



Assessment Online

Safe Practice Guidelines for Online and Blended Assessment in Further Education and Training

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NB: Any reference to ‘the ETB’ within the document will be taken to refer to Limerick and Clare Education and Training Board.

Introduction

These guidelines were developed by a cross-functional working group to provide clarity and consistency to assessors and learners, in line with guidance provided by QQI.

QQI Topic Specific Guidelines on Blended Learning requires providers to develop “Policies, regulations and processes (including administration) (that) are fit for-purpose in the context of blended learning. The relevance of existing arrangements originally designed for face-to-face provision may not always be appropriate and/or effective in the blended learning context. Examples include - arrangements for online assessment including pre-assessment, the conduct of assessment and marking/grading which are robustly tested and invoke confidence”

This document provides guidance for “Administration, storage and retrieval”, with detailed instructions in the StaffCONNECT site – Quality Assurance | Assessment Resources.

Many thanks to the working group for sharing their expertise in the development of this valuable resource.

Teaching and Learning Online Safe Practice Guidelines for Further Education and Training - Online Assessments

Online assessment can provide Assessors with numerous possibilities to replace existing classroom-based assessment or examinations with online alternatives. Online quizzes, assignments, ePortfolios and video submissions are just some of the possibilities to replace or supplement traditional examinations or portfolios of evidence, however, such methods present Assessors with a number of challenges with regard to ensuring fairness and equity for all learners. A few simple guidelines to follow include:

- If the assessment is summative assessment for a QQI module, your starting point is the module descriptor. Carefully read the Learning Objectives and the assessment guidelines from the relevant module descriptor. The specific guidelines apply to both offline and online assessment and all assessment must be fully compliant with the assessment criteria.
- Use the tools to hand. The FET Division supports the use of both Moodle and MS Teams, both of which have assignment functionality, where rubrics can be used, if applicable, with grading and feedback readily provided to learners.
- Communicate with learners in relation to assessment. Clearly describe what is expected and listen to and respond to any concerns they may have.
- Apply the principles of Universal Design for Learning (Appendix 1) to assessment. Ensure the assessment is presented in accessible formats for all learners and offer choice to learners particularly regarding multiple means of representation.
- Provide sample assessment in advance and give learners the opportunity to familiarise themselves with the assessment process.
- Allow reasonable accommodation in line with the ETB's Quality Assurance policies. Respond to accessibility issues or concerns raised and seek support to ensure all learners can access assessment fairly.
- Data retention periods for online assessments are the same as for written assessments so it is essential that assessment evidence is retained and stored safely and securely in compliance with the ETB's Secure Storage Procedure and GDPR requirements. All staff must complete the online GDPR training at <https://Limerick and Clare Education and Training Boardfet.etbonline.ie/course/view.php?id=1098>. For more details email dataprotection@lcteb.ie.

Guidelines for Communicating with Learners/Induction to Online Assessment

Clear and effective communication with Learners is central to fair and consistent online assessment. It is essential that from the commencement of programmes, learners are provided with full clarity in relation to both the modes of assessment and the assessment schedule. For online or blended learning programmes, it is essential that learners are fully informed from the outset of all requirements for programme participation including assessment.

Induction

Induction for blended and online programmes should provide learners with clear comprehensive information on all requirements for engagement on the programme including:

1. Details of technology requirements. The minimum technical specification of any mobile device required by learners must be detailed and clearly communicated to learners prior to commencement of the Learning Programme. The information provided must be consistent with the ETB's [Bring Your Own Device \(BYOD\) for Learning Guidelines](#). These guidelines are designed to facilitate and promote learners bringing a personal mobile device to ETB campuses for use in their education and training and/or using a computer/mobile device for remote learning. This is in line with the ETB's [Device Equity Guidelines](#). The ETB may be able to provide devices to learners under ETB's Learner Device Loan Agreement, where appropriate to support participation in online or blended programmes.
2. Details of Information and Communications Technology (ICT) Skills required for participation in online learning including skills required for completion of online assessments. Initial learner assessments should ensure that learners have the necessary skills to effectively use the learning platform (e.g. – MS Teams, Moodle) including completion of necessary assessments online.
3. Details of the planned assessment schedule including all online assessments.
4. Details of the specific technology applications to be used for assessment e.g. – assignments in MS Teams, graded Multiple Choice Questions (MCQs) in Moodle etc.
5. Details of data protection and privacy expectations. Learners must be fully informed in relation to their rights and responsibilities regarding data protection including, where relevant the procedures for storage and processing of recordings as part of the assessment process (see [08 Secure Storage Procedure \(Part-time\)](#) and [08 Secure Storage Procedure \(Full-time\)](#)).

