



HCT Learning  
Quality Assurance Manual  
2020

**Support for Learners**

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## **1 Supports for Learners**

HCT Learning is dedicated to providing learners with purposeful resources and support systems necessary for successful participation on our programmes. With the development of a range of programme delivery methods, flexible delivery styles, trainer guidance and mentoring appropriate to our learners requirements. Selecting fit for purpose facilities and resources which will be checked before programme commencement as we will engage in delivering predominately practical based training. HCT Learning will ensure that resources and materials essential to successful achievement are allocated, maintained and where required budget allocated. HCT will ensure that suitable venues for programme delivery are chosen against a set criteria which forms part of the feasibility and compatibility studies which are carried out for all new programmes and are committed to ensuring that all training is delivered in line with registration and regulation requirements.

HCT Learning provides training within the community and are committed to delivering high quality training and supporting learners to ensure successful completion on our programmes. We aim to promote a culture of inclusiveness on our programmes ensuring that all learners are treated in an appropriate, fair and consistent manner. We wish to make the learning experience meaningful to the learner and instil confidence in their academic abilities. We aim to make training more accessible for learners wishing to up skill or gain certification in areas in which they possess life experience. At HCT Learning we strive to provide affordable training programmes whilst maintaining academic standards. This training will be relevant to the learners sector and will be practical in assisting learners with new job opportunities and for further progression academically.

Some supports available to learners are:

- Pastoral Care Support for learners
- Appointment of class representative
- RRA for learners such as a Scribe, Reader, modified presentation of booklets etc.
- Access to one to one meeting with the trainer
- Access to a QQI team for advice and support
- Formative feedback midway through the programme

### **1.1 Delivery and Resources for Learners**

Before HCT Learning engages in any programme delivery, a trainer that is industry specific to the training programme planned will be required to visit the venue in order to ensure that it is suitability equipped for the required programme learning outcomes to be met. To ensure that learner

resources can be accessed and implemented and that successful delivery of the programme can be achieved with the learners needs in mind. Offering only part-time educational opportunities within the community and voluntary organisations, to individuals who may have been out of education for a number of years, it is at our fundamental value to deliver our training programmes specific to our learners individual profile professionally while ensuring the integrity of our assessments are maintained.

**Centre Based Learning:** HCT learning delivers all their training programmes through a direct learning approach. The company's philosophy has been built on the essence to provide an interactive approach to our training and as a result most of the programmes we offer require active participation from our learners in order to demonstrate understanding. This could include: classroom based, involving group discussions. And instructional, practical sessions, workshop tutorials and project related training. There is no intention at the moment to offer a blended learning type approach in fulfilment of our directed learning obligations. This approach simply does not suit our learners.

**Practical Delivery Approach:** We are heavily focused on providing training that is supportive and interactive, as we consider this approach enhances the learning environment and is most suitable for our portfolio of learners who attend our programmes. We deliver each programme through task related activities that are tailored and fit for purpose to meet national standards.

### **1.1.1 Introduction to Programme**

Once initial interest has been expressed to attend a programme learners will be communicated on supports and services available in order to attend and achieve the required standards for certification. A range of methods have been developed to communicate this to learners.

Initial interest:

- Our website has been designed where information is clearly communicated
- Direct initial call to discuss programme
- Brochures have been designed to inform learners of supports and services available
- Programme outlines: each programme has its own tailored programme outline
- Pre-network and programme network emails include resources and support services

Once a learner has been booked onto a programme all information regarding support services will be confirmed and the learner will be asked to inform the centre if any services are required. The information will be supplied in:

- Pre-programme confirmation email
- Enrolment information and booking form
- Learner introduction pack and invoice
- Pre-programme information call and email (72 hours before programme commencement)

### **1.1.2 The Programme Information Pack and Induction**

On the first morning of the course the learners will be introduced to HCT Learning and the programme they are attending. It details all elements of the programme they are attending including services and facilities which are available to learners and supplies any and all information required for the learner to successfully complete the course. The trainer will induct the learners on the assessment schedule on the first day of the programme. This will inform the learner as to what assessment they will be doing and on what day of the programme these will be taking place. They will assess the learner and provide marks for skills demonstrations. They will conduct the exam with learners according to the guidelines provided by the centre to ensure consistency across the country. The timelines for assessing skills/exams along with programme packs, briefs, marking grids etc. will be established by the Programme Development and Review Committee during the programme development stage.

### **1.1.3 Registration Form**

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

#### **1.1.4 Programme Packs**

HCT Learning provides all learners with material for the selected programme they are attending. This includes a hard copy of the programme pack that has been designed specifically around the programme content and assessments relating to the programme. This pack has been designed by a group of subject matter experts. The pack will also include useful links regarding the subject they are participating in, such as case samples, quizzes and self-directed learning. The pack is updated frequently as part of our ongoing monitoring and feedback received. Learners also have access to our programme packs in soft copy once requested from the office. For further information please refer to our Programme Development Process.

