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Galway and Roscommon
Education and Training Board

FET Fair and Consistent Assessment of Learners

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Infographic Fair & Consistent Assessment of Learners

1. Introduction

This policy and associated procedures outline Galway and Roscommon Education and Training Board's (GRETB's) policy for Fair and Consistent Assessment of Learners. This policy aims to ensure that all learners in the Further and Education Training (FET) sector receive fair and consistent assessment throughout their learning journey. The Fair and Consistent Assessment of Learners procedures have been adapted from the ETBI National Assessment Working Group 2018.

2. Purpose/Legal Basis

The purpose of this policy and associated procedures is to assist providers in the development and implementation of quality assured processes and procedures for the fair and consistent assessment of learners. It aims to maintain the quality and integrity of assessments while fostering a supportive learning environment that nurtures individual growth and skills development.

These documents set out best practice regarding assessment, authentication, results approval, feedback, and the processing of appeals. Assessment of learners may take place in a range of settings including classrooms, the workplace, on the job, community setting or by computer based/e-assessment. The QQI assessment guidelines apply to all types of delivery and assessment settings.

Quality will be assured through establishing an assessment framework for providers which includes:

- The publication of nationally developed award standards (in the form of the Award Specification), including valid and reliable assessment techniques.
- The publication of assessment guidelines.
- The providers' quality assurance including their procedures for fair and consistent assessment of learners.
- QQI (2013 updated 2018) [Quality Assuring Assessment Guidelines for Providers](#) and [Assessment and Standards, Revised 2022](#).

3. Scope

This Policy applies to all FET staff who are involved in the assessment, results and appeals processes of learners.

3.1 Apprenticeships

The SOLAS Craft Apprenticeship Assessment rules underpin the apprenticeship assessments, re-checks, reviews, re-sits, referrals, repeats and appeals for all craft apprenticeship assessments leading to the request of an award from recognised bodies whose awards are within or aligned with the national framework of qualifications (NFQ). This will ensure compliance with the requirements of the Qualifications (Education and Training) Acts 1999 and the Education and Training Act 2012.

Responsibility for maintaining Craft apprenticeship assessment rules remain with SOLAS. GRETB is responsible for ensuring that apprentices are informed of the appeals process, of their right to appeal an assessment result decision and responsible for implementing this procedure. An appeal application for the SOLAS Craft Apprenticeship Programme must be received by the relevant ETB manager no later than 10 working days from the receipt of results. To view the SOLAS Craft Apprenticeship Assessment Rules policy please contact apprenticeship@gretb.ie. Post 2016 Apprenticeships must adhere to the National Quality Assurance Procedures as outlined in the ETBI QAP Handbook and all relevant GRETB QA procedures.

4. Acronyms

AEO	Adult Education Officer
FET	Further Education and Training
FETSU	Further Education and Training Support Unit
ETBI	Education and Training Boards Ireland
GRETB	Galway and Roscommon Education and Training Board
IT	Information Technology
NFQ	National Framework of Qualifications
QA	Quality Assurance
QAP	Quality Assurance Procedures
QQI	Quality and Qualifications Ireland
RAP	Results Approval Process
RPL	Recognition of Prior Learning
SOLAS	An tSeirbhís Oideachais Leanúnaigh agus Scileanna
HETAC	Higher Education and Training Awards Council
IAC	Independent Appeals Committee
IV	Internal Verification
NARIC	National Academic Recognition Information Centre
CAS	Common Awards System
NFQ	National Framework of Qualifications
QBS	Quality Business System
FETAC	Further Education and Training Awards Council
FESS	Further Education Support Services
EQF	European Qualifications Framework

5. Definitions

Quality assured assessment ensures that, in criterion referenced assessment, ‘learners are assessed, and the assessment judgement is made based on whether the learner has reached the required national standards of knowledge, skill and competence for the award’ (QQI, 2013, p.5). Central to quality assured assessment is the assumption that learners are assessed in a fair and consistent manner in line with the award standard. Quality assured assessment is underpinned by the principles of assessment.

