance Audit Sheet rev 1 20.02.2022 is used for this audit).

5.5 Trainer Profile & Courses Documentation on OneDrive

For Quality assurance purposes Qualtec requires collects and retains Copies of trainers' certificates, Insurance, Monitoring Reports and Affiliation forms/Insurance. All Documentation is maintained in a OneDrive Folder that is password protected and linked to the Certification Database Certification records stored in the Learner/course folder in OneDrive by date.

Affiliated trainers/ subcontractors or other contractors appointed by Managing Director are required to complete course documentation that is

required by Qualtec for either QQI or PHECC Courses. This can include attendance Sheets, evaluation Sheets and Skills Sheets. This documentation can contain details of learners needed to certification process. These are saved in OneDrive folders by trainer/date in the PHECC folder for the relevant year. All records must be stored securely and deleted when no longer needed for its main purpose of certification.

5.6 Accounts Information

Accounts Information are required for payment/refund procedures. Employees/ Affiliated Trainers/ bank details are necessary for the Payroll system.

This data is maintained safely and securely with restricted access in the Accounts Package, Sage. The only personal information retained in the accounts package is the Contact Name, Contact number, Address and email address/ Bank Details/ PPSN.

5.7 Virtual Learning Environment (VLE)

The Data Protection requirements for Blended Learning are the same as those for face-to-face courses. The only student information retained in the VLE is name and email address. Learner gives consent freely and specifically for the purpose of generating an account for access to online courses. This consent can be withdrawn at any time by email.

Instructors have access to the LMS/VLE through the Instructor Portal.

5.8 Backups and Security

Both the Database and OneDrive are stored on an independent server by hosting companies (Microsoft, Act and Graphedia) which are backed up and firewalled. This ensures that personal data can be restored in the event of loss of data. Local files are firewall protected and backed up.

5.9 Staff and **Instructor** GDPR Training

Staff and Instructors complete the GPDR Module that is on our VLE. Staff and Instructors are required to comply with the organisation's GDPR

Policy and Procedures. All staff members and trainers must complete our GDPR course.

The certificate of successful completion of GDPR Module on the VLE is saved in individuals folders.

Access to course is not restricted, staff and Affiliated Trainers have access to it through their personal account on LMS. In line with good working practice, course material should be reviewed yearly and renewed if required.

5.10 Breaches of GDPR Requirements

In the event of a data breach, the Data Protection Officer must be informed immediately by email (info@qualtec.ie Ref to Data Protection Officer).

The incident will be recorded by the Data Protection Officer on the Incident Log which is in the Quality Management System folder in OneDrive.

The severity and implications of the breach will be considered by the Data Protection Officer. If the Data Protection Officer cannot adequately deal with the breach the issue will be escalated to the Managing Director.

Corrective action will be agreed and recorded on the Incident Log. This may involve informing the Person (s) whose personal data has been compromised and/ or the Data Protection Commission.

An investigation will be carried out to agree preventive action to mitigate against a similar beach occurring in the future. This is recorded on the Incident Log.

5.11 Management information system for further planning - Internal

Reports on the following can be generated for the Certifications Database:

student satisfaction rates,

course completion rates,

certification rates,

trainer performance.

They are analysed and reviewed on an ongoing basis by the Managing Director in consultation with staff/ trainers and follow up activities are agreed. They are also used for programme reviews.

Reports such as upcoming expiry dates of courses can be generated, and old certification details can be purged.

Other reports such as Age of Debt, Sales and Website Analytics are reviewed by the Managing Director on an ongoing basis to allow timely analysis and action.

Document Control Policy

Effective control of documentation used within the quality assurance(QA) system and its processes is key to effective training delivery and conformity with regulatory requirements.

It is Qualtec's Policy that all documents related to Quality are controlled

Document Control Procedure

1. Purpose

The purpose of this procedure is to ensure that all documents related to quality are controlled. This procedure defines the process for the creation, approval, control, issue and review of Qualtec's quality assurance in relation to its training activities.

2. Scope

The scope of this procedure covers all documentation used by Qualtec that impacts on the quality of Qualtec's training activities.

3. Responsibility

The Head of Training & Quality is responsible for controlling documents.

The Academic Board has oversight of this policy in relation to academic and regulatory standards.

The Management Board has oversight of this policy in relation to training delivery, resources and supports.

4. Records

Document Control Register.

5. Procedure

All new documents must be issued by the Head of Training and

Quality.

All documents are reviewed by the Head of Training and Quality and approved by the Independent External Consultant on behalf of the Academic Board.

All controlled documents contain the following footer:

Rev: Revised by: Approved by: Date:

Once approved, documents are added to the Document Control Register.

QA system users may request revisions to Controlled Documents by making an email request to the Head of Training & Quality.

All change requests in relation to academic matters (including all teaching, learning and assessment matters) requires approval by the Academic Board.

The Head of Training & Quality is required to update the Documents Register once the change has been approved

The Documents Register details the following:

Document Title	Revision number	Revision Date	Revision details
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The Revision Number and date on the controlled document is increased by 1.

All relevant persons are then informed by of the change.

Equality & Diversity Policy

It is Qualtec's Policy that all students and staff will be treated with dignity and respect, fairly and equally and that diversity is welcomed.

Qualtec provides equal access to all learners regardless of their gender, marital status, family status, disability, religion, sexual orientation, race, colour, nationality, ethnic/national origins or membership of the travelling community.

Qualtec will:

ensure that promotional and teaching materials do not use discriminatory language and where appropriate reflect the diversity within the company and broader community.

ensure that all learners are encouraged to participate in the diverse range of courses on offer.

provide a learning environment that encourages learners to remain in the course by removing barriers and ensuring tutors have the skills to deliver courses that are inclusive.

Learners, staff and trainers have the right to learn and work in an environment free from bullying, harassment, discrimination or intimidation.

Qualtec recognises these rights and will not tolerate any behaviour that breaches these rights.

Equality & Diversity Procedure

1. Purpose

The purpose of this procedure is to ensure that staff, trainers and learners are treated with dignity and respect, fairly and equally and that diversity is welcomed.

2. Scope

This Procedure applies to all staff, trainers and learners

3. Responsibility

The Head of Training & Quality is responsible for ensuring that adequate learners support is in place.

Trainers are responsible for supporting learners on their courses.

Rev: 4 Revised by: Sean Kelleher **Approved by:** Mark Taylor **Date:** 12.03.2025

Page: 52 of 136

4. Records

Learner Handbook, Booking form

5. Procedure

There is a Learner Handbook detailing Learners rights and responsibilities. This is available on the Qualtec website and is emailed to learners in advance of the course. By booking a place on the course they agree to comply with its arrangements. Trainers sign an Affiliation form which requires them to comply with this agreement.

Any breaches of this agreement must be reported immediately to the Managing Director who will decide on the appropriate disciplinary action.

Optimise will endeavour to provide reasonable accommodation to facilitate learners with different needs.

All courses are booked in wheelchair accessible venues.

Online material has accessibility options such as zoom/ magnify content.

There is a section on the course booking form to allow students to indicate any special requirements and reasonable accommodations required.

The tutor asks at the start of the course that they be made aware of any issues that may impact on their learning such as literacy. The tutor also states that there would be mutual respect always shown.

All tests are either skills based or MCQs. The trainer can complete the test on a one-to-one basis with learners and read out the questions.

Any reasonable support will be provided to those that need it.

Equipment, Platforms and IT Services Maintenance Policy

It is the policy of Qualtec that all equipment and resources are adequately maintained. It is Qualtec's policy that a planned approach to the procurement of services (e.g., cloud services), hardware and software to support online learning and a clear policy on a common platform for approval of exceptions.

Equipment, Platforms and IT Services Maintenance Procedure

Procedure

1. Purpose

To ensure that equipment, platforms and services required to deliver courses is available, reliable and supported.

2. Scope

All courses leading to Awards

3. Responsibility

It is the responsibility of the Head of Training and Quality to ensure that they have the adequate training equipment and resources.

4. Records

Trainer Report, Equipment Checklist, Course Evaluation form, Monitoring Report

5. Procedure

IT Equipment

The trainer must maintain their own IT equipment. This equipment includes equipment required to develop and deliver blended learning such as two screens, a microphone and a Zoom account. The trainer should also be able to log in on their mobile device and/or tether to a Hotspot in the event of their broadband going down.

The equipment required is identified on the course lesson plan and Equipment Checklist.

All equipment should be checked far enough in advance of courses to ensure that they can be replaced or replenished. This is recorded on the Course Spreadsheet.

Qualtec does not endorse any supplier of equipment but can suggest where this equipment can be purchased on request.

On completion of the course the trainer will note and issues in terms of the condition of equipment and/or the need for extra supplies or repairs on the Trainer Report form.

Learners rate the suitability and condition of trainer equipment on the Course Evaluation Form.

Blended learning

Learning modules must be TinCanny compliant to facilitate the possible migration to new Virtual Learning Environments (VLEs). Programme Developers are informed of this requirement and the types of programmes and learner profiles for which blended learning is and is not appropriate in our context.

Qualtec has recognised the importance of having an effective platform to support online learning.

To this end, we have selected a Cloud based approach to managing the Blended Learning Training.

This consists of:

1. Act: a cloud-based Learner Certification Management System to manage the learner journey from booking to issuance of certificates. Procedures and training videos have been developed for staff and trainers in the correct use of this system.
2. OneDrive: a cloud-based system to manage access to course resources such as templates, assignment briefs, course notes and videos and the filing of course records such as complete assignments and videos and trainer records such as certificates and CVs.
Procedures are written on how submit and file these records.
3. Learndash: A Virtual Learning Environment (VLE) to provide supplementary e-learning material for administration staff, learners and trainers. The VLE was selected on its ability to meet the following criteria:
 - Reliability
 - Accessibility
 - Course Tracking
 - Assessment Management
 - Course Management

- Learner Portal
- Asynchronous Learning
- eCommerce Management
- Blended Learning
- Built-in Course Authoring
- Security against data breaches / hacking
- GDPR
- Tech Support.

Davis (2004) suggests that it is critical to establish the level of access to “broadband internet access” that intended students have and will have in the near future. This will be important when selecting the appropriate infrastructure for deploying the e-learning programme.

This ensures that learners, trainers and support staff have their required level of access to the documentation and records they need for course completion and certification.

Qualtec has appropriate support arrangements for these packages. Qualtec requires that all learning modules developed meet SCORM/Tin Canny requirements to ensure ease of migration across Virtual Learning Environments.

Contingency arrangements in the event of platform, hardware or software failures.

For bookings, the booking is flagged appropriately in Outlook and the Learner Certification Management System when the service is restored.

OneDrive: Files can be saved locally, and the cloud-based folders will be updated when services are restored.

Learndash: The e-learning materials on Learndash VLE are also available in the course resources folder in OneDrive and again can be downloaded/viewed locally.

For live training sessions a backup trainer is online and is made co-host.

This co-host is based in a different location on a different network to ensure continuity of delivery.

The trainer has the option of using the hotspot on their mobile phone in the event of a broadband service outage.

Robust and consistent systems and processes across the organisation to manage the submission, receipt, marking and return of assessments.

The Assessment of Learners Policy & Procedure includes the arrangement for the invigilation of online exams. This includes:

- Getting the learners to identify themselves on camera before the commencement of the assessment/ examination.
- Ensuring that the learner's desk is visible by a second camera, and that the learner stays visible online until a picture has been taken and they have submitted their answers.

Learners are sent the Learner Handbook outlining the requirements for assessment and the need to ensure that all assignments are completed by themselves, what constitutes academic malpractice and the associated consequences.

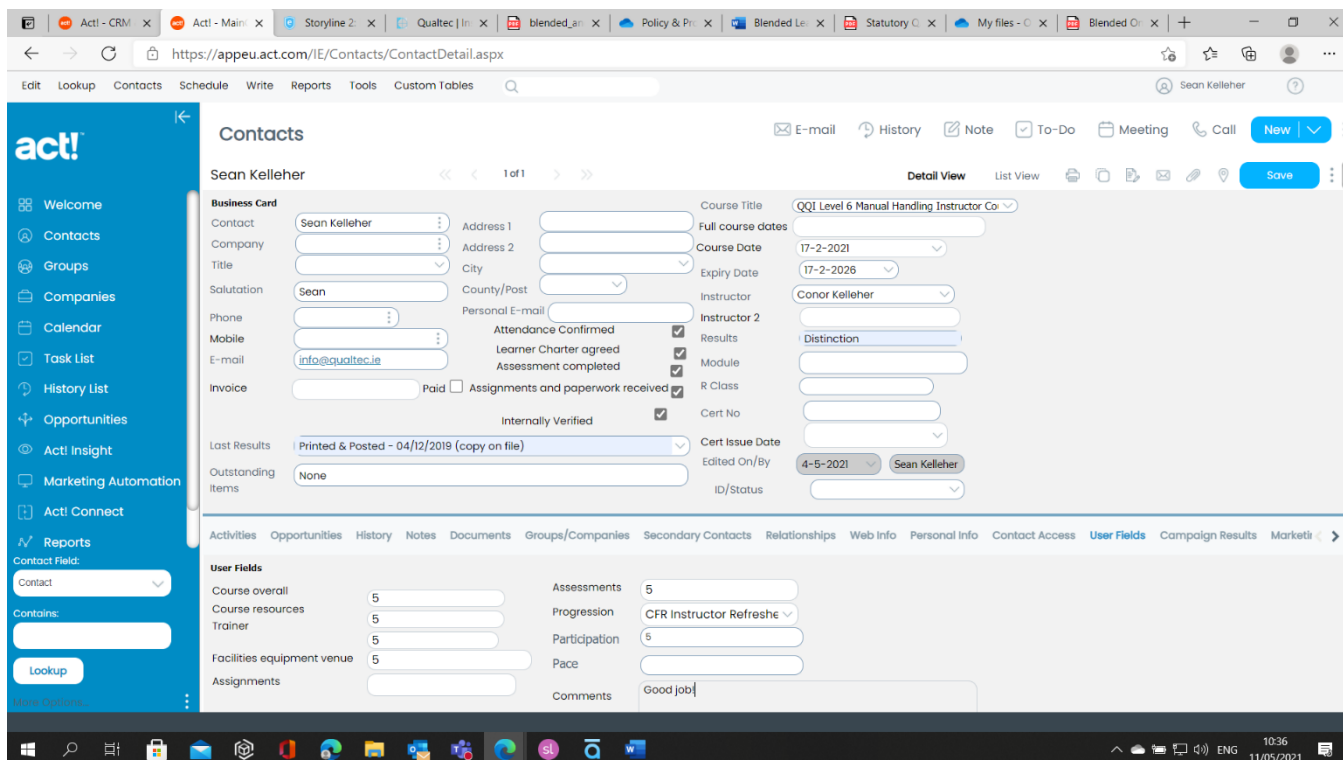
Learners are informed at induction that all assignments must be completed by themselves. Assignments are submitted through the VLE. Learners must confirm that their assignments are their own work.

