

# Information for Learners

Guidelines and Procedures

for Covid-19 Contingency Planning of Assessments

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| **Policy Area** | Fair & Consistent Assessment of Learners |
| **Procedure** | B6.2 |
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**Alternative Assessments to Exams in Response to Covid-19**

**Rationale**

These guidelines and procedures are intended to inform and support the development of alternative forms of assessment in order that learners can achieve the qualification they have been working towards while maintaining the integrity of the award.

The QQI Principles of Assessment must still apply and all assessments must be Fair, Reliable, Valid, Transparent and Quality Assured.

**Alternative Assessments**

Assessment is criterion-referenced i.e. Learners are assessed and the assessment judgement is based on whether the learner has reached the desired standards of knowledge, skills and competence for that award.

National Standards identify these knowledge, skills and competencies and are expressed as Learning Outcomes in the Award Component Specification, and the developed and validated Programme Descriptor and Module Descriptors.

**Alternative forms of assessment that LCFE will use will include but are not limited to are**

* An assignment in lieu of an examination or skills demonstration;
* A take-home examination/open book examination in lieu of an examination in an examination hall;
* A remote recording of a practical skills demonstration;
* Revised module assessment technique to accommodate Learning Outcomes (LOs) already evidenced by learners during the course;
* Recognition of Prior Learning for Work Experience/Work Practice.

**All learners are encouraged to undertake the alternative assessment at this time in order to ensure certification for the Summer period. Note the CAO deadline is July as well.**

A learner may request to defer or postpone an exam/assignment but should take the following into account:

* The next certification period would be October 2020
* The July CAO deadline would be missed
* Non-CAO progression could be affected

**Guidelines for Alternative Assessments**

An Assignment in Lieu of an Examination or Skills Demonstration This is the use of alternative assessments, which would allow identified Learning Outcomes, previously assigned to the examinable component of a given programme, to switch to being assessed by assignment. Alternative assessments are assignments devised to replace “Examination” assessment technique with “Assignment” or “Project”.

**Take-home Examination/Open Book Examination**

Take-home examinations/open book examinations must have a time-limited deadline for online submission.

Where possible, answers should be inserted into an online answer document created in MS Word, Excel etc. On completion of the examination, all online answer documents, digital support evidence, etc. should be submitted within 10 minutes of the completion time of the examination. Any rough work should be photographed and uploaded within 15 minutes of the completion time of the examination.

Learners must ensure they confirm authorship of work for Online Examinations submitted through LCFE VLE.

Appropriate LCFE Submission Cover Sheet must accompany hardcopy examinations as per current Examination Submission Procedures.

**Guidelines for Learners for Remote Recording of Digital Evidence**

Learners should be afforded the opportunity to remotely record skills demonstrations/practical skills that would normally be recorded in the FET Centre or place of employment and be supported in submitting these recordings as part of their assessment evidence.

**Guidelines for Adopting Previously Achieved Learning Outcomes**

Learners may be offered the opportunity to have module Learning Outcomes, previously achieved through the completion of module assessments, to be incorporated into the achievement of the overall module. If a Learning Outcome is fully assessed, then there may be no need to further assess, and the weighting of

the associated assessments may be adjusted to incorporate this.

**Procedure for Conducting a Take-home/Open Book Examination**

A learner sitting a Take-home/Open Book Examination must follow the procedures as set out below to ensure quality and equity of the assessment. Learners must read the Guideline document on Information Technology Guidelines for Learners Performing an online Take - home/Open Book Examination on LCFE VLE.

**On the Day of the Take-home Examination/Open book Examination**

**Examination Equipment**

Learners will require access to a computer/tablet, up-to-date browser, software, email account and an internet connection. This equipment must be tested prior to the examination by the learner to ensure that all equipment is in working order.

