



# HCT Learning

## Quality Assurance Manual

### 2020

#### **Equality and Diversity Policy**

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### 1 Equality and Diversity

HCT Learning is fully compliant with the Equal Status Act 2000 to 2004 and has implemented a range of measurements to ensure that everyone involved with or associated with HCT Learning has equal rights. That no direct and indirect discrimination is tolerated under the 9 grounds, age, gender, religion, disability, race, sexual orientation, marital status, family status and membership to the Traveller Community and have developed practices to safeguard equal opportunities for all. HCT Learning will also ensure that we will:

- Promote equality
- Prohibit certain kinds of discrimination across nine grounds
- Prohibit sexual harassment
- Prohibit victimisation
- Require reasonable accommodation for people with disabilities
- Allow a broad range of positive action measures

#### 1.1 Equality Policy

It is the policy of HCT Learning to ensure that the highest standard of equality is practiced at all times when considering learners for entry onto our programmes. We aim to promote equality, harmony and respect amongst individuals and to eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation of all kinds. In doing so, staff will be suitably trained in the area of equality and will be

aware of issues relating to the topic. HCT Learning will comply with legislation which prohibits discrimination under the following grounds:

- Gender
- Marital status
- Family status
- Age
- Sexual orientation
- Religious beliefs
- Disability
- Race
- Membership of the Traveller Community

The objectives of this policy are:

- To ensure that all staff are aware of their responsibilities as trainers, assessors, administrators, managers and representatives of the company under the provisions of national legislation and the policies of the company
- To ensure that all applicants to HCT Learning are treated fairly, and in accordance with the published policies and procedures
- To ensure that HCT Learning affords all learners an equal opportunity to develop their full potential; the policies, procedures and practices of HCT Learning in relation to teaching, learning and assessment will seek to ensure equality of opportunity for all learners and as far as is practicable, practices will conform with the published procedures of HCT Learning

### **1.1.1 Equality of Assessment**

In order to ensure equality of assessment for all learners we shall provide the following:

- Standardised programme assessment material throughout the country (assessment booklets, packs, lesson plans, programme information pack).
- Assessment deadlines are the same for every programme delivered.
- All programmes contain the same content.
- A pre-programme visits will be conducted for all programmes to ensure that they can meet the required standardised level.
- Promotional materials are monitored for the use of potentially discriminatory language and bias and make use of images that are representative of society.

HCT Learning will ensure that our admission policies and procedures are communicated through a range of comprehensive public information that demonstrates our fair and consistent approach to how learners are selected for entry onto our programmes. These include:

- Programme brochures
- Course outlines
- Prospectus and Tenders
- Websites

MyHCT has been developed in order to provide several pre-defined emails that communicates our admission and certification of awards requirements. These include:

- Programme network emails
- Pre-programme confirmation email
- Pre-programme client information
- Invoice and introduction pack
- Programme completed email
- Assessment receipt

## **1.2 Equality of Access to Programmes and Services**

### **1.2.1 Admissions Procedures**

It is the policy of HCT Learning, as far as is practicable, to admit all applicants who fulfil the minimum academic requirements for its programmes.

HCT Learning publishes detailed admissions criteria, procedures and regulations for entry to all its programmes on an annual basis. These include those seeking additional supports or accommodations for reason of disability or medical condition. All documentation is published on HCT Learning's website, and is supplied in hard and electronic copy to all applicants upon request. Where additional requirements are in place these procedures have been designed to ensure the best possible fit between learner and programme is found and to ensure the HCT Learning can adequately and appropriately provide supports to ensure that all learners have equal opportunity to succeed on their programme of choice.

### **1.2.2 Provision of Support to Learners with Disabilities**

HCT Learning welcomes learners with special educational needs onto our programmes, we predominantly work with individuals who may have been out of education for a number of years. As

a result HCT Learning will work with our learners who present themselves with specific learning support requirements in order to facilitate the successful completion of our programmes. HCT Learning wishes to reduce barriers that can be created in order to provide equality of access and opportunity for all their learners who register and attend our programmes.

### **1.2.3 Identifying Reasonable Accommodation Needs**

HCT Learning welcomes learners with special educational needs. A reasonable accommodation is a process that helps to support learners who may have a disadvantage due to a medical condition, impairment, learning difficulty or other extenuating circumstances in order to provide equality of access and opportunity for all.

To ensure learners receive a fair and equal learning experience, HCT Learning must attempt to identify if there is a need for reasonable accommodation among the learners attending a course. HCT Learning uses two different approaches when hoping to identify if a learner will require any reasonable accommodation throughout the course.