Ongoing Communication

Effective clear communication is essential in the design and delivery of online or blended learning programmes. Learners must be fully informed on an ongoing basis, particularly in relation to aspects impacting on assessment. Assessors should:

1. Ensure ongoing consistent scheduled communication. Assessors should communicate with learners regularly and consistently and use strategies to ensure that learners are fully engaged and are responding to communications on an ongoing basis.
2. Use the appropriate available communication tools in a planned manner. Platforms such as Moodle and MS Teams have multiple applications, which can support effective communication such as forums, messaging, feedback surveys, questionnaire etc. Clearly outline to learners which applications will be used and how you will communicate key messages to them throughout the programme.
3. Monitor online activity, particularly for assessment related work. Moodle logs or MS Teams insights enable Assessors to monitor engagement online. Early identification of learners who are not engaging online is crucial to the identification of those most at risk of drop-out enabling relevant strategies to be used to address non-participation.
4. Ensure assessments are presented in accessible formats for all learners and offer choice to learners, particularly, regarding multiple means of representation applying UDL principles.
5. Provide details of practice or dummy assessments. Where assessment procedures may be complex (e.g. – online-proctored examinations) or learners are new to online assessment, arranging practice assessments prior to scheduled assessment is strongly advisable.
6. Provide details of how assessment feedback will be given for online assessments. Learners should be provided with full clarity in relation to how feedback will be provided for both practice and final assessments. Feedback provided should clearly show how assessment criteria were applied including where marking rubrics were used if applicable.

Online Assessments – Assessment Techniques

Assignment/Project/Portfolio/Learner Record

- Online access to brief, online submission, online results and feedback

Examination

- Online Examination with a Webcam
- Take-home Examination/Open Book Examination
- Online Quiz/Examination

Skills Demonstration

- Remote Recording of Digital Evidence

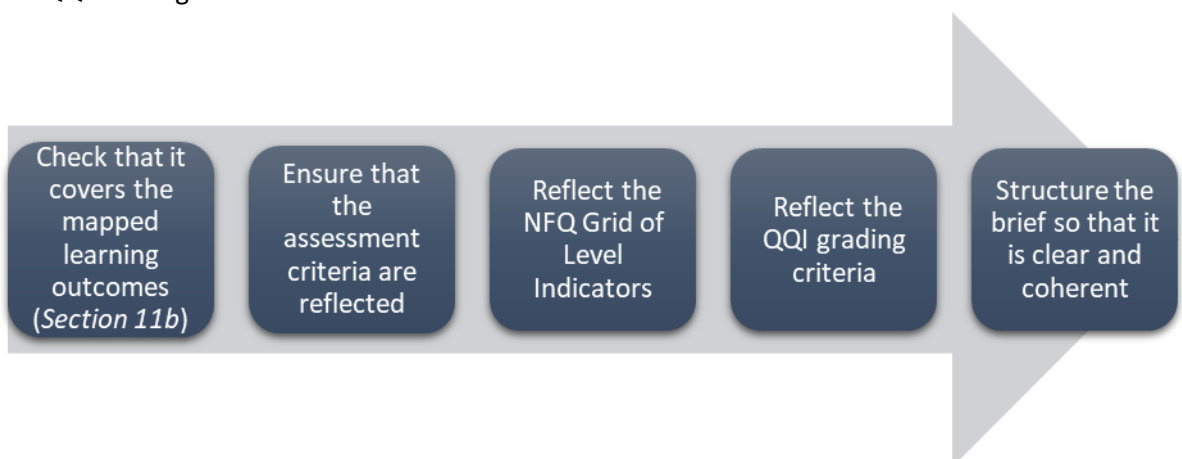
Developing and Conducting Online Assessments

Assessors designing assessment briefs for online delivery must design the brief in-line with the standards of the award and must also ensure that it covers the Learning Outcomes (as per Section 11b of the module descriptor).

