HCT Learning

Quality Assurance Manual

2020

Staff Recruitment, Management and Development

Contents

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1 Staff Recruitment, Management and Development

HCT Learning has implemented a strategic and coherent approach towards its legislative and moral responsibilities in relation to the recruitment and selection process. In addition, the company is highly people focused, aiming to ensure the continued education and satisfaction of all members of staff. It has a vigorous approach towards it staff recruitment and their continued advancement to ensure that HCT Learnings academic standards are continually achieved. HCT Learning is also dedicated to the monitoring of staff performance with regards to communicating and understanding the organisational requirements relating to HCT Learning's quality assurance practices.

HCT Learning have outsourced their employment law, HR/employee wellbeing, and health and safety needs to Peninsula who specialise in these services. Peninsula offers guidance to HCT Learning regarding these issues, and the two companies implement tailored documents and approaches regarding the recruitment and selection processes.

HCT Learning is fully committed to ensuring that the highest standard of equality is practiced at all times in the area of employment and service provision and anti-harassment. We provide equal opportunities and are committed to the principle of equality regardless of gender, marital status, family status, sexual orientation, religion, age, disability, race or membership of the Traveller Community.

1.1 Recruitment Process for In-House Staff

Office Based Staff

All new, full time office 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 from this need. The recruitment of a new member of staff under these conditions has to be approved by the committee. Terminations and replacements can be approved without committee meetings; it is only in the case of a new member of staff that the committee needs to reach a decision.

1.1.1 Advertising Vacancies

HCT Learning outsources their recruitment requirements to a recruitment agency. The recruitment agency will advertise on behalf of HCT Learning ensuring that all legal considerations have been adhered to. The advertisements are required to include the following information:

- Job Description – detailing the job title, and the general tasks, duties, and responsibilities of the role
- Personal Specification – setting out the qualities and attributes required from a potential candidate, such as qualifications, relevant experience, special attributes, physical requirements, disposition/personal qualities and special circumstances

1.1.2 Application Process

(CV, application form and health questionnaire): HCT Learning will require the agency to provide three documents when forwarding potential candidate applications. These documents should include information on a candidate's education and work history, qualifications, and relevant skills. The information gathered is to gain an understanding of the candidate's suitability in an objective and non-discriminatory way.

Interviews: A shortlist is gathered from the submitted candidates taking no account of race, sex, disability, age, etc. HCT Learning will contact the recruitment agency to co-ordinate interviews which are held in our head office. The questions asked are open ended, requiring the applicant to give examples of when and how they have demonstrated the skills needed for the job. The interviewer will also give the candidate an opportunity to ask questions.

Offer/Reference: For a select number of candidates HCT Learning will request references. These are ordinarily obtained from a previous employer, plus one other source. If the reference is deemed to be satisfactory then HCT Learning may make an offer to that candidate through the recruitment agency. The offer is made in writing via a letter of offer of employment and the company will ask for a response to be made in a timely fashion.

Personal Information: After the candidate has accepted the position HCT Learning will make a request for P45, PPS number, personal pension details (if required), bank details, emergency contact details and proof of ID.

1.1.3   Personal files

Once a new employee starts with HCT Learning we will be required to create a personal file for the new employee. This file will consist of the following documentation:

- Employees full name
- Contact information
- Employment information
- Emergency contact details
- Payment details
- Pension
- Disabilities
- CV, application form and health questionnaire
- Interview notes
- Contract of employment
- Offer letter/references
- Job description
- Appraisal (when completed)
- Holiday request form

Sensitive information will be uploaded onto HROnline which is password protected and only accessible by the staff member and management.

1.1.4   Staff Handbook

All permanent staff working in HCT Learning will be issued with a staff handbook that covers the following policies and procedures:

- Joining our organisation
- Salaries etc.
- Authorised leave/time off from work
- Holiday entitlement & conditions
- Sickness/injury payments & conditions
- General terms of employment, information & procedures

- Termination of employment

- Safeguards

- Making a protected disclosure - Whistleblowing

- Communications Policy

- Standards

- Green Office Policy & Procedures

- Safety, welfare and hygiene

- Working at Home Policy

- Capability & competence

- Disciplinary rules & procedures

- Disciplinary appeal procedure

- Grievance procedure

- Redundancy procedure

- Equal Opportunities Policy

- Personal Harassment Policy & Procedures

- Bullying Prevention Policy

- Data Protection (GDPR)

1.2   Recruitment Process for Trainers

Contract Trainer Recruitment

Recruitment of trainers is assessed on a 6 month basis and periodically on a demand basis due to the nature of HCT's 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.

1.2.1   Advertising Vacancies

 Trainer vacancies are advertised on the Indeed and Intreo websites – which will list the job specification, duties, skills and required qualifications relating to the position. The aim is to provide a complete overview of the role and the responsibilities which the job will involve. All requirements are in line with HCT's recommendations on trainer quality. Trainers must hold a qualification in the

area they wish to train along with a minimum of two years experience in this field. A training qualification (minimum Level 6) is also required.

1.2.2   Application Process

Recruitment Interview Template: On receipt of a resume interested parties must fill out a recruitment application for employment form. A recruitment interview template form will then be sent to the applicant. This is an initial interest form, which requests specific information regarding qualifications, experience and other standardised questions. This is conducted in order to identify suitable candidates to call forward for interview. This form will be placed on file along with a CV for selected candidates.

All applications for trainer roles are assessed based on their suitability and experience within the minimum criteria necessary for the role as outlined above. A shortlist will be compiled with a list of potential candidates for each role advertised. References will be checked and a copy of qualifications will be requested.

Interview: Suitable candidates are invited to engage in a telephone interview with the Training Manager where credentials will be discussed and an overview of experience, personality and suitability will be assessed. A recruitment trainer interview form is completed and if successful will be placed in the trainers personal file.

1.2.3   Trainer Personnel File

 HCT Learning keep up to date files on all of its trainers. These files include CVs, qualifications, recruitment interview template, recruitment trainer interview form, emergency contact details, proof of identification, passports and immigration papers (if relevant) for non–Irish nationals, trainer handbook receipts, recruitment induction checklist, a copy of their driving licence, and a copy of their trainers insurance details (if they are not availing of HCT Learning's insurance). Any one-to-one meetings with trainers in relation to appraisals, staff development, and disciplinary actions are also filed here.

1.2.4   Induction

All HCT Learning staff who are associated with the development, delivery, and review of programmes are required to have access to, and be appropriately informed on, all relevant policies and procedures regarding these responsibilities. HCT Learning will not engage in services with any person until they are fully confident that the above has been achieved.

1.3   Staff Development

HCT Learning will provide to all staff and trainers ongoing training, mentoring and support throughout the duration of their stay with the company.