Access	Refers to a learner’s ability to avail of appropriate opportunities to enter and succeed in programmes leading to awards, with recognition of learning already achieved.
Approved Result	Results which have been through the internal verification and external authentication process and are approved for distribution to learners by the Results Approval Panel. An appeal can only be made based on approved results.

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Assessment	The process by which evidence of performance is collected and compared with the standards of knowledge, skill or competence and a judgement is made on learner achievement of the standards.
Assessor	The assessor devises assessment instruments/marketing schemes and assessment criteria. The assessor provides opportunities for learners to generate evidence, evaluates learner evidence and makes assessment decisions.
Assessment Deadlines	The assessment plan for the programme or module including dates.
Assessment Instrument	Is the specific activity/task or question(s) devised by the assessor based on the specified assessment technique.
Assessment Resources	Refers to any permitted resources, which learners require in an examination as informed by the programme.
Assessment Results Appeals	Refers to the appeal of an approved result.
Assessment Techniques	Assignment, collection of work, learner record, project, and skills demonstration.
Assessment Materials	Any documentation associated with the planning of an assessment.
Assessment Process Appeal	Refers to an appeal by a learner to the provider based on the assessment conditions and/or process: the learner believes the assessment conditions and/or process negatively impacted their assessment performance.
Assessment Records	Any documentation which demonstrates evidence that an assessment has taken place.
Authentication Process	The process by which providers will quality assure the devising, recording and verification of the assessment procedures. This process will include both internal verification and external authentication.
Award	That which is conferred, granted, or given by an awarding body and which records that a learner has acquired a standard of knowledge, skill, or competence.
Examination	Any theory based, oral, aural, online, or practical examination, which occurs on a specific date/s and for a specific duration.
External authentication	The means by which learners, providers, assessors and QQI will be independently assured that the application of the provider's assessment procedures is carried out effectively.
External authenticator	Appointed by providers to provide independent authentication of fair and consistent assessment in line with QQI requirements.
Extenuating Circumstances	Situations or events which unexpectedly interfere with a learner's ability to complete or sit an element of assessment.
Feedback	Feedback in terms of this policy refers to feedback to learners in relation to their progress. Feedback is a two-way process between the practitioner and learner to identify what still needs to be learned for a learner, if needed. It is an also opportunity for the learner to respond to the comments of feedback and the practitioner to establish where a learner is at in their learning.

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FET Centre Manager	A manager responsible for the efficient and effective delivery and quality of approved and appropriate Further Education and Training services and programmes as required by senior management as well as the management of human, financial and material resources as assigned to the service. FET Centre Managers refers to Post Leaving Certificate (PLC) Principal/Deputy, Training Centre Manager/Assistant, VTOS/BTEI Coordinator, Night Class Coordinator/Manager, Programme Coordinator.
Formative Assessment	Continuous and ongoing assessments that are integrated into the learning process to provide learners with feedback and identify their strengths and weaknesses.
Internal Verification	The Process by which learners will be assured that the provider's assessment procedures are applied in a consistent manner across the provider's assessment activities.
Learner	Includes all FET learners: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Part-time/full-time learners • In person/online/blended/hybrid • Accredited learners (Levels 1 – 6) • Non-accredited learners
Learner Assessment Evidence	Any assessment evidence, created by the learner, which forms part of a module or programme assessment.
Missed assessment Deadlines	Failure to submit assessment evidence and/or failure to attend a practical assessment.
Moderation	Moderation is a process separate from the marking of assessments, which ensures that an assessment outcome (e.g., mark and / or grade) is fair, valid, and reliable, that assessment criteria have been applied consistently, and that any differences in academic judgement between assessor's judgements and an EA can be addressed by amending the results to ensure that they are in line with QQI National Standards.
Practitioner	Includes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • FET Practitioners/FET Educators (Adult Educator, Teacher, Instructor, Tutors, Resource Persons, Contractors, etc., (this list is not exhaustive)) • Other practitioners who may be indirectly linked to Teaching and Learning (Senior Management Team, QA Team, etc., (this list is not exhaustive))
Programme	A programme is a learning experience designed and offered by a provider based on predetermined national standards and leading to an award.
Quality Assurance	The system(s) put in place by a provider to support and improve the quality of its programme(s).
Reasonable Accommodation	The adaptation of assessment to cater for the needs of learners whose personal situation means that the assessment would otherwise be unfair, e.g., learners covered by equality legislation.
Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL)	Recognition of Prior Learning i.e., recognition of learning that has taken place but not necessarily been assessed or measured prior to entering a programme. Such prior learning may have been acquired through formal, non-formal or informal routes.
Resources	Resources refers to any materials/artefacts/etc., sourced or generated by the practitioner, for the purpose of teaching and learning. Practitioners will have access to essential and up-to-date resources required to delivery specific programmes, including Technology Enhanced Learning tools and resources.

