



HCT Learning
Quality Assurance Manual
2020

Introduction to HCT Learning

Contents

Introduction to HCT Learning.....	1
1.1 Introduction to HCT Learning.....	3
1.1.1 Mission.....	3
1.1.2 Vision.....	3
1.1.3 Our Ethos	3
1.1.4 The Learner’s Experience.....	4
1.1.5 Transparency.....	4
1.1.6 Our Centre Objectives:.....	4
1.1.7 Management Principals	5
1.2 Company Profile.....	6
1.2.1 Scope.....	6
1.2.2 Who We Are.....	6
1.2.3 Staff.....	7
1.2.4 Trainers	8
1.3 Company Information.....	8
1.3.1 Company Organisational Chart.....	10
1.3.2 QQI Organisational Chart.....	11
1.3.3 Human Resources Management.....	12
1.3.4 Health and Safety.....	12
1.3.5 Insurance.....	13
1.3.6 Programme Payments.....	13
1.3.7 Equality Legislation	14
1.3.8 Data Protection	14
1.3.9 Protection for Enrolled Learners.....	15
1.4 Our Programmes and Sectors	15

1.1 Introduction to HCT Learning

HCT Learning

Progressive, Innovative and Interactive Training

1.1.1 Mission

At HCT Learning all our activities are driven by our mission. This determines the programmes in which we may seek to develop, ensuring they serve the needs of the learners and organisations we work with. The mission at HCT Learning is to:

- Support and provide pathways to further academic and training opportunities for all learners
- Provide a positive quality system that is progressive, integrated, innovative and capable of identifying and implementing improvement in an efficient and timely way
- Supply a service that is learner focused and based on the quality of the learners experience

HCT learning works with learners who may have been out of education for a number of years. We strive to make the return to education a good experience for all these learners and help them achieve their best while attending our programmes.

1.1.2 Vision

We aspire to continuously evolve with both new and existing clients. We are committed to our learners, they are the core of our activities, and therefore we strive to adapt to our learners needs. We seek their feedback in order to enhance the learning experience on our programmes.

We strive to enhance our academic provisions and services while remaining committed to our mission and ethos. We believe in high standards of provision ensuring we stay fair, honest and transparent in our delivery. We will deliver qualifications which enhance the learners experience, employability prospects and provide them with progression opportunities.

At HCT Learning we believe in respect and equality for all learners. We embrace diversity in our learners and provide accommodation throughout our programmes to ensure their success.

We seek to develop our staff, programmes and relationships with clients in order to meet the evolving needs of learners.

1.1.3 Our Ethos

HCT Learning is welcoming and inclusive to all learners, striving to provide high quality training within the community. We are committed to supporting learners in their academic experiences by

providing a systematic, comprehensive and approachable method of learning. To promote our fundamental values of integrity through our assessment framework, ensuring all learning achievements are appropriate, fair, consistent and in line with all QA guidelines and legislative requirements. We strive to maintain and promote a culture of respect and inclusiveness to allow our learners to enhance their learning potential during our programmes.

1.1.4 The Learner's Experience

At HCT Learning we are highly invested in the learners experience. As a result we will engage with learners at all stages of our ongoing monitoring, reviews and evaluation practices. We will actively seek feedback from our learners in order to improve the quality of the learners experiences while in attendance on our programmes.

- Feedback completed mid and end on every programme delivered and reviewed
- Class representatives are nominated for every programme delivered to be the first point of contact between trainers/HCT Learning and learners
- Learner representatives are invited to all meeting to provide us with feedback in order to achieve programme enhancement

1.1.5 Transparency

HCT Learning will ensure that all information supplied is transparent, clear and relevant. Information regarding our programmes will be made available on our website and in our brochures. All policies and procedures will be available publicly on our website and will be available to staff and trainers through the MyHCT.

