COMMUNICATING IN A FURTHER EDUCATION CONTEXT

Resource to assist Providers / Centres in ensuring the effective implementation of Communications Processes and Procedures across all of the areas of the Provider's Quality Assurance Agreement with FETAC

This resource is part of a series of publications developed by FESS to support DES funded Providers / Centres in the effective implementation of their FETAC Quality Assurance Requirements.

The publications are available to download at www.fess.ie.

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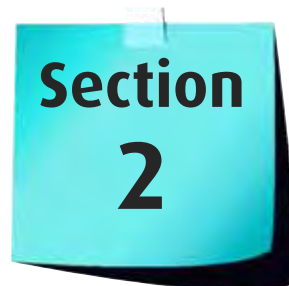
Contents

Preamble

This resource has been developed to assist Providers / Centres in ensuring the effective implementation of Communications Processes and Procedures across all of the areas of the Provider's Quality Assurance Agreement with FETAC.

According to FETAC Quality Assurance in Further Education and Training Policy and Guidelines, v1.3, Section B1 of a Provider's Quality Assurance Agreement should be detailed as follows;

Policy Area	Procedures
B.1 Communications	B1.1 Communication with Learners
	B1.2 Communication with Staff
	B1.3 Communication with Other Stakeholders

There are communications responsibilities for Providers across **all** Quality Assurance areas. FESS has structured this resource to support Providers in ensuring effective communications across the Quality Assurance Policy areas.

Communication does not just happen. It must be planned, structured and constantly reviewed. To ensure effective Communication Processes, all strategies and instruments used within the Provider should:

- deliver clear and consistent messages to all Stakeholders
- be simple, direct, and accessible to all Stakeholders
- be user-friendly.

This resource has been developed by the FESS Communications Task Group which comprised members of FESS and Provider representatives;

ANN DUNNE	FETAC QA Officer	City Of Dublin VEC
VIRGO HYNES	FETAC QA Co-Ordinator	Co. Wexford VEC
MARIE ROONEY	Co-Ordinator for Research and Policy	Co. Dublin VEC
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FESS would like to acknowledge and thank the members of the Task Group and their employers for facilitating and contributing to this process.

Introduction

The Further Education Support Service Communications Resource – Communicating in a Further Education Context is structured in four main sections:

Section 1

FESS Communications Audit and Planning Tool

This will assist Providers in reviewing current communications practices across the Quality Assurance areas with all Stakeholders and in planning for the future. The tool allows Providers to make notes, provide evidence and plan for improvement in Communications processes across FETAC Quality Assurance policy areas.
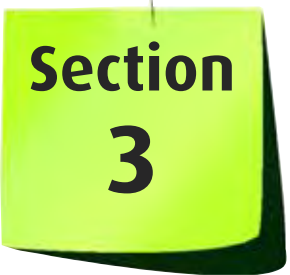
Section 2

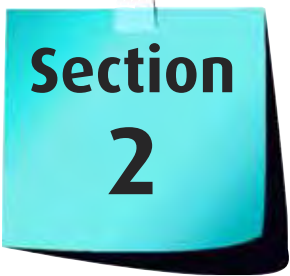### FESS Checklist for Providing Information to Learners

This checklist is structured in accordance with procedures for each Quality Assurance area, and will assist Providers in ensuring that all relevant information is communicated to Learners.
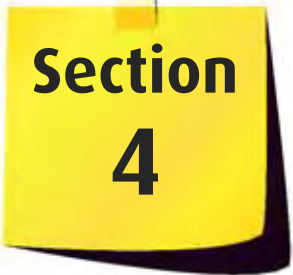
Section 3

FESS Checklist for Providing Information to Staff

This checklist is structured in accordance with procedures for each Quality Assurance area. It will assist Providers in ensuring that Staff are informed of and updated with all relevant information.

Section 4

Suggested Methodologies for Communicating in a Further Education Context

This section gives an overview of some possible communications methodologies that Providers may use. It will serve to check the methods most appropriate to your context and to introduce more varied and effective means where applicable.

FESS Communications Audit and Planning Tool

The FESS Communications Audit and Planning Tool comprises six sections which can each be used to ensure effective communications procedures with Learners, Staff and other Stakeholders, within the named Quality Assurance Policy Area. Each section may be used as a standalone resource. Completing all six sections will enable the Provider to identify all communications activities and to plan for improvement where relevant.