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Standards	Standards identify the knowledge, skill and/or competence that must be attained to achieve an award.
Summative Assessment	Summative assessment is generally carried out at the end of a programme or 'unit' of learning, e.g., written examination. It is comprehensive in nature and is generally used for certification purposes. It is based on the cumulative learning experience that takes place in a programme or 'unit.'
Synchronous and Asynchronous Learning	<p>Synchronous Learning: A type of learning that takes place in real-time, with all participants present and engaged at the same time. This can include in person learning, live online classes, webinars, and virtual meetings.</p> <p>Asynchronous Learning: A type of learning where participants work through predefined activities/tasks at their own pace in a flexible manner. Asynchronous learning activities are designed as part of an overall course/module flow and are completed to specific deadlines. It is up to the learner to schedule activity completion up to the specified deadline.</p>
Transfer	Refers to a learner's ability to move from one programme leading to an award to another, including at the same level on the framework, having received recognition for knowledge, skill or competence acquired.
Validation	The process through which QQI determines that the programmes devised by providers will enable learners to achieve the standard required for an award.
Verification	Verification is the process of confirming whether the assessment results and outputs are correct and reliable.

The principles of assessment which apply to this document and associated procedures are based on the QQI (2013) principles for assessment, [updated 2022](#). GRETb's Quality Assurance System overarches these principles and ensures learner achievement is assessed in a fair and consistent manner in line with the standard for each award.

Principles of Assessment

Validity	<p>Validity is a fundamental assessment principle ensuring that an assessment measures what it is designed to measure: the relevant standard of knowledge, skill and competence required for an award should be assessed. Validity in assessment occurs when:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assessment is fit for purpose (i.e., a practical assessment assesses a practical skill). • Learners can produce evidence which can be measured against the award standard. • Assessors can make accurate assessment decisions. • Assessment is accessible to all candidates who are potentially able to achieve it.
Reliability	<p>Reliability in assessment ensures that assessment measurement is accurate: The knowledge, skills, and competence which the assessment measures should produce reliable and accurate results. Reliability in assessment ensures that results are consistent under similar conditions. Reliability in assessment occurs when:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The assessment is based on valid assessment techniques. • Assessment conditions are consistent. • Learner evidence is reliable. • Results are consistent over time across various assessors, contexts, conditions, and learners.

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Fair	Fairness in assessment supports the validity and reliability principles and provides equal opportunity to all learners. Fairness in assessment ensures learners have access to appropriate resources/equipment in assessment; assessment design and implementation is fair to all learners; and policies and procedures exist to ensure fair assessment of learners.
Quality	Quality in assessment ensures that all assessment processes are quality assured.
Transparency	Transparency in assessment ensures that assessment policy and procedures provide clarity to all relevant stakeholders.

6. Policy Statement

Galway and Roscommon Education and Training Board's (GRETB) approach to assessment planning is all-inclusive. The overall assessment plan for learners across course modules should be considered, ensuring that each assessment instrument is designed mindfully. When feasible, assessments should be integrated. GRETB seek to focus on providing learners with sufficient opportunities to generate evidence that demonstrates their knowledge, skills, and competencies.