1.3.1   Development of Programme Essential Material

In order to maintain a fair and consistent approach throughout all our programmes and services, HCT Learning has developed standardised forms, documents and assessment material. The information in these materials is required to remain exactly as it is, with no adaptations unless reviewed and approved by the Academic Council. These forms will inform all staff of the policies and procedures at HCT Learning, helping them develop in their role. The materials include the following information:

- Introduction to the company including its mission, vision, ethos, management principals, scope, and history
- Detailed breakdown of the company handbook
- Roles and responsibilities of HCT departments and staff
- Academic and administrative roles and responsibilities of the trainers
- Legislative obligations and responsibilities including those regarding Data Protection, freedom of information, equality, and discrimination
- QQI and HCT agreed quality assurance commitments
- Company policies and procedures, and our standardised approach to programme delivery
- Terms and conditions of employment
- Health and safety regulations and responsibilities

All fulltime staff will also receive a hard copy of the staff/trainer handbook which introduces new members to the organisation and details the following policies and procedures:

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- Salaries, authorised leave, holiday entitlement and conditions, sickness and injury payments and conditions, and the companys Equal Opportunities Policy
- General terms of employment, information, and procedures – including employee standards at work, welfare and hygiene, working at home, capability, competence, communications, green office standards and safety standards
- Termination of employment, safeguards, making a protected disclosure, disciplinary appeal, grievance procedure, redundancy procedure, Personal Harassment Policy and procedures, and Bullying Prevention Policy

1.3.2 Staff Appraisals

Once a staff member has started with the company a member of management will meet with them on a weekly basis to ensure that the staff member is settling in well and understands their role. After the initial 3 months, management will meet with the staff member on a monthly basis to discuss how the new employee is performing and ensure they are happy within their new role. All permanent staff will take part in a yearly appraisal although will also have a number of none official meetings throughout the year.

The aim of the appraisal will be to:

- Help improve your employee's future job performance by identifying strengths and weaknesses and determining how strengths can best be utilised and how weaknesses can be overcome
- Help reveal problems which may be restricting your employee's progress and causing inefficient work practices
- Encourage regular dialogue between yourself and your employees about their work performance which will result in improved communications and clearer direction
- Develop a greater degree of consistency by ensuring that you and your employees meet formally and regularly to discuss performance and potential
- Assist succession planning and determine suitability of employees for promotion
- Move away from us reacting to an event into preparing for the event

HCT Learning work with Peninsula, who provides use with template in order to guide us in our appraisal processes.

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HCT Learning will need to ensure that the employee:

- Has a copy of all relevant documentation and suggest that they read it thoroughly

- Give the employee a Preparation for Appraisal form, asking them to complete it and return it within two weeks

- Give any further guidance or clarification on any aspect of the appraisal scheme which they may want

- Arrange a mutually convenient date, time and place for the appraisal interview (about four weeks after the Preparation for Appraisal form is returned to your appraiser)

Time frame and cycle

- Preparation for appraisal completed by the employee

- Appraisal form completion by the appraiser

- Appraisal Interview this will be between the appraiser and employee

- Action Plans: this is agreed between appraiser and employee

- Action Plan monitoring – over agreed time frame, completed by appraiser and discussed between appraiser and employee

The purpose of the appraisals to:

- Ensure an understanding and awareness of the individual/business objectives and the barriers preventing their achievement

- Develop a knowledge and agreement of what is expected of individuals and how their contribution fits into the organisation

- Review the individual's performance, giving a formal opportunity to discuss progress and identify improvements and build on strengths

- Review potential development needs and to predict the employee's future capabilities and how these can be developed

- Review progression and to assess the employee's eligibility to achieve promotion

- Develop individuals so that job satisfaction and job performance is maximised, thus increasing effectiveness and efficiency resulting in the provision of an improved service for our clients/customers

- Ensure we use our workforce in the most effective way

1.4 Staff Training

Below will outline the procedures in place to aid in staff training and to ensure professional development among all staff members.

1.4.1 Standard Operational Procedure Manual and Training

 HCT Learning has developed standard operational procedures for required functions within the company it explains all stages of given task. All staff has access to this and a hard copy is located in the companies HQ. Staff will be given a copy during the induction process and a competency log is required to be filled out by staff at this time to ensure that understanding and competency in HCT Learning's standard operational procedures has been achieved.

1.4.2 Information System Training

Full training on our staff-based information system (MyHCT web application) is given to each staff member when they join HCT Learning. This training is supplemented as needed, if and when new developments have been implemented. Staff are given the opportunity to take part in live demonstrations and trials, and are invited to offer feedback on the information management system and their training as a whole. They are also provided with a standard operational manual to refer to, and full managerial support if any questions arise regarding the use of these information systems.

1.4.3 Information System Training for Trainers

Full training on our trainer-based information system (MyHCT online) is provided to trainers when they start with HCT Learning. It provides them with a trainers portal to access important information regarding each course they are contracted to deliver. Trainers are fully trained on how to use and navigate the system, which allows them full access to the following information and functions:

- List of upcoming programmes
- List of completed programmes
- Trainers calendar (showing bookings and dates of availability)
- Trainers details – contact details, address, email address
- Course information – client information, duration of course, venue details, trainers rate

- Trainer contract of service – this includes HCT policies, course details, client and venue details, trainers rate
- Pre-Programme paperwork including client appointment form, Health and Safety risk assessment form, and trainers pre and end feedback forms
- A copy of all course information relevant to a module such as assessment specification, lesson plans, exam sample answers, component specification, Programme Verification Booklet, skills demonstration assessment, and exam assessment
- Upload facility for photos (for photographic evidence of skills demonstrations) and invoices

1.4.4   Pre-Programme Tutor Meeting

All trainers will be trained in all official programme documentation and materials such as programme packs, assessment criteria and briefs, and marking sheets. Trainers will be asked to verify that they understand the requirement before they engage in any programme delivery. A pre-programme tutor meeting will be conducted for each programme delivered where HCT Learning will communicate the following specific requirements:

- Programme name, NFQ level, credit value, duration and venue
- Number of learners expected to partake in a programme
- Reasonable Accommodations policy, examples and possible actions
- Programme learning outcomes and component specifications
- Assessment criteria, booklets and marking break down
- Programme paperwork
- Equipment, material and PPE requirements for programme
- Programme content and lesson plan
- Pre-programme client appointment requirements
- Health and Safety risk assessments

1.4.5   Training and Continuous Professional Development

HCT Learning has a policy of encouraging its employees to undertake training and workshops in order to further their career within the company. All full-time staff and trainers can attend any of our training programmes with no associated costs. The company will also support further education on any other external academic programmes which are beneficial to its services. This support may

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include funding, training, and/or time off, if it doesn't interfere with the core duties of the company. All further training will need to be approved by management. Types of training and development could include the following:

- Formal qualifications
- Conferences and seminars
- HCT Learning accredited training programmes
- Attendance of a short programme relevant to their discipline area or job requirements
- In-house training

However, in the event of termination of employment, for whatever reason, the company will seek reimbursement of the costs in line with the training agreement.

HCT Learning have a successful history of supporting individuals through identifying and achieving staff and trainer developmental goals that in turn add value to the company's core values. Details of programmes attended and other continuous professional development activities are logged and updated to their CPD File.

HCT Learning will identify CPD opportunities through the following activities:

- Regular staff monitoring
- Staff/trainer performance appraisal and feedback
- Continuous staff development plans
- Pre-programme tutor meeting
- Staff meetings
- End trainer feedback
- One to ones before during and after programmes

1.5   Staff in Place to Aid in Quality Assessment and Training

1.5.1   Centre Director

The purpose of this role is to develop, maintain and implement our robust QA system. They ensure that all staff are fully trained and are provided with ongoing support in order to fulfil all QA agreed

requirements. This will help to ensure that staff fully understand their roles and responsibilities. The Centre Director aims to maintain high standards of QA by establishing continuous monitoring, reviewing and evaluation of training within all departments.