The requirements of FETAC Quality Assurance Policy Area B1 Communications are embedded across the tool, and we have also selected the following policy areas for specific attention,

    B2 Equality
    B3 Staff Recruitment and
        Development
    B4 Access, Transfer and
        Progression
    B5 Programme Development
        Delivery and Review
    B6 Fair and Consistent Assessment
        of Learners
    B9 Self Evaluation.

This tool allows Providers to make notes and comments, provide evidence and indicate plans for improvement.

In completing this section FESS recommend using the FESS Equality Action Planning Framework, which is available to download at www.fess.ie.

The FESS Checklist for Providing Information to Learners (pages 32-37) and the FESS Checklist for Providing Information to Staff (pages 38-43) may be used to complement this tool.

Note: It is good practice to ensure awareness within the Provider of the 9 Grounds for discrimination covered by legislation, i.e. gender, marital status, family status, religion, age, disability, sexual orientation, race and membership of the Traveller community.

FESS COMMUNICATIONS AUDIT AND PLANNING TOOL

FETAC Quality Assurance: B2 EQUALITY

COMMUNICATION TO LEARNERS

Provider notes, comments, evidence, plans for improvement

Is the Provider's Equality Policy available and accessible to prospective Learners?

Examples of evidence; Prospectus, Website, Learner Handbook

Is the Provider's Equality Policy prominently displayed and circulated to participating Learners?

Examples of evidence: Learner Noticeboard, Learner Handbook
Please see the FESS Equality Action Planning Framework, available at www.fess.ie. Also refer to, www.equality.ie

Are Learners informed of their right to lodge a discrimination complaint and the related procedures?

Examples of evidence: Prospectus, Website, Learner Handbook

COMMUNICATION FROM LEARNERS

Provider notes, comments, evidence, plans for improvement

Are Learners given an opportunity to provide feedback on their Provider's Equality Policy and equality issues?

Examples of evidence; Questionnaires, Minutes of Tutor/Learner Meetings, Minutes of Student Council Meetings

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FESS COMMUNICATIONS AUDIT AND PLANNING TOOL

FETAC Quality Assurance: **B2 EQUALITY** *(continued)*

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COMMUNICATION TO STAFF

Provider notes, comments, evidence, plans for improvement

Is the Provider's Equality Policy prominently displayed and circulated to participating Staff?	Examples of evidence; Staff Handbook, Provider website, agenda item at Staff Meetings, memos from Management
Are Staff informed of Equality Training Opportunities?	Please see the FESS Equality Action Planning Framework, available at www.fess.ie ● Phase 1 Step 2 – *Initial Equality Awareness Training* and *Equality Training Sections* ● Appendix 2 – *List of Agencies and Resources for Further Training*
Is the Provider Equality Plan communicated to Staff?	Please see the FESS Equality Action Planning Framework at www.fess.ie ● Phase 3 Step 6 – *Develop Action Plan* ● Phase 3 Step 6 – *Equality Action Planning Template*

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FESS COMMUNICATIONS AUDIT AND PLANNING TOOL

FETAC Quality Assurance: **B2 EQUALITY** *(continued)*

COMMUNICATION TO STAFF	Provider notes, comments, evidence, plans for improvement
Are Staff consulted in the review of the Provider's Equality Policy?	Examples of evidence; Minutes of Staff Meetings, Staff questionnaires, Staff Feedback Forms, Focus groups
Are Staff informed of their right to lodge a discrimination complaint and the related procedures?	Examples of evidence; Staff Handbook, Minutes of Staff Induction

COMMUNICATION FROM STAFF	Provider notes, comments, evidence, plans for improvement
Is there a system in place for Staff to communicate their Equality training needs?	Examples of evidence; Notes /Minutes of Staff Meetings, Staff questionnaires, Staff CPD review
Is there a facility for Staff to give feedback on Equality issues and the Provider's Equality Plan?	Examples of evidence; Minutes of Staff Meetings

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FETAC Quality Assurance: **B2 EQUALITY** *(continued)*

COMMUNICATION TO EXTERNAL STAKEHOLDERS

(**Note;** External Stakeholders may include work experience employers, prospective employers, external guidance personnel etc)

Provider notes, comments, evidence, plans for improvement

Is the Provider's Equality Policy available and accessible to External Stakeholders?