#### **1.1.5 Physical Resources**

A comprehensive checklist covering any and all requirements necessary for the programme to be delivered. This will include the venue specification for centre based learning along with the practical session and work simulated work environments, which will include: material, tools, PPE and possible project content in order to satisfy our identified delivery mode. This checklist will lay the foundation in order for us to meet the basic programme requirements. However additional resources may be added as programme delivery methods may vary between groups. HCT Learning will ensure programme trainers have sufficient learning resources in order to successfully deliver the programme and will keep evidence of resources purchased.

Any shortcomings in this regard will be highlighted through the Red Flag system.

#### **1.1.6 Standardised Assessment Briefs and Booklets**

As part of our validation process standardised assessment briefs and or booklets are developed with our group of subject experts, these booklets are used as part of our programme delivery and are designed as a step by step guide explaining each activity in clear easy to understand language meeting the required learning outcomes. Booklets are used often to accompany trainer's marks in order to generate evidence of understanding of activity.

#### **1.1.7 Pastoral Care Measures**

##### **What is Pastoral Care?**

The Pastoral Care system provides a personal support service, available to all students. Pastoral care focuses on the learner as a whole taking into account personal, social and academic difficulties. The

aim is to help learners deal with critical incidents in their lives. It is to equip the learner with the resources they need to develop not only academically, but in all areas of their lives. To promote positive self-esteem, healthy risk taking, helping them set goals for their future learning and development. As an education centre we have a duty of care to our learners, this is why we have developed the Pastoral Care system. HCT Learning's scope of learners can be people that have been out of the educational sector for a long period of time and as a result we facilitate a range of wellbeing practices. The needs of our learners may include special needs, emotional needs, social needs or English language acquisition needs.

The Pastoral Care system at HCT Learning is not to offer counselling to learners but to provide a confidential system in which we can provide a listening ear as well as guidance on further resources and appropriate support services available to the learner. This service is free to any learner registered on a programme with HCT Learning and we encourage all learners to avail of this service.

### **Why is it important?**

It is important to promote an educational environment that is positive, safe and secure. Through providing a Pastoral Care system HCT Learning believes this will allow the learner to achieve their full potential. We aim to look after the learner as a whole and not just the educational side. HCT Learning aims to support the learner to make decisions about their training while taking their wider life into context. We aim to build an environment through our Pastoral Care system which adapts to the needs and abilities of all learners. It is hoped through providing this service that it will improve attendance and participation of learners and reduce the drop-out rates on programmes. This system can help learners deal with the pressures of returning to education, in particular, in dealing with the stress of study and exams.

### **How do we facilitate our learners in pastoral care?**

- Learners will be provided with telephone assistance throughout the programme to speak about personal concerns and stress from a qualified person that they can access for wellbeing matters.
- In order to deliver this service HCT Learning has a full time Pastoral Care Mentor/Counsellor. They are available to all learners throughout the duration of the programme.
- There will also be a class representative elected at the beginning of each programme. They will be responsible for raising awareness of any issues within the programme from a learner's perspective.

- The trainer will be available to hold one to one meetings with any learners throughout the programme. They will be able to provide direct support on the course content, assessment and possible progression.
- HCT Learning provides access to a QQI team who can provide clarity on any concerns which arise and can provide guidance on possible progression.

**One to One Appointments:** Learners have access to one to one appointment with management, the QQI team, programme coordinators, administrative and training staff before, during and after the programme to discuss any concerns, service issues, personal difficulties or career advice that they may have regarding their successful participation on a programme.

**Office Support Telephone/Email:** HCT Learning's office is open during normal office hours and where required staff will provide immediate support to learners with advice, concerns, service issues, personal difficulties or career advice that they may have regarding their successful participation on a programme.

#### **1.1.8 Mentoring and Feedback to Learners**

HCT trainers will provide learners with ongoing support mentoring and feedback throughout the programme delivery and assessment. Once that deadline for assessments has passed, the trainer is required to document any feedback to the centre through the Programme Verification Booklet. Notes gathered from the mid and end feedback received from the trainer will be gathered in order to facilitate if required the support or feedback to a specific learner after certification.

#### **1.1.9 Formative Feedback**

HCT Learning provides learners with formative feedback at the midway point of their course. Formative feedback ensures the learner is completely aware of their strengths and weaknesses, and how they can work to improve them. Formative feedback will provide the learners with the opportunity to enhance their overall learning experience. If the learner feels they need to, the opportunity to discuss the feedback with their trainer in a more detailed manner will also be available. By discussing the feedback with the trainer, the learner can then reflect on their feedback in more detail and work towards improving their weaknesses and enhancing their strengths. Formative feedback is a great benefit to the trainer also. By completing formative assessments, the trainer can use the feedback created to understand the group of learners and what accommodations



they may require going forward. This enables the trainer to plan and structure their lesson plans in a way that is most appropriate and beneficial for the learning group.

Learners are assessed under four different headings and on a six-point scale. Learners are given a short, but detailed description of each point. This will provide the opportunity for the learner to understand in full, what is expected of them going forward on the course.