Maintaining Standards

The assessment must be designed in-line with the standards of the award. This essentially means that the brief must reflect:

- the *action verbs* at the start of every Learning Outcome, e.g. Reflect, Examine, Evaluate, etc.
- the Grid of Level Indicators¹
- the QQI Grading Criteria²



¹ <https://www.qqi.ie/Downloads/NFQLevelindicators.pdf> or <https://www.qqi.ie/Downloads/Grid%20of%20level%20indicators%202019.pdf>

² <https://www.qqi.ie/Downloads/Quality%20Assuring%20Assessment%20-%20Guidelines%20for%20Providers%20Revised%202013.pdf#search=quality%20assuring%20assessment%20guidelines%2A>

Structuring the Brief

Begin structuring the brief by downloading and completing the [04 Assessment Brief](#) template from StaffCONNECT. The top section of the brief should be filled in as per normal procedure for designing an assessment brief with all applicable information included.

The next section will contain the *Instructions* for the learner, i.e. what do they have to do to achieve the Learning Outcomes?

Structure the brief so that it is clear and coherent:

- Is the language understandable to the learner?
- Is it logical?
- Does it make sense?
- Is it clear what the learner must do and in what order?
- Does it include all the necessary information?
- Is the format appropriate to the typical learner profile at that level?

Important Points to Remember

The weighting and level of the assignment will dictate how much is required of the learner. Refer to the Word Count Guidelines (Appendix 2) available on [StaffCONNECT](#).

1. It is important that assessors allow for flexibility in how learners present their assignment evidence. This could be in the format of a video, blog, poster, essay, report, booklet, etc. Learners should be given a choice where possible and practicable. Be mindful of not overwhelming the learners with too many choices.
2. Learners must also be made aware of how they will be marked, i.e. the *Assessment/Performance Criteria and Marks* must be clearly stated. Learners do not need to be provided with a detailed marking scheme, however, they should have a clear indication of how marks will be allocated for the different sections of their work.
3. How learners will submit their completed work must also be clearly outlined in the brief under the section on *Submission Details*. Where online submission is identified in the brief then it must be done through the selected online environment e.g. Moodle or MS Teams.
4. Learners must still be given the opportunity to submit draft work and receive feedback.
5. Academic integrity must be maintained and the learner must declare that the work is their own by completing the [03 Assessment Cover Sheet](#) or using learner authenticity declaration option in Moodle or MS Teams. If learners have difficulty inserting a digital signature, then the entry of a typed name will suffice in lieu of a signature.
6. For additional information on how to structure briefs and examination questions, please refer to the Moodle course – [Assessing Learner Evidence in FET for QQI Certification](#).

Marking Online Assessment Evidence

Learners work does not need to be printed to be marked. Work can be marked and graded and learner feedback given via Moodle or MS Teams. Alternatively, the same can be done within MS Word (or other software application) by inserting comments and annotating directly on the text.

All learner evidence must be securely stored in-line with the ETB's [08 Secure Storage Procedure \(Part-time\)](#) and [08 Secure Storage Procedure \(Full-time\)](#).

Reasonable Accommodation Procedure

Learners must still be afforded the opportunity to avail of assessment accommodations for the alternative assessment, where practicable. In the context of assessment, reasonable accommodation is the term for the adaptation of assessment as necessary to cater for the needs of learners whose personal situation means that the assessment would otherwise be unfair, e.g. learners with a disability, and/or other learners covered by equality legislation. The grounds include; learning difficulty; deaf or having a hearing impairment; blind or visually impaired; physical difficulty (including mental health and/or behavioural difficulties along with physical difficulties); and any grounds covered by current legislation.

For example, learners who are to be afforded extra time in an assessment due to the impact of a disability or any of the above equality grounds, must continue to receive this and must be accommodated in an equivalent way in relation to their alternative assessment.