Job Description:

- Responsible for the recruitment and selection of permanent staff
- Complete intensive and comprehensive induction and staff training
- Ensure that permanent staff records are accurate and up to date
- Work with programme leaders and trainers in the development of new programmes and develop programme booklets, learner materials, and assessment plans for all new programmes
- Complete programme documentation, individual programme assessment specification, Programme Verification Booklets and individual learner marking sheets
- Development and final approval of programme marketing material to include brochures and course outlines
- Management of the strategic planning and development of a robust bespoke QA document by continually establishing and implementing improvement focused policies and procedures
- Management of academic strategies in line with the organisations principles agreed range
- Overall management of the assessment process by reviewing the Internal Verification Reports, including following up on any discrepancies with the internal verifier in preparation for EA and final submission
- Grant extensions/resubmission
- Concept, design and implementation of our information management system
- Establishing continuous monitoring, reviewing and evaluation
- Produce and maintain programme reports, communicating them to required parties
- Work as the main point of contact for third party requirements such as insurance, accountancy and HR

1.5.2 Training Manager

The purpose of this role is to recruit trainers that have capacity to facilitate the successful completion of HCT Learning's programmes. The Training Manager is required to ensure trainers fully understand HCT Learning's policies and procedures in relation to programme delivery and assessments. The Training Manager reports to the Centre Director, and works closely with the QQI

Assessment Verifier, to ensure appropriate monitoring, reviewing, and evaluation of each programme.

Job Description:

- Participate in Academic Council Meeting
- Communicate with external chair for Academic Council Meeting, in relation to preparing meeting required documentation
- Member of the Quality and Monitoring Committee
- Attending Programme Monitoring Submission cycle meetings
- Member of the Programme Development and Review Committee
- Management of the QA Manual
- Ensure that amendments to our Quality Assurance Document have been communicated to the correct personnel
- Chair and arrange weekly staff meetings
- Manage programme adaptation to include extended programme durations, implement changes or alterations to programmes, and ensure any changes are fully communicated to relevant personnel: implementation of contingency plan for programme cover
- Assist in the on-going development, monitoring and reviewing of programmes
- Act as the main point of contact for trainers
- Responsible for the recruitment of contract trainers, ensuring they have the qualifications and capabilities to deliver QQI accredited programmes and understand our policies and procedures
- Must complete intensive and comprehensive trainer induction day
- Create and maintain both hard and soft copies of the trainer's personal file
- Create trainer log ins on the trainer portal providing them with an individual username and password
- Complete pre-programme meeting ensuring that trainers understand our pedagogical assessment techniques for learners to gain accreditation
- Provide support and information to trainers in relation to programme delivery and assessment
- Call hosting supervisors once programmes have been added to MyHCT to confirm programme timetable, venue and programme requirements from required training specification, and assessments details

- Match trainer to programme based on qualification, training specification requirements, and location

- Send trainer pre-programme confirmation email. Once programme has been confirmed allow trainer to access specific programme details including trainer contract of service, assessment specification, Programme Verification Booklet, sample answers and lesson plans

- Work in association with trainers and hosting supervisor to arrange pre-programme site visits

- Complete pre-programme tutor meeting – explaining policies and procedures and assessment and delivery criteria for specific programmes

- Complete mid trainer feedback on programmes longer than three days in duration

- Internally verify all learners and groups in preparation for certification – checking that all evidence requirements are met and, if outstanding, follow this up with relevant personnel

- Complete the Internal Verification Report in preparation for final submission to QQI

- Provide feedback from trainers in relation to programme planning, development, and assessments

- Sample mark 2 learners for each group to ensure fair and consistent marking is being achieved

- Arrange for trainers to attend training programmes in order to improve their portfolio of programmes and or experiences

- Deal with any feedback that requires immediate action

- Take part in programme review meetings

- Attend and provide feedback at RAP meetings

1.5.3 QQI Assessment Verifier

The QQI Assessment Verifier is the key person responsible for the submission of assessments through QQI. They will work closely with the Centre Director to support and administer QA policies. The QQI Assessment Verifier also assists in the overall administration, validation, programme planning, development, monitoring, and review of QA standards.

Job Description:

- Participate in Academic Council Meeting

- Member of the Quality and Monitoring Committee

- Chair Programme monitoring submission cycle

- Chair and record RAP meeting

- Management of programmes for assessments for submission cycle

- Complete Certification Report – Group Summary, investigate and record findings for submission

- Check all programme related material has been completed from pedagogical reviewer, programme evaluator and Internal Verification log

- Ensure that all learners that have submitted work have a grade allocated

- Check QBS results, ensuring that correct results have been allocated to the correct person and that the HCT marking sheet and QBS marking sheet are in line

- Print QBS Marking sheet and allocate on page the number of fails, merits distinctions etc in preparation for total groups

- Note for future reference the average results received in each assessment (the range)

- Review all feedback given ensuring that it is matching and communicated across all reports

- Once all groups are ready, pull out all programmes, check for assessment consistency in each assessment e.g. skills demonstration, exam. Where there is diversity between trainers, check the Programme Verification Booklet for comments on group e.g. group scored low on skills, is trainer saying that the group has not used the equipment before, if so – update trainer feedback section, where large diversity or a red flag has been raised – bring to management's attention for grade changes and update trainer feedback with comments

- Check that all feedback has been completed

- Check total numbers against QBS, physical groups and MyHCT- print them out ensuring they match

- Where no grounds for a red flag have been found e.g. assessor was incorrect – e.g. assessor has said trainer has marked too high, the trainer has not marked too high – remove the red flag to avoid negative trainer feedback going out where it's not needed

- Check dropouts looking for any patterns, e.g. has one trainer received all the dropouts, if so update trainer feedback with comment

- Check RRA - looking for any patterns e.g. has one trainer received all the RRA, if so update trainer feedback with comment

- Keep notes - once all assessments are ready, review trainer across e.g. are the trainers always marking too high, are trainers always having dropouts etc – if so update trainer feedback with comment

- Review and implement where required timelines for submission cycle red flags

- Investigate any areas of concern that may lead to compromised assessment results – prepare findings for management, EA and RAP meeting

- Preparing assessment for presentation, adding total group numbers and grade breakdown

- Keep track of programme External Assessment Report in order to ensure programmes last EA date, EA name and due date is maintained – also prepare report for EA visit

- Arrange for External Authenticators to visit our offices

- Submit final results

- Complete Certification Report – Trainers Submission Feedback

- Where required – complete desk monitoring requirements for QQI

- Provide feedback to learners on results and assessments where required

- Administering appeals/repeat of assessments

- Responsible for the correction and recording of lost or certification print errors

- Take part in programme review meeting

- Act as the point of contact for all awarding bodies

1.5.4   QQI Programme Evaluator

The purpose of this role is to assist in the administration of paperwork for programme planning, delivery and assessment. It involves working closely with all departments to ensure that programme documents are in order for each programme delivered. A QQI Programme Evaluator will also be a general aid to both the QQI Assessment Verifier and Training Manager in adhering to trainer programme delivery support and learner certification. This role will take a pedagogical approach to programme planning, monitoring and review. The person in this role will need to hold a qualification in education.