Below the six-point scale is outlined:

1	2	3	4	5	6
Unsatisfactory	Considerably less than is expected	Average	Good	Very good	Excellent

### **Attendance and Punctuality**

1. Learners attendance to date has been unsatisfactory. The learner has attended little to no part of the programme they are participating in. This is not sustainable.
2. Learners attendance to date is below average, the learner's attendance so far is considerably less than is expected. Immediate improvement is required.
3. Learners attendance to date is average, the learner has missed some elements of the programme they are participating in. Improvement is needed.
4. Learners attendance to date is good, the learner has attended the programme in full - however may need to improve on time keeping.
5. Learners attendance to date has been very good. The learner may have only been late to return to the programme on one or two occasions.
6. Learners attendance to date has been excellent. The learner has arrived on time to every session of the programme.

### **Performance on Practical Skills Assessments to Date**

1. Learners performance on Practical Skills Assessments completed to date has been unsatisfactory. The learner's ability to complete practical elements of this programme has not been demonstrated to date with the learner displaying little or no interest. This is not sustainable.
2. Learners performance on Practical Skills Assessment completed to date has been considerably less than is expected. The learner's ability to complete practical elements of this programme is unclear to date. Immediate improvement is required.

3. Learners performance on Practical Skills Assessment completed to date has been average. The learner's ability to complete practical elements of this programme to a moderate level with some interest demonstrated, however it is recommended that more improvement is needed.
4. Learners performance on Practical Skills Assessment completed to date has been good. The learner's ability to complete practical elements of this programme to an acceptable level has been demonstrated. Some improvement needed.
5. Learners performance on Practical Skills Assessment completed to date has been very good. The learner's ability to complete practical elements of this programme is to an impressive level with great interest demonstrated. Some minor improvements could be made.
6. Learners performance on Practical Skills Assessment completed to date has been excellent. The learner's ability to complete practical elements of this programme to an exceptional level with outstanding interest demonstrated. No improvements to be made.

#### **Performance on Theoretical Assessments to Date**

1. Learners performance on Theoretical Assessment completed to date has been unsatisfactory. The learner's ability to complete Theoretical elements of this programme is not demonstrated to date with the learner demonstrating little or no interest. This is not sustainable.
2. Learners performance on Theoretical Assessment completed to date has been considerably less than is expected. The learner's ability to complete Theoretical elements of this programme is unclear to date, more interest needed. Immediate improvement is required.
3. Learners performance on Practical Skills Assessment completed to date has been average. The learner's ability to complete Theoretical elements of this programme to a moderate level with some interest demonstrated however it is recommended that more improvement is needed.
4. Learners performance on Theoretical Assessment completed to date has been good. The learner's ability to complete Theoretical elements of this programme to an acceptable level with sufficient interest demonstrated. Some improvement needed.
5. Learners performance on Theoretical Assessment completed to date has been very good. The learner's ability to complete Theoretical elements of this programme is to an impressive level with great interest demonstrated. Some minor improvements could be made.

6. Learners performance on Theoretical Assessment completed to date has been excellent. The learner's ability to complete theoretical elements of this programme to an exceptional level with outstanding interest demonstrated. No improvements to be made.

### **Observation of Health and Safety Regulations**

1. Learners observation of Health and Safety Regulations to date has been unsatisfactory. The learner's ability to observe the health and safety requirements of this programme has not been demonstrated to date, is fearful and presenting alarming concerns for their welfare and others. This is not sustainable.
2. Learners observation of Health and Safety Regulations to date has been considerably less than is expected. The learner's ability to observe the health and safety requirements of this programme is unclear to date with the learner needing to demonstrate more understanding and presenting concerns for their welfare and others. Immediate improvement is required.
3. Learners observation of Health and Safety Regulations to date has been average. The learner's ability to observe the health and safety requirements of this programme has been to a moderate level with some understanding demonstrated however it is recommended that more improvement is needed.
4. Learners observation of Health and Safety Regulations to date has been good. The learner's ability to observe the health and safety requirements of this programme has been to an acceptable level with sufficient understanding demonstrated. Some improvement needed.
5. Learners observation of Health and Safety Regulations to date has been very good. The learner's ability to observe the health and safety requirements of this programme has been to an impressive level with great understanding demonstrated. Some minor improvements could be made.
6. Learners observation of Health and Safety Regulations to date has been excellent. The learner's ability to observe the health and safety requirements of this programme has been to an exceptional level with outstanding understanding demonstrated. No improvements to be made.

#### **1.1.10 Programme Monitoring Visit**

The QQI team will be required to complete monitoring visits in order to ensure the programme is being delivered to the required standard. These spot checks do not get communicated or scheduled

to trainers or learners however can be used as an opportunity for any learners on the programme for support or advice regarding their situation.

### **1.1.11 Class Representative**

#### **What is a Class Rep?**

The class rep is the first point of contact between trainers/HCT Learning and learners. They will gather and communicate any issues or feedback from the other learners. The aim of this is to improve the learning experience for present and future learners of the programme.