Assignments are then saved into the relevant learner's OneDrive folder and attached electronically to their Learner record in the Act Certification Management System. The assignments received field is ticked electronically.

Skills are assessed electronically on Excel Sheets, and these are saved in OneDrive and the Learner Record updated.

Student record system designed or adapted to support blended learning programmes and learners and their quality assurance.

Qualtec uses a student record system called “Act”, to record and manage the student journey from Enquiry through to issuance of certification.



The screenshot displays the 'act!' CRM interface. The left sidebar contains navigation links: Welcome, Contacts, Groups, Companies, Calendar, Task List, History List, Opportunities, Act! Insight, Marketing Automation, Act! Connect, Reports, and a dropdown for Contact Field. The main area shows the 'Contacts' page for 'Sean Kelleher'. The 'Business Card' section includes fields for Contact, Company, Title, Salutation, Phone, Mobile, E-mail, Invoice, and various checkboxes for 'Attendance Confirmed', 'Learner Charter agreed', 'Assessment completed', 'Internally Verified', and 'Assignments and paperwork received'. The 'Course Title' is 'QQI Level 6 Manual Handling Instructor Co'. The 'Full course dates' are '17-2-2021' to '17-2-2026'. The 'Instructor' is 'Conor Kelleher'. The 'Results' are 'Distinction'. The 'Module' is 'R Class'. The 'Cert No' is '4-5-2021'. The 'Cert Issue Date' is '4-5-2021'. The 'Edited On/By' is 'Sean Kelleher'. The 'ID/Status' is 'Good job'. The 'User Fields' section includes 'Course overall', 'Course resources', 'Trainer', 'Facilities equipment venue', 'Assessments', 'Progression', 'Participation', 'Pace', and 'Comments'. The bottom of the screen shows the Windows taskbar with various application icons and the system clock indicating 10:36 on 11/05/2021.

Effective institutional arrangements

All blended Learning systems are trialled by the Head of Training and Quality, Internal Verifier and trainers before rollout to learners. There are technical support contracts in place with software providers.

Contingencies are in place, such as reverting to previous means of administration and delivery until resumption of service. There are agreements in place, covering Intellectual property rights and software licensing issues in place where content is developed in collaboration with external companies.

All images used on the Virtual Learning Environment (VLE) are purchased and are property of Qualtec. Developers act in accordance with licensing laws when using content such as images, audio, video, etc. on the VLE. This is stipulated in the Contract agreed with developers.

The lesson plan for each course outlines how each module will be delivered and how the relevant technology will be used and what resources are required. This includes detailing when to use Breakout Rooms, a proper workstation with two screens, a bright room with adequate space.

The procedure outlines how a record of registration, attendance, polling and feedback is recorded and where this is filed. The procedure also outlines the appropriate number of learners per session and the appropriate duration of a learning session before taking a break.

Learning material is developed using standard formats (SCORM, TinCanny) which facilitates ease of migration onto other VLE platforms if required. Again, this is agreed with the developer. All learner records can be exported as .CSV to allow for migration and analysis.

Assignments are submitted electronically by the learner from their own email addresses, and they must confirm that it is their own work. Assignments are saved into the learner's folder and receipt is confirmed by email.

Learner Information for Programmes Procedure

1. Purpose:

To ensure that learners have all information required to complete the course successfully.

2. Scope:

All courses. This is limited to learners based on the island of Ireland.

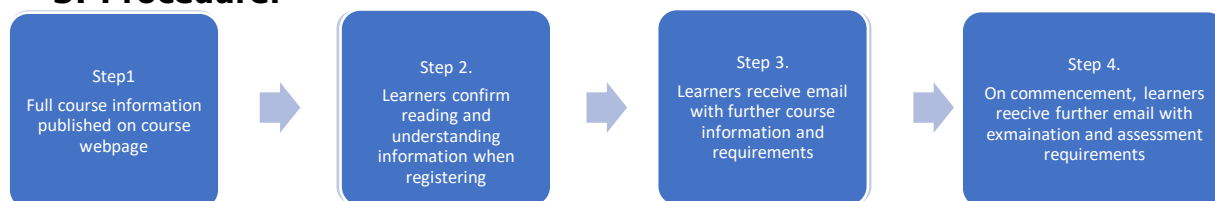
3. Responsibility

The Head of Training and Quality is responsible for ensuring that all information for learners is accurate and up to date.

4. Records:

Student Record, Course/Programme website

5. Procedure:



5.1 Full course information published on course webpage.

The course website contains the following information:

- Information on the learning environment
- Hardware, software and IT competence requirements
- Time commitments for face to face, synchronous and asynchronous, workplace (as appropriate)
- Capacity to Succeed statement
- How to access supports both technical and academic and technical.
- Expected behaviour / net etiquette
- Academic Integrity – general info and provider rules and procedures
- Any collaboration arrangements with Qualtec.

Enquiries are received by phone, email and from the website. The availability of spots is checked in the Course groups to ensure the maximum ratio of trainer to learner is not exceeded.

5.2 An email is also forwarded to learners or clients in advance of the course containing the full details outlined above and a link to the Learner Handbook.

5.3 Once registered the students or clients will receive an email with information on the course, approximate duration and clear instructions on the course process and requirements and a Learner Handbook.

5.4 For Blended Learning, this email will advise them that they will need to have reasonable broadband access (at least 10 Mbps download speed). This can be tested in advance of the course by arranging a practice log in by sending an email to info@qualtec.ie or using this online tool <https://www.highspeedinternet.com/tools/speed-test>. They will need to ensure that their computer has an in-built microphone and speaker. They will need to complete this section of the course in a quiet location on their own. Their camera and microphone will need to be on during the session unless other people come into the location.

They will also get the course registration link for the VLE and a link for the live face to face sessions delivered through Zoom.

Once students log into the Online course there is a module explaining the course process and support available both academic and technical.

5.5 On commencement, learners receive further information on examination and assessment requirements.

Classroom information

Students will receive an email with clear instructions on the requirements for the final day including appropriate dress, any Covid requirements, a schedule for the day and Examination Rules.

Administrative Support

As explained in our learner Handbook, students need inform of us in advance of any reasonable accommodations and or support required to successfully complete this course. Academic Support is available from the trainer who can be contacted between 9 am and 5 pm on their email. They will respond within 24 hours.

The support available both academic and technical is explained during the Learner Induction module at the start of the live session. Academic support is available to students at break time during the classroom training.

Technical Support

Technical Support before or outside live course hours is available by sending an email to info@qualtec.ie.

There is a dedicated Technical Support person who is responsible for responding to any technical issues. That person is trained in and is very familiar with all aspects of the VLE. If the Technical Support person cannot resolve the issue, it will be escalated to the Managing Director and then to the external IT Support company who host the VLE.

If they are having technical issues during the live Zoom sessions, they can send a message by text or chat to the trainer.

If they cannot access the Zoom session, they can send an email and the Technical Support person will attempt to resolve their issue.

Learners can access academic support from the trainer during scheduled breaks. They can message the trainer and a separate breakout room can be created or it can be provided offline via phone. This includes assistance with regards to the online material.

Pastoral care

As a trainer of trainers for 25 years Sean Kelleher is happy to provide guidance to learners on how learners can progress and develop as trainers. He has also completed a Professional Diploma in Positive Health so is qualified to provide personal advice in the area of Positive Health & Wellbeing. This again is available from 9 until 5 Monday to Friday.

Learner Support Policy

It is Qualtec's Policy that learners are adequately supported and resourced both during and after the course completion.

Learner Support Procedure

1. Purpose

The purpose of this procedure is to outline the support available to learners on Qualtec's courses.

2. Scope

This Procedure applies to all programmes leading to an Award.

3. Responsibility

The Head of Training & Quality is responsible for ensuring that adequate learners support is in place.

Trainers are responsible for supporting learners on their courses.

4. Records

Delegate Booking form, Course Evaluation form, Learner Handbook

5. Procedure

5.1 Course Development

The needs of all learners are considered when developing courses resources. Course resources are accessible in a simple way and can be magnified if required for people with sight issues.

Reasonable Accommodation and accessibility

Learners are asked to inform the organisation of any special requirements or reasonable accommodations required when booking on the course.

Reasonable Accommodation is made such as reading out questions to learners with dyslexia, letting learners of the same gender treat each other or modifying the practical skills for those with physical limitations.

5.2 Administrative Support

Learners can contact the trainer directly on their email which will be provided during course induction. They can also contact administration staff in the office by email, info@qualtec.ie. Normal office hours are 9 am

to 5.30 pm. Both the office and the trainer can be contacted outside these hours if the matter is urgent.

Learners need inform of us in advance of any reasonable accommodations and or support required to successfully complete this course. Academic Support is available from the trainer who can be contacted between 9 am and 5 pm on their email. We will respond within 24 hours.

5.3 Technical Support

Technical Support before or outside live course hours is available by sending an email to info@qualtec.ie.

There is a dedicated Technical Support person who is responsible for responding to any technical issues. That person is trained in and is very familiar with all aspects of the (Virtual Learning Environment) VLE. If the Technical Support person cannot resolve the issue, it will be escalated to the Managing Director and then to the external IT Support company who host the VLE.

5.4 Academic and Pastoral Support

Learners can access academic support from the trainer during scheduled breaks. They can message the instructor/ trainer and a separate breakout room can be created or it can be provided offline via phone.

The support available both academic and technical will be explained during the Learner Induction module at the start of the live session.

Academic support is available to students at break time during the classroom training. This can include one-to-one sessions and remediation if required. This can be facilitated at break times, end of days or end of courses.

In the event of requiring pastoral support learners can message the trainer privately using the Chat function or phone the Head of Training and Quality, Sean Kelleher on 086 2660506.

The above supports is detailed in the Learner Handbook which is available on the website.

5.5 Course Resources

Learners on instructor courses are provided with a link to the course resources folder. This contains all course resources required to successfully complete course and to apply what was learned after course completion.

This includes handouts, guides, check sheets, videos and PPT slides workbooks.

Rev: 4 Revised by: Sean Kelleher **Approved by:** Mark Taylor **Date:** 12.03.2025

Page: 64 of 136

This is emailed to learners once the course commences.

Learners are informed of the course resources at the start of the course.

The trainer will check with the learners that they have access to the material.

Learners on end user courses are provided with courses notes.

The adequacy of course resources are reviewed and checked against any changes in standards and updated on an ongoing basis. Course resources are also provided on the course Virtual Learning Environment (VLE).

Learners rate the adequacy of the materials after each course.

5.6 Blended Learning and elearning Support

Academic Support is available from the trainer who can be contacted between 9 am and 5 pm on their email. They will respond within 24 hours.

The support available both academic and technical is explained during the Learner Induction module at the start of the live session.

Technical Support before or outside live course hours is available by sending an email to info@qualtec.ie.

There is a dedicated Technical Support person who is responsible for responding to any technical issues. That person is trained in and is very familiar with all aspects of the Virtual Learning Environment (VLE). If the Technical Support person cannot resolve the issue, it will be escalated to the Managing Director and then to the external IT Support company who host the Virtual Learning Environment (VLE).

If learners are having technical issues during the live Zoom sessions, they can send a message by text or chat to the trainer.

If learners cannot access the Zoom session, they can send an email and the Technical Support person will attempt to resolve their issue.

Learners can access academic support from the trainer during scheduled breaks. They can message the trainer and a separate breakout room can be created or it can be provided offline via phone.

Again, academic support is available to students at break time during the classroom training.

5.7 Constructive Feedback

Throughout their programme of study, learners receive constructive formative feedback on progress from their tutor.

Trainers provide learners with individualised feedback on informal classroom assessment activities.

Trainers ensure feedback is given in a timely manner so as not to disadvantage the learner in assessment.

If a learner needs to communicate with a trainer outside of classroom time this is facilitated through email.

The Managing Director is responsible for co-ordinating learner supports and monitoring their effectiveness.

Feedback from learners is recorded on the Course Evaluation form and any issues will be dealt with in a timely manner.

All required information on the course is provided on the webpage for the course including entry requirements, career pathways and progression opportunities.