Please refer to *04_Reasonable Accommodation Procedure* on [StaffCONNECT](#).

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

Procedure for Conducting an Online Examination

Part A - Online Examination with a Webcam

When conducting online examinations with the use of a webcam, the Assessor must follow the procedures as set out below:

- Online examinations must be distributed via Moodle or MS Teams.
- The duration of the examination will be dictated by the module descriptor plus an additional half an hour for uploading and downloading. Additional time may be added to verify identification (if applicable) and to show the Examination Supervisor the learner test room.
- 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.
- Where an assessor uses multiple choice questions, to ensure academic integrity and fairness the examination questions and distractors should be randomised. The Assessor may also insert short answer responses to multiple choice questions to allow learners to explain why they chose a particular response. Learners should be given the opportunity to complete a practice test.
- In order to be quality assured, online examinations must still comply with and adhere to the ETB's *Assessment Procedures* available on [StaffCONNECT](#).
- In addition, a learner taking an online examination (via Webcam) must follow the procedures as set out below to ensure quality and equity of the assessment.

Note: An online assessment may be an unfamiliar method of assessment for the learners, therefore, learners should be aware of what to expect and given clear comprehensive instructions on all aspects of the online examination. Learners should also be given the opportunity to do a practice test.

On the Day of the Online Examination

Examination Equipment

- Learners will require access to a computer/tablet, up-to-date browser, web camera, microphone, online learning environment e.g. Moodle or MS Teams 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;
- Microphone and webcam required for the examination must be enabled and running;
- The webcam must be focussed on the candidate at all times during the examination;
- The lens of the webcam must not be covered at any time during the examination.

Learner Identification

- Learner identification will be confirmed through the logs generated by Moodle and MS Teams.
- Where a learner is not known by the Examination Supervisor, 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 (or Provision Manager, Provision Co-ordinator).
- The Examination Supervisor should confirm the identification of each learner.
- Additional time must be allocated at the start of the examination for learners to show the Examination Supervisor the test room using the webcam (360° pan of the test room). This is to ensure that the test room meets the requirement set down in this guideline document.

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. Exception may include any additional arrangement made under the Reasonable Accommodation Procedure.
- 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.
- Lighting should be sufficient so that the Examination Supervisor can clearly see the learner.

Examination Resources

The assessor will inform the learners if examination resources are permitted e.g. books, dictionaries, class notes etc. If the use of examination resources are allowed they must be shown to the Examination Supervisor (as defined by the ETB's *Assessment Procedures* available on [StaffCONNECT](#).) via the webcam video prior to the examination to ensure the integrity of the examination.

Commencing the Online Examination

- The Examination Supervisor will confirm attendance by completing the [07 Examination Attendance Register](#) or [Assessment Supervisor or Assessor Report \(Training Centre\)](#) template. This should contain a list of learners attending the examination (minus learner signatures) and be signed by the Examination Supervisor. This can be supported by evidence of attendance e.g. video recording of learners in attendance.
- The online examination instructions should be read aloud to learners before the time for the examination commences.
- The examination paper will be distributed online. Examination Supervisor to confirm all learners in attendance have received the examination paper.
- The specified examination start time, duration and end time will also be read aloud to learners and be visible during the examination using the assessor webcam.
- Learners may then commence the examination. The examination starting time must be noted on the [07 Examination Attendance Register](#) or [Assessment Supervisor or Assessor Report \(Training Centre\) template](#).

Conducting an Online Examination

In conducting an online examination, a 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.

- must not leave the room after starting the online examination.
- must face the computer screen during the online examination.
- is not allowed to take screen shots or use any additional software e.g. screen sharing software, during the examination.
- is not allowed to use email or surf the Internet unless explicitly permitted.
- is not allowed to aid, or attempt to aid, another learner, obtain, or attempt to obtain aid from another learner, Examination Supervisor or any other person.
- is not allowed to wear earplugs or headphones.
- must be dressed and behave appropriately at all times.
- is not authorised to leave the examination until after a specified timeframe (recommended timeframe: at least thirty (30) minutes) from the time at which the examination began (recommended time for 2-hour examination).
- shall not be permitted to leave the examination in the final ten (10) minutes of the examination.