#### **Benefits?**

There are many benefits to becoming a class rep. As well as it being a crucial role to help and improve the learning experience on a programme, there are benefits to you personally. You will gain new skills and experiences from this role. These include:

- Leadership skills – The other learners will look to you for help with dealing with any issues which may arise.
- Negotiation skills – You may be required to negotiate with the trainer, your supervisor or the office on some issues which may arise.
- Advocacy skills – You will speak on behalf of the class in a number of different ways, such as within the classroom, council meetings and to provide feedback of the programme to the office.
- Communication skills - You will gain experience in communicating information accurately and as intended from the learners to the trainer/supervisor/office.
- Team-working skills – You will be the representative of the group but you will work with all learners to voice concerns and provide feedback.
- Problem solving skills – You will work with the trainer/supervisor/office to find a resolution to any issues which may arise.

In addition to this, the class rep will be empirical in helping to improve the programme, making a positive contribution for all learners. They will help build and maintain a good partnership between the office/trainers and the learners. You will support your group and ensure that their voice is heard.

#### **What will this role entail?**

- The class rep may be asked to attend council meetings

- They may be contacted outside the training delivery and asked to provide us with feedback for programme enhancements and learning experiences in our Kilkenny office
- They will be the main speaker for the group to voice questions, concerns and seek clarification
- May be invited to provide input into proposed changes which have been made in the learner, trainer and client feedback reports

### **How to become a Class Representative?**

At the start of each programme the trainer will ask if anyone in the class would like put themselves forward as a class representative. At this point learners may nominate themselves. If 2 or more learners nominate themselves then a class vote will be held to decide who shall be elected. If no-one nominates themselves we will take no further action. Please note that by giving their information as a class representative it means that HCT Learning will retain the data for a maximum period of 5 years.

## **1.2 Monitoring Feedback on our Resources and Support Systems**

HCT Learning feel it is necessary to conduct ongoing monitoring on feedback regarding resources and support systems in order to ensure that learners are facilitated with the best support systems and resources required in order for them to successfully participate in the programme they are attending. Feedback on resources and support systems are monitored at a number of levels:

- Programme development: once need for a programme has been identified a risk register, feasibility & compatibility study and cost analysis will be completed with a view of setting provisional programme resources required in order to achieve programme delivery. The Programme Development and Review Committee will be required to complete a comprehensive facilities checklist covering any and all requirements necessary for the programme to be delivered and the Pastoral Care Advisor will be consulted in order to review the support systems that could be implemented for the learners attending the programme, as a result a final budget will be confirmed in order for programme delivery to be achieved. The assessment specification will be provided to the trainer delivering the programme.
- Per programme delivered: during the programme planning stage of the programme, the programme coordinators will be required to advise and communicate the programme admission requirements in relation to a facilities and resources required, the trainer chosen

to deliver the programme will be required to carry out a pre-programme client appointment which will include the completion of a risk assessment and facilities checklist, the purpose of this meeting is to ensure that the supports and resource systems are in place in order for the programme to be delivered successfully. HCT Learning will monitor the reports generated from these visits in order to ensure they are meeting the programme delivery and assessment criteria. A pre-programme confirmation email will be sent to clients which will outline the venue and physical resources checklist and programme content.

- Mid and end feedback on our programmes to our clients, learners and trainers, where specific questions relating to the resources and support provided will be asked. Learners can be confident that all feedback is given anonymously – unless they choose otherwise.
- Red Flag System: HCT Learning has devised a Red Flag system that in each case the threshold is set and where the threshold falls below the provision set in any category will trigger a non-compliance and an automatic correction action response, this could include an update or amendment to the provisions of support and resource systems in place.
- During each submission cycle: Feedback of programme planning, delivery and assessment will be completed at the end of each submission cycle as a result, tailored questions regarding resources and support systems will be investigated to seek improvements.
- RRA Annual Report/Certification Report – Group Summary: HCT Learning will review yearly and also each submission cycles the number of learners that requested and were granted reasonable requests of accommodation. These reports will allow us to monitor the number of learners that are seeking RRA and accommodations granted.
- Programme Annual Report: At the end of each year a Programme Annual Report will be completed on all programmes delivered, the purpose of this report/meeting is to reflect on services, supports and resources on programmes we engage in the delivery of.
- Programme reviews: Each year a programme will be chosen by the Academic Council for review, the purpose of this review is to seek improvement to the programme delivered with a view of making programme enhancements; this will include amendments to our resource and support systems in place.
- Those appointed as a learner representative will form an integral part of our QA system and will be consulted in a range of aspects of the academic system. The learner will be required to identify areas of improving our standards and can be a strong influence of any decisions on our learning processes. Learner feedback is seen as criteria requirements needed in order to identify necessary improvements of its learning experiences and to provide positive

change for its current and future learners; this will include updates to our resource and support systems.

- The Pastoral Care Advisor will provide guidance on further resources and appropriate support services available to the learner in order to promote an educational environment that is positive, safe and secure. The purpose of our approach to pastoral care towards our learners is to focus on cultivating an environment and culture that supports the physical, social, intellectual, emotional and spiritual development of the learner.
- Staffs at HCT are given the opportunity to provide suggestions during staff meetings regarding resources and supports offered.