The Managing Director provides advice to learners on career/ business opportunities available on completion of the course.

Qualtec work in partnership with their clients and provide guidance on how to develop their career as trainers within their current employment, in their profession or how to progress as independent trainers.

5.8 Peer Support

Learners can contact each other during live sessions using the Chat function in the control bar. The trainer will explain how learners can access this.

There is a forum for each programme where learners can communicate with each other.

Malpractice Policy

It is Qualtec's policy to treat any instances of Malpractice seriously and issue reasonable sanctions for any instances of Malpractice.

Malpractice Procedure

1. Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to state Qualtec's policy in relation to Malpractice and outline procedures to identify malpractice and sanctions to be applied.

2. Scope

This procedure relates to malpractice within Qualtec as a training organisation and applies to all staff, contractors and trainers.

3. Responsibility

The Head of Training & Quality is responsible for ensuring that this procedure is adhered to by all staff and any collaborative partners, e.g. contracted trainers.

4. Records

Contract of Employment. Memorandum of Agreement/Affiliation form, PHECC Instructor's Code of Conduct, Academic Risk Assessment

5. Procedure

On commencement in the organisation staff and contractors receive an induction. This induction includes an outline of their roles and responsibilities. It also includes an outline of what is considered to be malpractice. Malpractice is defined as any action or omission that would or could have an adverse effect on any stakeholders, the integrity of qualifications, or the certification thereof, contrary to the Conditions, or any other relevant Statutory Regulation or Legislation.

This could include:

- disclosure of examination questions ahead of assessment,
- falsification of certificates,
- engaging in work directly with Qualtec's clients and breaches of Data Protection procedures.

Staff sign an Employment Contract which outlines staff member's roles & responsibilities and what is malpractice and possible sanctions.

These sanctions could include suspension without pay or instance dismissal in the event of what is gross misconduct or malpractice. Contract trainers/instructors sign a Memorandum of Agreement/Affiliation and Code of Conduct. Again, this agreement outlines the roles and responsibilities of trainers/instructors, what is malpractice and the possible sanctions to be imposed. Sanctions could include suspension or the instant cancellation of the Memorandum of Agreement/Affiliation.

An Academic Risk Assessment has been carried out to identify possible risks to the Awards and the controls in place to mitigate these risks. The controls include internal verification of paperwork and assessment material and monitoring visits to ensure compliance with course arrangements by trainers.

Any instances of malpractice identified must be reported to the Head of Training & Quality. This is recorded on the Customer Complaint/Non-Compliance Log. The Head of Training & Quality will investigate these suspected instances.

The Head of Training & Quality will communicate directly with the persons in question and will be given an opportunity to respond to these allegations.

The Head of Training & Quality will decide on the sanctions to be imposed and will communicate their decision directly to the person in question.

The corrective and or preventive action taken is recorded on the Customer Complaint/ Non-Compliance Log.

This can include suspension or instant dismissal.

The persons in question can appeal this decision and the matter can be referred to an independent third party such as a freelance External Quality Assurer or an Independent Subject Matter Expert.

All instances of malpractice will be brought to the attention of the Academic Board for discussion and to agree on any improvements to avoid such instances occurring in the future.

Other Parties Involved in Education Policy

Qualtec aims to maintain effective and ongoing relationships with other providers and other stakeholders within the training community. This relationship includes co-operation on the development and delivery of programmes and discussion on training best practise.

Other Learners Involved in Education Procedure

1. Purpose

The purpose of this procedure is to outline how Qualtec engages with other interested parties.

2. Scope

This procedure relates to all other interested parties such as other training organisations, second providers, external panellists and authenticators.

3. Responsibility

The Head of Training & Quality is responsible for ensuring that learners are assessed in a fair, consistent and transparent way.

4. Records

Minutes of meetings

5. Procedure

Peer relationships with the broader education and training community

These relationships can be developed through existing contacts with other training providers, for example, benchmarking exercises and contributing to instructor training initiatives in Ireland and abroad.

External partnerships and second providers

Qualtec does not use any secondary providers to deliver QQI courses.

External panellists, examiners and authenticators

A range of external expertise may be sought to assist Qualtec in the development and delivery of its programmes. For example, Subject Matter Experts (SMEs) may be used in programme development and review where required. In addition, external authenticators are selected and reviewed regularly to ensure that they possess the required range of expertise for the programmes that they are reviewing. Expert panellists, examiners and authenticators are required to disclose any conflict of interest.

Premises and Infrastructure Selection Procedure

1. Purpose

The purpose of this procedure is to ensure that only suitable venues and infrastructure are used for training purposes

2. Scope

Venues and infrastructure used for both online and classroom training.

3. Responsibility

The Trainer is responsible to selecting a suitable venue for courses. The Head of Training & Quality is responsible for monitoring the suitability of venues.

4. Records

Courses Spreadsheet, Venue Checklist, Equipment Cheecklist, Course Notification and Pre-Course Checksheet Trainer Courses Report, Course Evaluation Form.

5. Procedure

A suitable venue is selected by the Instructor. This is confirmed on the Courses Spreadsheet.

Equipment required is checked and venue is confirmed a week in advance of the course. Affiliated Trainers confirm this on their Course Notification Course Notification and Pre-Course Checksheet.

This will include a suitable venue required to deliver blended learning through Zoom if required. The room for Zoom should be quite and bright. The trainer should have two screens, a camera, microphone and good speakers. Learners should also have camera, microphone and good speakers.

The venue/room must be accessible to all students.

There shall be adequate sound insulation and it should not be positioned beside noisy areas such as kitchens.

Furniture and chairs must be in good condition.

The room should have adequate space for the theory and practical aspect of the course.

There should be adequate lighting and should have windows with natural lighting.

A flip chart stand must be provided.

The room shall be clean and well maintained. Horizontal surfaces such as tabletops should be wiped down prior to course commencement and during breaks.

Heating should be controllable from the room. There should be adequate ventilation in the room.

This is to ensure its suitability for learners to achieve the learning outcomes.

The dates required will be booked with the venue well in advance of the training to ensure availability. This will be confirmed on the Courses Spreadsheet/ Trainer Report.

This is to ensure its suitability for learners to achieve the learning outcomes.

The dates required will be booked with the venue well in advance of the training to ensure availability. This will be confirmed by email.

The Instructor is responsible for ensuring that the training venue is set up in a timely manner at least an hour in advance of the commencement of the training. The Venue Checklist is completed.

The Instructor will confirm that the venue was set up correctly on the Trainer Course Report. They will note any issues on the Training Course Report Form.

For the use of Blended Learning learner will be given the option to log in advance of the course to confirm that their IT system, sound and vision and broadband connection is suitable.

The learners also rate the facilities, set up and equipment on the Course Evaluation form.

Venue set up will be monitored by the Head of Training at least once a year through monitoring visits. This included logging on to online courses and or/viewing videos of set up and/or training. This will be recorded on the Monitoring Report.

Instructors are required to maintain an inventory of their equipment on the Equipment Check, inspect equipment at least once a year to ensure that it is fit for purpose and update the list of equipment is replaced. This is recorded on the Equipment Checklist.

IT Infrastructure

IT Infrastructure such as Virtual Learning Environments and other software is selected, piloted, and tested by the Head of Training & Quality.

The Head of Training and Quality is responsible for ensuring that the capacity, currency, and life expectancy of the infrastructure (ACT & LearnDash) is appropriate to support plans and ambitions for blended and fully online learning provision, including the scale of programme offerings and number of anticipated learners.

New digital tools and platforms being piloted or implemented have had their reliability and security tested and signed off, with confirmation that appropriate technical support and contingency plans are in place.

Any new software or platforms are introduced on a pilot basis to support any migration to new or different IT infrastructure taking account of the need to maintain compatibility with the technology that learners are currently using. Generally the current arrangements remain in place until the new software or platforms is fully tested and functional.

Maintenance and Support Service Level Agreements are in place for these digital tools and platforms.

Programme Design and Development Policy

It is Qualtec's policy to ensure that courses are designed and developed to meet the requirements for QQI approval and certification and reflect a commitment to quality improvement. Any proposal for the development of new programmes may emerge from different sources and is based on one or more of the following criteria:

- A demonstrated industry or work sector requirement.
- Evidence of learner demand (e.g., feedback on existing courses; learner enquiries on new skills training; progression routes from existing courses); and
- Government or other initiatives to support emerging education and skills training needs, plus wider trends in the economy and society.

Any new programme development must take account of Qualtec's current scope of provision so this may involve, for example, an application to QQI requesting extension of this scope as part of a new programme validation application.

This policy requires both the Management Board and Academic Board to work together in the programme design and approval process:

- The Academic Board has final sign-off responsibility in ensuring that any new programme meets academic and regulatory requirements.; and
- The Management Board has sign-off on the business case, course viability, resourcing and commercial matters.

Programme Design and Development Procedure

1. Purpose

The purpose of this procedure is to ensure that all programmes are designed and developed to the highest standard possible and meet the Awarding Body's requirements. This procedure outlines Qualtec's strategic approach to new course design and development in line with QQI's *Core/Sector Specific Statutory Quality Assurance Guidelines for Providers (2016)* and PHECC's *Quality Review Framework*.

2. Scope

This policy relates to Programme Design and Development within Qualtec, covering all proposals for new course development leading to an Award by PHECC or QQI.

3. Responsibility

The Head of Training and Quality is responsible for identifying and proposing new programmes and well as the design and development of all programmes leading to awards.

The Head of Training & Quality is responsible for ensuring that this policy is adhered to by all staff and any collaborative partners, e.g., SMEs engaged for the purposes of new programme design and development.

The Academic Board has oversight of this policy in relation to academic and regulatory standards, with final approval prior to the launch of a new programme by Qualtec.

The Management Board has oversight of this policy in relation to business strategy and training resources.

4. Records

Business Proposal, Academic Board Minutes, Validation Application, Lesson Plans

5. Procedure

5.1 Business Case

Proposals for any new programme will require a review of the business case by the Head of Training & Quality. This involves:

- A review of the industry needs and market requirements (including number of awards issued by QQI/Year).
- Consideration of Qualtec's organisational capacity to develop and deliver the proposed course.
- Risk analysis via SWOT/PESTLE and consideration of Qualtec's Risk Register.
- Cost/benefit analysis and commercial factors including the business rationale of using blended learning.
- Consideration of possible training delivery modes; and
- Financial resources and people requirements including those required for blended learning.

Once the initial business case has been evaluated, the Head of Training & Quality will brief the Academic Board on the course proposal.

5.2 Academic Board initial review

The Academic Board will assess whether Qualtec has the organisational capacity to develop and deliver the programme. If the organisation does not have the internal skills to develop the course, then the Academic Board will ensure that people with the requisite knowledge and skills are made available by Qualtec to support the proposed development.

If the programme is outside Qualtec's current scope of provision, then the Academic Board will arrange with the Head of Training & Quality for a preliminary discussion with QQI, as appropriate, as part of the project scoping exercise.

The Academic Board and Head of Training & Quality may then agree to progress matters and must jointly agree on the creation of a Programme Development Team.

5.3 Programme Development Team (PDT)

A Programme Development Team (PDT) appropriate to the proposal is agreed with the Academic Board. This team should have a wide range of expertise.

5.4 Programme design Process

Programme Descriptors will be reviewed to identify which element of the Blended Learning approach can most effectively and efficiently achieve each learning outcome.

Programmes are developed using the ADDIE Instructional Design Model. The steps to this model are:

1. Analysis: Research to plan for the programme.
2. Design: Critical decisions will be made about and how it will be delivered
3. Development: This is the programme creation process.
4. Implementation: This is where content is uploaded into a learning management system (LMS)
5. Evaluation: Based on the findings during the evaluation phase, the programme will be refined.

The scoping exercise will be led by the Programme Development Expert in conjunction with the PDT will consider:

- Relevant module descriptor for QQI Awards.
- Educational Standard for PHECC Awards.
- Programme development guidelines from the Awarding Body,
- Professional body / regulatory requirements.
- QQI's Policies & Criteria for Validation of Programmes; Blended learning
- Pedagogical framework and teaching strategies in relation to theory and practical skills
- Ensuring Programmes are learner centred, adequately engaging and interactive, are subject led and that it is easy to access and use.
- Framing of lesson plans, aims and objectives of each session, learner activities, allocation of resources and scheduling, self-directed versus instructor-led sessions, etc.
- Identification of which elements of the Blended Learning approach can most effectively and efficiently achieve each learning outcome.
- Substituting direct time and materials with engaging, flexible and appropriate content.
- Identification of those elements that are not suitable for asynchronous learning (through material on VLE) or synchronous (Zoom).
- Consideration of the use of online learning experiences,
- The balance between face to face, online and classroom (group work, skills, demonstration and practical work.
- Modules to be developed for delivery through the Virtual Learning Environment are identified.

- Design of live online synchronous classes and asynchronous content to engage learners in a variety of activities and promote interactivity consistent with the principles of active learning and learner-centred pedagogy.
- How the online teaching and learning of skills will be done.
- Development of digital learning materials and resources, including consideration of their accessibility, the principles of Universal Design for Learning and the potential use of open educational resources.
- Digital tools and platforms for engaging with teachers and enabling learners to meet the intended learning outcomes
- The adaption of the assessment strategy for online context and with consideration for Academic Integrity.
- The specific implications for teaching, learning and assessment which arise from the use of synchronous or asynchronous content delivery.
- Assessment methods (formative/summative) and assessment instruments appropriate to the programme and its blend
- Course content & resources for each module (video, handouts, slide presentations).
- Target learner profile including elements relevant to online participation.
- Learner's workload and allocated study time.
- Explicit protocols and expectations for learners on the types of engagement and participation required of them using online synchronous and/or asynchronous tools and platforms.
- 'Capacity to Succeed' statement for learners i.e., clear information for learners as to what will be required of them to successfully participate in the programme.
- Definition of entry/exit routes via consideration of Access, Transfer and Progression routes.
- Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) considerations; and
- Any other requirements deemed necessary by the Academic Board in consultation with the Head of Training & Quality.