GRETB is committed to ensuring that learners are fully informed of all aspects of their course, including how assessment is conducted:

- All learners will be assessed impartially and without discrimination. No learner shall be advantaged or disadvantaged due to their background, race, gender, religion, disability, or any other characteristic.
- Assessment information, including assessment criteria, methods and expectations is communicated clearly to all learners on commencement of a module or programme.
- Assessments shall be designed to measure the intended learning outcomes accurately and consistently. Practitioners will use reliable assessment methods to ensure that the learner's performance is a true reflection of their knowledge, skills, and competencies.
- Assessment practices will be adapted to accommodate diverse learners needs, including those with disabilities, language barriers or specific learning difficulties to ensure equitable opportunities for success.
- Learners shall receive regular and constructive feedback on their performance, allowing them to track their progress and identify areas for improvement.
- Academic honesty and integrity shall be always upheld and measures to help prevent academic malpractice and plagiarism will be implemented.

7. Assessment Methods

7.1 Formative Assessment

Continuous and ongoing assessments will be integrated into the learning process to provide learners with feedback and identify any areas for improvement.

7.2 Summative Assessment

End-of-module or end-of-course assessments will evaluate learners' overall performance and achievement of learning outcomes. These assessments will be based on clear and pre-defined criteria.

7.3 Alternative Assessment Methods

Practitioners will explore alternative assessment approaches when required, for example, Vlogs, Social Media diaries etc.

8. Standardisation

8.1 Marking Criteria

To ensure consistency across different assessors and assessments, standardised marking criteria is in place and should be followed.

8.2 Moderation & Verification

An internal and external moderation and verification process will be implemented to verify the accuracy and fairness of assessments. Moderators will ensure adherence to the Authentication and Results Approval Process (RAP) Procedures (Appendices 9, 10).

9. Reasonable Accommodation

9.1 Learners

Reasonable accommodations will be provided for all learners due to disabilities or personal circumstances to enable them to participate fully in assessments. Practitioners will work with learners to identify suitable accommodations that do not compromise the integrity of the assessment. Please see Reasonable Accommodation Procedure (Appendix 5).

10. Assessment Deadlines

To ensure that learners have a clear understanding of assessment timelines, each module or course will have predetermined assessment deadlines communicated at the beginning of the learning programme. These deadlines will be established to allow sufficient time for learners to prepare and complete the assessments effectively.

The establishment of assessment deadlines will consider the following factors:

- **Learning Duration:** The assessment deadline will be aligned with the duration of the learning programme to provide learners with an appropriate timeframe to demonstrate their understanding and skills development.

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- **Complexity of Assessments:** The complexity and scope of assessments will be considered when determining the deadline. More extensive or intricate assessments may require longer preparation and completion times.
- **Formative Assessments:** For formative assessments integrated throughout the learning process, specific deadlines may not be assigned. Instead, learners will be informed of the timelines for each formative assessment task and will be expected to complete them within a reasonable timeframe.
- **Summative Assessments:** The deadlines for end-of-module or end-of-course summative assessments will be clearly communicated to learners at the beginning of the learning programme. These deadlines will consider the time required for marking and feedback provision.
- **Reasonable Timeframe:** Assessment deadlines will be set to provide learners with a reasonable timeframe.
- **Short Term Extensions:** In exceptional circumstances, such as unforeseen personal or health related issues, learners may request extensions to assessment deadlines. Extensions will be granted on a case-by-case basis, and learners will have to provide valid reasons and supporting documentation. (Appendix 7)
- **Compassionate Consideration:** Please see Compassionate Consideration procedure. (Appendix 2).
- **Appeals on Assessment Deadlines:** If a learner believes that they were unable to meet the assessment deadline due to extenuating circumstances, they may appeal a decision to refuse an extension to the relevant authorities following the formal appeals process outlined in the Compassionate Consideration and Short-Term Extensions procedures.

Practitioners will play a crucial role in reminding learners of approaching assessment deadlines, providing necessary support, and addressing any potential issues that may hinder learners from meeting the deadlines. The objective is to strike a balance between setting realistic deadlines that encourage learners' timely completion of assessments while also allowing for flexibility and understanding of individual needs.