Job Description:
- Participate in Academic Council Meeting

- Member of the Quality and Monitoring Committee

- Chair all meetings completed by the Programme Development and Review Committee

- Chair Group Assessors Meeting

- Assist in the on-going development, monitoring and reviewing of programmes

- Point of contact for peer reviewer during programme development

- Log possible programmes for validation opportunities for learner progression within centre scope
- Help establish programme profiles, learning profiles, programme objectives and duration for validation requirements with management and programme leaders
- Co-ordinate the programme validation process once approval has been granted; including the collection of evidence required for completion of application
- Administer standardised programme material updates and amendments
- Spot check public information to ensure accuracy
- Preparation of programmes intended for submission, expected dates due and internal verification durations needed
- To allocate programme codes, check QBS codes reports in order to appoint the correct sequence for QBS certification system
- Download and upload programmes to QBS
- Check on invalids daily, and where required, make contact with learners to seek clarification on details received from the registration form
- Collection and management of learners assessments – involving accurately checking in the receipt of learners assessments, and completing an AVL; before passing this on to the assessor
- Arranging the safe transfer of learners assessments
- Follow up evidence requirements from trainers and were required upload to MyHCT
- Complete Programme Verification Log for QQI Cycle Submission. Once assessor has completed report, check calculations and notes, and if required follow up on any outstanding issues or concerns the assessor may have highlighted
- Complete evaluation on each programme completed- ensuring that all programme requirements are being met and reviewed
- Update summary results on MyHCT and QBS
- Take ownership over programme paperwork filing system
- Organise reasonable accommodation for learners who are in need of it
- Update programme information pack as needed, ensuring it contains all the newest validation approved material, updated exams and booklets
- Responsible for the organisation of learner extensions, seeking management's approval, ensuring log is kept up to date, and that outcome is communicated to learners.

- Prepare submission folders with relevant programme assessment paperwork

- Take part in RAP meetings to improve programme standards based on feedback and learner grades

- Final Approval of Certificates before positing

- Providing administrative support to QQI Assessment Verifier and Training Manager

- Take part in programme review meetings

- Prepare and manage relevant submission record and documents

Administrator

The purpose of this role is to handle administrative duties within the office. They will work closely with all departments to assist with administrative duties.

Job Description:

- Answer incoming calls on the main line and direct them to the relevant department

- Keep stock check on stationary for programme delivery and office requirements

- Handle incoming and outgoing post

- Print and assemble programme documentation in preparation for programme delivery

- Arrange couriers and collection of packs in advance of programme start date

- Complete pre-client calls 72 hours before a programme is due to start. Where contact cannot be made a pre-programme client information email is to be sent, this contains general programme information and a request for contact in the case of any alterations

- Send out certificates of attendance for one day non-accredited programmes

- Store and arrange into correct envelopes QQI certificates for final checks

- Prepare and send certificates out by sticking address labels and return to sender on hard back envelopes and placing correct certificates into envelopes and allocating the correct postage on each envelope

- Filing programme paperwork away

- File programme assessments in secure filing cabinets

- Maintain accurate and comprehensive records of learner's attendance, ensuring that attendance is kept up to date and where trainers do not comply with company policy pursue them, communicate to management if faced with resistance. Ensure that any changes to learners attendance such as nonstarters and dropouts are recorded and communicated to relevant departments

- Record learners feedback and notes onto MyHCT - which will be used to reflect and report on during RAP and programme enhancement

- Mid and End Client Programme Feedback

- Uploading where required programme photos/videos and recordings

1.5.5   Programme Coordinator

The purpose of this role is to assist and advise prospective and current clients and learners on the programmes and services offered at HCT Learning. They will ensure that appropriate programme requirements are being fully communicated along with support and guidance on any academic planning for initial programme implementation. They will report to the Centre Director and work closely with the QQI team and Training Manager. The successful person will need to have excellent communication skills, along with the capacity to know and impart all necessary information regarding QA requirements for course delivery.

Job Description:

- At the start of each week prepare for programme requirements – programmes needed to be networked, booking forms due and end clients required

- Enter accurate and comprehensive information to MyHCT regarding programme notes, venues, clients, and learners data

- Must be willing to learn all details of HCT Learning's programmes including programme name, duration, cost, NFQ level, minimum/maximum learner numbers, programmes aims and objectives, programme content assessment overview, equipment, tools, PPE requirements and possible project overviews in order to meet learning outcomes

- Respond quickly and efficiently to clients calls, emails and any other queries

- Provide clients with programme outlines, brochures and other related documentation

- Build effective relationships with clients and learners by calling community employment supervisors every 6-8 weeks to promote HCT learning's programmes and services

- Call Partnerships, Tus and other bodies with access to funding every 8-10 weeks

- To keep courses enquires of potential programmes and or learners interest (sniffers)

- When adding a programme to MyHCT, make sure that the information added is as comprehensive as possible to ensure that clear programme coordination can be achieved

- Send pre-programme confirmation email and booking forms to clients in the lead up to programme commencement. Ensure booking forms are completed in full and returned

- Complete end clients one week after programme has been completed

- To return calls within 2-3 hours and reply to all emails in a timely manner

- Achieve weekly KPI's in relation to calls made

- To abide by HCT Learning's policies and procedures, and complete all necessary reports as needed

- Where problems or queries present themselves, and the programme coordinator is not equipped to deal with them, they must be communicated to the relevant department

- To complete tender documents when requested using company approved documentation

- To bring to attention needs identification of programmes within our scope that clients may identify of interest to management to bring forward to committee meetings

1.5.6 Accounts Coordinator

The purpose of this role is to provide financial assistance within the company. The successful candidate will hold an appropriate qualification relating to the role. They must also have experience with accounts packages, working closely with, and taking direction from DeLoughry & O'Gorman. who will advise along with management report functions and processes required.

Job Description:

- Provide weekly, monthly, and yearly reports regarding the programmes required to be processed for the coming week, number of programmes ran within a month, number of programmes changed or cancelled monthly, and programme history reports

- To produce monthly profits and loss reports for analysis

- Process invoices on SAGE

- Send invoice pack and programme information terms and conditions to clients

- Process accounts receivable from cheques and bank and post matching invoices onto SAGE - filing payments in by month and year

- Send out receipt of payments

- Complete financial transactions – matching training invoice reports on MyHCT, allocating sequence codes on SAGE and manual invoices, filing in order of number by year

- Process any cancelations or amendments which may be requested from programme coordinators as per company terms and conditions

- Back up SAGE daily to ensure no data is lost

- Send fortnight payroll to DeLoughry & O'Gorman

- Calculate commission owed to programmes coordinators every 4 weeks and send to DeLoughry & O'Gorman

- Process staff fortnightly payroll once payslips have been received and distribute them to permanent staff

- Facilitate payment of due invoices by sending bill reminders and contacting clients

- Complete bank reconciliation each month

- Once certification has been completed update MyHCT and send out results letters

- Work with management and committees to identify programme costing and help devise company targets

- File bank statements in order and in secure designated area

- Send DeLoughry & O'Gorman end of year reports including trial balances, debtor listings, creditor listings, bank statements and expense sheets

- Provide DeLoughry & O'Gorman with details of newly recruited staff members and termination details as required

1.5.7   Database Administrator

The purpose of this role is to work with the Centre Director to develop a tailored data management system that is specific to the company needs. It must adhere to all legislation relevant to the operating of HCT Learning. The successful person will have had experience in developing Web applications using MySQL and PHP Scripting.