The principles and criteria that informed the decision making for assessing the appropriateness of blended learning modes for programme design include:

Learner-Centric Approach: Blended learning should prioritize inclusivity, accessibility, and engagement, ensuring diverse learner needs are

accommodated through a balanced integration of online and in-person modes.

Alignment with Learning Outcomes: The chosen blend must align with the programme's educational objectives and ensure the achievement of all learning outcomes, whether delivered face-to-face, online (synchronous/asynchronous), or through practical demonstrations.

Pedagogical Quality: The blended approach must incorporate best practices in teaching and learning strategies, fostering critical thinking, active engagement, and meaningful assessment practices.

Technological Feasibility: Adequate infrastructure, reliable platforms, and user-friendly tools must support the seamless delivery of online components and facilitate learner interaction.

Consideration is given to the types of programmes and learner profiles when developing the course material including online content.

Lesson plans are developed detailing the delivery methods and modes and the assessment methods and modes for each module.

Subject Matter Experts are standing members of the Programme Development Team. Other technical experts will be seconded onto the PDT as required, will attend meetings as required for facilitate collaboration and materials and minutes are shared with them through a Onedrive folder set up for the Programme Development Project.

Content is developed for the elearning in accordance with the Articulate Content Development Procedure.

Learning modules must be SCORM/TinCanny compliant to facilitate the possible migration to new Virtual Learning Environments (VLEs). Programme Developers are informed of this requirement and the types of programmes and learner profiles for which blended learning is and is not appropriate in our context.

The Programme Design Process encourages collaboration and constructive peer review by colleagues and learners of the planned teaching, learning and assessment methods, the online learning environment, and the learning materials and resources.

The course material is peer reviewed by the Programme Development Team at the draft stage to ensure that:

- The documentation is of sufficient quality, are learner centred and that they enable learners to achieve the learning outcomes.

Rev: 4 Revised by: Sean Kelleher **Approved by:** Mark Taylor **Date:** 12.03.2025

Page: 79 of 136

- All modules of a programme are owned by an academic or training department. This applies to online learning even when some modules or sections are outsourced.
- There is clarity in the information provided to learners and staff about communication channels and the availability of advice and support.
- Learners can test and monitor their progress at appropriate points.
- The relationship between learning materials and other components of learner support activity is defined.
- Protocols and information are provided to learners and staff on the use of the full range of online interactions and forums in their learning.
- There are nominated academic/professional moderators who understand and have the authority to intervene in, for example, cyber bullying that may constitute risk to learners and/or the provider.

Any issues will be reported to the Head of Training and Quality.

Once draft programme content and a draft validation application is available, the Head of Training & Quality will review this against the relevant validation criteria prior to submission to the Academic Board.

This will be reviewed to ensure that the programme meets the criteria applicable to the programme award and that it addresses the issues specific to the mode of delivery. This includes ensures that it:

- demonstrates that the programme's duration and credit are appropriate.
- sets out the expected proportion of on-site vs synchronous and / or asynchronous teaching and learning.
- details the maximum class sizes to manage online interactivity.
- demonstrates prior engagement with all key stakeholders and draw on relevant business intelligence.
- describes any strategic collaborations or partnerships offering digital services and what agreements are in place to mitigate risks and maintain business continuity, especially when offered outside of Ireland.
- describes staff qualifications and experience in the provision of blended and/or fully online learning delivery and arrangements for training and continuing professional development.
- describes what digital tools and platforms will be used to facilitate blended and online teaching and learner interactivity and provide access to appropriate digital learning resources and materials.
- describes how the planned curriculum design, teaching, learning

and assessment strategies reflect learner-centred principles and good practice in blended and/or fully online learning provision.

- describes what learning resources and materials will be available and what remote access learners will have to the library and other electronic databases.
- describes the synchronous and/or asynchronous teaching methods planned to support teacher-learner and learner-learner interactivity following good practice and learner-centred principles.
- confirms that testing of delivery platforms and environments has been undertaken to confirm that it is possible for learners to engage in blended and/or fully online learning, especially if studying outside of Ireland.
- indicates how the programme meets and is bound by the provider's commitments to privacy and data protection laws and safeguard learners' confidentiality and consumer rights, especially when offered outside of Ireland.
- describes mechanisms for verifying the identity of learners throughout their programme of study but particularly regarding assessment, to mitigate risks against fraudulent practices, attempts to gain unfair advantage, or academic malpractice.
- identifies the academic owner of all modules of the programme, if and when a second provider or collaborator is involved.
- describes what policies, procedures and resources are used to promote academic integrity, including mitigation of fraudulent practices and monitoring of AI-generated digital artefacts.
- describes what online communication channels will be available for learner enquires and consultations with teaching, professional and administrative staff.
- describes what provision there is for learning support and how learners can develop their digital skills and ability to learn how to be an effective online learner.
- describes the administrative protocols to accurately maintain records, monitor progression and achievement and offer appropriate interventions for learners who may be struggling or at risk of failure, especially those studying fully online.
- identifies on-site and/or virtual office hours when teaching staff are available for learner consultations.
- describe how the online dimensions of the learning design promote learner engagement and success.

5.5 Academic Board further review

The Academic Board will review the proposed course materials and draft validation application, with the option to interview members of the PDT as required. This will include testing the programme proposal against

criteria/rationale for choosing BL contained in the Blended Learning Strategy and Plan document.

If approved, then the Programme Development Expert will be instructed to proceed with the validation application.

If the Academic Board refuses to approve or requires further work by the PDT then the Head of Training & Quality will organise this work by the PDT or the proposal will lapse.

5.6 Validation Application

The Programme Development Expert will manage the programme validation application with the relevant Awarding Body, including any validation panel.

This involves the submission of the Programme Application along with the Programme materials including access to online content to QQI through their Sharepoint for approval.

Both the Academic Board and Management Board will be formally notified of the outcome of the application. If the application is unsuccessful then both parties will consult on whether to make a new or amended application for validation.

5.7 Final Authorisation & Programme Launch

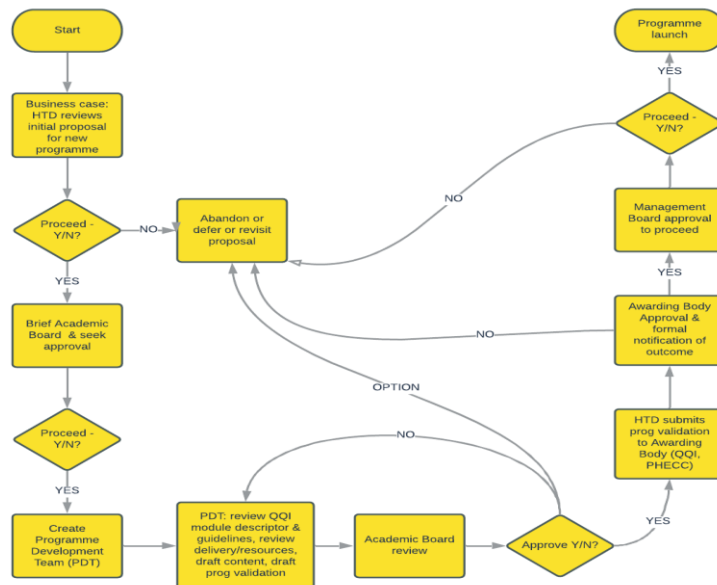
If the application is successful, then both the Academic Board and Management Board will be provided with copies of the formal decision by the Awarding Body.

The Management Board will provide final authorisation to proceed with the programme launch. The Academic Board will monitor programme delivery as part of its overall supervisory brief.

Programme Delivery will be the responsibility of the Head of Training & Quality.

Programme staff to be provided with appropriate CPD required for the Programme Delivery. This includes training on using our VLE.

Programme Design & Development



Programme Delivery Procedure

1. Purpose:

The purpose of this procedure is to outline how Qualtec delivers training in a way that ensures:

- The learner's training and self-development needs are being fulfilled;
- The awarding bodies' requirements and training module specifications are met; and
- The pedagogical and andragogical principles as outlined in Qualtec's Teaching and Learning Policy are being met.

2. Scope:

All programmes leading to an Award.

3. Responsibility:

The Head of Training & Quality is responsible for ensuring that this procedure is adhered to by trainers and support staff.

4. Records:

Lesson Plans

Trainer Course Report

5. Procedure:

Learner induction & Motivation

The **Training Delivery Procedure** outlines how learners are motivated using Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs, Knowles' andragogical theories of adult learning, and Vroom's Expectancy Theory.

Module Introduction

The **Training Delivery Procedure** outlines how trainers should introduce each module, using action-based learning outcomes derived from Bloom's Taxonomy.

Qualtec endorse McGregor's Theory Y approach for Instructor level courses that suggests that learners want to learn and are self-motivated and can work on their own initiative. This module outlines the assignments and engagement required by learners.

Teaching Methods

Different teaching methods are used in accordance with the **Teaching Methods Procedure** to ensure that the principles of Kolb's four stages of experiential learning and the different types of learners identified by Honey & Mumford. They also outline how Dewey's aim of promoting practical, quality learning experiences can be encouraged using reflective practise.

Teaching Media

Teaching Media is selected and used in accordance with the **Teaching Media Procedure** to ensure that the different type of learner identified in Fleming's VARK Model is catered for.

Assessment

Trainers should be aware that all assessment must be transparent, fair and reliable, being both internally and externally validated and fit-for-purpose.

Assessment for each individual module is planned and designed during the Programme Planning phase to ensure that all Learning Outcomes (which are based on Blooms Taxonomy) are properly assessed, appropriate assessment instruments (e.g., exams, skills demonstrations, etc.) are in place, and that assessment forms part of the course schedule.

The induction event must include a briefing on the timing and format of assessments. Assessment methods are defined as part of an Award specification and may include:

- Exams - the trainer may also act as exam invigilator so is responsible for security of exam materials, venue set-up, running the exam, etc.
- Skills demonstrations – the trainer sets up the venue, sources the details of skills to be assessed, ensures that any specialist equipment to be used is in full working order, etc.
- Assignments – the trainer will issue the assessment brief, provide guidance on academic integrity, word count, hand-up dates, etc.
- Reflective journals – learners may be required to record specific areas of learning experiences during the programme and the trainer will provide guidance on the format, word count, etc.

Trainers should also be aware of the Reasonable Accommodation

Rev: 4 Revised by: Sean Kelleher **Approved by:** Mark Taylor **Date:** 12.03.2025

Page: 85 of 136

Procedure together with academic integrity standards and the appeals process.

The Assessment Procedure expands on how learners are assessed fairly.

Programme Review Policy

It is Qualtec's Policy to ensure courses are reviewed in order to identify elements of the Blended Learning approach effectively and efficiently achieve each learning outcome. It should allow for constructive feedback from all stakeholders.

Programme Review Procedure

1. Purpose

The purpose of this procedure is to ensure that all programmes are reviewed and changed to highest standard possible and meet the Awarding Body's requirements. This procedure outlines Qualtec's strategic approach to new course design and development in line with QQI's *Core/Sector Specific Statutory Quality Assurance Guidelines for Providers (2016)* and PHECC's *Quality Review Framework (2015)*.

2. Scope

This procedure relates to the review and change of Programmes within Qualtec leading to an Award by PHECC or QQI. This includes Blended Learning Programmes.

3. Responsibility

The Head of Training and Quality is responsible for identifying and proposing revisions and changes all programmes leading to awards.

The Academic Board has oversight of this policy in relation to academic and regulatory standards, with final approval prior to the change or revision of a programme by Qualtec.

The Management Board has oversight of this policy in relation to business strategy and training resources.

4. Records

Evaluation forms, Programme Development Plan

5. Procedure

At the end of each course students are asked verbally their opinion on the course content. There is an online form on the LMS for learners to give

immediate feedback on any problems with the eLearning element of the course.

They are also asked to complete a course evaluation form. This includes feedback specific to the both the synchronous and asynchronous element of the course. These evaluation forms include a section for comments or recommendations on the course.

Trainers/ instructors are required to review their course during and after delivery and to complete the Trainer Course Report form and forward it to the Head of Training & Quality. This may result in immediate changes to the course content or resources. The edit date on the course material will be changed.

When changes are made to Programme standard by stakeholders such the course content will be reviewed by the Head of Training & Quality and the necessary changes are made to the course material.

Programmes are monitored and reviewed on an ongoing basis to ensure that the programme is meeting the requirements of all interested parties.

Learner feedback is monitored through the Course Evaluation Forms.

Feedback is also sought from other stakeholders such as employers. Each year an Employer Course Evaluation Form is forwarded to employers.

Trainers will also provide ongoing feedback. This will include feedback on the programme structure, coherence, and sequencing. The course content can be updated by the Head of Training and Quality.

The Programme Team will review learner's evaluation data and share good practise from evaluations to grow and build a knowledge base of what works and why. This is discussed at the Results Approval Panel.

Formal Reviews

A formal review of courses is carried out once a year by the Academic Board.