1.1.6 Our Centre Objectives:

- To provide interactive learning that has meaning to the learner that is attending
- To instil educational academic experience and confidence
- To make training accessible to all that may wish to update skills, re-enter the educational system after being out of it for a number of years, or to seek qualification in areas that they may have life or work experience in
- To provide a professional approach towards our clients and learners instilling confidences within the training and educational sector

- To provide training relevant to the learners sector that are practical for job opportunities and to promote further progression
- To provide affordable training programmes, whilst still maintaining academic standards
- To work with our clients ensuring we are up to date in relation to what we offer, and to understand our learners needs
- To deliver certified training in a wide range of practical and job-related skills
- To provide highly experienced and qualified trainers
- To provide a very much hands on practical approach towards our training programmes
- To provide our customer with outstanding services
- To change or alter our practices based on learning from feedback received, as we value honest feedback and strive to improve constantly
- To fully induct all our trainers providing them with complete understanding, to ensure consistency nationwide
- To ensure that all our learners understand our expectations, services and practices ensuring transparency

1.1.7 Management Principals

HCT Learning is dedicated to taking full accountability for the strategic planning and development of our QA Manual. This will be achieved by continually establishing and implementing improvement focused policies and procedures. This enables continuous monitoring, reviewing and evaluation of a provider owned quality assurance system, whilst being committed to developing a competent company infrastructure, working in conjunction with relevant associates and staying faithful to QQI's quality assurance (QA) guidelines.

When planning or developing new programmes we shall ensure that a cost-based analysis, feasibility study, compatibility study and risk register are carried out to consider the viability of the potential programme. The cost analysis will be considered by the Board, it will ensure the benefits of delivering and developing the programme outweighs the time and investment requirements. The feasibility study, compatibility study and risk register will give us a better overview of programmes allowing us to examine the strengths and weaknesses of developing or offering a programme. These will be carried out by the Quality and Monitoring Committee. This will also be carried out for current programmes according to feedback from our Red Flag system. The findings of the risk register, feasibility & compatibility studies will be reviewed by the Academic Council who will make the decision. We shall appoint an External Quality Assurance Advisor to the Academic Council. This will

ensure that corporate and academic issues are kept separate when considering resources and financial impacts of new programmes.

1.2 Company Profile

1.2.1 Scope

Established in 2008, HCT Learning has certified 25,000 learners nationwide and is continuously growing sustainably with each academic cycle. Specialising in offering component only awards at industry request, HCT Learning will work towards offering a collaborative, collective approach towards minor awards within the context of practical educational achievements. We are working within the professional domain to offer part-time educational opportunities within the community and voluntary organisations, to individuals who may have been out of education for a number of years. Representing awards on the national framework between levels 3 to 6, HCT Learning will aspire to provide its students and its stakeholders with indicative consultative services on its established and integrated academic management systems and programmes which will meet our provider owned quality assurance guidelines and statutory obligations. We will strive to continually modify and advance our services in order to maintain an integral and pragmatic approach to further education.

1.2.2 Who We Are

HCT Learning is a privately owned company located in the South East of Ireland. The company was founded in 2008, and since then we have become experts in providing part-time training programmes to community & voluntary organisations nationwide. HCT Learning together with its team of dedicated staff and trainers alike are focused on providing adult education to individuals who may have been out of education for a number of years or who want to update their skills and progress into different sectors of work through a practical hands-on approach to training.

We are heavily focused on a supportive, practical, interactive environment for learners who wish to achieve new and develop existing skills. Offering off-site training to our learners through locally based programmes that are set up nationwide, ensuring that we give adults a fantastic opportunity to develop and upskill through flexible scheduling of courses. We also are proud of the fact that we can tailor to the needs of clients and adjust our delivery methods to suit each individual group.

Priding ourselves on our highly qualified and experienced trainers to deliver our programmes, we have over 50 trainers on MyHCT we application that have completed an induction process before

delivering a programme. Meaning we can offer a wide range of programmes with local trainers. Our trainers are fully qualified in their respected fields and all are industry professionals with a real passion for training.

At HCT we carefully monitor the needs of learners through our robust QA system, which is constantly being monitored and developed by our HCT team, proving we have built up excellent links both locally and nationwide. We are always looking to develop new programmes to meet the demand of new learners and the market. As the Horticulture sector continues to be HCT's flag ship, we have built such a reliable reputation with our clients, the demand that HCT diversify its training portfolio to also include a range of personal and professional development programmes, ranging from level 3 - 6 proves quite highly successful also.