Where needs identified have been raised, depending on required outcome, HCT Learning will either:

- Purchase the material if identified as a programme requirement immediately
- Arrange for subject experts to take part in a resource update as part of the programme review process
- Where policies or procedures may be affected. HCT Learning will be required to update and bring forward to the Academic Council for approval
- Ensure that any learning gained is incorporated in future programme rollouts and that governing policies and procedures are altered as necessary to consider such feedback

### **1.3 Requirements for Delivery of Training**

HCT Learning deliver programmes nationwide, as a result we have developed a range of programme requirements in relation to the physical learning environment that need to be compiled for us to engage in the delivery of any programme offered.

**Insurance:** 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.

**Health and Safety:** As part of our risk register completed during programme development, the centre has developed a number of practices in order to safeguard learner's safety during the duration of the programme.

It is the responsibility of management, staff and trainers at the training venue, to ensure that a suitable venue for programme delivery has been selected.

HCT Learning requires a Health and Safety Risk Assessment form to be completed before the programme commencement. Programme coordinators will be required to send a pre-programme confirmation email to the venue/hosting client which will outline the venue and physical resources checklist. The trainer selected to deliver the programme on behalf of HCT Learning will then be required to attend a client appointment and as part of that appointment complete a Health and Safety risk assessment. The risk assessments have been developed by our Health and Safety Officer as part of our programme development processes. Trainers will be required to submit their findings confirming that all control measures have been put in place and the Training Manager at HCT Learning will then be required to review the findings in order to ensure that health and safety standards are maintained or where required implemented.

**HCT Learning Health and Safety Statement:** It is the policy of Hughes Consultancy and Training to promote high standards of health and safety within the centre and venues of training and to ensure that the Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Act 2005 and its associated legislation are adhered to. In addition to our commitment to the safety of our staff and students, it is the aim of Hughes Consultancy and Training Ltd, to achieve a working environment, free from work related accidents and ill health.

The Management team will therefore ensure that the following is carried out:

- Identify hazards in the workplace, assessing the risks related to them and implementing appropriate preventative and protective measures
- Provide and maintain work equipment
- Establish and enforce safe methods of work
- Recruit and appoint personnel who have the skills, abilities and competence, matching with their role and level of responsibility
- Ensure that tasks given to employees are within their skills, knowledge and ability to perform



- Ensure that technical competence is maintained through the provision of refresher training as appropriate
- Promote awareness of health and safety and of good practice through the effective communication or relevant information
- Source sufficient funds needed to meet these objectives

All members of the centre are expected to demonstrate their commitment towards a safe and healthy work and study environment by complying with the centres Health and Safety Policy and associated procedures.

This health and safety statement will be reviewed whenever there is a significant change in the matters to which it refers to ensuring that it reflects changing needs and circumstances.

### **Health and Safety Learners Responsibilities**

Students have a legal responsibility not to endanger themselves or others by their actions. Thus full time and part time students must:

- Take reasonable care for their own safety and not endanger others by their acts or omissions
- Co-operate fully with all safety rules and regulations issued by the company
- Not interfere or misuse anything that is provided in the interest of health and safety
- Ensure equipment is operated in a safe manner and good housekeeping standards are maintained
- Use personal protective equipment (PPE), as necessary. (Learners are required to provide their own PPE i.e. safety glasses etc.)
- Use equipment only if properly trained
- Report accidents, dangerous occurrences, defective equipment or potential safety hazards to the trainer/centre
- Comply with requirements of the 2005 Act and all associated legislation
- Not to be under the influence of alcohol or drugs or a combination of alcohol and drugs to the extent that he or she is likely to endanger his or her own safety, health or welfare at work or that of any other person
- Not to engage in improper conduct or other behaviours such as violence, bullying or horseplay, which could endanger another person or his/her safety, health and welfare

### **Learner Skills Competency Log**

HCT Learning requires a competency log to be completed for all manual based training programmes. The competency log will identify and check that learners understand and have achieved the required capability within a specific topic of the programme delivered. This competency log will be presented along with the learner's assessments and is used to ensure that learners attending the programme have been appropriately trained within that given topic.

### **Accident Report Form**

HCT Learning requires an accident/incident report form to be completed whenever an accident or incident occurs on one of their training programmes. The Programme Verification Booklet includes a section for completion where the incident occurs that results in injury or damages to a person or their property. HCT Learning will where required investigate the incident and where required report to the Health and Safety Authority.

#### **1.3.1 Facilities Checklist**

As part of the pre-programme tutor meeting they will be required to complete a facilities checklist. This is to ensure that learner resources and supports required within reason are met. The adequacy of resources and supports provided are monitored regularly through feedback from learners and clients, and updated where necessary. Through this practice we operate an integrated approach to teaching by including the learner perspective.