Job Description:

- With the help of management; develop, maintain and update company management information system and company website

- Responsible for designing, coding and modifying the applications according to management's specifications with an emphasis on user-friendly design and clear navigation. Modifications may need to be made if bugs arise and to improve operational efficiency

- Writing new codes and improving existing codes, so that the application functions properly

- Works closely with the system users to spot any bugs in the programming code and fix any resulting problems

- Integrate data from various back-end services

- Design and implement the web application in accordance to end users information needs and views

- Define users and enable data distribution to the right users, in the appropriate format and in a timely manner

- Perform data backup on a regular basis

- Perform tests and evaluations regularly to ensure data security

- Assigns passwords and maintain system access

1.5.8   Marketing Administrator

The purpose of this role is to provide marketing support to HCT Learning, to ensure that all required communication is included in all programme related marketing material and our website, working closely with our IT department and programme coordinators to development and update all marketing and communication documentation.

Job Description:

- Provide marking support to the company and programme coordinators

- Design new programme course outlines once programme has been validated

- Create content and ensure that all required information is communicated through our website

- Design and maintain programme brochures

- Keep online advertising and social media up to date

- Design programme prospectuses

- Produce clear and concise standardised emails ensuring all programme obligations are being achieved

- Format programme packs, assessments and company templates

- Complete tender templates ensuring that they are prepared and available to programme coordinators for completion

- Organise events that are appropriate and feasible to the company

- Develop and maintain physical marketing material for programmes and events

- Monitor current marking material ensuring that information included is current and correct

- Archive outdated marking material

- Identify possible new business opportunities

- Develop industry sector knowledge by reading industry related documentation

- Promotion of brand and services

- Assisting in outbound or inbound marketing activities

1.5.9   Programme Heads

This position will report to the Training Manager. The programme heads are there to provide support and advice for programme development, delivery and review. The programme head will have experience of the National Framework of Qualifications, will have experience delivering programmes similar to the programme they are head of, will hold practical experience within the subject, will be academically qualified, holding a minimum of a degree in the area as well as a training qualification (minimum Level 6).

Job Description:

- Attend Academic Council meetings where appropriate

- Be part of the Programme Development and Review Committee

- Help identify new programmes opportunities within their area of expertise

- Aid in the selection process of other members of the Programme Development and Review Committee when new programme development opportunities have been identified

- Give advice and input on updating packs, assessments, exam questions and sample answers

- Help in the structure development of programme delivery and content

- Provide trainer representation during meetings

- Reflect and act on feedback gained through the Red Flag system taking other trainers input into consideration too

- Participate in programme monitoring and self-evaluation activities that are relevant to their area of expertise

- Give feedback and work on new concepts for the trainers portal where required

- Provide extra support to other trainers within the area

- Where required provide support to trainers to answer subject related questions they have in relation to programme content and assessment

- Provide support to new trainers by offering a shadow day where they can go and attend a course with a programme head to see our approach and ethos towards training

1.5.10 Trainers

The purpose of this role is to provide the successful delivery and assessment of HCT Learning's programmes. They will support learners during the learning process; ensuring learner satisfaction is achieved, while maintaining high quality and professional programme delivery. Trainers must hold a qualification in the area they wish to train along with a minimum of 2 years experience in this field. A training qualification (minimum Level 6) is also required.

Job Description:

- Work with the Training Manager to ensure a complete understanding of programme delivery, teaching and assessment requirements

- Follow HCT learning's quality assurance system; which has been created to ensure that the standards outlined in our QA policy are being fully understood and adhered to

- To carry out sufficient preparation before the programme commences, allowing time to correctly structure the programme in line with learning outcomes clearly specified in the lesson plan, component specification guidelines, and assessment specification guidelines

- Complete pre-programme client appointments in order to ensure that programme objectives, learning outcomes, projects, and assessment are appropriate and achievable

- Complete Health and Safety risk assessments, highlight any concerns and address these concerns to ensure health and safety requirements are met

- Deliver the programme using the programme material, assessment and documentation approved by HCT Learning

- Communicate to learners all the information contained in the programme information pack, ensuring it is fully understood. This information includes programme registration requirements, certification requirements, assessment deadlines and requirements, programme paperwork requirements, policies on plagiarism, reasonable accommodation, extensions, assessment appeal and repeat policy and transfer and progression opportunities

- Provide support, guidance and feedback to learners for the duration of the programme

- Communicate to HCT Learning any identified reasonable accommodation requirements

- Assess and mark learners as required, providing feedback to learners on completed activities

- Follow HCT Learning's policies and procedures which are set out in their programme assessment specification. Ensure that the programme's supporting documentation has been completed in full and to a legible standard. Ensure that learner's grades are fair and consistent

- Report any significant or unusual events that occur while training is being delivered

- Help us to develop strategies for continuous enhancement of all programmes and services

- Contribute to programme development, design, and planning of programmes within the trainers field of expertise

- Return all programme related documentation including programme paperwork, assessment documentation and Programme Verification Booklets

1.6   Trainer Programme Coordination

Each trainer working with HCT Learning will have access to their own personal portal, trainers have the ability to update their calendar to communicate their availability and the trainer's portal is linked to MyHCT and will update the trainer's availability on their master personal page. The trainer's calendar communicates:

- The dates the trainer is working for another training body/holidays etc.

- Dates the trainer is working for HCT Learning with direct link to programme when clicking on the date

- Dates the trainer is free to deliver training

Once a programme of interest has been identified by the programme coordinator – they will add it to programme leads and the Training Manager is notified that there is a trainer needed to be matched for a programme. HCT Learning has access to over 50 contract trainers through Ireland. The Training Manager will be required to call the hosting supervisor ensuring that the course selected to run is correct and suitable and discussing possible dates for programme to be delivered. There is a checklist the Training Manager will fill out during this call called Programme Training Manager Call. The Training Manager will match a trainer to a programme under the following headings:

- Trainers field of training and qualification

- Trainer location in relation to programme

- Good trainers feedback

- Trainers availability

Where an error occurs where the trainer has been booked for a programme but is unavailable, MyHCT will not allow you to match the trainer to the programme. In the cases where this happens, either the programmes dates will be changed or an alternative suitable trainer will be matched to

the programme. All programmes scheduled for delivery will have a minimum of a month's notice, in order to ensure appropriate planning and recruitment needs can be meet. If the case arises where HCT Learning is unable to fulfil a suitable trainer for a programme, the programme will be cancelled, until they can meet the programme requirements in relation to providing a qualified and capable trainer as outlined above.

1.6.1   Scheduling Trainers Meeting, Programme Development and Review Days

HCT Learning will arrange trainer meeting and programme development review dates, by using the trainer's calendar on MyHCT. A minimum of 3 trainers along with programme heads will be invited to attend programme development and review days. The Training Manager will be required to invite the trainers to attendant the meeting, which is optional for the trainers to attend, where the case arises that the first 3 trainers are unable to attend, HCT Learning will either invite the next group of trainers within that sector or wait until the trainers become available depending on time limitations. HCT Learning try and work from a rotation list of trainers, ensuring all involved in the programme being delivered have a chance for their experience to be heard, trainers not attending the meeting will have access before the meeting has taken place to speak to programme heads to discuss their thoughts. Once a training development and review date has been scheduled the Training Manager is able to access the calendar manager section of MyHCT where they are able to pick the dates the trainer is not available, add the description of the activity and select the trainers that this impacts on.