Becoming a recognised QQI centre in 2009, we have since then, accredited over 25,000 learners in total up to June 2018. One of our strongest tools of our business is our tailored web application which is the hub of our key information system which we are constantly improving to meet the needs of the business. Our team of dedicated staff consists of our Centre Manager, Director, Training Manager, Administrative Department, Sales Department, IT Department, and QQI Department which further consists of fulltime assessors, QQI Programme Evaluator and QQI Assessment Verifier, and Accounts Department. We also have collaborated with a number of permanent trainers who provide excellent advisory services, all of which work very closely with our HCT Team and together we provide a first class experience, from pre-client care to end client care, we are with you from the first step to the last of your learning experience with HCT learning.

1.2.3 Staff

At HCT Learning all new fulltime positions will only be advertised and recruited for once a need has been identified and once a job description and personal specification requirements have been drawn up. The recruitment of a new member of staff will only take place after approval from the Board.

Currently employed at HCT are:

- 9 Staff PRSI - Management, Accounts, Training Manager, QQI team, Administrators, Sales, IT, Trainers and Assessors
- 6 full time staff, which are based in our head office
- Relationship with 50+ trainers nationwide – constantly recruiting
- 11 positions identified for External Advisers over a range of areas of the business

1.2.4 Trainers

At HCT Learning we have work with 50+ trainers. Recruitment of trainers is assessed on a 6-month basis and periodically on a demand basis due to the nature of our business. The Training Manager will assess the volume of modules delivered along with the numbers of trainers in each sector or county. If a gap is identified it is recommended that the trainer recruitment process is initiated. Due to this continuous hiring process, if a trainer is not available for a certain programme there will be other trainers in the area we can use. Our trainers are contracted so we are aware they may be working elsewhere which is why we continuously hire. These decisions will also be made by the Board.

We work with highly qualified trainers. They will hold a qualification in their field, along with work experience and a training qualification minimum level 6. There is an extensive recruitment process for trainers. And all will be required to complete an induction at HCT to ensure they comply with all policies and procedures practiced by HCT Learning.

1.3 Company Information

Hughes Consultancy and Training LTD Trading as HCT Learning was set up in September 2008 and its main head office is located at:

Unit 2 Purcellsinch Business Park

Dublin Road

Kilkenny

R95 TK64

Telephone Number: 056 7770761

Opening Hours: Monday- Thursday 9 – 5; Friday 9 – 1.30

HCT Learning is a privately-owned limited company and complies with all Ltd company legislative obligations as a result, HCT Learning adhere to the following company principal duties:

- To keep adequate accounting records (Section 281 Companies Act 2014)
- To prepare annual financial statements (Sections 290 & 293 Companies Act 2014)
- To maintain certain registers and documents
- To file certain documents with the Registrar of Companies
- To hold general meetings of the company

We are fully compliant with programme validation policies and procedures according to QQI's *'Policies and criteria for the validation of programmes of education and training'* November 2017/QP.17-V1.03.

The company is currently owned by 1 Director, established in April 2010.