Examples of evidence; Provider Website, Materials / Presentations used at Open Days / Evenings and during promotional visits

Are External Stakeholders informed of the right to lodge a discrimination complaint and the related procedures?

Examples of evidence; Provider / College / Centre Prospectus, Customer Charter

COMMUNICATION FROM EXTERNAL STAKEHOLDERS

Provider notes, comments, evidence, plans for improvement

Are External Stakeholders given an opportunity to provide feedback on Equality issues?

Examples of evidence; Questionnaires, letters, notes of phone calls

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FETAC Quality Assurance: B3 STAFF RECRUITMENT AND DEVELOPMENT

COMMUNICATION TO LEARNERS

Are Learners given adequate notice of changes in time-table to facilitate Staff Continuing Professional Development (CPD) activities?

Provider notes, comments, evidence, plans for improvement

Examples of evidence; Provider Noticeboard, Email, Text Messages

COMMUNICATION FROM LEARNERS

Are there procedures in place that allow Learners to communicate their needs which may then inform plans for Staff CPD?

Provider notes, comments, evidence, plans for improvement

Examples of evidence; Data from Learner Survey (identified areas may include specific language needs, assistive technology, literacy support)
Please see the FESS Equality Action Planning Framework available at, www.fess.ie

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FESS COMMUNICATIONS AUDIT AND PLANNING TOOL

FETAC Quality Assurance: **B3 STAFF RECRUITMENT AND DEVELOPMENT** *(continued)*

COMMUNICATION TO STAFF	Provider notes, comments, evidence, plans for improvement
Are all Staff informed of Job Vacancies & Appointments within the Provider?	Examples of evidence; Job advertisements placed on Staff Noticeboard
Is information on selection procedures readily available for existing and prospective Staff?	Examples of evidence; Selection criteria available on file
Are new Staff informed of Provider Staff Induction Training?	Examples of evidence; Memos to Staff, CPD Calendar Please see the FESS online resource for New Tutors, available at www.fess.ie
Is information on relevant professional bodies/ certifying bodies including professional publications easily available to Staff?	Examples of evidence; Subject association website, newsletters, dedicated noticeboards
Are Staff informed of a range of relevant CPD training programmes?	Examples of evidence; CPD Calendar, Memos from Management, Minutes from Staff Meetings

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FESS COMMUNICATIONS AUDIT AND PLANNING TOOL

FETAC Quality Assurance: **B3 STAFF RECRUITMENT AND DEVELOPMENT** *(continued)*

COMMUNICATION FROM STAFF	Provider notes, comments, evidence, plans for improvement
Is CPD included on the Agenda for Staff/Programme Meetings?	Examples of evidence; Agenda/Minutes from Staff/Programme Meetings
Are Staff consulted on CPD needs?	Examples of evidence; Data from Staff surveys, Minutes from Staff Meetings Please see FESS Local Seminar Procedures available at, www.fess.ie
Are Staff who participate in CPD facilitated in sharing learning / resources with colleagues?	Examples of evidence; ICT Platform, Use of Intranet, Minutes from Programme Meetings

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FETAC Quality Assurance: B3 STAFF RECRUITMENT AND DEVELOPMENT *(continued)*

COMMUNICATION TO EXTERNAL STAKEHOLDERS	Provider notes, comments, evidence, plans for improvement
Are relevant external agencies communicated with in relation to Staff Recruitment and Development as appropriate?	Examples of evidence; Emails, Letters, Minutes of Meetings

COMMUNICATION FROM EXTERNAL STAKEHOLDERS	Provider notes, comments, evidence, plans for improvement
Is information from external agencies in relation to Staff Recruitment and Development circulated as appropriate ?	Examples of evidence; Notice to Staff informing them of the following websites, The Teaching Council Website; www.teachingcouncil.ie The Department of Education and Skills may contain updates on recruitment and CPD initiatives; www.education.ie The Education Centres in Ireland offer extensive CPD Calendars of Events. Please see; www.ateci.ie The FESS website provides many CPD supports and resources, www.fess.ie