1.7   Monitoring Trainers Effectiveness

HCT Learning will provide the trainer with ongoing support and feedback in their overall performance of the delivery and assessment of our learners and programmes. There are a number of forms which aid in gathering the feedback for trainers and programmes. The information received from these reports will be examined by the Training Manager and relayed to the trainers as necessary and at the end of each submission cycle. These forms include:

- Programme feedback forms
  - Mid and End learner feedback forms
  - Mid and End trainer feedback report
  - Mid and End client feedback report

- Internal Verification Reports
    - Pedagogical Reviewers Report
    - Internal Verification Checklist
    - Internal Verification Report
- Submission Reports
    - Certification Report – Group Summary
    - Certification Report - Tutor Summary
    - External Authenticator Report
    - Results Approval Panel Report
    - End Submission Cycle Feedback
    - Grade Analysis Report
- Annual Feedback Report
- Red Flag Reports

1.7.1   Supporting Trainers with their Performance

In order to support trainers in delivering programmes and to ensure consistency nationwide HCT Learning has developed all documents required to deliver programmes. During induction to HCT trainers are provided with all policies and procedures in the Trainer Handbook. These are explained in full to trainers at this point. All trainers will have a MyHCT portal. Through this they will be able to access a soft copy of all policies and programme material.

Before delivering a programme the Training Manager will complete a Pre-Tutor Meeting with the trainer to ensure they understand all assessment criteria before delivering the programme. The trainer will also be supplied with the following standardised centre owned documents prior to delivering a programme, all are developed by HCT Learning to ensure the fair and consistent assessment of all learners nationwide. In addition to the induction to HCT these documents for clear and concise guidelines to trainers for delivery of programmes.

Documents supplied to trainers:
- Lesson plans that have been devised as part of our programme validation process
- Component Specifications (developed by QQI)
- Programme Verification Booklet
    - Skills Demonstrations Marking Sheets

- o Exam Seating Plan

- o Examination Guidelines

- o Examination sign in/out

- o Scribe/Reader Policy

- o Recording Video/Photograph Guidelines

- o Chart to document RRA

- Assessment Specification Booklet

- Sample answers solution guidelines

- Assessment booklets

- Programme packs

- Briefs

- Assessment Plan

Marking Grids

HCT Learning has designed marking grids as a reference for trainers when marking learners' assessments. The use of marking grids will ensure there is a fair marking system used by all trainers delivering our programmes. The marking grids will promote consistency throughout our programmes nationwide, they will be provided to our trainers once a programme has been coordinated.

The marking grid will be introduced and explained to the trainer during the pre-programme meeting with the Training Manager. This guide will help trainers mark learners' assessments while meeting the standard approved by HCT Learning. The trainer will have a greater understanding of the marks being awarded and why they are awarding each mark. The marking grid is broken into Unsuccessful, Pass, Merit, Distinction, and Distinction 100%, each section has an explanation of what is expected from the learner in order to achieve the associated grade. HCT will ask for clarification from a trainer where assessment results are not in line with other trainers to seek clarification on difference and why they marked above or below average.

Group Assessor Meeting

Where it is found a trainer is consistently marking outside the national average HCT Learning will facilitate a group assessor meeting chaired by the QQI Programme Evaluator. During this trainers will sample mark assessments and discuss as to why they awarded the marks they have. This cross

moderation will allow trainers to learn and be guided in the marking process by their peers in order to ensure consistency across the country.

Submission Feedback to Trainers

HCT Learning will communicate to trainers any short comings in relation to their performance and will work with them. At the end of every programme cycle all trainers will be issued with a Certification Report – Tutor Summary for the programme.

 This will be a composite report that gives:

- The total numbers of programmes they have delivered
- The number and names of programmes they have delivered during the submission cycle
- A breakdown of learners booked, dropouts and attended but didn't submit
- Learner grade breakdown and average result
- Notes from each programme
- Feedback received from learners and clients
- Office feedback and rating scale, notes for the Red Flag system
- Opportunity for their comments

This report will identify areas for improvement. If needed a plan of action will be devised in order to assist them in making improvements and will be monitored by the Training Manager and reported to Centre Manager where required.

1.8   Removal of Trainers

Where gross misconduct has been identified or where performance has not been improved HCT Learning will no longer work in conjunction with that contracted trainer. If required the trainer will be removed from the programme they are delivering with immediate effect and will be replaced.

1.9   Staff Disciplinary

Disciplinary Rules & Procedures

A) Introduction

1. It is necessary to have a minimum number of rules in the interests of the whole organisation.

2. The rules set standards of performance and behaviour whilst the procedures are designed to help promote fairness and order in the treatment of individuals. It is our aim that the rules and procedures should emphasise and encourage improvement in the conduct of individuals, where they are failing to meet the required standards and not be a means of punishment.

3. Every effort will be made to ensure that any action taken under this procedure is fair, with you being given the opportunity to state your case and appeal against any decision that you consider to be unjust.

4. The following rules and procedures should ensure that:-

   a. the correct procedure is used when inviting you to a disciplinary hearing.

   b. you are fully aware of the correct procedure, the standards of performance, action and behaviour required of you.

   c. disciplinary action, where necessary, is taken speedily and in a fair, uniform and consistent manner.

   d. On occasion it may be necessary for the company to conduct an investigation meeting to clarify a particular incident or occurrence prior to any potential disciplinary hearing. The purpose of this investigatory meeting is to establish the facts about a particular incident or occurrence, and the details of which will remain completely confidential. The investigation will be carried out by a designated member of the management team or, if necessary, in the case of any possible conflict of interest, an agreed external third party. In either case, the person nominated will have appropriate training and experience and be familiar with the procedures involved. The designated investigator will meet with you and any witnesses or other relevant persons individually. The person investigating the complaints will make every effort to carry out and complete the investigation as quickly as possible. This investigation meeting itself should not be interpreted as a disciplinary hearing as no disciplinary sanction would ever be issued on foot of an investigatory meeting. Instead, the facts established in an investigatory meeting may be used to identify whether or not a formal disciplinary hearing ought to be conducted.

   e. on some occasions temporary suspension on contractual pay may be necessary in order that an uninterrupted investigation can take place. This must not be regarded as disciplinary action or a penalty of any kind.

   f. other than for an "off the record" informal reprimand, you have the right to be accompanied by a fellow employee or Trade Union Representative, who may act as a

witness or speak on your behalf, at all stages of the formal disciplinary process. However, they are not there to answer questions on your behalf. In addition, in line with the Code of Practice for Disciplinary and Grievance Procedures, there is no provision for legal representation at any stage of the disciplinary process.

g. you will not normally be dismissed for a first breach of discipline, except in the case of gross misconduct or SOSG (some other substantial grounds).

h. you will only be disciplined after careful investigation of the facts and the opportunity to present your side of the case at a disciplinary hearing.

i. if you are disciplined, you will receive an explanation of the penalty imposed and you will have the right to appeal against the finding and the penalty.

B) Disciplinary Rules

It is not practicable to specify all disciplinary rules or offences which may result in disciplinary action, as they may vary depending on the nature of the work. In addition to the specific examples of minor misconduct, major misconduct and gross misconduct shown in this handbook, a breach of other conditions, procedures, rules, etc. within this handbook will also result in the disciplinary procedure being used to deal with such matters.