VAT Registration Number: 9696930M

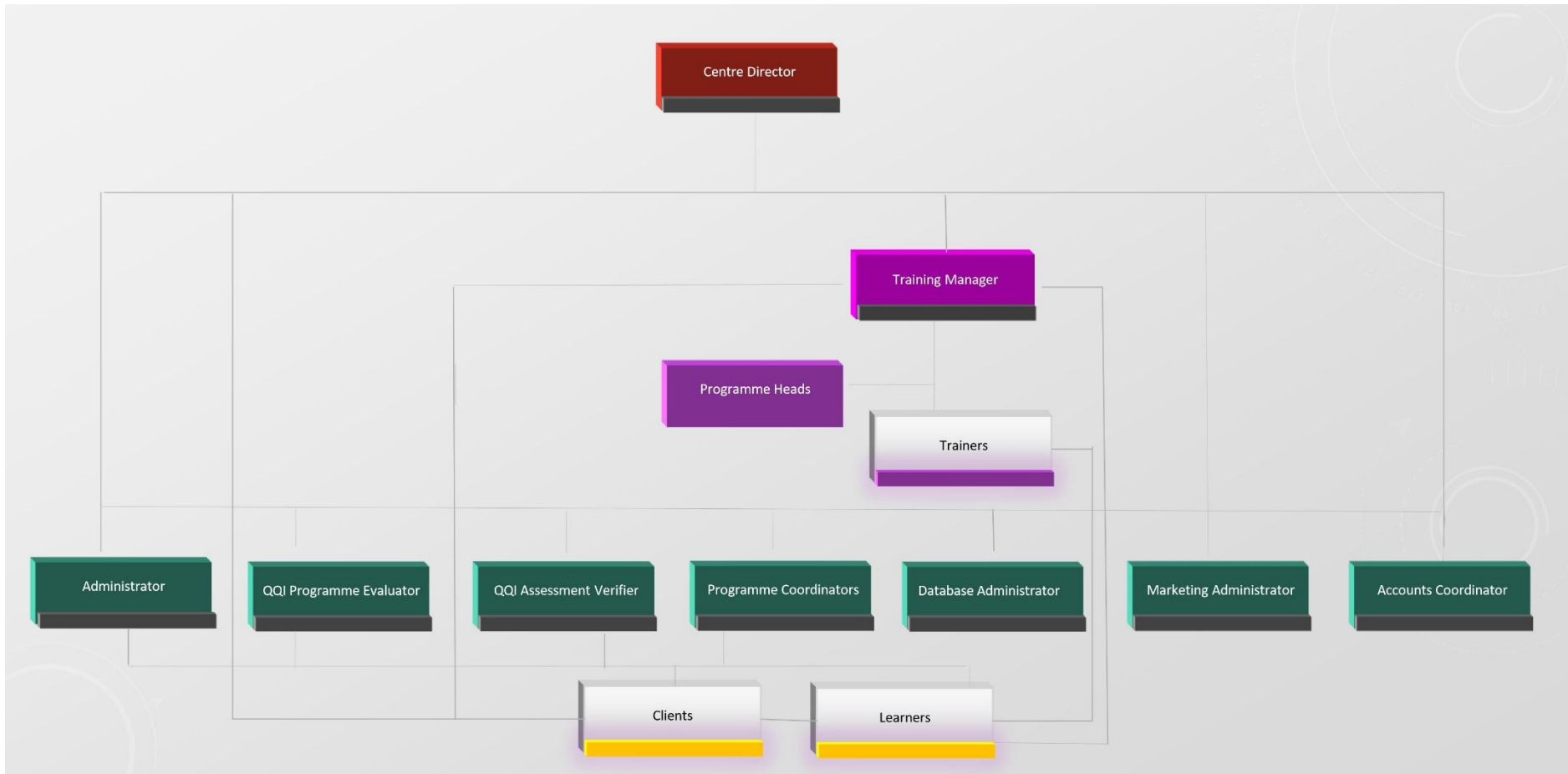
Company Registration Number: 462503

QQI Registration Number: [38447H](#)