**Learner Identification**

Learners taking an online examination must verify their identity prior to the examination. Examples of learner identification include but are not limited to:

* Photo ID (Passport, Drivers Licence or Public Services Card);
* Assessor verification

**Testing Room: The learner’s test room must meet the following requirements:**

* The test room must be quiet. No sound from music, television or any other sounds are permitted;
* Strict silence must be observed during the examination;
* No other person can be present in the test room;
* Only the equipment and permitted resources (verified by your Assessor/Examination Supervisor) necessary to carry out the test should be on the desk or workspace;
* Any other devices e.g. additional computer, smart phone or similar devices should be switched off.

**Examination Resources**

The assessor will inform the learners if examination resources are permitted e.g. books, dictionaries, class notes etc.

The relevant Examination paper can be downloaded from Moodle on the day of your examination. If you cannot download the examination paper, please contact your Assessor and they will be on hand to help solve any IT issues you may have. Learners are required to upload their answer paper to Moodle at the end of their

examination paper. There is a **15-minute** time allowance at the end of the exam for this.

**Conducting a Take-home Examination/Open book Examination**

The learner is not allowed to talk out loud, or attempt to communicate, in any way, with another person during the online examination. Communication is allowed only in the case of an emergency or if asking a question. The learner is only allowed to communicate with the Examination Supervisor/Assessor via specified communication media e.g. email, chat through MS Teams etc. The learner is not allowed to aid, or attempt to aid, another learner, obtain, or attempt to obtain aid from another learner, Examination Supervisor/Assessor or any other person.

**Unexpected event during a Take-home Examination/Open book Examination**

If an unexpected event occurs during a timed online examination (internet connection failure, medical emergency, etc.), the Assessor must ensure that integrity of the examination is maintained;

In some instances, (e.g. failure to reconnect after 5 minutes or more, or repeated internet connection failure etc.) the examination may need to be abandoned.

**Concluding a Take-home Examination/Open book Examination**

The Assessor will remind learners that there are ten (10) minutes remaining and that all learners should submit their answer document within a specified period of time (this will vary depending on the type of online examination);

Learners must ensure that all documents (answer document, support files, Assessment Coversheet/Declaration) are sent to the Assessor. They must remain online until all examination material has been received by the Assessor. The Assessor will confirm receipt of work to the learner;

Once all examination materials have been received, learners are permitted to leave;

If there is an unplanned outage within 24 hours before the online examination is due to take place or an unplanned outage of 5 minutes or more within the last 30 minutes of the examination finish time, an automatic extension should be granted to all learners affected.

See **Appendix 1** which outlines IT Guidelines for Learners Performing an Online/Open Book Exam.

**Procedure for Remote Recording of Digital Evidence**

The guidelines below detail the required communication to a learner who is recording digital evidence off-campus.

**Before recording begins**

If you are borrowing a device familiarise yourself with its functions and check that it is sufficiently charged;

Test the equipment you are going to use prior to recording your skills demonstration/practical skill to make sure the audio and picture is clear;

If you have someone assisting you with recording, ensure that they are familiar with how to use the device and are clear on what they need to record;

Position the camera so the view is not obstructed and try to record at a time when there is not a lot of loud background noise;

Ensure that you have read your brief/instructions from your assessor and that you are clear of what evidence you need to produce to achieve the learning outcomes.

**Identification**

You must identify yourself at the beginning of the recording. You must state your name, the module you are studying and the learning outcomes you are demonstrating in your recording. This information can be presented orally or written clearly on a sheet of paper if you prefer;

It is important to remember that you can only submit evidence that has been produced on your own without undue assistance from others and so it is vital that you are clearly identified as the person being assessed. If there is ambiguity over this the evidence may not be submitted for authentication.

**During and after recording**

Audio visual evidence should clearly show the demonstration of all the learning outcomes listed in the brief you have been given by your tutor/teacher;

If your recording is oral, ensure that you speak clearly and slowly. If your recording is a video with both visual and oral evidence, ensure that the device is focused on you performing the tasks and that you speak clearly and slowly throughout.

Once you have finished your recording check that there are no issues with audio/picture quality before you submit;

Follow the instructions you have been given by your tutor/teacher to submit the recording e.g. via Moodle, as an email attachment, etc.;

If you have issues with recording/submitting evidence, contact your tutor/teacher immediately.