Through completing the facilities checklist we aim to:

- Ensure that every venue is fit for purpose, that the resources and supports fit the need of the programme to be delivered. This will ensure that the learner can achieve the highest quality of instruction to achieve certification.
- To ensure the diverse needs of all learners are met for every programme delivered, e.g. learners with disabilities.

In order to meet these aims the following criteria would need to be met as part of the checklist:

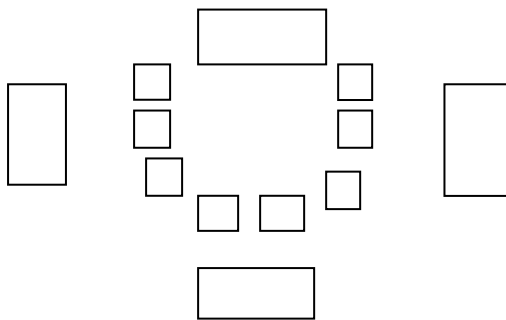
- Reasonable access to public transport or adequate parking is available at or near the venue
- The venue is easy to find and accessible to all learners, e.g. wheelchair accessible
- The room must be large enough to comfortably fit all learners
- There should be adequate lighting in the room including natural sun light, the room should have adequate acoustics, ventilation and heating

- The venue must have adequate health and safety requirements, e.g. fire exits, assembly points etc
- The room should have adequate furniture, e.g. tables and chairs
- There should be access to the appropriate tools for the course e.g. lawnmowers, paint brushes etc
- For project based courses the trainer must ensure there is appropriate space for all learners to partake in the project
- For outdoor/manual programmes must ensure that the venue can supply both a classroom and outdoor area suitable to the needs of the programme e.g. grass for lawnmower instruction etc

### **Suggested Layout for General Purpose Training Room**

The following is a recommended room layout for in class delivery:

- The room should be a U-shaped layout unless otherwise instructed



- There should be a pack for each person laid out on their chair
- A top table is required for the trainer, their paperwork and any equipment they may need to use e.g. projector for PowerPoint presentations
- The room should be at a comfortable temperature with access to air conditioning if needed
- Have natural lighting, with limited disruption from noise appropriate to the training being delivered
- Tables will be at the sides of the room
- If tables are provided they are only to be used for group work
- The venue and the room need to have accessibility for wheelchair users and other of limited mobility

### **1.3.2 Practical Outdoor Premises**

Each programme delivered, where practical, project or skills related demonstrations need to be demonstrated; pre-established criteria will be implemented that has been developed during the validation process. However all programme venues will need to accommodate an ideal cover area in the event of bad weather conditions. Under no circumstance can HCT Learning engage in programme delivery were programmes do not meet the set programme requirements.

HCT Learning will confirm the venue required in the following:

- During programme set up, programme coordinators will discuss with the host the venue requirements
- Pre-programme confirmation email will be sent detailing venue requirements
- The tutors client appointment/health and safety/risk assessment meeting

### **1.3.3 Accessing Programme Resources and Equipment securely**

- Programme material will either be collected by the trainer or shipped by courier from HCT Learning, directly to the trainer only
- A log on MyHCT tracks which material that has been sent
- The resources and materials will be required to be signed for on receipt of delivery and HCT Learning are able to access the log to confirm the time and date of receipt
- Resources and materials are to be kept safe and secure to ensure integrity of the programme delivered does not get compromised
- Programme resources and equipment are to be opened only by the trainer delivering the programme
- Learner's induction to include programme details and HCT Learning policies and procedures
- The assessment criteria will need to be discussed with learners on the 1st morning of the programme to include assessment techniques that will be used, assessment deadlines and grade breakdown
- The assessment plan will be given to the learners detailing a schedule for skills demonstrations, exams etc.
- Once the programme has been completed the trainer will be required to collect all assessment related documentation that has been collected as part of the delivery of the programme, this includes assessment booklets where skills demonstration have been completed and are part of the overall trainer marks

- The trainer will be required to complete with the learners a sign over of assessment confirming that they have handed their assessment booklets to the trainer
- The trainer will be required to submit all assessment related evidence and outstanding programme documentation to the centre in a secure manner immediately after programme has been completed either by courier or directly into the office
- Any equipment that is provided by HCT Learning will need to be returned to our office along with the outstanding paperwork
- Where required trainers will be need to submit photo or video evidence through MyHCT trainer portal or through a memory stick following our Submission of Photo policy
- Under no circumstances should any programme related documentation be left unattended at any point of programme delivery or in an uncompromising position

#### **1.4 Equality Policy**

It is the policy of HCT Learning to ensure that the highest standard of equality is practiced at all times in the area of employment and service provision and anti-harassment. In doing so, staff will be suitably trained in the area of equality and will be aware of issues relating to the topic.

Hughes Consultancy & Training Limited will comply with legislation which prohibits discrimination under the following grounds: gender, marital status, age, sexual orientation, religious beliefs, disability, family status, race and membership of the Traveller Community.

##### **Purpose**

The purpose of this policy is to promote equality of opportunity for all learners of HCT Learning by ensuring that all administrative, academic and other practices operate on the basis of the appropriate merits, qualifications, abilities and potential of individuals and do not discriminate against any individual on the grounds of the 8 terms above.