11. Examinations (Appendix 4)

11.1 Examination Centres and Institutions

- Provide suitable examination venues that are equipped to accommodate the number of candidates and maintain a conducive examination environment.
- Implement appropriate security and storage measures (Appendix 6) to ensure the confidentiality and integrity of examination materials.
- Facilitate the smooth administration of examinations, including scheduling, supervision, and result processing.
- Ensure that reasonable accommodations are in place for candidates with disabilities or specific needs during examinations.

11.2 Examiners

- Mark examination papers objectively and impartially, adhering to the standardised marking criteria provided by the examination committees.
- Maintain confidentiality and security of examination materials (Appendix 6) before, during, and after the examination.
- Attend examiner training sessions to stay updated on the assessment policy and marking guidelines.
- Report any irregularities or concerns related to the examination process to the appropriate authorities.

11.3 Supervisors

- Oversee the examination process, ensuring a conducive and fair environment for all candidates.
- Verify the identity of candidates and enforce examination rules and guidelines.
- Maintain security and confidentiality during the examination (Appendix 6), preventing any form of malpractice.
- Assist candidates with any procedural issues or emergencies during the examination.

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11.4 Learners (Examination Candidates)

- Prepare thoroughly for the examinations by revising the relevant course material.
- Follow the instructions provided by Supervisors during the examination.
- Conduct themselves with integrity and adhere to the examination rules and guidelines.
- Avoid engaging in any form of cheating, plagiarism, malpractice, or academic dishonesty.

11.5 Results and Feedback

- **Timely Release of Results:** The designated authorities must ensure that examination results are released within a reasonable timeframe.
- **Feedback Provision:** Learners should receive constructive feedback on their examination performance, helping them understand their strengths and areas for improvement (Appendix 8)

11.6 Examination Appeals

- Allow learners to appeal their examination results if they believe there were procedural irregularities or valid grounds for reconsideration of their result.
- Ensure that the examination appeals process is fair, transparent, and accessible to all learners.
(See Section 12)

12. Assessment Appeals

If a learner is dissatisfied with their assessment results or believes that there were issues with the assessment process that may have impacted their performance, they have the right to appeal. The appeal process will be initiated by the learner within a specified time after the release of the approved assessment results. Please see Assessment Results and Process Appeal Procedure (Appendix 3).

13. Roles and Responsibilities in relation to Fair and Consistent Assessment of Learners

13.1 Learners

- a) Understand and adhere to the assessment policy and procedure guidelines, including deadlines, assessment methods, and expectations.
- b) Seek clarification and guidance from Practitioners/Centre Managers or the nominated deputy if they have any questions or concerns about the assessment process.
- c) Engage actively in their learning and take advantage of formative assessments and feedback to improve their understanding and performance.
- d) Follow the appeals process outlined in the Appeals Procedure (Appendix 3) if they believe there is valid grounds to challenge their assessment results.

13.2 Practitioners

- a) Design assessments that align with the learning outcomes, are fair, and provide opportunities for diverse learners to demonstrate their knowledge and skills.
- b) Clearly communicate assessment criteria, expectations, and deadlines to learners at the beginning of the learning programme.
- c) Provide ongoing feedback and support to learners, helping them understand their progress and areas for improvement.
- d) Adhere to appropriate security and storage measures (Appendix 6) ensuring the confidentiality and integrity of assessment and examination materials are maintained.
- e) Mark assessments consistently and fairly, adhering to the standardised marking criteria.
- f) Participate in education training and professional development to stay informed about best practices in assessment and maintain their competence in assessment methodologies.
- g) Collaborate with other Practitioners and moderation/internal and external verification teams to ensure the consistency and integrity of assessments.

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13.3 Centre Managers/Nominated Deputy

- a) Oversee the implementation of the Fair and Consistent Assessment of Learners Policy within the GRETB Further and Education Training (FET) sector.
- b) Ensure Practitioners and staff are aware of the policy and procedures and have access to relevant resources and training on assessment practices.
- c) Support Practitioners in the design and delivery of assessments that align with the policy's principles.
- d) Establish a system for internal and external moderation/verification of assessments to verify consistency and fairness (Appendix 9).
- e) Allocate appropriate resources and facilities to facilitate the assessment process.
- f) Implement appropriate security and storage measures to ensure the confidentiality and integrity of examination and assessment materials (Appendix 6).
- g) Facilitate assessment appeals and refer to the designated assessment appeals facilitator responsible for managing the appeals process (Appendix 3).
- h) Regularly review the implementation and effectiveness of this policy and associated procedures, making improvements, as necessary.