**Procedure for Adopting Previously Achieved Learning Outcomes**

As stated previously, learners may be offered the opportunity to have module Learning Outcomes, previously achieved through the completion of module assessments, to be incorporated into the achievement of the overall module. If a Learning Outcome is fully assessed, then there may be no need to further assess, and the weighting of the associated assessments may be adjusted to incorporate this.

**Work Experience/Work Placement Contingency Plan**

A number of learners will not have the opportunity to complete their work placement and thus their Work Experience 5N1356/6N1946 module due to the current crisis.

Three potential scenarios are as follows:

1. Learners have partially completed work placement.
2. Learners have not commenced work placement.
3. Learners have completed work placement.

The following process will apply to best accommodate learners to complete their Work Experience 5N1356/6N1946 module and achieve their Major Award.

The Work Experience module is a generic module and was designed to suit all forms of vocational work experience. To this end, if a learner has experience that has occurred **within the last five years**, then they may be suitable for Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) for part of their module. Learners who have fully completed their work placement will finish and submit their diaries and Supervisor’s Reports as per assessor instructions.

Where learners have completed Work Experience/Work Placement but cannot have it signed-off by the workplace supervisor due to closures, then the following is recommended:

**Recommendations:**

1. Email or transcribed telephone reference from workplace supervisor;
2. Where a supervisor’s report cannot be retrieved from the workplace, that work placement to be assessed by the liaising assessor completing the supervisor’s report form in lieu.

Learners will be required to formally notify the assessor that the full work experience/work placement requirement of the module has been fully completed.

**Process for Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) and Work Placement**

Application of an RPL process to a learner’s work placement will only apply to learners who have completed or are in the process of completing, the Portfolio/Collection of Work (60%) of their Work Experience module in the classroom or remotely from home.

**The Skills Demonstration** (40%) requires the learner to complete their work placement in a vocationally relevant area and to record their experiences in their workplace diary. If this cannot now be completed, then the Skills Demonstration (40%) can be achieved through RPL in one of two ways as outlined below.

Learner has **partially completed work placement** If a learner has completed at least 50% of their work placement then they must supply an up-to-date CV accompanied by a reference or letter from an employer. This employer does not have to be the employer where they did their partial work placement but must be current, i.e. be from within the last five years.

Learner has less than 50% complete or not commenced work placement If a learner has less than 50% complete, or not commenced their work placement then they must, as for partial completers, supply an up-to-date CV accompanied by a reference or letter from an employer. This employer must be current, i.e. be from within the last five years.

These learners must also complete an assignment given by your teacher. The employer reference will be graded as part of the assignment (Part 1 – 10%). The CV will have already been completed and marked as part of the Collection of Work for the module but must be supplied as part of the RPL process.

**Reasonable Accommodation**

Learners will be afforded the opportunity to avail of assessment accommodations for the alternative assessment, where practicable. Learners who are afforded extra time in an assessment due to the impact of a disability or on equality grounds, will continue to receive this and will be accommodated in an equivalent way in relation to their alternative assessment.

If Reasonable Accommodation is provided to a learner, the integrity of the Examination and adherence to the standards should be maintained at all times.

If you are entitled to Examination Accommodations, you should have signed an **Exams Office Form** during the year with your course coordinator. If you have entitlements for Examination Accommodations such as extra time / reader/ scribe etc. then you should contact your subject teacher before the day of the examination to discuss the arrangements.

**It is also important to remember that while learners may be having difficulty engaging with technology at this time, this does not on its own, constitute grounds for reasonable accommodation application.**

**Academic Integrity**

The granting of an award in an area of study acknowledges the achievement of a set of defined learning outcomes. If such recognition is unearned by means of dishonesty, the value of every award in that area is diminished, as is the reputation of the college and all its graduates. LCFE implements appropriate procedures to deal with any form of assessment malpractice which could impact on the validity of assessment.

Please refer to your Learner Handbook to ensure you familiarise yourself with appropriate LCFE Policies and Procedures around this area for example **Assessment Malpractice Procedure.**