All the above information is considered during programme reviews. This includes a review of the assessments strategies to identify opportunities for learners to engage in formative assessment activities that will check and reinforce learning remotely such as the use of quizzes, online polls and the use of breakout rooms during "live" synchronous training.

Other evidence considered when reviewing programmes includes enrolment numbers, completion rates and progression/ refresh rates. These are monitored through the Course KPI Reports.

They will review learner's evaluation data and share good practise from evaluations to grow and build a knowledge base of what works and why.

QQI programmes are benchmarked against other providers using QQI Reports.

All the above information is considered during programme reviews.

A programme development plan for updating digital content to ensure its currency and relevance based on defined standards or expectations about the length of life expectancy is developed.

The Head of Training & Quality/Course Director is responsible for making any changes required such as updating course documentation, lesson plans, notes and Powerpoints and online content.

Any changes to the online content will be tested by staff, trainers and or the Subject Matter Expert to ensure that they work correctly and will report any issues to the Head of Training and Quality.

Any changes to the programme are approved by the Academic Board.

The Head of Training & Quality is responsible for informing trainers of any changes required.

PHECC Course material will be reviewed, revised and updated in the of changes in PHECC Training Education Standards, Clinical Practise Guidelines or Examination Standards.

The updated material will be circulated to all faculty members and these faculty members will compete a training session explaining these changes.

Programmes are revalidated when required by QQI. This revalidation is carried out in accordance with the Programme Design and Development Policy and Procedure.

Public Information Policy

Qualtec's policy is to ensure open and honest communication with learners, prospective learners, staff, and other interested parties. Information published on Qualtec's website and other channels should be clear, accurate, objective, up to date and easily accessible.

Public Information Procedure

1. Purpose:

To ensure that accurate and transparent information is available to learners and other interested parties.

2. Scope:

There is a range of public information made available by Qualtec on the company website www.qualtec.ie

3. Responsibility

The Managing Director is responsible for ensuring that all information on the company website www.qualtec.ie is correct and up to date. and Recognition of Prior Learning Procedure are detailed in the Learner Handbook that is available on the company website.

4. Records

Delegate Booking Form, Quality Assurance Evaluation Reports

5. Procedure:

5.1 Programme details

All relevant programme and award information is made available to prospective and current learners on the course webpage including the following:

- Details of the award
- Name of awarding body, e.g. QQI, PHECC
- Title of award, i.e. per programme validation specification
- NFQ level and award type (minor, major, special purpose)
- Delivery method (classroom, online)

- Time commitments – face to face, synchronous and asynchronous, workplace (as appropriate)
- Capacity to Succeed statement.
- Course duration
- Eligibility requirements and learner suitability (e.g., online learning and digital skills)
- Hardware and software requirements.
- Procedures for access, transfer and progression

Information for enrolled learners, including the Appeals Process, Academic Integrity, Technical and Pastoral Support and Customer Complaints Procedure and Recognition of Prior Learning Procedure are detailed in the Learner Handbook that is made available on the company website.

The accuracy of such information is maintained. Information for prospective learners is honest, transparent and facilitates comparison. The Managing Director is responsible for the verifying accuracy of information before publication on the website.

5.2 Blended Learning information

The course page on the Qualtec website www.qualtec.ie outlines the information required to learners successfully complete blended learning programmes and achieve the learning outcomes: This includes information in relation to:

- The structure of programmes and the blend of learning.
- The prerequisites for participating on the course including the pre-knowledge and the technological skills that the learners will need.
- The extent of the autonomous learning and the supported elements of the training.
- The realistic commitment required to complete the programme, including independent learning.
- The hours when academic and technical support is available.
- The hardware and software required, and the time that learners are expected to commit to independent learning in order to complete the programme successfully.
- The specific level of engagement expected for different elements of the blend.

- The extent to which face-to-face attendance is part of the blend is made clear to learners and/or other stakeholders such as funding, recognition or validating bodies.
 - Stakeholders can participate in online events where they can talk to Instructors explaining different programmes.

5.3 Publication of quality assurance evaluation reports

On completion of quality evaluations, a report on the key findings and quality improvement plans are published on the website in an accessible location.

5.4 Programme collaboration

Some PHECC programmes are delivered by secondary providers. These providers are required to explain this on each course webpage and provide the information above on this webpage or on links to Qualtec's site.

QQI programmes are not delivered by secondary providers.

Quality and Continuous Improvement Policy

Qualtec is committed to maintaining the highest standards of quality in its educational offerings. We will achieve this through a structured approach to continuous quality improvement, which includes systematic monitoring, annual self-assessment, and the implementation of improvement initiatives.

Quality and Continuous Improvement Procedure

1. Purpose

The purpose of this procedure is to outline the controls in place to assure the quality of courses to establish a framework for continuous quality improvement within the institution, ensuring systematic monitoring, annual self-assessment, and ongoing quality enhancement of QQI and PHECC-approved courses

2. Scope

This procedure covers all courses leading to Awards.

3. Responsibility

The Head of Training & Quality is responsible for ensuring that this policy is adhered to by all training and support staff, together with any collaborative partners, e.g. contracted trainers.

In addition, the Academic Board has oversight of this procedure.

4. Records

Course Materials and Lesson Plans, Evaluation forms, Surveys, Self-Evaluation Report

5. Procedure

Policies and Procedures are made available through the relevant OneDrive folder.

Policies and Procedures relevant to learners are made available in the Learner Handbook on the company's [website](#).

These policy and procedures are translated into practice through a variety of internal quality assurance processes that allow participation by all staff within Qualtec.

Rev: 4 Revised by: Sean Kelleher **Approved by:** Mark Taylor **Date:** 12.03.2025

Page: 92 of 136

Compliance with the assessment criteria is checked through the Assessment of Learners Procedure.

Programmes are developed in accordance with the Programme Design & Delivery Procedure.

There are lesson plans in place for all courses and these must be adhered to.

On completion of a course, learners are requested to complete an evaluation survey.

The course evaluation results and completion rates are reviewed at the Results Approval Panel Meeting.

The Head of Training & Quality can sit in on courses delivered to ensure that they are delivered to the required standard.

The Head of Training & Quality will contact the instructor/ trainer to discuss any issues highlighted on the evaluation forms.

It is the responsibility of the Internal Verifier to ensure that all paperwork for the course is complete.

At least every 12 months a monitoring visit will be carried out on trainers.

They will be assessed using the Monitoring Report. This form is returned to the Head of Training & Quality.

The Head of Training & Quality will discuss any issues highlighted with the trainer/ instructor.

It is the responsibility of the Internal Verifier to ensure that all paperwork for the course is complete.

The following indicators are monitored to ensure that the strategy is implemented:

Amount of outstanding debt, value of lodgements, students per course/month, attendees v bookings, completion rates/ pass rates.

The Head of Training & Quality is responsible for overseeing the assessment of trends and outcomes and taking appropriate action.

The financial resources of the organisation are monitored through financial statements on a monthly basis from the bank and yearly financial accounts from the accountants.

The Managing Director is responsible for ensuring that there are adequate personnel resources. The Managing Director can deliver all courses and is available as back up. This is an item on the Management Review Board

Meeting. The organisation has trained assistant staff members to ensure business continuity in the event of key staff members being unavailable.

Consideration is given to the findings of internal and external evaluation and self-monitoring processes.

A formal self-evaluation is carried out once a year. This includes a review of learner feedback and external verification reports. It also considers trends of Key Performance Indicators such as satisfaction levels (objectives met), numbers of students, completion rates, repeat students, lead time for issuance of certs, age of debt. This includes a review of learner feedback and external verification reports.

The Managing Director will review self-evaluation findings and agree an improvement plan in consultation with relevant people.

Consideration is given to the findings of internal and external evaluation and self-monitoring processes.

Each year the Head of Training & Quality will carry out a Self-Assessment to identify areas for improvement. Quality assurance procedures have been developed which outline the roles and responsibilities for these procedures.

An action plan is developed based on the review of these findings.

Process	Responsibility	Related Policy & procedure	Record	Monitoring of Process
New course opportunity identified	Head of Training & Quality	Programme Design & Development	Strategic Plan	Yearly Self Evaluation Assessment
Cost/ benefit analysis carried out	Head of Training & Quality	Programme Design & Development	Strategic plan	Yearly Self Evaluation Assessment
Course is developed	Head of Training & Quality	Programme Design & Development	Lesson Plan, PPT	Yearly Self Evaluation Assessment
Course is internally approved	Head of Training & Quality	Programme Design & Development	Lesson Plan, PPT	Yearly Self Evaluation Assessment
Course is submitted for validation	Head of Training & Quality	Programme Design & Development	Application form	Yearly Self Evaluation Assessment
Webpage is developed & published	Head of Training & Quality	Public Information and Communication Website Administration	Webpage	Yearly Self Evaluation Assessment
Venue selected	Trainer	Premises Selection	Email, Course Notification form. Trainer Report, Evaluation form	Yearly Self Evaluation Assessment
Trainers are selected/ recruited /trained	Head of Training & Quality	Staff Recruitment & Development	CV, Training Records	Yearly Self Evaluation Assessment
Enquiries are received/ dealt with	Administrator	Incoming Enquiries	Email	Yearly Self Evaluation Assessment
Bookings are taken/ confirmed	Administrator	Bookings in ACT	ACT! Database	Yearly Self Evaluation Assessment

Recognition of Prior Learning is provided	Administrator/MD	Recognition of Prior Learning	RPL Application form	Yearly Self Evaluation Assessment
Invoice issued	Administrator	Invoicing	Invoice	Yearly Self Evaluation Assessment
Payments received	Administrator	Lodgments	Lodgments/ Aged Debtors Spreadsheet	Yearly Self Evaluation Assessment
Course is notified and venue selected	Trainer	Course notification and venue selection	Course Notification Form. Venue Selection Form	Yearly Self Evaluation Assessment
Course is delivered	Trainer	Training & Learning	Course Attendance sheet	Yearly Self Evaluation Assessment
Course resources/ survey sent	Trainer	Learner Support ACT!	Act! Database	Yearly Self Evaluation Assessment
Training is assessed	Trainer	Assessment	Skills Sheet, Test, Evaluation form	Yearly Self Evaluation Assessment
Course paperwork is submitted	Trainer	End of Course Reporting	Course Paperwork, Trainer Course Report	Yearly Self Evaluation Assessment
Results are verified	Internal Verifier	Internal Verification	Course paperwork, Act Learner Record	Yearly Self Evaluation Assessment
Results are reviewed	Results Panel	Results Approval	Results Approval Panel Minutes	Yearly Self Evaluation Assessment

Results are externally verified	External Verifier	External Verification	External Verification Report	Yearly Self Evaluation Assessment
Certificates issues	Administrator	Issuing certificates	ACT! Database	Yearly Self Evaluation Assessment
Feedback reviewed	Managing Director	Results Approval	Course Evaluation Reports	Yearly Self Evaluation Assessment
Performance is monitored	Managing Director	Assessment Information & Data Management	Course Evaluation Reports, Monitoring Reports	Yearly Self Evaluation Assessment
Quality System is reviewed	Managing Director	Assessment	MRB Minutes, Self-Assessment & Quality Improvement Plan	Yearly Self Evaluation Assessment

Qualtec Courses Flowchart

New courses are developed in accordance with the Programme Design & Development Policy & Procedure



New staff and trainers are recruited and developed in accordance with the Recruitment & Development Policy & procedure



If required trainers are vetted in accordance with the Vetting Policy & Procedure



Enquiries are made by phone or email. An email is sent with course details



Learners are booked courses in accordance with the Admissions Policy & Procedure and Booking Procedure



Learners can apply for Recognition of Prior Learning in accordance with the RPL Policy & Procedure



Equipment is checked and maintained by the trainer in accordance with the Equipment & Maintenance Policy & Procedure



The learning environment is checked by the trainers against the Premises selection criteria in accordance with the Learning Environment Policy & Procedure



Courses are delivered by trainers in accordance with the Programme Delivery Procedure



Learners are treated and looked after in accordance with the Equality Diversity H&S Policy & Procedures



Learners trainers and Qualtec staff communicate in accordance with the Communications Policy & Procedure



Learners are supported in accordance with the Learner Support Policy & Procedure



Courses are assessed in accordance with the Assessment Policy and Review Procedure



Results are internally verified in accordance with the Internal Verification Policy & Procedure



Results are approved in accordance with the Results Approval Policy & Procedure



Complaints can be made in accordance with the Complaints Policy and Procedure



Courses are reviewed and revised in accordance with Course Review Policy & Procedure



Appeals with the Appeals Policy & Procedure



Learners information is managed in accordance with the Information Management Policy & Procedure



Courses are reviewed in accordance with the Courses Review Policy & Procedure



Trainers' performance is monitored in accordance with the Assessment Procedure

Key Performance Indicators Table

Task	Responsibility	Metric	Monitoring and Reporting Tool	Reporting	Frequency
Marketing	MD/Sean	Google Ranking Site visits	Qualtec.ie Status Reports Site Kit. Website	To MD from SEO	Weekly
Enquiries	Admin/Deirbhle	Response time	Email meter.	To staff via email	Weekly
Enquiries	MD/Sean	Act Conversion Rate	Conversion Report	Management Board	Yearly
Sales	MD/Sean Kelleher	Sales /P&L	Sage Company Accounts	Management Board	Yearly
Customer Satisfaction	Trainers	Google Reviews	Google on webpage www.qualtec.ie	Results Approval Panel Management Board Academic Board	Monthly Yearly
				Results Approval Panel Management Board	Monthly Yearly
Course Completion	Trainers	Course completion rate	Courses Report. Results Approval Panel Minutes Completion Reports. Management Minutes	Results Approval Panel Management Meeting Academic Board	Monthly Yearly
Grades	Results Approval Panel/ MD,IV, Elaine	Results Approval completed on time	Results Approval Minutes	Results Approval Panel Management Meeting	Monthly Yearly

Issuance of certs	Admin/ Elaine	Cert issue LT IV LT Submission LT	Courses Report	Results Approval Panel Management Meeting	Monthly Yearly
Aged Debtors	Debt Collector/Ashling	Age of Debt	Aged Debtors Report	Management Meeting	Yearly

Reasonable Accommodation Policy

It is Qualtec's policy that reasonable accommodation will be made for learners with disabilities or who fall under the nine grounds for discrimination under the Equal Status Acts 2000-2018.