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FESS COMMUNICATIONS AUDIT AND PLANNING TOOL

FETAC Quality Assurance: B4 ACCESS, TRANSFER AND PROGRESSION

COMMUNICATION TO LEARNERS	Provider notes, comments, evidence, plans for improvement
Is information available for and communicated to all Learners on Access, Transfer and Progression (ATP) routes and opportunities?	Examples of evidence; Admission criteria, framework information, credit transfer /exemptions, Prospectus, Website, Learner Handbook, Provider Application Form, Promotional Materials, Enrolment Forms
Is information on Programmes and related awards included on course database websites?	Examples of evidence; Programmes listed on Qualifax, www.qualifax.ie Careers Portal, www.careersportal.ie
Are processes in place to ensure ongoing information about ATP is communicated to Learners?	Examples of evidence; Career Guidance Noticeboards The Adult Education Guidance Information Service, please contact your local VEC or see www.ncge.ie

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FESS COMMUNICATIONS AUDIT AND PLANNING TOOL

FETAC Quality Assurance: B4 ACCESS, TRANSFER AND PROGRESSION *(continued)*

COMMUNICATION TO LEARNERS

Are support processes in place to enable Learners to progress through the framework, including specific supports for mature students where applicable?

Provider notes, comments, evidence, plans for improvement

Examples of evidence; Preparation for interviews, Aptitude test preparation; Support for Learners making applications through the CAO, UCAS and other systems, including direct applications; Relevant external organisations invited to address learners about ATP opportunities, for example, Higher Education Institutes (HEIs); Information on funding mechanisms, grants and opportunities

COMMUNICATION FROM LEARNERS

Are systems in place to respond accurately when Learners make Access, Transfer and Progression (ATP) enquiries and requests to the Provider?

Provider notes, comments, evidence, plans for improvement

Examples of evidence; Supporting documentation for processes for eligibility, opportunities to transfer and progress, recognition of prior learning and certification, personal statements, references

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FESS COMMUNICATIONS AUDIT AND PLANNING TOOL

FETAC Quality Assurance: B4 ACCESS, TRANSFER AND PROGRESSION *(continued)*

COMMUNICATION TO STAFF

Provider notes, comments, evidence, plans for improvement

Are all Staff aware and regularly updated, where appropriate, of relevant ATP opportunities that are available to Learners?

Examples of evidence; Staff Handbook, Programme Team Meetings, Notice to Staff of the following websites, FESS, available at www.fess.ie
FETAC, available at www.fetac.ie (Higher Education Links)
NQAI, available at www.nqai.ie

Are Staff aware of the procedures that the Provider implements to ensure that all Learners have access to appropriate ATP information?

Examples of evidence; Provider website, Provider QA Agreement with FETAC, Staff Meetings, Staff Handbooks, Staff Noticeboards, Referrals to Guidance personnel

COMMUNICATION FROM STAFF

Provider notes, comments, evidence, plans for improvement

Are systems in place to respond accurately to ATP queries from Staff?

Examples of evidence; Agenda items at Staff Meetings, Staff Noticeboards, Emails

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FESS COMMUNICATIONS AUDIT AND PLANNING TOOL

FETAC Quality Assurance: B4 ACCESS, TRANSFER AND PROGRESSION *(continued)*

COMMUNICATION TO EXTERNAL STAKEHOLDERS

Is information on ATP opportunities available to External Stakeholders as appropriate?

Some examples of External Stakeholders might include;

● Local and Community Groups

● Organisations dealing with funding streams and mechanisms (Vocational Training Opportunities Scheme, Higher Education Authority, Back to Education Initiative)

● Employers

● Institute of Guidance Counsellors, National Council for Guidance in Education

● Higher Education Institutes

● Health Service Executive, National Educational Psychological Service

Provider notes, comments, evidence, plans for improvement

Examples of evidence; Provider Website, Prospectus and promotional material (brochures, flyers etc.)

COMMUNICATION FROM EXTERNAL STAKEHOLDERS

Are processes in place to respond accurately to ATP queries from External Stakeholders?

Provider notes, comments, evidence, plans for improvement

Examples of evidence; Emails, letters

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FESS COMMUNICATIONS AUDIT AND PLANNING TOOL

FETAC Quality Assurance: **B5 PROGRAMME DEVELOPMENT, DELIVERY AND REVIEW**

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COMMUNICATION TO LEARNERS	Provider notes, comments, evidence, plans for improvement
Are Learners adequately informed of programme content, structure, materials and certification in advance of commencing programme?	Examples of evidence; Promotional materials, Learner Induction Programme, Learner Handbook, Programme Handbook, Provider Website
Is information on resources & facilities to support learning made easily available to Learners?	Examples of evidence; Guidance and Learning Support Services, Computer Room Availability, Library, Resource Room, Sports Facilities, Canteen, Catering service, Local Community Services
Are programme/course timetables clear and easily available for Learners? Are Learners informed about health and safety requirements? Are Learners informed about outings, field trips, outings and trips as appropriate in advance of and during the programme? Do Learners know how they can contribute to an ongoing review of the programme?	Examples of evidence; Programme Handbook, Programme Induction, Minutes from Student Council Meetings, Notes from tutorials, Questionnaires/Surveys, Notices from Learner Noticeboards, Learner Evaluation Forms