C) Rules Covering Minor Misconduct

(these are examples only and not an exhaustive list)

You will be liable to disciplinary action if you are found to have acted in any of the following ways:-

1. failure to abide by the general health and safety rules and procedures.

2. persistent absenteeism and/or lateness.

3. unsatisfactory standards or output of work.

4. unauthorised use or negligent damage or loss of our property.

D) Rules Covering Major Misconduct

(these are examples only and not an exhaustive list)

1. rudeness towards customers, members of the public or other employees, objectionable or insulting behaviour or bad language.

2. failure to devote the whole of your time, attention and abilities to our business and its affairs during your normal working hours.

3. failure to carry out all reasonable instructions or follow our rules and procedures.

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4. unauthorised use of company email and internet facilities.

5. failure to report immediately any damage to property or premises caused by you.

6. failure to comply with normal safety procedures.

E) Rules Covering Gross Misconduct

(these are examples only and not an exhaustive list)

You will be liable to summary dismissal if you are found to have acted in any of the following ways:

1. grossly indecent or immoral behaviour, deliberate acts of unlawful discrimination or serious acts of harassment.

2. dangerous behaviour, fighting or physical assault.

3. incapacity at work or poor performance caused by intoxicants, drugs, prescribed drugs and over the counter medication.

4. attendance at work whilst under the influence of any intoxicating substance, irrespective of incapacity or the amount taken. The company operates a zero tolerance policy in respect of intoxicants.

5. possession, supply or use of illicit drugs;

6. For this purpose, the term 'drugs' is used to describe both illegal drugs and other psychoactive (mind-altering) substances which may or may not be illegal.

7. deliberate falsification of any records (including time sheets, absence records and so on, in respect of yourself or any fellow employee).

8. undertaking private work on the premises and/or in working hours without express permission.

9. working in competition with us.

10. taking part in activities which result in adverse publicity to ourselves, or which cause us to lose faith in your integrity.

11. theft or unauthorised possession of money or property, irrespective of value, whether belonging to us, another employee, or a third party.

12. destruction/sabotage of our property, any property on the premises.

13. serious breaches of health and safety rules that endanger the lives of employees or any other person, to include HACCP Regulations.

14. interference with or misuse of any equipment for use at work that may cause harm.

15. gross insubordination and/or continuing refusal to carry out legitimate instructions.

16. abuse of the personal harassment policy.

17. smoking in breach of company policy/designated non-smoking areas.

18. unauthorised consumption of alcohol on the premises.

19. Any action, inaction or wrongdoing committed by you during the course of your employment that would result in a financial loss to the company.

20. Any action, inaction or wrongdoing committed by you, outside of normal working hours that, had you been in employment, would be considered to be gross misconduct.

21. Deliberately bringing a complaint against a fellow employee that you know to be false or malicious.

F) Disciplinary procedure

1. Disciplinary action taken against you will be based on the following procedure:

OFFENCE	FIRST OCCASION	SECOND OCCASION	THIRD OCCASION	FOURTH OCCASION
Minor Misconduct	Formal verbal warning	Written Warning	Final written warning	Dismissal
Major Misconduct	Written Warning or Final Written Warning	Final written Warning or Dismissal	Dismissal	
Gross misconduct	Dismissal			

2. We retain discretion in respect of the disciplinary procedures to take account of your length of service and to vary the procedures accordingly. If you have a short amount of service you may not be in receipt of any warnings before dismissal but you will retain the right to a disciplinary hearing and you will have the right of appeal.

3. If a disciplinary penalty is imposed it will be in line with the procedure outlined above, which may encompass a formal verbal warning, written warning, final written warning, or dismissal, and full details will be given to you. All warnings will be effective from the date they are initially communicated to you in writing. Warnings will be issued in accordance with the company's disciplinary procedures, and will be for corrective purposes.

4. In all cases warnings will be issued for misconduct, irrespective of the precise matters concerned, and any further breach of the procedure in relation to similar or entirely

independent matters of misconduct will be treated as further disciplinary matters and allow the continuation of the disciplinary process through to dismissal if the warnings are not heeded.

5. We reserve the right at our discretion the authority to bypass any step in the disciplinary process if we feel that the severity of the action warrants it. We will be fair in the application of such discretion.

G) Disciplinary Authority

The operation of the disciplinary procedure contained in the previous section, is based on the following authority for the various levels of disciplinary action. However, the list does not prevent a higher or lower level of seniority, in the event of the appropriate level not being available, or suitable, progressing any action at whatever stage of the disciplinary process.

	ALL EMPLOYEES
Formal verbal warning	Director
Written warning Director	Director
Final written warning	Director
Dismissal	Director

H) Period of Warnings

1. Formal verbal warning: A formal verbal warning will normally be disregarded for disciplinary purposes after a six month period.

2. Written warning: A written warning will normally be disregarded for disciplinary purposes after a twelve month period.

3. Final written warning: A final written warning will normally be disregarded for disciplinary purposes after a twelve month period.

I) Extended Warnings

The Company may extend, at its discretion, a final written warning if in its opinion the employee has not reached the required standard following a disciplinary process but has shown some improvement.

J) Spent Warnings

A "spent" warning forms part of an employee's history and cannot be used to accelerate the disciplinary procedure to the next level warning. However in certain limited circumstances it may be used in consideration of the employees total work history, especially where any future offences or incidents are related.

K) General Notes

1. If you are in a supervisory or managerial position then demotion to a lower status may be considered as an alternative to dismissal except in cases of gross misconduct.

2. In exceptional circumstances, suspension from work without pay for up to five days as an alternative to dismissal (except dismissal for gross misconduct) may be considered by the person authorised to dismiss.

3. Gross misconduct offences will result in dismissal without notice.

4. You have the right to appeal against any disciplinary action.

Disciplinary Appeal Procedure

- The disciplinary rules and procedures which form part of your contract of employment incorporate the right to lodge an appeal in respect of any disciplinary action taken against you.

- If you wish to exercise this right you should apply, preferably in writing, to the person, within five days, indicated in your individual Statement of Main Terms of Employment (Form SMT) or nominated person if deemed more appropriate. From time to time it may be necessary to appoint an external person to hear an appeal; such an appointment will be deemed a last resort and only used where absolutely necessary. Should it be deemed necessary to engage an external person to hear an appeal, all such hearings carried out will be in accordance with company procedures. You agree to permit us to share any relevant sensitive data where it is necessary for the purposes of that hearing.

- Any disciplinary penalty imposed on you, as a result of the company's disciplinary procedures, will be effective from the date the penalty was initially imposed.

- An appeal against a formal warning or dismissal should give details of why the penalty imposed is either too severe, inappropriate or unfair in the circumstances.

- The disciplinary appeal procedure will normally be conducted by a member of staff not previously connected with the disciplinary process so that an independent decision into the severity and appropriateness of the disciplinary action can be made.

- If you are appealing on the grounds that you have not committed the offence then your appeal may take the form of a complete re-hearing and reappraisal of all matters so that the person who conducts the appeal can make an independent decision before deciding to grant or refuse the appeal.

- You may be accompanied at the appeal hearing by a fellow employee of your choice or an authorised trade union representative, who may act as a witness or speak on your behalf, and the result of the appeal will be made known to you in writing within five working days after the hearing. This decision is final.