13.4 QA Department /Designated Appeals Facilitator

- a) Oversee the assessment appeals process in a fair, transparent, and confidential manner (Appendix 3).
- b) Establish clear procedures for submitting appeals, reviewing evidence, and communicating outcomes, which will ensure learners' appeals are handled in a timely manner.
- c) Make decisions on assessment appeals based on the evidence and in alignment with the policy and procedures principles.
- d) Document and maintain assessment appeals records and their outcomes.

13.5 Results Approval Teams

- a) Collaborate with Practitioners and Centre Managers/nominated deputy to ensure the consistency and reliability of assessments (Appendix 9).
- b) Verify that marking and assessment practices align with the policy and procedures guidelines.
- c) Provide feedback to Practitioners and Centre Managers/nominated deputy on their assessment practices to improve quality.
- d) Participate in ongoing training and development to maintain expertise in assessment moderation.

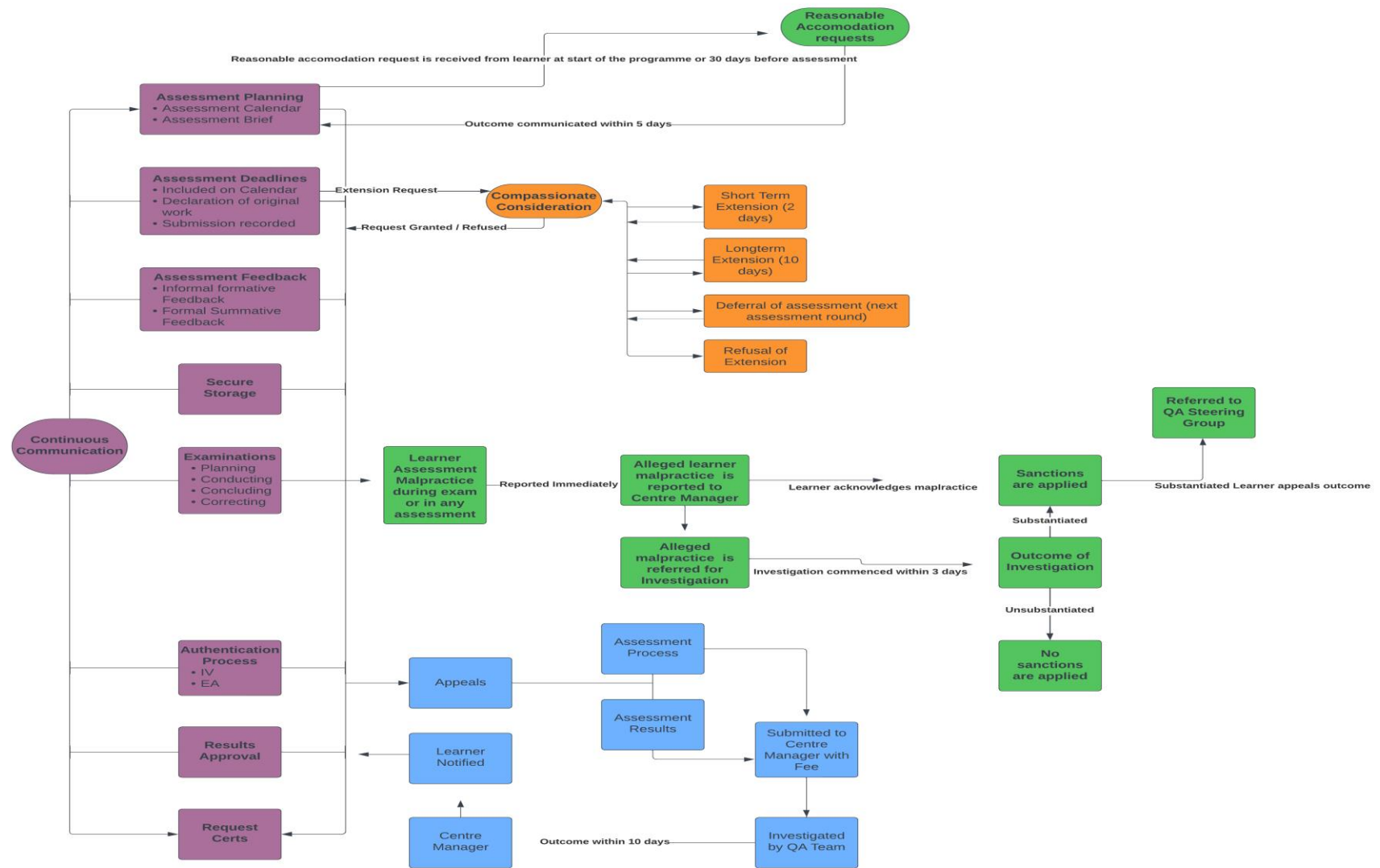
13.6 Learner Support Services

- a) Aid learners with disabilities or specific learning needs, ensuring that reasonable accommodations are arranged for assessments.
- b) Offer guidance and support to learners.
- c) Collaborate with Practitioners and administrators to promote an inclusive and supportive learning environment.

14. Policy Review

This policy will be reviewed every two years by the FET Support and Development Unit in accordance with organisational needs and/or where it is necessary to do so.

Infographic: Fair & Consistent Assessment of Learners



15. Appendices:

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

Appendix Two: [Procedure for Compassionate Consideration in Extenuating Circumstances](#)

Appendix Three: [Procedure for Appeals: Results and Process](#)

Appendix Four: [Procedure for Examinations: Planning, Conducting and Concluding](#)

Appendix Five: [Procedure for Reasonable Accommodation in Assessment](#)

Appendix Six: [Procedure for Secure Storage of Assessment Materials and Learner Evidence](#)

Appendix Seven: [Procedure for Assessment Deadlines: Short Term Extensions](#)

Appendix Eight: Learner [Procedure for Providing Feedback to Learners](#)

Appendix Nine: [Procedure for Internal Verification and External Authentication](#)

Appendix Ten: [GRETB Results Approval Process \(RAP\) Procedure](#)

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