Erratum Notice

Where an error in the examination has been noted, the Examination Supervisor will seek clarification from the Assessor (or other subject matter expert if the Assessor is unavailable) who should be available to clarify the query. This amendment will be communicated to all learners and noted on the [07 Examination Attendance Register](#) or [Assessment Supervisor or Assessor Report \(Training Centre\)](#). The integrity of the examination must be maintained at all times.

Unexpected Event during an Online Examination

- If an unexpected event occurs during an online examination (internet connection failure, medical emergency, etc.), the Examination Supervisor must ensure that the integrity of the examination is maintained;
- Any unexpected events should be noted in the [07 Examination Attendance Register](#) or [Assessment Supervisor or Assessor Report \(Training Centre\)](#);
- In some instances, (e.g. failure to reconnect after 10 minutes or more, or repeated internet connection failure etc.) the examination may need to be abandoned;
- In the case of an unexpected event and the learner fails to return to the examination, they should be afforded the opportunity to take the examination again. A new examination paper, marking scheme and outline solutions must be devised.

Concluding an Examination

- The Examination Supervisor 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 remain in the test room until all examination material has been received by the Examination Supervisor. The Examination Supervisor will confirm receipt of work to the learner;
- Once all examination materials have been received, learners are permitted to leave;

- The Examination Supervisor is responsible for the collection and storage of all examination material in the manner required by the Provision and complying with the [08 Secure Storage Procedure \(Part-time\)](#) and [08 Secure Storage Procedure \(Full-time\)](#).

Repeat of an Online Examination

Where an unexpected event occurs during the online examination and the examination has to be abandoned, the learners should be given the opportunity of a repeat examination. A new examination paper, marking scheme and outline solutions must be devised.

If there is an unplanned outage within 24 hours before the online examination is due to take place an automatic extension should be granted to all learners affected. If the learners are completing the examination at a different time or date a new examination paper, marking scheme and outline solutions must be devised.

Part B Take-home Examination/Open Book Examination

When conducting a take-home/open book examination, the Assessor must follow the procedures as set out below:

- Take-home Examinations/Open Book Examinations must be distributed via Moodle or MS Teams.
- The duration of the examination will be dictated by the module descriptor plus an additional half an hour for uploading and downloading.
- 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.
- For theory based examinations the original examination questions may need to be altered so that learners are not only recalling information but are discussing, evaluating or critiquing information.
- Learners should be given the opportunity to complete a practice test.
- Learners must complete the [03A Assessment Cover Sheet Levels 4-5 Online Examinations](#) to confirm authorship of work or by using learner authenticity declaration option in Moodle or MS Teams.
- Take-home Examinations/Open Book Examinations in order to be quality assured, must still comply with and adhere to the ETB's *Assessment Procedures* available on [StaffCONNECT](#).
- In addition, 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.

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, web camera, microphone, online learning environment e.g. Moodle or MS Teams 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

- Learner identification will be confirmed through the logs generated by Moodle and MS Teams.
- Learners must complete the [03A Assessment Cover Sheet Levels 4-5 Online Examinations](#) to confirm authorship of work or by using learner authenticity declaration option in Moodle or MS Teams.

Testing Room

Learners should be made aware of the following in relation to the testing room. The learner's test room should meet the following requirements:

- The test room should be quiet. No sound from music, television or any other sounds are permitted;
- Strict silence should be observed during the examination;
- No other person can be present in the test room. Exception may include any additional arrangement made under the Reasonable Accommodation Procedure;
- 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.

Commencing a Take-home Examination/Open book Examination

- The Assessor will upload the examination paper and answer document (if applicable) to the selected online environment e.g. Moodle or MS Teams.
- The Examination Supervisor will confirm that the learners have accessed the documentation through Moodle and MS Team logs
- The Examination Supervisor will also complete the [07 Examination Attendance Register](#) or [Assessment Supervisor or Assessor Report \(Training Centre\)](#) template. This can contain a list of learners attending the examination (minus learner signatures) and signed by the Examination Supervisor.
- Examination Supervisor should be available during the examination period to clarify any questions from the learners.