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FESS COMMUNICATIONS AUDIT AND PLANNING TOOL

FETAC Quality Assurance: **B5 PROGRAMME DEVELOPMENT, DELIVERY AND REVIEW** *(continued)*

COMMUNICATION FROM LEARNERS	Provider notes, comments, evidence, plans for improvement
Are records maintained of prospective Learner interest / needs identification?	Examples of evidence; Open Day visitors, Application Numbers, feedback from prospective Learners, enquiries at career exhibitions, web-site visits
Is Learner feedback from prospective and participating Learners obtained and analysed? Is this information used to inform new programme development? Are programmes amended as appropriate?	Examples of evidence; Learner Questionnaire, Learner Evaluation Forms, Minutes from Focus Group discussions
Can Learners easily communicate their needs and resources in relation to the programme? Are established channels of communication in place?	Examples of evidence; Minutes from Student Council Meetings, Minutes from Learner/Tutor Meetings, Evaluation/Feedback Forms

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FESS COMMUNICATIONS AUDIT AND PLANNING TOOL

FETAC Quality Assurance: B5 PROGRAMME DEVELOPMENT, DELIVERY AND REVIEW *(continued)*

COMMUNICATION TO STAFF	Provider notes, comments, evidence, plans for improvement
Are Staff aware of the Provider's programme development delivery and review policy and procedures? ● Is a schedule of Programme Planning Meetings and Programme Review Meetings made available to Staff at the appropriate times? ● Are Staff informed of Health and Safety requirements? Can Staff easily review all Health & Safety practice at year end? ● Are Staff informed of procedures in relation to Learner attendance records and other Learner records? ● Do Staff know they can contribute to an ongoing review of the programme via various channels of communications ? ● Are Staff informed that all feedback is reviewed and applied where appropriate?	Examples of evidence; Staff Handbook, Intranet, Website, Copy of schedule of Meetings, Staff Evaluation Forms, Learner Handbook, Learner Contract, Minutes from Staff / Department / Programme Meetings.
Are Staff constantly updated on programme development, delivery and review issues?	Examples of evidence; minutes of Staff / Department / Programme meetings, memos, feedback from External Stakeholders
Are Staff informed of programme planning materials required in advance of the programme?	Examples of evidence; Schemes of work; Programme time-table, Assessment schedule, Programme / Department Meetings schedule

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FETAC Quality Assurance: B5 PROGRAMME DEVELOPMENT, DELIVERY AND REVIEW *(continued)*

COMMUNICATION TO STAFF	Provider notes, comments, evidence, plans for improvement
Are Staff informed about the various teaching & learning resources available to support the programme?	Examples of evidence; publications, learning resource materials, the Further Education Support Service, available at, www.fess.ie
Are certification requirements for the award communicated to all Staff?	Examples of evidence; Information from FETAC available at, www.fetac.ie, Minutes from Programme Team Meetings, Copy of Provider Prospectus, Advertising material

COMMUNICATION FROM STAFF	Provider notes, comments, evidence, plans for improvement
Are Staff facilitated in providing feedback on programme design & content, and services / resources?	Examples of evidence; Staff Meetings, surveys, questionnaires

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FETAC Quality Assurance: B5 PROGRAMME DEVELOPMENT, DELIVERY AND REVIEW *(continued)*

COMMUNICATION TO EXTERNAL STAKEHOLDERS	Provider notes, comments, evidence, plans for improvement
Is there regular communication with external agencies such as DES, FETAC, employers and community partners to enhance programme development, delivery and review?	Examples of evidence; Copies of letters, Faxes, Emails

COMMUNICATION FROM EXTERNAL STAKEHOLDERS	Provider notes, comments, evidence, plans for improvement
Are findings and analysis of research consulted when ascertaining the need for the development of existing programmes and the provision of new ones?	Examples of evidence; Copies of national and local surveys
Are External Stakeholders facilitated in providing feedback on programmes and services?	Examples of evidence; Work placement reports, External Examiner / External Authenticator reports