##### **Objectives**

The objectives of this policy are:

- To ensure that all staff are aware of their responsibilities as trainers, assessors, administrators, managers and representatives of the company under the provisions of national legislation and the policies of the company
- To ensure that all applicants to HCT Learning are treated fairly, and in accordance with the published policies and procedures

- To ensure that HCT Learning affords all learners an equal opportunity to develop their full potential; the policies, procedures and practices of HCT Learning in relation to teaching, learning and assessment will seek to ensure equality of opportunity for all learners and as far as is practicable, practices will conform with the published procedures of HCT Learning

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

##### **Admissions Procedures**

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

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

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

HCT Learning welcomes learners with special educational needs onto our programmes, we predominantly work with individuals who may have been out of education for a number of years. As a result HCT Learning will work with our learners who present themselves with specific learning support requirements in order to facilitate the successful completion of our programmes. HCT Learning wishes to reduce barriers that can be created in order to provide equality of access and opportunity for all their learners who register and attend our programmes.

#### **1.4.3 Identifying Reasonable Accommodation Needs**

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

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

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

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

### **Request for Reasonable Accommodation**

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

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

- Modified presentation of assignments/examination papers e.g. enlargements
- Scribes/Readers/Dictaphone
- Spelling/grammar wavier
- Use of sign language

- Practical assistants
- Rest periods
- Adaptive equipment/software
- Use of assistive technology
- Altered exam settings
- Extra time

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

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

Type of Disability	Report Accepted from Medical Consultant/Specialist	Age of Report
<b>Learning Difficulty</b>		
Dyslexia and Dyscalculia	An Education Psychologist assessment completed by an appropriately qualified psychologist. A Dyslexic Adult Screen Test (DAST) completed by a trained practitioner will be accepted for dyslexia.	There is no limit on the age of the report
Developmental Coordination Disorder (DCD) – Dyspraxia/Dysgraphia	Appropriately qualified Psychologist, Occupational Therapist, Neurologist or Chartered Physiotherapist who is a member	There is no age limit.



	of their respective professional or regulatory body.	
General Learning Disability	An Education Psychologist assessment completed by an appropriately qualified Psychologist.	There is no age limit.
<b>Hearing Difficulty</b>		
Learners who have an Audiogram	Diagnostic/Clinical Audiologist registered with the Irish Academy of Audiologist (IAA) or HSE Audiologist	There is no age limit.
Applicants attending school for the deaf	Principal of school for the deaf	There is no age limit.
Applicants who are recipients of a cochlear implant	Ear Nose and Throat (ENT) Consultant or Cochlear Implant Programme Coordinator	There is no age limit.
<b>Visual Difficulty</b>		
Blind/Vision Impaired (including, but not exclusively– Anirida, Best’s disease, Charles Bonnet syndrome, Coat’s disease, Coloboma Congenital cataracts, Corneal dystrophies (including Keratoconus), Corneal transplantation, Diabetes-related eye conditions, Hemianopsia, Glaucoma, High degree myopia, Macular Hole, Nystagmus, Retinitis pigmentosa, Retinal vessel occlusion, Retinopathy of prematurity, Stargardt’s macular dystrophy, Stickler	Ophthalmologist/Ophthalmic Surgeon	There is no age limit.

Syndrome, Thyroid eye disease, Uveitis, Lawrence Moon Biedel Syndrome, Alstrom Syndrome)		
<b>Physical Difficulty</b>		
Physical Disability (including, but not exclusively- Cerebral Palsy, Brittle Bone Disease, Spina Bifida, Rheumatoid/Osteoarthritis, Spinal Cord Injuries, Muscular Dystrophy, Hydrocephalus)	Orthopaedic Consultant or other relevant Consultant.	There is no age limit.
Neurological Conditions (including, but not exclusively– Epilepsy, Guillain-Barre Syndrome, Huntingtons Disease, Brain Tumour, Multiple Sclerosis, Motor Neuron Disease, Friedreich’s Ataxia, Head/Traumatic Brain Injury, Stroke, Parkinson’s Disease, Spinal Muscular Atrophy)	Neurologist or other relevant Consultant.	There is no age limit.
Speech, Language and Communication Disorder (including but not exclusively– Stammering, Receptive and/or Expressive Language Disorders, Unintelligibility due to a phonological disorder,	Speech and Language Therapist.	