Reasonable accommodation is a process intended to mitigate, as far as possible:

- the impact of a disability on a learner's engagement with a training programme; and/or
- ensure that appropriate supports are available to any individual covered by equality legislation.

The overall aim is to take positive action, as far as is reasonably possible, to facilitate the learner in their training and assessment during the programme, thereby ensuring that the learner can access and participate in the programme on an equal basis when compared with other learners.

In relation to programme access and participation, Qualtec will use its best endeavours to provide reasonable accommodation to meet the needs of any learners with a disability or facilitate those learners covered by equality legislation, subject to the learner meeting the minimum entry requirements for a programme.

In relation to assessment, the aim is to achieve fairness and consistency in Qualtec's approach to this area. Reasonable accommodation must incorporate suitable adaptation of assessment when necessary to cater for learners whose personal situation may mean that an assessment would be otherwise unfair.

Reasonable Accommodation Procedure

1. Purpose

The purpose of this procedure is to ensure that all requests for reasonable accommodation by learners are considered and dealt with efficiently and fairly

2. Scope

This procedure relates to all requests for reasonable accommodations.

3. Responsibility

The Head of Training & Quality is responsible for considering all requests for reasonable accommodation.

The Academic Board has oversight of this policy and procedure.

Rev: 4 Revised by: Sean Kelleher **Approved by:** Mark Taylor **Date:** 12.03.2025

Page: 103 of 136

4. Records

Reasonable Accommodation Application form

5. Procedure

Reasonable accommodation is made for students with disabilities or other issues covered under the nine grounds for discrimination and in accordance with the Equal Status Act 2000-2018.

Information pertaining to reasonable accommodation will be made available to learners at the enrolment stage and it is available in the learner handbook.

The Learner must indicate that they require Reasonable Accommodation at least one week prior to the course commencement.

They will be sent a Reasonable Accommodation form which they must complete and return for consideration with supporting evidence.

The learner will complete the Reasonable Accommodation Application form at least a week in advance of the course.

The following may be required as supporting evidence:

Medical Report

Occupational Therapist Report

Educational Psychologist Report

Evidence of previous support provided during a state exam

All requests will be held in confidence as per Qualtec confidentiality and security of personal data.

The Request for Reasonable Accommodation will be forwarded to the Head of Training and Quality for consideration.

Qualtec will provide reasonable accommodation to meet the needs of any learners with a disability. In relation to assessment, reasonable accommodation incorporates adaptation of assessment when necessary to

cater for learners whose personal situation may mean that an assessment would be otherwise unfair.

This can include a reading out questions for learners that may have literacy issues.

This will be carried out on a one-to-one basis to ensure that other learners are not disturbed or cannot hear the answers.

This may also include allowing students to perform skills from a seated to perform skills from a seated or table height position if necessary.

Appointment of scribes

Modified briefs

Rest periods and/or additional time

Adaptive technology equipment and/or software

Oral or video evidence

This will be noted on the Assessment Sheet.

The Head of Training and Quality will inform the learner and trainer about his decision and arrangements that will be put in place to accommodate the learner.

These arrangements include:

Extra time/rest periods

Oral/video evidence

Modified assessment

Physically adapted skills demonstration and assessment.

Use of reasonable accommodation and adaptations will be noted on the assessment sheet.

Implementation steps:

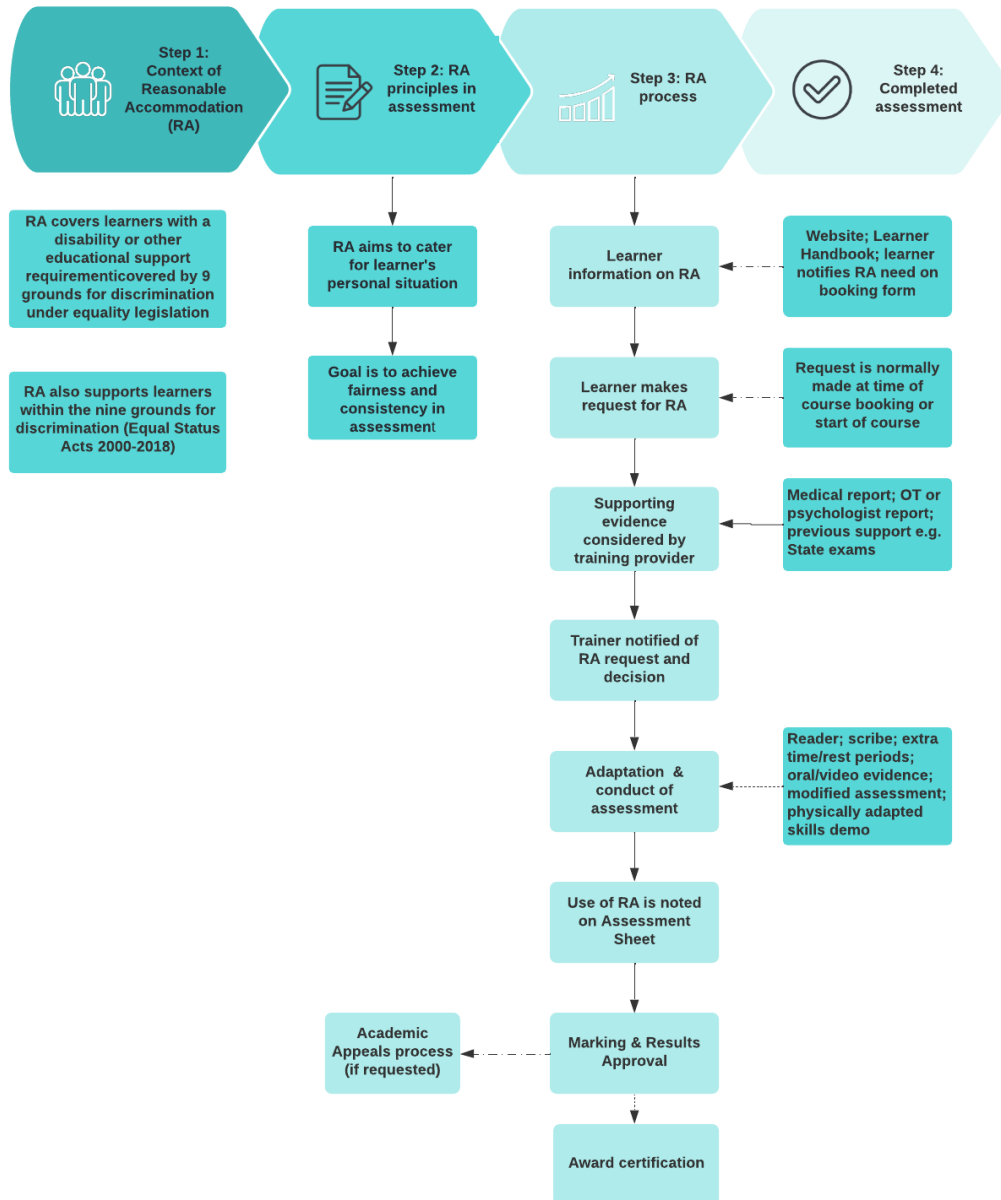
Step 1.

During registration, the learner is required to advise Qualtec of any requirement for Reasonable Accommodation(s). The learner will be supplied with a Reasonable Accommodation Application form which they must complete and submit to the Qualtec Administrator.

Step 2. The Head of Training & Quality will consider the request and liaise with the learner to discuss how best the needs of the learner can be met (within the constraints of the requested support and Qualtec's capacity to provide same).

Step 3. Once the supports have been agreed, the Head of Training & Quality will organise the provision of the supports, bearing in mind that QQI guidance states that *"Reasonable accommodations are concerned with adapting the assessment approach, not with diluting the standard of learning to be attained, interfering with or amending the intended learning outcomes. Assessments which involve reasonable accommodations should be consistent with those which do not"*.

Step 4. Learner assessments conducted under Reasonable Accommodation Provisions are noted. This is to ensure that any of the future processing of these assessments (e.g., Internal Verification, External Authentication, Results Approval or Appeals) may be informed by this data.



Recognition of Prior Learning Policy

It is the policy of Qualtec to provide Recognition of Prior Learning to learners (RPL). Qualtec recognizes that many adult learners have prior learning both formal and informal.

Qualtec is committed to supporting lifelong learning and prior learning and/or relevant experience may be considered as part of the course admissions process. Learners may wish to have this considered for the purposes of receiving awards and for access to, or exemptions from, programme requirements. To facilitate this Qualtec have implemented a process for providing RPL.

Learners can gain additional information and recognition of any educational programmes and certified training complete outside of Ireland through the National Academic Recognition Information Centre (NARIC) and the National Europass Centre.

Learners are assessed in a fair and consistent manner and Qualtec will ensure that all applications for RPL are consistent with quality assurance policy and procedures.

Qualtec will ensure each application for RPL is judged with fairness and transparency. It will also ensure that each application is judged to have achieved the relevant standard and ensure accuracy, validity and consistency.

Recognition of Prior Learning Procedure

1. Purpose

The purpose of this procedure is to recognize and facilitate Recognition of Prior Learning.

2. Scope

This policy relates to all requests for Recognition of Prior Learning for Programmes within Qualtec leading to an Award by PHECC or QQI.

3. Responsibility

The Head of Training and Quality is responsible for considering and approving all applications for Recognition of Prior Learning.

The Academic Board has oversight of this policy.

The Management Board has oversight of this policy in relation to business strategy and training resources.

4. Records

RPL Application form

5. Procedure

Learners wishing to avail of RPL are required to complete the RPL Application Form which requires details of any prior learning or relevant experience. The form is designed to help assess how RPL may support entry to a course or identify a credit or exemption from a unit within a programme. Learners are required to provide evidence as to how they have already attained the academic credits/practical competencies for the course. Learners return the RPL Application Form along with supporting evidence, e.g., CV and a supporting statement, course schedules, award certificates.

The Head of Training & Quality will respond by email or phone to any queries that the learner might have in this area. The RPL Application will be reviewed by the Head of Training & Quality who will respond by email or phone to any queries that the learner might have. The Head of Training & Quality will provide the learner with feedback on items received and options available to fulfil any outstanding RPL requirements, further assessing these as necessary.

The Head of Training & Quality will advise the applicant on whether they were successful or not. If unsuccessful the applicant can appeal the decision through the Appeals Procedure as part of the assessment process.

In addition, a learner availing of RPL may need to attend training days as they would only qualify for exemption from the relevant assessment component.

The Head of Training & Quality will carry out any further face to face assessments required: for example, skills demonstration or written test. The Internal Verifier will verify that there is evidence available for all credits awarded. Preliminary results will be emailed to learners, allowing them to appeal these results prior to the Results Approval Panel.

Recruitment, Management & Development Policy

It is the policy of Qualtec that all staff involved in the development and delivery of programmes should have suitable qualifications, experience and expertise to fulfil their roles. It is their policy that the organisation is adequately staffed to meet their needs.

It is also their policy that staff are aware of these requirements and roles & responsibilities.

It is the Policy of Qualtec to professionally recruit and develop all staff engaged in the provision of our programmes and services to learners. Qualtec applies a systematic approach to the recruitment and engagement of staff. Recruitment is carried out by the Head of Training & quality. Induction training is compulsory for all new staff. Existing staff's training needs are appraised annually.

Recruitment, Management & Development Procedure

1. Purpose

The purpose of this procedure is to ensure that the organisation is adequately staffed by suitable candidates to support and deliver Blended Learning programmes.

2. Scope

This procedure relates to the recruitment, management and development of all personnel critical to the quality of the provision of training and certification including the development the development and support of online resources, online teaching, where such experience is lacking, and support services for learners.

3. Responsibility

Head of Training & Quality is responsible for this procedure

4. Records

CVs, Certificates, Roles & Responsibilities & Selection Criteria, VLE, Appraisal Form. Memos, Courses Reports. Meeting Minutes.

5. Procedure

Recruitment

Roles & Responsibilities are developed for each position within the organisation by the Managing Director. These are detailed in the QA Manual and on the Roles & Responsibilities and Selection Criteria form. These detail any qualifications required to meet the programme and the relevant Institution needs and the selection criteria.

Applications for vacancies are reviewed by the Head of Training & Quality or Assistant Head of Training & Quality.

Applicants are expected to submit a CV and relevant certificates.

Applicants are interviewed by the Head of Training & Quality or Assistant Head of Training & Quality. The applicant is scored against the selection criteria on the Roles & Responsibilities and Selection Criteria form.

Personnel are selected on their suitability in relation to the roles & responsibilities and the minimum requirements set.

Rev: 4 Revised by: Sean Kelleher **Approved by:** Mark Taylor **Date:** 12.03.2025

Page: 111 of 136

Garda Vetting

Garda Vetting will be carried out in accordance with the Vetting Procedure if required.