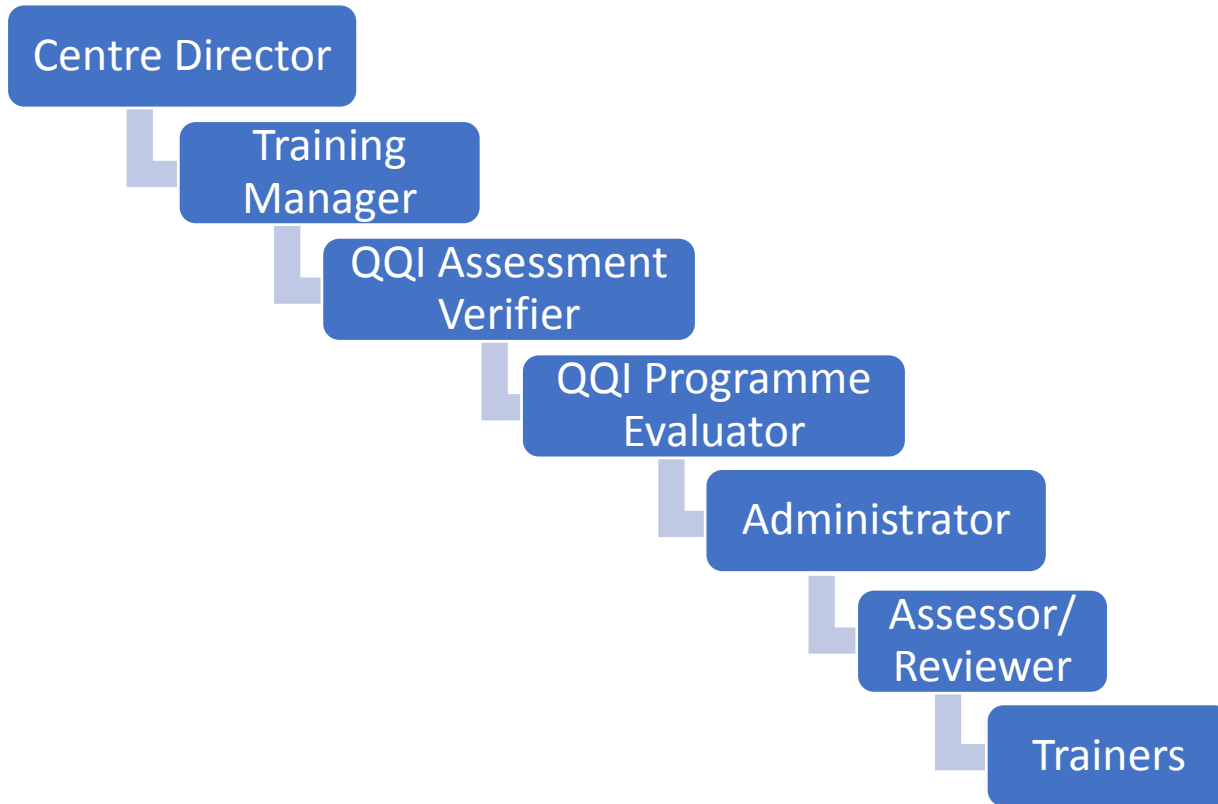
HCT Learning completes all required end of year accounts on an annual basis and are completed by:

De Loughry & O'Gorman
Chartered Accountants and Registered Auditors
Lacken House
Kilkenny

1.3.1 Company Organisational Chart



1.3.2 QQI Organisational Chart



1.3.3 Human Resources Management

HCT Learning has outsourced Human Resources management to Peninsula who provide employment law, HR/employee wellbeing services to businesses in Ireland. They provide us with a HR professional team that work with us to meet all required obligations in relation to employment law. We are fully compliant with the Employment Information Acts 1994-2014 and Employment Equality Acts 1998-2015. On behalf of HCT Learning, Peninsula carries out the following duties:

- Carry out HR audits and review our documentation and update employee personnel documentation to ensure compliance with current legislation and best practices
- Design an employee handbook including our relevant policies, procedures, rules, standards and expectations as well as associated documentation related to employment law
- 24-hour advice services from practising solicitors and experienced HR professionals in relation to employee guidance, company HR functions and legal representation
- HROnline is a safe and secure cloud-based HR management system that allows us to manage all permanent staff data including employee information, leave and absences in one place
- Provides bi-monthly employment law training session that will communicate changes in legislations, case law and best practices

Peninsula offers guidance to HCT Learning regarding these issues and has helped implement tailored documents and approaches regarding the recruitment and selection processes.

Staffing issues will be addressed at the Board meeting. They will consider appraisals, salary and make decisions on new permanent positions. The Red Flag system will highlight poor staff performance which can be considered by the Board as part of programme review. Learner feedback will also report on issues regarding poor tutoring.