1.10 Employee Assistance Programme

HCT Learning's staffs wellbeing both physically and mentally is important to us. We believe that a structured support system can help employees to deal with the turbulences they may face from time to time. By introducing an employee assistance programme in the workplace HCT Learning wants to help employees combat the stress from their personal and professional lives. Through offering this service we hope that this will help prevent foreseeable absences from the workplace and create a positive workplace environment.

An employee assistance program (EAP) is a programme designed to identify and assist employees in resolving any personal or health problems that may be affecting the employee's performance at work. Support is provided through the EAP for immediate, free, confidential help for all employees and their household members. Employers have a responsibility to minimise workplace risks and improve their employees' health and wellbeing. Through this programme we aim to help you look after your physical and mental well being through the advice and care of experts in these fields. The EAP service offers proactive and preventative support rather than just reactive support. This delivers the best possible outcomes for both the employee and employer.

EAP is an online and telephone system providing a support network of field experts offering 24/7 guidance. It is completely confidential and dependent on the nature of the issue, counselling or guidance can be provided by fully qualified professionals.

What our services include:

• Family issues	• Relationships	• Legal
• Medical information	• Domestic abuse	• Stress
• Lifestyle addictions	• Insurance claims	• Childcare
• Gambling	• Consumer issues	• Work
• Financial	• Debt	• Housing

The following support is provided to our staff:

Counselling support: A team of counsellors both male and female from a range of ethnic, cultural and disciplinary backgrounds

Telephone support: The telephone counselling service is available 24 hours a day, 365 days a year

Financial information: Guidance and information needed to take the next steps in resolving issues, such as debt management

Bereavement support: Support those who are working with bereavement

Legal information service: Legal information is available via the helpline 24 hours a day, providing immediate and effective guidance

Medical information: Qualified nurses are on hand to offer advice on a range of medical or health related issues. They can't diagnose but can offer practical information and advice

Online support: Virtual library of informative articles and self-help guides

How to use it:

Telephone Counselling: Your call will always be answered by a qualified and experienced counsellor who will offer help and support in a professional, friendly and non-judgmental manner.

Online Health Portal @ www.healthassuredeap.com

• Emotional support	• Medical factsheets
• Personal coaching	• Fitness advice
• Health checks	• BMI assessment

1.11 Positive Action Towards Disability

HCT Learning is committed to a policy of equality of opportunity for all staff. The company will strive for recruitment, employment, training and promotion practices that are free of barriers, both

systemic and deliberate; and that do not directly or indirectly discriminate against people generally, and against people with disabilities in particular. The company believes that everyone should be more aware of the need to ensure that people with disabilities have the same choices and opportunities as all employees and that their skills, abilities, ambitions and aspirations are valued equally. While we are committed to not discriminating against people with disabilities, we also support internal initiatives that remove some of the myths and concerns that surround disability and demonstrate the importance of employment for all. This will be achieved through appropriate organisational policies and procedures, employee communication, participation and education.

Definition

Under the Employment Equality Acts 1998 and 2008, "Disability" means:

- The total or partial loss of a person's bodily or mental functions, including the loss of a part of a person's body
- The presence in the body of organisms causing, or likely to cause, chronic disease or illness
- The malfunction, malformation or disfigurement of a part of a person's body
- A condition or malfunction which results in a person learning differently from a person without the condition or malfunction
- A condition, illness or disease which affects a person's thought processes, perception of reality, emotions or judgment or which results in disturbed behaviour

"Disability" includes a disability which exists at present, or which previously existed but no longer exists, or which may exist in the future or which is imputed to a person. The definition covers a wide range of disabilities and the assumptions and stereotypes that are generally held about disability. The company recognises that:

- Some disabilities are obvious, and others are not so apparent
- The same disability can vary in its severity and will affect individuals differently
- Some people with disabilities may require special assistance or equipment in the workplace, other people may not need any such support

Accordingly, HCT Learning will treat every person with a disability as an individual, and will discuss openly with the particular person what assistance or supports, if any, they may need. The company asks that any person with a disability who encounters difficulties or obstacles in carrying out their

role will raise the issue with their supervisor or the HR department at the earliest possible opportunity.

1.12 Commitment to Positive Action

The company commits to:

- Work with employees to review work practices to ensure they do not unnecessarily exclude people with disabilities or mental health difficulties.

- Provide training and take other relevant steps to encourage disability awareness amongst all employees, both with regard to their colleagues, interview candidates and the customer-base. Such training will support managers in supervising, managing and training staff with a disability.

- Perform a thorough audit of the business premises, including entries, exits and information-display to make the workplace more accessible and safer for everyone, including those with disabilities.

- Ensure that recruitment advertisements, job descriptions and personal specifications are based on requirements and tasks that are absolutely essential to the role, and do not discriminate directly or indirectly against a person with a disability. Non-essential qualifications or experience will be described as "desirable", thereby leaving the position open to a wider pool of applicants including those with disabilities.

- Facilitate a friend or relative to accompany a disabled candidate to an interview.

- Prepare existing employees in methods of assisting visually impaired candidates and other visually impaired visitors in the organisation.

- Where the suitability of a particular candidate with a disability is at issue, the organisation will consider what accommodation could reasonably be implemented to facilitate the employment of the person with the disability.

- Where the organisation forms an initial opinion that a candidate is unable by virtue of a disability to be employed in a particular post, the candidate in question will be afforded an opportunity to respond to that opinion before a final decision is made.

- Make all reasonable efforts with regard to facilities, equipment and other supports to meet the special requirements that any particular disability may give rise to and enable staff with disabilities to perform their role successfully.

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- Ensure that staff with disabilities have the same opportunities as other staff to develop full and rewarding careers within the organisation, and to acquire the range of skills and experience necessary for personal and future career development.

- Positively encourage people with disabilities to apply for appropriate promotions within the company.

- Identify anyone with a disability who may need particular assistance in the event of evacuation; liaise with the Safety Officer with regard to these arrangements. Ensure that any person with a disability is aware of the need to identify themselves to the Safety Officer in the event of their disability not being generally known in the organisation and there being a need for particular assistance during an evacuation.

- Making every effort to retain existing employees who acquire or develop a disability during their time with the company; this may involve re-training, transferring etc. Appropriate counselling if required/requested will be provided for such employees to assist them to make the transition to adapt to their new situation.

Employees are invited to raise any ideas they may have with regard to making the workplace more disability-friendly with their line manager or the HR department.
Should any employee who has a disability feel that they have been discriminated against, or otherwise treated unfairly or less favourably than an employee without a disability, they should bring this to the attention of their line manager, or the HR department, or use the appropriate company procedure (i.e. Dignity at Work policy and procedure or grievance/complaints procedure). All such complaints will be taken seriously and action taken where appropriate.

1.13 Retention of Records

All records relating to recruitment and selection will be held by the Human Resources (HR) department in Head Office, following the completion of the recruitment process at local level. Records relating to the recruitment process including those of unsuccessful applicants will be held for 18 months, after which they will be confidentially destroyed. Unsolicited applications will be returned to the applicant as all posts are publicly advertised. Records for successful applicants for teaching posts will be retained for the duration of employment plus 7 years after which they will be confidentially destroyed. All records relating to recruitment and selection will be held securely with access limited to HR staff.

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