Staff are provided with a copy of the relevant Roles & Responsibilities. They are required to provide a copy of their qualifications and are required to ensure that they are kept in date and furnish the organisation with the latest copy.

Induction

Staff and Instructors/ trainers are required to complete the relevant Induction course on commencement. This is available on the organisation's VLE. The Induction course introduces them to Qualtec's Documented Quality Management System. It includes modules on GDPR, Equality and Diversity, Manual Handling and DSE use. It also includes links to their relevant procedures and videos outlining how these procedures are carried out. Certificates are generated on completion of the courses. It will also include a module for any updates in Clinical Practice Guidelines (CPG).

Training Needs

Mandatory training mandatory courses are included in the relevant group on the VLE and on the Versatility Chart or Affiliated Trainers Spreadsheet. The Head of Training & Quality or Assistant Head of Training & Quality will track completion of required courses by trainers on the VLE/ Versatility Chart or Affiliated Trainers Spreadsheet. The Head of Training & Quality or Assistant Head of Training & Quality will review these training Needs on an ongoing basis and formally at the Management Review Board meeting and can add to the list of required courses.

Training Needs for other staff Members is tracked on the VLE which identify the training needs for specific positions. Again, the Head of Training & Quality will review these Training Needs on an ongoing basis and formally at the Management Review Board meeting and can add to the list of required courses.

Development

Staff are developed on an ongoing basis. This generally involves ongoing training by experienced staff on an inhouse basis.

Rev: 4 Revised by: Sean Kelleher **Approved by:** Mark Taylor **Date:** 12.03.2025

Page: 112 of 136

Staff performance is monitored by the Office Manager/ Head of Training & Quality on an ongoing basis. Extra training will be provided where required.

The Head of Training & Quality or Assistant Head of Training & Quality will from time to time sit in, monitor, and assist on programmes for the purpose of assessing and improving trainer performance. The purpose of this is to increase staff's versatility. The organisation encourages and will pay for relevant external training.

Any issues are communicated through email and any changes/improvements are detailed on the Quality Improvement Plan.

are encouraged to provide feedback on programmes and suggest improvements to programmes. This can be provided by email on an ongoing basis and trainers will input into the formal review of programmes.

Reserve instructor/trainers are retained both fulltime and on a contract basis to provide backup in the event of the main trainer for each programme. These instructor/trainers are trained using the same approach as for the main instructor/trainers and are required to have the same qualifications and experience. These instructor/trainers will input into programme development and review.

Instructor/trainers will be informed by email about any issues related to the programmes they deliver, and any staff development issues.

Staff have been trained in providing access to learners to online course resources.

Staff can attend any relevant seminars and network meetings.

Online course resources such as notes/ handouts/ videos/ guides and standards are made available to Instructors on the relevant course folder which is available on OneDrive. This may be made available to Instructors on the VLE in the future.

Staff are allowed to attend any relevant seminars and network meetings. Training needs are discussed at the Management Review Board Meeting and any training requirements will be agreed.

Instructor/Trainers can request extra training through the Trainer Course Report, via email or during appraisals.

Instructor/Trainer Performance

Instructor/Trainer performance is monitored on an ongoing basis by the Head of Training & Quality or Assistant Head of Training & Quality.

This is carried out through monitoring visits to observe teaching practise.

A Monitoring Report is completed on the trainer performance.

Rev: 4 Revised by: Sean Kelleher **Approved by:** Mark Taylor **Date:** 12.03.2025

Page: 113 of 136

The Head of Training & Quality also monitors trainer performance through reviewing Course Evaluation forms/ Surveys and KPIs such as course completion rates, assessment results and Monitoring Reports.

Instructor/Trainer performance will be formally reviewed each year and corrective action will be agreed for any issues identified. This is recorded on the Appraisal Form. This may include further training.

If there are any concerns the Head of Training & Quality or Assistant Head of Training & Quality will contact the Instructor/Trainer to discuss any issues and agree corrective action. This corrective action will be reviewed to ensure that the issue has been resolved.

Communications

Staff and Instructors/Trainers will be issued with memos by email informing of any general issues that they need to be aware of including general performance issues. Meetings will be held if required and minutes will be maintained of these. Instructors/Trainers can communicate issues through their Course Reports which are reviewed at the Results Approval Panel Meetings.

Misconduct

Qualtec categories misconduct into three categories, minor, major and gross misconduct.

Examples of minor misconduct include poor timekeeping, poor personal care and late submission or poor completion of paperwork.

Examples of major misconduct include non-completion of required paperwork, poor attitude to customers and use of foul language.

Examples of Gross Misconduct include verbal or physical assault, repeated incidents of major misconduct, taking of drugs, theft, fraud and soliciting Qualtec's customers.

In the event of minor misconduct, the Managing Director will informally speak to the staff member or Instructor/Trainer and explain what the issue is and what the required standard is.

In the event of a major misconduct, the Managing Director will complete a formal investigation into the matter. The Managing Director will inform the Staff Member or Instructor in writing what the Misconduct is and will request that the staff member or Instructor responds in writing. The Managing Director will hold a meeting with the staff member and agree

Rev: 4 Revised by: Sean Kelleher **Approved by:** Mark Taylor **Date:** 12.03.2025

Page: 114 of 136

corrective action required. This will be sent in writing and the staff member or trainer will be required to agree in writing.

In the event of major misconduct, the staff member will be informed in writing of the alleged misconduct. They will be required to attend a disciplinary meeting and have the right to be accompanied. They will be given a final written warning.

In the event of gross misconduct, a full investigation will be carried out. The Managing Director will inform the staff member that they must attend a Disciplinary Meeting in writing.

They will be informed of the nature of the meeting and the details of the alleged Gross Misconduct. They can be accompanied to the meeting. The staff member will be given sufficient time to respond to the accusation. The employee will be informed of the final decision in writing. They may appeal this decision.

Risk Management Policy

Qualtec aims to identify and manage risks in the provision of its training programmes in order to ensure the overall quality and academic integrity of its training courses. The procedure for Risk Management is outlined in the Risk Management Procedure. Qualtec maintain a Risk Register.

Risk-based thinking forms a part of the process approach to Qualtec's training operations. It is recognised that risk can give rise to both positive and negative factors, thereby allowing for opportunities for improvement across Qualtec's QA planning and delivery.

Risk Management Procedure

1. Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to manage both business and academic risks. Risk may be defined as the effect of uncertainty on Qualtec's training and commercial objectives which might give rise to undesirable outcomes or potential hazards.

2. Scope

Qualtec aims to identify and manage risks in the provision of its training programmes in order to ensure the overall quality and academic integrity of its training courses.

3. Responsibility

The Head of Training and Quality is responsible for ensuring that this policy is adhered to by all training and support staff, together with any collaborative partners, e.g. contracted trainers.

In addition, the Academic Board has oversight of risk in relation to academic and regulatory matters.

4. Records

Risk Register

5. Procedure

Qualtec has adopted risk-based thinking in order to review and assess levels of risk across its operations and training processes. The Managing Director oversees a Risk Assessment process to identify potential risks and document these within a Risk Register. The Managing Director maintains the Risk Register and is responsible for ensuring that each risk is monitored and reviewed by its designated owner within Qualtec.

Risks can be categorised in terms of regulatory, reputational, financial, business continuity and academic.

As noted above, the Academic Board has a risk oversight responsibility in relation to academic and related training compliance matters.

Risk Control

The controls required to mitigate the risk are documented in the Risk control action column.

Responsibility

The person responsible for ensuring that this control is in place and is effective is entered in the Responsibility column.

Oversight

The body for overseeing these controls are documented in the Oversight column.

Evaluation of Risk

Risk tolerances are reviewed by the designated risk owner and then categorised in terms of:

- P = Probability or Likelihood
- S = Severity

These are scored from 1 to 3.

The Risk Level is calculated by multiplying Probability and Severity.

Low= 1-2

Medium= 3-4

High= 5-6

Safeguarding Policy

Qualtec is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and vulnerable adults. We expect all staff, volunteers, and contractors to share this commitment and adhere to our safeguarding policy and procedures. We will ensure that our practices reflect statutory responsibilities, government guidance, and comply with PHECC requirements.”

To this end Qualtec has produced the following procedure that aligns with PHECC requirements and ensures the safety and well-being of children and vulnerable adults in your care.

Safeguarding Procedure

1. Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that Qualtec meets its obligations in respect to the safeguarding of children and vulnerable adults.

2. Scope

This procedure applies to staff and contractors who would potentially encounter children and vulnerable adults.

3. Responsibility

The Head of Training and Quality is responsible for safeguarding on Qualtec and ensuring that this policy is adhered to by all training and support staff, together with any collaborative partners, e.g. contracted trainers.

In addition, the Academic Board has oversight of this policy and procedure.

4. Records

Safeguarding training records

5. Procedure

Instructors that may encounter vulnerable adults and children must complete safeguarding training. This includes instructors that deliver public courses.

Self-Evaluation, Monitoring Review & Continuous Improvement Policy

Qualtec is committed to continuous improvement across all its areas of training delivery. Therefore, all areas of the quality assurance system are subject to formal reviews to ensure that quality standards are maintained and improved, with the results of these reviews being considered by the Management Board and Academic Board.

Self-Evaluation, Monitoring, Review & Continuous Improvement Procedure

1. Purpose

The purpose of this procedure is to outline Qualtec's Procedure for self-evaluation, monitoring and review.

At its core, the purpose of self-evaluation is to ensure that the Quality Management System is operating effectively and that it meets the requirements of QQI/PHECC and other stakeholders.

The underlying principle is that provider-owned quality assurance engages with external quality assurance reviews by QQI and PHECC, acting on any recommendations for improvement resulting from these reviews.

2. Scope

This procedure relates to all areas of Qualtec's Quality Management System outlined in the Quality Assurance Manual. Self-evaluation will consider all activities (i.e. policies and procedures) relating to all training programmes and courses leading to Awards.

3. Responsibility

The Head of Training & Quality is responsible for ensuring that self-evaluation is carried out and that improvements suggested are implemented.

The Head of Training & Quality works with the Assistant Head of Training & Quality to monitor training processes and ensure that Quality Management System is operating effectively.

The Academic Board has oversight of all self-evaluation, monitoring and feedback in relation to teaching and learning activities. In particular, the Academic Board must approve any five-yearly formal self-evaluation report before it is sent to QQI.

The Management Board will receive monitoring and other reports, ensuring that any recommendations are reviewed at an operational level and acted upon as necessary.

4. Records

Self-Evaluation Report. Quality Improvement Plan, KPI Reports

5. Procedure

Self-evaluation

The Managing Director completes a Self-Evaluation once a year. This will involve inputs from staff, learners & trainers.

The Managing Director will note down the findings on the Self-Assessment Report.

On completion of the Self-Assessment the Managing Director will produce a Quality Improvement Plan detailing the corrective action required, responsibility and target date for its completion.

The Managing Director will close items off on the Quality Improvement Plan as they are completed.

Instructor Monitoring

The Head of Training and Quality or Assistant Head of Training and Quality carries out monitoring visits on Instructors to ensure that they are following the Policies & Procedures detailed in the Instructor Handbook.

Affiliated Instructors notify the institution of scheduled courses.

At least one of these courses are monitored each year.

The monitoring assessed using the Monitoring Report sheet.

The affiliated trainer is scored using the marking scheme on the Monitoring Report Sheet.

This includes inspecting the venue, facilities, and equipment.

The issues and findings are discussed with the instructor, and any corrective action is agreed.

The Monitoring Report will be forwarded it to the instructor.

Key Performance Indicator (KPI) Monitoring

The Managing Director monitors key performance indicators such as sales targets, conversion rates, invoice lead times, course KPIs such as student numbers, student grades, completion rates, certification lead times and customer satisfaction levels are monitored by the Results Approval Panel through Course reports generated. Any issues will be brought to the attention of the Head of Training and Quality and any corrective action required will be decided upon.

Self-Evaluation & Improvement Reports and KPI Reports are reviewed at the Management Board Meeting and any improvements required are recorded in the minutes.

Detailed Performance Reports are generated each year detailing completion rates, progression rates and grades analysis. These are reviewed at both the Management Board and Academic Board.

The Self-Evaluation Report & Improvement Plan, KPI Reports, and minutes are circulated to the Academic Board for review and oversight.

Blended Learning Analytics, Monitoring and Engagement

Focus is placed on learner monitoring and engagement for blended learning programmes. This is achieved in a number of ways.

Online eLearning element (Asynchronous): Learner's progress and engagement during the online element of programmes is monitored using the TinCanny Reporting module on the LMS during the blended learning programme delivery.

Instructors have access to this learning analytics data through the Instructor Portal on the LMS.

An evaluation form specifically for the eLearning element part of the course must be completed by the learner.

Reports learner satisfaction with this mode of delivery, completion rates and duration and quiz results are generated and reviewed at the Academic Board Meetings.

Live element (Synchronous): Learner's progress and engagement during the live element of the course is monitored through quizzes and polls. An evaluation form specifically for the live element of the course must be completed by the learner. Reports of learner engagement, quizzes and learner satisfaction with this mode of delivery and learner grades are generated and reviewed at the Academic Board Meetings.

External quality assurance

Qualtec is subject to external quality assurance review by QQI and PHECC and will act on any recommendations for improvement resulting from these reviews.

The Managing Director will review previous internal/ self-evaluation and external reviews and follow up actions before preparing for upcoming external reviews.