1.3.4 Health and Safety

HCT Learning will work with a dedicated Health and Safety Officer in order to comply with health and safety legislation, the Health and Safety Officer will enable the centre to implement and manage health and safety requirements by:

- Creating and implementing a Safety Statement
- Completion of a Risk Assessment for the main office
- Completion of an individual Risk Assessment for each programme officer
- Create health and safety training
- Fire drills

All staff will be trained where required in the following areas:

- Manual handling
- Risk Assessment
- Fire Warden training
- Notification of accidents and dangerous incidents
- Display screen safety
- FAR training

1.3.5 Insurance

HCT Learning work with Wright Insurance Brokers for all the insurance needs as a result HCT Learning has been able to get the required insurance that is best suited for their needs.

HCT Learning has a combined liability policy for the business description of Training & Consultancy – this covers:

- Employer's liability covers up to €13,000,000
- Public/Products liability for €6,500,000

Our public liability will cover all damage to a third party or third-party property whilst in attendance on a training programme.

HCT Learning also has an office policy in place which covers contents, laptop/computers, money, employers and public liability for office-based staff. HCT Learning has all required insurance in order to protect the learners whilst attending any of the training programmes, trainers working for HCT Learning automatically subscribe for HCT's personal and professional indemnity insurance at the cost of €25 per programme delivered which will be deducted at source. In the case where trainers hold their own personal and professional indemnity insurance, HCT Learning will need to be named on their insurance and a copy of the insurance will be kept on file at HCT's head office.

All our insurance cover is subject to Insurers Policy terms and conditions.

1.3.6 Programme Payments

Invoices will be generated before programme commencement. Invoices will be sent by email using the email address provided along with programme terms and conditions and Programme Introduction email. We will require payment 30 days after the last day of the programme completed. We have available 3 different payment methods, Cheque, Merchant and Bank Transfer, a private

learner on a programme may pay by cheque. Results achieved by learners will not be provided until payment has been received in full.

Creditor Payments

Payment runs are completed Thursday of every week. Invoices are to be sent to our head office at HCT Learning Unit 2, Purcellsinch Business Park, Old Dublin Road, Kilkenny or emailed to our account depart. HCT Learning will operate on the payment terms of no longer than 30 working days from the date of receipt of all relevant paperwork requested, however tend to make payments immediately after a programme has been completed. During the booking process of the programme related programme cost will be added to MyHCT and will be automatically flagged each Thursday for payment the week the programme has been completed. This allows the centre to track payments due. All payments are required to be authorised by Centre Director before processing. HCT Learning will make payments via EFT or by cheque.

1.3.7 Equality Legislation

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

1.3.8 Data Protection

HCT Learning is fully compliant with all data protection policies and procedures and has amended the practise in line with the new GDPR the Data Protection Act 2018, HCT Learning has implemented a range of control measures to ensure that data received from any third party is dealt with correctly and in line with the legalisation.

1.3.9 Protection for Enrolled Learners

HCT learning is not obliged under section 65 of the Qualification and Quality Assurance and Education and Training ACT 2012 to have in place Protection for Enrolled Learners measures in the event that a programme of learning ceases before completion, as we will not run any programmes of learning which are in excess of three months in duration - nor do we anticipate or plan to run any such programmes in the future. It is our policy to inform all learners of this position during induction. In the event that in the future a programme of greater than three months is planned we will update our policy and procedures to fully comply with the requirements of section 65 of the Qualification and Quality Assurance and Education and Training ACT 2012 as is required by law.

This will be done when:

- A programme is submitted for validation
- There are changes to a validated programme that are changed or alternative in duration that are changed to 3 months or longer in duration this will be subject to review to approval of QQI

1.4 Our Programmes and Sectors

- **Level 3:** Broken into 2 sections Horticulture and Maintenance related programmes, working towards a major award in General Learning 3M0874 and Employability Skills 3M035

Programme	NFQ Level	Award Class
Career Preparation - 3N0896	3	3M0874 General Learning
Operating Horticulture Equipment - 3N0889	3	3M0874 General Learning
Outdoor Vegetable Crop Production - 3N0890	3	3M0874 General Learning
Plant Identification - 3N0568	3	3M0874 General Learning
Plant Propagation - 3N0569	3	3M0874 General Learning
Planting & Potting by Hand - 3N0891	3	3M0874 General Learning