The learners are presented with registration forms on day one of their course. In this form, learners are asked specific questions that will help the trainer and HCT Learning identify if the learner may experience some difficulties or barriers throughout their course. A question asking if the learner will require any accommodation in order to assist them when completing this course is also available on the registration form. If the learner chooses to state that they will require assistance, the trainer can discuss this with the learner in a more appropriate environment. This will provide an opportunity for the learner to access the help they feel will best meet their learning needs.

The second method used by HCT Learning is the NALA Skills Checker. The NALA Skills Checker is an online assessment that provides learners with the opportunity to explore their strengths and weaknesses. Once the assessment has been submitted by the learner, the skills checker will present learners with a report which outlines where they could experience difficulties and may need assistance when completing their course. The learner can then bring this report to their trainers' attention for further discussion and this in turn will enable the trainer to implement the best possible strategies to meet the learners needs during the programme.

#### **1.2.4 Request for Reasonable Accommodation**

This accommodation has been designed to assist learners in demonstrating his or her achievements in their assessments. They have not been designed to compensate for a possible lack of achievement arising from a disability or other factors of disadvantage, and most importantly, should not give the learner an advantage over others. All reasonable accommodation granted will preserve the integrity of the validity and reliability of the assessment. Learners can fill the Reasonable Accommodation Request Form.

There are various types of reasonable accommodation accessible to learners, these include:

- Modified presentation of assignments/examination papers e.g. enlargements
- Scribes/Readers/Dictaphone
- Spelling/grammar wavier
- Use of sign language
- Practical assistants
- Rest periods
- Adaptive equipment/software
- Use of assistive technology
- Altered exam settings
- Extra time

Learners throughout the programme are given a number of different opportunities in order to communicate possible special accommodation requirements these include:

- Initial programme interest
- Programme confirmation once enrolled
- Client appointment
- Enrolment information and booking form
- Learner introduction pack and invoice
- Pre-programme information call and email (72 hours before programme commencement)
- Booking learners onto programme
- Programme introduction and registration
- Mid participants feedback
- Learning/trainer meeting

Type of Disability	Report Accepted from Medical Consultant/Specialist	Age of Report
<b>Learning Difficulty</b>		
Dyslexia and Dyscalculia	An Education Psychologist assessment completed by an appropriately qualified psychologist.  A Dyslexic Adult Screen Test (DAST) completed by a trained practitioner will be accepted for dyslexia.	There is no limit on the age of the report
Developmental Coordination Disorder (DCD) – Dyspraxia/Dysgraphia	Appropriately qualified Psychologist, Occupational Therapist, Neurologist or Chartered Physiotherapist who is a member of their respective professional or regulatory body.	There is no age limit.
General Learning Disability	An Education Psychologist assessment completed by an appropriately qualified Psychologist.	There is no age limit.
<b>Hearing Difficulty</b>		
Learners who have an Audiogram	Diagnostic/Clinical Audiologist registered with the Irish Academy of Audiologist (IAA) or HSE Audiologist	There is no age limit.
Applicants attending school for the deaf	Principal of school for the deaf	There is no age limit.
Applicants who are recipients of a cochlear implant	Ear Nose and Throat (ENT) Consultant or Cochlear Implant Programme Coordinator	There is no age limit.
<b>Visual Difficulty</b>		
Blind/Vision Impaired (including, but not exclusively– Anirida, Best’s disease, Charles Bonnet syndrome, Coat’s disease, Coloboma Congenial	Ophthalmologist/Ophthalmic Surgeon	

<p>cataracts, Corneal dystrophies (including Keratoconus), Corneal transplantation, Diabetes-related eye conditions, Hemianopsia, Glaucoma, High degree myopia, Macular Hole, Nystagmus, Retinitis pigmentosa, Retinal vessel occlusion, Retinopathy of prematurity, Stargardt’s macular dystrophy, Stickler Syndrome, Thyroid eye disease, Uveitis, Lawrence Moon Biedel Syndrome, Alstrom Syndrome)</p>		<p>There is no age limit.</p>
<p><b>Physical Difficulty</b></p>		
<p>Physical Disability (including, but not exclusively- Cerebral Palsy, Brittle Bone Disease, Spina Bifida, Rheumatoid/Osteoarthritis, Spinal Cord Injuries, Muscular Dystrophy, Hydrocephalus)</p>	<p>Orthopaedic Consultant or other relevant Consultant.</p>	<p>There is no age limit.</p>
<p>Neurological Conditions (including, but not exclusively– Epilepsy, Guillain-Barre Syndrome, Huntingtons Disease, Brain Tumour, Multiple Sclerosis, Motor Neuron Disease, Friedreich’s Ataxia, Head/Traumatic Brain Injury, Stroke, Parkinson’s Disease, Spinal Muscular</p>	<p>Neurologist or other relevant Consultant.</p>	<p>There is no age limit.</p>