Strategic Planning Gap Analysis for Blended Learning Procedure

1. Purpose:

To ensure that the use of Blended Learning is explicit and shared with all stakeholders.

2. Scope:

The use of Blended Learning for the delivery of accredited programmes

3. Responsibility:

The Managing Director is responsible for the development and dissemination of the Blended Learning Strategic Plan and the Blended Learning Strategy and Plan.

4. Records:

Strategic Plan, Blended Learning Gap Analysis Tool and Action Plan, Blended Learning Strategy and Plan.

5. Procedure:

SWOT Analysis

A Five-year Strategic Plan has been developed for Qualtec's operations. This involved the completion of a SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats) Analysis has been carried out on. This Strategic Plan includes a list of programmes that the organisation intends to develop, the rationale for selecting these programmes, an outline of the new Programme Development Team and how the organisation intends to sustain the delivery and development of these programmes.

It includes a detailed Action Plan detailing the Action item, Action Step, Person/s Responsible for completing the step and Target date (Q, Year)

This Strategic Plan is updated as items are completed and reviewed formally at the Management Review Board Meeting.

Gap Analysis

A Gap Analysis is carried out using the QQI's Blended Learning Gap Analysis Tool and Action Plan.

A Blended Learning Strategy and Plan is developed identifying the key actions required to ensure that Blended Learning is effective. This Blended Learning Strategy and Plan will identify the investment required to ensure that Blended Learning is effective. It will also identify the contingencies

and risks to the organisation from Blended Learning, including corporate and academic risks that are identified in the Strategic Plan. It will identify the key roles and responsibilities for e-learning. These will be included in the organisation's Risk Register.

This Gap Analysis will include a review of current policies and procedures, including administrative procedures to ensure that they are fit for purpose in the context of Blended Learning.

These will be reviewed by the Academic Council prior to submission to QQI for approval.

This Gap Analysis will also consider the adequacy of the current induction, training and appraisal procedures and the current skills, experience and training of staff in the context of Blended Learning.

The Gap Analysis will also consider issues and risks associated with regulations relating to Blended Learning such as intellectual property and copyright, child protection, GDPR and protection for enrolled learners.

The Gap Analysis will consider existing collaborative arrangements in the context of Blended Learning and further collaboration required.

This Blended Learning Strategy and Plan and revised policies and procedures will be communicated to and understood by all staff members. They will be made aware of their roles and responsibilities with respect to Blended Learning and will receive the appropriate induction and training in the relevant procedures.

Teaching & Learning Policy

Learning Ethos

Qualtec's ethos for learning is that it is fostered in a fun, friendly, focussed and fair way to ensure the highest standards. This is achieved through providing an encouraging and supportive environment for all learners and using a diverse range of teaching methods and media. This includes the use of a blended learning approach to training.

The aim is to support quality provision and ensure that consistent standards in teaching and learning apply within Qualtec as a training organisation. Qualtec's teaching is learner-centred and aims to provide a safe learning environment where learners can engage and participate in the learning experience in a fun and challenging way.

Qualtec's definition of a "good quality learning experience" would be where learners on completion of our training feel confident, competent and committed to fulfil the role that they are being trained for.

Equality, Diversity & Inclusion (EDI)

Qualtec welcomes a diverse range of learners in terms of background and ability. All students will be treated equally, and diversity is welcomed. Wherever possible, Qualtec will reasonably accommodate each learner's individual needs. Qualtec are committed to compliance with Equality legislation and will take steps to ensure that no student is discriminated against.

Vetting

Qualtec's policy is that all trainers involved with vulnerable adults and children will be Garda vetted in accordance with the National Vetting Bureau (Children and Vulnerable Persons) Acts 2012 to 2016.

Quality Enhancement

Qualtec is committed to self-monitoring and improving the quality of teaching and learning on our education and training programmes

Pedagogical Methods

Qualtec's pedagogical methods are documented for each training module to address the teaching and learning strategy to be used within programme delivery. These methods can be applied to a range of settings, including face-to-face classroom, practical skills training, self-directed learning, online and blended learning. Qualtec's approach is to facilitate learners to learn through active engagement on courses.

Learners are encouraged to be independent and take responsibility for their own learning. Qualtec's approach to training recognises individual learning needs and a range of preferred learning styles, being underpinned by established theories in relation to adult learning which are referenced below.

Qualtec is predominantly involved in the training of adults and recognises that most adult learners want to be in control of their own learning (Knowles)¹, like to participate in the learning process and being able to draw on their life experiences in their learning activities and goals. Adult learning is generally directed towards a specific purpose, e.g., achieving a learning objective through a series of milestones and a specified assessment method in order to achieve an award (Bloom)². These learning outcomes are often the first step in the learning process so that there is a constructive alignment of all teaching and learning activities towards the required learning outcomes and assessment criteria.

Qualtec apply the following concepts and theorists to their training.

- **Learning outcomes - Bloom's Taxonomy of learning outcomes**³ framework has evolved and endured since the 1950s as a means of describing a learner's progression from lower order (remembering; basic knowledge) to higher order (evaluative; creative) thinking skills. This is linked to action verbs and activities to describe the intended learning outcomes: "the learner will be able to ...".
- **Experiential learning** – this teaching approach recognises that each learner has a different learning style so training should aim to mix concrete and abstract experiences (doing versus thinking; experimentation versus observation) as identified by Kolb⁴. Training materials should cater for different styles of learning and learners should be encouraged to move out of their comfort zones in investigating and acquiring knowledge and skills (Honey & Mumford)⁵. This is related to Dewey's⁶ aim to promote practical, quality learning experiences, engaging learners through reflective practice by using learners' own experiences as a teaching tool rather than simply communicating knowledge and skills. In addition, Fleming's VARK model⁷ can be used to identify individuals' preferred learning styles (or a mix of these):

VAR model	Learner response	Resource examples ⁸
Visual	Learn a new task after seeing someone do it first.	Pictures, diagrams, demonstrations, video.
Auditory	Listen to instructions from trainer.	Spoken word, sound.

Reading	Real learning occurs after the training event when the learner can study course materials.	Handouts, books, case studies.
Kinaesthetic	Learners prefer practical, hands-on experiences; try it out/learn as you go.	Physical (touch, feel, hold, do).

- **Learning motivation and expectations** – learners will have a range of motivations in acquiring knowledge and skills, so training should focus on learners’ desired outcomes and expectations, including the learner’s subjective belief in themselves, termed “expectancy theory” by Vroom⁹. Progression to higher order learning can only occur in a safe environment (physical; psychological), regardless of the training environment (classroom or online), reflecting Maslow’s hierarchy of needs¹⁰. Qualtec’s approach to training is based on the McGregor’s Theory Y in that it is believed that learners enjoy learning and can be trusted to be self-directed.

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Teaching & Learning Procedure

1. Purpose

The purpose of this procedure is to outline Qualtec's approach to Training and Learning.

2. Scope

This document covers all teaching and learning procedures within Qualtec and applies to all programmes leading to an Award.

3. Responsibility

The Head of Training & Quality is responsible for ensuring that the procedures described in this document and the related activities are adhered to by all staff and any collaborative partners, e.g. contracted trainers.

In addition, the delivery of teaching and learning activities will be subject to high-level monitoring by both the Academic Board and the Management Board as appropriate.

4. Records

- Learner Handbook
- Instructor Handbook
- Health & Safety Statement
- Online material
- Booking form
- Lesson Plan
- Evaluation form
- Trainer Course Report

5. Procedure

- Learners' rights and responsibilities are detailed in the Learner Agreement in the Learning Handbook available on the organisations' website.
- Qualtec will endeavour to provide reasonable accommodation to facilitate learners with different needs (see 5 above). Any

reasonable support will be provided to those that need it. Qualtec respects and attends to the diversity of learners and their needs, enabling flexible learning pathways. Equality & Diversity is recognised in accordance with our Equality & Diversity Policy & Procedure.

- Qualtec will endeavour to provide an safe learning environment for learners. The arrangements to ensure this are outlined in their Health & Safety Statement.
- Learner Support includes IT Support and Academic Support. This is outlined in the Learner Support Policy & Procedure, Learner Handbook and at Learner Induction. Feedback on this support is welcomed through the course evaluation form.
- Trainer availability and equipment needed is checked and confirmed on the Outlook Calendar/ Courses Spreadsheet.
- A suitable venue is booked in accordance with the Premises and Infrastructure Selection Policy & Procedure.
- Programmes/ courses are planned and developed in accordance with the Programme Design & Development Policy & Procedure.
- A range of modes of delivery used which include, lecture, discussion, group work, role play, case studies and demonstrations, etc to achieve these learning outcomes. The use of the pedagogical approaches referenced in the Teaching & Learning Policy are outlined in the Programme Delivery Procedure.
- Blended Learning Material is planned in accordance with the Programme Design and Development Policy and Procedure. Blended Learning material has accessibility options, such as Zoom, and content can be magnified.
- Bookings are received directly from the company website www.qualtec.ie. Persons enquiring by phone are directed to the relevant page. There is a section on the course booking form to allow students to indicate any reasonable accommodations requested and also to the Learner Handbook.
- The instructor asks at the start of the course that they be made aware of any issues that may impact on their learning such as literacy.

- All tests are either skills based or MCQs. The trainer can read out the questions and complete the test on a one to one basis with learners.
- Students are asked to respect each other at the start of the course.
- Instructors are selected and inducted in accordance with the Staff Recruitment Management & Development Policy & Procedures. They complete the relevant Trainer Induction course on the VLE. These Induction Courses are only for affiliated trainers and for induction purpose only.
- Courses are delivered by trainers in accordance with the Instructor Handbook and Teaching and Learning Policy & Procedures. Instructors will be informed of any changes to procedures by email.
- All information required by the learners to successfully complete the course and any prerequisites are detailed on the programme website in accordance with the Communication Policy & Procedure.
- Instructors are responsible for ensuring that the course objectives and learning outcomes are achieved. Each module is prefaced by a statement of the learning outcomes to be achieved.
- Instructors must monitor learner progress both during online asynchronous sessions and through the Instructor Portal to identify any learners that are struggling and offer to provide fit-for-purpose interventions.
- Learners are provided with course resources either through a Onedrive Folder or an elearning module available on our VLE. Qualtec encourages a sense of autonomy in the learner, while encouraging adequate guidance and support for the learner as outlined in the Learner Support Policy & Procedure.
- Mutual respect is one of our key principles. This outlined in the Learning Agreement in our Learner Handbook and this is stated by the trainer at the course induction. The Learner Handbook is available from Qualtec's website.
- Any complaints are dealt with in accordance with the Complaints Policy & Procedure.
- Assessment paperwork is handled, transmitted and stored in accordance with the Assessment of Learners Policy & Procedure.

- Assessments and Examination set up and invigilated in accordance with the Learners knowledge and skills are assessed in accordance with our Assessment of Learners Policy & Procedure. The examination rules are outlined in the Learner Handbook. This includes a definition of plagiarism and academic misconduct and sanctions for same. It also details the process for investigation of these cases including escalation and academic review of same.
- Results are reviewed and approved in accordance with the Internal Verification Policy & Procedure.
- Any Learner Appeals are dealt with in accordance with learner Appeals Policy & Procedure.
- Qualtec reviews the effectiveness of its premises, equipment and facilities in accordance with the Premises and Infrastructure Selection Policy & Procedure to ensure their continuing adequacy and effectiveness in relation to the programmes of education and training, research and related services.
- Equipment is selected and maintained in accordance with the Equipment Maintenance Policy & Procedure.
- Qualtec engages with the wider national and international community of practice to enhance teaching and research. We are involved with organisations such as St John's Ambulance.
- Instructor are vetted if required in accordance with the Vetting Procedure.
- Learner and Tutor feedback is sought using evaluation forms that are completed at the end of the course. The course evaluation form includes questions in relation to the ease of access, quality of online content, pace, learner activities, ease of navigation and technical support. There is space on the Evaluation form for Comments. There is also a Technical Issues Report form on the VLE.

Vetting Policy

It is Qualtec's policy that all trainers involved with vulnerable adults and children will be Garda vetted.

Vetting Procedure

1. Purpose

To ensure that all trainers involved in training vulnerable persons are Garda vetted prior to training.

2. Scope

All training courses involving vulnerable persons. This includes minors and the elderly.

3. Responsibility

The Head of Training & Quality is responsible for ensuring those trainers are vetted.

4. Records

Confirmation of vetting

5. Procedure

Affiliated trainers are required to notify Qualtec if they plan to deliver courses to vulnerable people.

Prior to commencement of any training involving children or vulnerable children Optimise the trainer will make an application through the Garda eVetting system. The procedure is outlined below:

Step 1

The vetting subject manually completes and forwards to Optimise Management Consultants a vetting Invitation Form (obtained from us) and provides proof of identity.

Step 2

Rev: 4 Revised by: Sean Kelleher **Approved by:** Mark Taylor **Date:** 12.03.2025

Page: 135 of 136

The Relevant Organisation validates proof of identity and sends the vetting subject an e-mail with a link attached inviting him/her to complete a Vetting Application Form.

Step 3

The vetting subject completes a Vetting Application Form online and submits it to the Relevant Organisation.

Step 4

The Relevant Organisation reviews the Vetting Application Form and submits it to the National Vetting Bureau.

Step 5

The National Vetting Bureau processes the application and forwards a vetting disclosure to the Relevant Organisation.

Step 6

The Relevant Organisation reviews the vetting disclosure and as soon as is practicable provides a copy of the disclosure to the vetting subject.

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