Programme	NFQ Level	Award Class
Brick and Blocklaying - 3N0919	3	3M0935 Employability Skills
Floor and Wall Tiling - 3N0523	3	3M0935 Employability Skills
Painting and Decorating - 3N0562	3	3M0935 Employability Skills
Plastering - 3N0571	3	3M0935 Employability Skills

- **Level 4:** Broken into 2 sections Horticulture and Maintenance related programmes, working towards a major award in Horticulture 4M1994 and Employment Skills 4M0857

Programme	NFQ Level	Award Class
Communications – 4N0689	4	4M0857 Employment Skills
Work Experience – 4N1168	4	4M0857 Employment Skills
Laying Kerbs, Flags and Paviers – 4N2848	4	4M0857 Employment Skills
Woodcraft – 4N3185	4	4M0857 Employment Skills
Work Place Safety – 4N1124	4	4M0857 Employment Skills
Home Repairs and Maintenance – 4N3774	4	4M0857 Employment Skills

Programme	NFQ Level	Award Class
Establishing Ornamental Flowering Plant – 4N0662	4	4M1994 Horticulture
Establishing Trees and Shrubs – 4N0666	4	4M1994 Horticulture
Hard Landscape Construction - 4N0681	4	4M1994 Horticulture
Plant Identification Care & Maintenance – 4N1186	4	4M1994 Horticulture
Sports Surfaces Maintenance – 4N2429	4	4M1994 Horticulture
Safe Horticultural Practice – 4N0719	4	4M1994 Horticulture

- **Level 5:** Broken into 2 sections Horticulture and Office Administration related programmes, working towards a major award in Horticulture 5M2586 and Office Administration 5M1997

Programme	NFQ Level	Award Class
Communications – 5N0690	5	5M1997 Office Administration
Customer Service - 5N0972	5	5M1997 Office Administration
Reception and Frontline Office Skills – 5N1407	5	5M1997 Office Administration
Retail Selling – 5N1619	5	5M1997 Office Administration
Safety & Health at Work – 5N1794	5	5M1997 Office Administration
Work Experience – 5N1356	5	5M1997 Office Administration

Programme	NFQ Level	Award Class
Agricultural Mechanics – 5N1745	5	5M2586 Horticulture

Boom Sprayer Pesticide Application – 5N1797	5	5M2586 Horticulture
Chainsaw Operations – 5N3404	5	5M2586 Horticulture
Handheld Pesticide Application -5N0731	5	5M2586 Horticulture
Landscape Construction and Maintenance – 5N1908	5	5M2586 Horticulture
Mechanical Pesticide Application – 5N20435	5	5M2586 Horticulture
Plant Protection - 5N2546	5	5M2586 Horticulture
Felling and Processing Small Tress – 5N3405	5	5M2586 Horticulture
Soil Science & Growing Media - 5N2530	5	5M2586 Horticulture

- 2 Stand alone programme at level 6 Leadership PG17185 and Training and Development 6S3372

Programme	NFQ Level	Award Class
6S3372 Training and Development	6	Major
PG17185 Leadership	6	Minor Leadership

<https://qsearch.qqi.ie/WebPart/ProviderDetails?providerCode=PQ00776>

HCT Learning offer a number of non-accredited programmes as listed below. These programmes have been developed in line with our education and training policies with exception to QQI validation and certification requirements.

Assertiveness Training	Health and Safety	Patient Handling Certificate of Attendance
Basic Bookkeeping	Infection Control	Performance and Appraisals
Business Coaching	Introduction to Dementia	Presentation Skills
Cardiac 1st Responders	Introduction to Food Safety and HACCP	Recruitment and Interview Skills
Challenging Behaviour	Introduction to Pesticides	Risk Assessment Assessors Training
Childcare Manual Handling	Lawn Mower and Strimmer	Selling Skills

Clinical Risk Assessment	Leadership and Management Skills	Time Management
CV Preparation and Interview Skills	Letter Writing	Tractor Safety
Equality and Diversity Training	Manual Handling Certificate of Attendance	Training Needs Analysis
Facilitation Skills	Microsoft Office Training	Understanding your Finance
Farm Safety	Negotiation Skills	
Fire Safety Marshall Training	Occupational 1st Aid Refresher	