Atrophy)		
Speech, Language and Communication Disorder (including but not exclusively– Stammering, Receptive and/or Expressive Language Disorders, Unintelligibility due to a phonological disorder, articulation disorder associated with structural anomalies, acquired communication disorders such as Aphasia, Anomia, Dysarthria, Dyspraxia resulting from Neurodegenerative, or genetic disease associated with impaired communication and social interaction)	Speech and Language Therapist.	There is no age limit.
Significant Ongoing Illness (including, but not exclusively– Diabetes Type 1, Cystic Fibrosis (CF), Severe Crohn’s Disease, Severe Ulcerative Colitis and Irritable Bowel Disease (IBD), Chronic Fatigue, Cancers)	Relevant Consultant/Specialist appropriate to the disability/condition. In cases where an applicant is in the care of the relevant Consultant/Specialist, the evidence of a disability can be provided by a Registrar who is a member of their team.	The report must be less than three years old.
<b>Mental Health and Behavioural Difficulty</b>		

<p>Autism Spectrum Disorder (including Asperger's Syndrome)</p>	<p>Report by Consultant Psychiatrist or Psychologist or Neurologist or Paediatrician, all of whom are a member of their professional or regulatory body.</p> <p>In cases where an applicant is in the care of a Consultant Psychiatrist, Neurologist or Paediatrician, a Registrar who is a member of their team can provide the evidence of a disability.</p>	<p>There is no age limit.</p>
<p>Attention Deficit Disorder/Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder</p>	<p>Consultant Psychologist or Psychologist or Neurologist or Paediatrician.</p> <p>All of whom are a member of their professional or regulatory body.</p> <p>In cases where an applicant is in the care of a Consultant Psychiatrist, Neurologist or Paediatrician, a Registrar who is a member of their team can provide the evidence of a disability.</p>	<p>There is no age limit.</p>
<p>Mental Health Condition (including, but not exclusively- Bipolar Disorder, Schizophrenia, Clinical Depressive Conditions, Severe Anxiety, Severe Phobias, OCD, Severe Eating Disorders, Psychosis)</p>	<p>Consultant Psychiatrist or Specialist Registrar.</p> <p>In cases where an applicant is in the care of a Consultant Psychiatrist, the Psychiatric Registrar can provide the evidence of a disability.</p> <p>Consultant Psychiatrist should be listed on the Specialist Register of the Medical Council of Ireland.</p>	<p>The report must be less than three years old.</p>

**Other Consideration:**

HCT Learning will where required accommodate learners with hidden disadvantages in facilitating them during their participation on a programme. Learners requiring special arrangements that do not fit into the above types of disabilities can be accommodated. The following categories will be considered:

### **1) Early School Leavers:**

HCT Learning engage in the delivery of a large volume of manual based practical related subjects, as a result the candidate profile may present themselves as a person who has worked in a specific sector for a significant duration, however may have left the educational sector at a early age without formal qualifications. As a result the learner has all the necessary ability, knowledge or skills to do something successfully to an efficient and capable standard however may not have the academic background in order to complete their assessments booklets without any aids. HCT Learning can make arrangements in order to accommodate the learner; however the following stages need to be followed:

- The request can be made to the office or the trainer. It is recommended this is before programme commencement in order for the centre to make required accommodations if required
- Reasonable request of accommodation will need to be completed
- The form will be approved by the Centre Director or Training Manager
- The decision will be communicated swiftly
- Forms of accommodation could include: extra time, Scribe and extra breaks where volumes of lecture based learning is taking place

HCT Learning can and will provide learners with a range of services in order to enhance their academic skills for future development these could include:

- Nala Literacy Service
- Adult Literacy Schemes
- Community Education Schemes
- Back to Education Initiatives
- Education and Training Boards
- Literacytools.ie

### **2) English is not mother tongue**

Where the situation arises where a person has grown up speaking a different language as a child, HCT Learning can arrange the use of a bilingual dictionary or an electronic translation add. The learner participating on the programme will need to meet the programme entry requirements in order to gain access onto the programme and the reasonable request must be completed and approved before any aids are used.