The following tables outline the grading criteria for QQI awards at levels 1 - 6.

	Successful		
Grading Criteria	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3
	The learner has achieved the learning outcomes for the award in a structured and supported learning setting. The outcomes have been achieved with significant support and direction from the assessor, but the learner has demonstrated sustentative achievement on their own.	The learner has achieved the learning outcomes for the award in a structured and supported setting with clear direction from the assessor. The learner has demonstrated some autonomy of action and has taken limited responsibility for the activities and for generating evidence.	The learner has achieved the learning outcomes for the award with some supervision and direction. The learner has demonstrated autonomy of action and has taken responsibility for generating appropriate evidence.

Grading Criteria for awards at Level 4 - Level 6		
Pass	Merit	Distinction
<p>A Pass indicates that the learner has:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> achieved the learning outcomes as outlined in the minor award - a pass is the minimum acceptable standard. used the language of the vocational/specialised area competently. attempted to apply the theory and concepts appropriately. provided sufficient evidence which has relevance and clarity. 	<p>A Merit indicates that the learner has:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> achieved the learning outcomes as outlined in the minor award - a merit implies a good standard has been achieved. used the language of the vocational/specialised area with a degree of fluency. expressed and developed ideas clearly demonstrated initiative, evaluation, and analytical skills. presented coherent and comprehensive evidence. 	<p>A Distinction indicates that the learner has:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> achieved the learning outcomes as outlined in the minor award - a distinction implies that an excellent standard has been achieved. used the language of the vocational/specialised area fluently and confidently. demonstration-depth understanding of the subject matter. demonstrated a high level of initiative, evaluation skills. demonstrated analytical and reflective thinking ♣ expressed and developed ideas clearly, systematically, and comprehensively ♣ presented coherent, detailed, and focused evidence.

Quality Assuring Assessment, Guidelines for Providers, Revised 2013 (Version 2 - revised 2018)*