<p>articulation disorder associated with structural anomalies, acquired communication disorders such as Aphasia, Anomia, Dysarthria, Dyspraxia resulting from Neurodegenerative, or genetic disease associated with impaired communication and social interaction)</p>		<p>There is no age limit.</p>
<p>Significant Ongoing Illness (including, but not exclusively– Diabetes Type 1, Cystic Fibrosis (CF), Severe Crohn’s Disease, Severe Ulcerative Colitis and Irritable Bowel Disease (IBD), Chronic Fatigue, Cancers)</p>	<p>Relevant Consultant/Specialist appropriate to the disability/condition.  In cases where an applicant is in the care of the relevant Consultant/Specialist, the evidence of a disability can be provided by a Registrar who is a member of their team.</p>	<p>The report must be less than three years old.</p>
<p><b>Mental Health and Behavioural Difficulty</b></p>		
<p>Autism Spectrum Disorder (including Asperger’s Syndrome)</p>	<p>Report by Consultant Psychiatrist or Psychologist or Neurologist or Paediatrician, all of whom are a member of their professional or regulatory body.  In cases where an applicant is in the care of a Consultant Psychiatrist, Neurologist or Paediatrician, a Registrar who is a member of their team can provide the evidence of a disability.</p>	<p>There is no age limit.</p>

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

**Other Consideration:**

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

**1) Early School Leavers:**

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

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

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

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

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

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

- The request can be made to the office or the trainer. It is recommended this is before programme commencement for the centre to make required accommodations if required
- Reasonable request of accommodation will need to be completed
- The form will be approved by the Centre Director or Training Manager
- The decision will be communicated swiftly
- In the case of an examination alternative exam and translation aid will be agreed. Not going as far as offering an alternative exam. It is risky in terms of maintaining standards across both exams

- The assessor will be required to check the dictionary before use in order to maintain the integrity of the assessment
- The use of 'word for word only' dictionaries is permitted. Dictionaries that offer alternative phrases/word explanations are not allowed

### **3) Medication Requirements**

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

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

### **4) Extension Requests**

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

- General Extension
  - 3 days
  - Compassionate consideration will be considered based on the learners personal experience
- 2 Week Extension
  - Unable to meet deadline
  - Due to medical/learning or unexpected external factors, evidence of this is required
- Extenuating Circumstances
  - 2-6 weeks
  - When a learner falls outside 2 week extension

- Due to medical/learning or unexpected external factors, extreme situation, evidence will be required

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

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

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

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

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

#### **1.5 Complaints from our Clients and Learners**

HCT Learning believes in delivering learner focus programmes and welcomes the opportunity to improve our services, delivery, resources and supports in order to provide the most fulfilling learner

experience possible. As a result complaints are taken seriously and are the foundations in which we can continuously improve. HCT Learning will deal with complaints from their clients and learners professionally and swiftly. There are three ways in which complaints can be addressed. There is the “anonymously” ‘Informal’ procedure and the ‘Formal’ complaints.

### **Anonymous Complaints**

Learners are given the opportunity during the programme they are attending to provide us with anonymous comments regarding their learning experience through the mid and end feedback. The Administrator is required to read and report on feedback received on each programme delivered, where any negative comments or grievances have been expressed on a programme, the Centre Director or Training Manager are required to be notified and where required investigated.

### **Informal Complaints**

HCT Learning believe whenever possible to deal with complaints on an informal basis using meetings, telephone calls and emails with the person making the complaint and other parties such as trainers, staff, other learners attending the programme, or in the case where it is in relation to physical factors i.e. equipment, venue. Depending on the nature of the complaint learners are asked to discuss their grievances with the trainer delivering the programme or with their programme coordinator who would have initially booked them onto the programme, with a view of resolving the issues. Informal complaints are documented and monitored and if required corrective measures will be put in place if a situation is identified as reoccurring.

### **Red Flag Monitoring System**

Our Red Flag Monitoring system has been developed that once feedback has been received and is under 70% satisfaction rate it will automatically trigger a Red Flag system response.

### **Formal Complaints**

Any learner on any programme which HCT Learning is engaging in the delivery of can make a formal complaint. Formal complaints are taken seriously as it can reflect on the centre negatively. HCT Learning believe in taking, where required, full accountability for their learners grievances based on service or treatment received and will ensure that where required corrective measures will be put in



place in order to fit in with our mission, vision and ethos. HCT will always ensure that no complaint made will be used to disadvantage any person in the future.

- The person making the complaint will be required to put their allegation or grievances in writing to the Training Manager or directly to the Centre Director within one week after the grievance has emerged. This can be done via letter or email
- Acknowledgments of receipt of the complaint will be given 5 working days after the complaint has been received
- All complaints received by HCT Learning will be handled in confidence and without prejudice
- Depending on the nature of the complaint HCT Learning will determine how to deal with the grievance most effectively
- In the case where it involves a staff member HCT Learning will be required to seek external advice from Peninsula who oversee our HR policies and procedures
- Where the complaint is based on the delivery of a programme HCT Learning may be required to be reviewed by the Academic Council
- HCT learning will investigate all complaints within 30 working days of receipt, however if the process takes longer, we will keep you updated every 20 working days
- HCT will issue a clear and concise written response

If the learner is unhappy with the response they have received they do have the option to appeal the decision to the Centre Director within 10 working days, the Centre Director will review all findings and may need to meet with the learner or other parties involved to discuss the complaint.

Depending on the complaint the Centre Director may need to seek external advice with the complainant's permission. The decision of the Centre Director will be communicated in writing after the investigation has been completed and is final.

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