- The request can be made to the office or the trainer. It is recommended this is before programme commencement for the centre to make required accommodations if required
- Reasonable request of accommodation will need to be completed
- The form will be approved by the Centre Director or Training Manager
- The decision will be communicated swiftly
- In the case of an examination alternative exam and translation aid will be agreed. Not going as far as offering an alternative exam. It is risky in terms of maintaining standards across both exams
- The assessor will be required to check the dictionary before use in order to maintain the integrity of the assessment
- The use of 'word for word only' dictionaries is permitted. Dictionaries that offer alternative phrases/word explanations are not allowed

### **3) Medication Requirements**

Learners that are required to take medication throughout the duration of the programme will be facilitated in relation to the arrangement of the following: extra breaks during class time, recovery time, arrangements for self-administering medication. HCT can put arrangements in place in order to accommodate the learner; however the following stages need to be followed:

- The request can be made to the office or the trainer – it is recommended this is before programme commencement in order for centre to make required accommodations if required
- Reasonable request of accommodation will need to be completed
- The form will be approved by the Centre Director or Training Manager
- The decision will be communicated and discussed with the learner
- Where required for medical reasons learners can sit their examination in a separate room with individual invigilator

### **4) Extension Requests**

Extension requests are approved by the office on an individual basis. The different types of extensions offered are listed below:

- General Extension
  - 3 days
  - Compassionate consideration will be considered based on the learners personal experience

- 2 Week Extension
  - Unable to meet deadline
  - Due to medical/learning or unexpected external factors, evidence of this is required
- Extenuating Circumstances
  - 2-6 weeks
  - When a learner falls outside 2 week extension
  - Due to medical/learning or unexpected external factors, extreme situation, evidence will be required

### **1.2.5 Provisions of Education and Training to International Learners**

To date HCT Learning has not engaged in the delivery of programmes to international learners.

However it understands its obligations in order to ensure that international learners should expect a high quality of education when enrolling onto a programme. As a result HCT Learning will if ever required ensure that:

- Information regarding awarding body, title of award, NFQ Level
- Protection for Enrolled Learners is in place
- Access, transfer and progression is in place
- Information is presented in a way that is accessible communicating attendance requirements, commencement dates, foundation programme entry and have a appropriate trained person to provide assistance and queries regarding intercultural competence
- Have developed clear entry requirements and have provisions in place if English is not first language
- Proficient in written and spoken English, RRA support can be provided but must have a basic understanding
- To provide learners with clear up to date information on all study including subsistence and accommodations
- Have developed and in place support services for international learners which could include dedicated persons to facilitate course coordination, counselling, accommodation, transport, culture awareness, financial support for personal or emergency hardship
- Have systems in place to encourage feedback

In the event that HCT does in the future offer courses aimed specifically at international students we are committed to creating a suitable package of QA procedures to take account of the additional measures and practices that will be required.

### 1.3 Reasonable Accommodation Request Form

Address:

Email:  Number:

Programme:

Tutor:  Dates:

Why is this request required?

Tick	Circumstance most related to your situation
<input type="checkbox"/>	A temporary, permanent or long term disability or chronic or disabling condition such as epilepsy, glandular fever, or other incapacitating illness of the learner
<input type="checkbox"/>	A physical injury or emotional trauma during a period four to six weeks previously
<input type="checkbox"/>	Learning disabilities involving problems with reading, writing, math, reasoning, listening, and speaking
<input type="checkbox"/>	Recent bereavement of close family member or friend
<input type="checkbox"/>	Severe accident
<input type="checkbox"/>	Domestic crisis
<input type="checkbox"/>	Terminal illness of a close family member
<input type="checkbox"/>	Other extenuating circumstances outside the control over the learner.

What is the accommodation request?

Tick	Reasonable Accommodation Request Requirements
<input type="checkbox"/>	Modified presentation of assignments/examination papers e.g. enlargements
<input type="checkbox"/>	Scribes/readers/ Dictaphone
<input type="checkbox"/>	Reading Assistances
<input type="checkbox"/>	Spelling/ Grammar waiver
<input type="checkbox"/>	Use of sign language
<input type="checkbox"/>	Practical assistants
<input type="checkbox"/>	Rest periods
<input type="checkbox"/>	Adaptive equipment/software
<input type="checkbox"/>	Use of assistive technology
<input type="checkbox"/>	Altered exam settings
<input type="checkbox"/>	Extra time.

Please note that Reasonable Accommodation is at the companies discretion and is dealt with on a case by case basis. Extensions are not automatically granted, however HCT will endeavour to accommodate where essential your request Evidence will strengthen your request

Do you have documentation to support this request? YES NO

- "Medical certificate.
- "A letter from eg Psychologist, Occupational Therapist Neurologist, physiotherapist, Audiologist, Orthopaed
- "A letter from an employer.
- "A statement from a transport company
- "A statement from an academic member of staff
- "A statement from a counsellor

Please tick the relevant box below for any evidence you are able to provide\*:

[Document title]



**Actions granted & notes:**



**HCT Signature:**



**Date:**