Conducting a Take-home Examination/Open book Examination

Learners should be made aware of the following:

- The learner is not allowed 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 via specified communication media e.g. chat through Moodle or MS Teams.
- The learner is not allowed to aid, or attempt to aid, another learner, obtain, or attempt to obtain aid from another learner, Examination Supervisor or any other person.

Erratum Notice

Where an error in the examination has been noted, the Examination Supervisor will seek clarification from the Assessor (or other subject matter expert if Assessor is unavailable) who should be available

to clarify the query. This amendment will be communicated to all learners and noted on the [07 Examination Attendance Register](#) or [Assessment Supervisor or Assessor Report \(Training Centre\) template](#). The integrity of the examination must be maintained at all times.

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

- If an unexpected event occurs during an online examination (internet connection failure, medical emergency, etc.), the Examination Supervisor must ensure that integrity of the examination is maintained.
- Any unexpected events should be noted in the [07 Examination Attendance Register](#) or [Assessment Supervisor or Assessor Report \(Training Centre\) template](#).
- 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. A new examination paper, marking scheme and outline solutions must be devised.

Concluding a Take-home Examination/Open book Examination

- Learners must ensure that all documents (answer document, support files, Assessment Coversheet/Declaration) are uploaded to the online platform e.g. Moodle or MS Teams.

Repeat of an Online Examination

Where an unexpected event occurs during the online examination and the examination has to be abandoned, the learners should be given the opportunity of a repeat examination. A new examination paper, marking scheme and outline solutions must be devised.

If there is an unplanned outage within 24 hours before the online examination is due to take place an automatic extension should be granted to all learners affected. If the learners are completing the examination at a different time or date a new examination paper, marking scheme and outline solutions must be devised.

Storage of Assessment Evidence

All learner evidence must be securely stored in-line with the ETB's [08 Secure Storage Procedure \(Part-time\)](#) and [08 Secure Storage Procedure \(Full-time\)](#).

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.

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 what 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 Assessor.

- 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 Assessor to submit the recording e.g. via Moodle, MS Teams as an email attachment, etc.
- If you have issues with recording/submitting evidence, contact your Assessor immediately.

Guidelines for Administration, Storage and Retrieval of Electronic Evidence

The administration, storage and retrieval of electronic assessment evidence is a core element of the online assessment process. Ensuring that the administration, storage and retrieval process is conducted in a safe manner, which is fully compliant with all relevant national legislation and regional/local policies particularly the ETB's Data Protection Policy, is essential. The following guidelines must be adhered to in relation to all digital evidence stored and accessed as part of any online assessment process.

1. Use only an approved supported ETB Platform. The ETB has approved and supports the use of Moodle, MS Teams and SharePoint (StaffCONNECT) for teaching, learning and assessment. All electronic assessment evidence presented for external authentication must be presented on one of these platforms. Each of these approved platforms is securely hosted, administered and managed by the ETB ensuring that access can be managed safely in compliance with data protection and privacy requirements.
2. Use a single chosen platform when presenting evidence for external authentication. Whilst Assessors are free to choose and safely use more than one single digital platform/resource for teaching and learning (see the ETB's Safe Practice Guidelines for Online and Blended Learning) when presenting evidence for internal verification and external authentication, the evidence needs to be presented in a single approved platform. Where there is a requirement to move digital assessment evidence across platforms the migration process must comply with data protection policies and legislation.
3. Ensure that the platform chosen is consistent with practice in your centre, programme, course and/or department. The adoption of consistent online assessment practices at centre, programme or department level helps to ensure that the learner experience is consistent. Assessors can share experiences and collaborate and that the assessment process is streamlined, efficient and can be managed safely in line with best practice.
4. Follow the recommended detailed processes for administration, storage and retrieval as outlined in the document on StaffConnect (see [specific instruction in Quality Assurance - Assessment Resources](#)). Each of the approved platforms requires a managed approach to ensure safe administration, storage and retrieval of assessment resources and complies with relevant guidelines and policies.
5. Take the necessary steps to ensure that access to content and data is restricted to the access required for the assessment process. Assessors can ensure access to assessment resources only by creating a private channel in MS Teams for non-assessment related activity and by assigning specific limited access roles to External Authenticators in Moodle. Details for managing access to non-assessment activities in the ETB's approved platforms can be found on StaffConnect ([specific instruction in Quality Assurance - Assessment Resources](#)).
6. The use of external hard drives, USB keys, DVD, CD-Roms or other external storage devices for the storing of assessment evidence should be avoided. If they must be used, they should be password protected.

7. An alternative to cloud-based solutions for the administration, storage and retrieval of electronic assessment evidence is the use of the ETB's internal organisation network. Where storage is on a network drive, permissions must be set so that access is restricted strictly to those who require access to assessment resources as part of the assessment process, in compliance with data protection and privacy requirements. Backup and Disaster Recovery Plans must be in place, implemented and tested regularly to ensure that the risk of Data breaches/losses are mitigated.
8. The storage and accessing of video evidence should ideally use a dedicated video hosting and sharing platform such as Stream. Where the volume of video evidence consists of a significant portion of the assessment evidence for a module or programme it is important that the platform used is fit-for-purpose. Access to the video hosting platforms must be managed in a safe manner and in full compliance with Data Protection and other relevant policies and legislation.
9. Hardware devices such as laptops/desktops used by the Assessor for teaching and assessment should be ETB configured devices. Technical support will only be available for ETB devices.

Appendix 1 – Universal Design for Learning (UDL)³

All assessments should be devised with Universal Design for Learning (UDL) guidelines in mind. For the purposes of these guidelines the focus is on the assessment activity.

UDL provides flexibility in the way information is provided, in the way learners respond or demonstrate knowledge and skills and in the way learners are engaged. This will allow all learners equal opportunities to participate in the learning and thus in the assessment and to demonstrate their knowledge, skills and competence in the most suitable way.

In essence, any learning should allow for:

Multiple means of engagement – The “Why” of Learning - learner’s motivation should be stimulated and enthusiasm sustained by promoting various ways of engaging with the learning and with the assessment.

Multiple means of representation – The “What” of Learning – Learners differ in the ways that they perceive and comprehend information that is presented to them so providing options for representation is essential.

Multiple means of expression and action – The “How” of Learning - learners should be offered a variety of ways to present information and content which will support understanding by all learners, particularly those with different learning styles/abilities.

The final point above is probably the most pertinent area when developing alternative assessments – learners, in consultation with the assessor should be offered different ways to present their assessment. This could be a poster, a blog, a podcast, a presentation (with or without visuals), a storyboard, model building etc. All details should be outlined in the Assessment Brief. Assessors must adhere to the learning outcomes in question and align the alternative assessment with same. Assessors must ensure that all the knowledge, skills and competences asked in the learning outcome are still demonstrated, albeit in a different manner.

Important points to note

Learners should be made aware of the new assessment method and afforded the opportunity to trial the new assessment method in advance. This may involve phone calls with the learner to talk through the assessment.

- Make it clear to the learner that support is there when needed. Talk to the learner and listen to their concerns;
- Ensure that any information on the new Assessment Brief is clear and comprehensive. The assessor should be aware of the language that will “talk” to the learners in this remote working environment;
- Keep in mind the method used to disseminate this brief. Be cognisant that the learner may be receiving this online for the first time. The learner may also need more time to understand the instructions;

³ <https://www.ahead.ie/udl>

- If possible, create a learning community where the class group can support each other. Keep established mentoring/buddy systems in operation. Ensure where possible that these learners can still make contact with each other;
- All briefs and instructional material should be developed in an accessible format, cognisant of all learners needs when working in a new environment ([Accessible Documents](#));
- The ETB's *Assessment Procedures* provide guidance and direction for staff and learners.

Appendix 2 - Word Count

Word Count Guidelines

Note: This is a guideline document for any assessor who wishes to set a word count for written assessments at Level 4-6. Any word counts specified in a module descriptor will always take precedent.

Weighting	Word Count
5%	250-500
10%	500-750
15%	750-1000
20%	1000-1250
25%	1250-1500
30%	1500-1750
35%	1750-2000
40%	2000-2250
45%	2250-2500
50%	2500-2750
55%	2750-3000
60%	3000-3250