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FESS COMMUNICATIONS AUDIT AND PLANNING TOOL

FETAC Quality Assurance: B6 FAIR AND CONSISTENT ASSESSMENT OF LEARNERS
Please see Section 2, FESS Checklist for Providing Information to Learners

COMMUNICATION TO LEARNERS	Provider notes, comments, evidence, plans for improvement
Are Learners informed of the Provider's assessment policies and procedures including Reasonable Accommodation, Assessment Deadlines, Receipting evidence, Assessment Malpractice, Repeat of Assessment Activity and Learner Appeals? ● Are Learners informed of their responsibilities and entitlements in relation to assessment? ● Are Learners given the assessment plan/calendar (including examination timetable, if appropriate) for the programme? ● Are Learners issued with clear assessment briefs including assessment criteria and marking schemes? ● Are Learners given feedback on assessments?	Examples of evidence; Assessment plan/calendar (including examination timetable, if appropriate) Assessment briefs including assessment and marking criteria, Details of feedback on assessments including signed statements, Learner Handbook, Learner Contract
Are Learners informed of the relevant award requirements and structures including the assessment methods, techniques and grading classifications?	Examples of evidence; Provider Website Please see Section 2, FESS Checklist for Providing Information to Learners (page 32) FETAC information available at www.fetac.ie Copies of Programme Descriptors

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FESS COMMUNICATIONS AUDIT AND PLANNING TOOL

FETAC Quality Assurance: B6 FAIR AND CONSISTENT ASSESSMENT OF LEARNERS *(continued)*

COMMUNICATION FROM LEARNERS	Provider notes, comments, evidence, plans for improvement
Are Learners facilitated in giving feedback on the assessment process?	Examples of evidence; Evidence of Learner involvement in Self Evaluation (interviews, notes, questionnaires), Copies of Evaluation Reports
Are requests for Learner Appeals facilitated by the Provider?	Examples of evidence; Request Form for Appeals, Evidence of Learner Appeals

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FESS COMMUNICATIONS AUDIT AND PLANNING TOOL

FETAC Quality Assurance: B6 FAIR AND CONSISTENT ASSESSMENT OF LEARNERS *(continued)*

COMMUNICATION TO STAFF

Provider notes, comments, evidence, plans for improvement

Are Staff made aware of **all** the Provider's assessment policies and procedures, and their associated roles and responsibilities, including;

- provision of Information to Learners in relation to assessment (briefs)
- ensuring consistency of marking
- providing reasonable accommodation
- assessment deadlines
- assessment malpractice
- providing feedback to Learners
- maintaining assessment records
- safe and secure storage of assessment materials
- authentication and results approval and appeals processes
- corrective action
- repeat opportunities?

Examples of evidence; Provider Guidelines for Assessors, Staff Handbook, Copy of Provider's QA Agreement, Staff Handbook, Minutes from Staff Meetings, Learner Feedback, Minutes from Results Approval Team Meetings

Do Staff receive copies of / or feedback from External Examiner and External Authenticator Reports as appropriate?

Examples of evidence; Copy of External Authenticator Report Receipt (signed by Staff Members)

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FETAC Quality Assurance: **B6 FAIR AND CONSISTENT ASSESSMENT OF LEARNERS** *(continued)*

COMMUNICATION FROM STAFF	Provider notes, comments, evidence, plans for improvement
Are Staff facilitated in contributing to the assessment plans for programmes?	Examples of evidence: Minutes from Programme Team and Staff Meetings, Staff Feedback Forms
Are Staff facilitated to give feedback on the Provider's assessment process?	Examples of evidence: Copies of Programme Review, Copy of Self Evaluation Process and Programme Improvement Plan
Have Staff provided all relevant and necessary assessment documentation and materials?	Examples of evidence: assessment briefs, examination papers, marking schemes, outline solutions, evidence of Learner feedback, assessment records, assessment processes and procedures

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FETAC Quality Assurance: B6 FAIR AND CONSISTENT ASSESSMENT OF LEARNERS *(continued)*

COMMUNICATION TO EXTERNAL STAKEHOLDERS

Are all third parties (for example, employers, National Governing Bodies [NGBs], External Examiners / External Authenticators) involved in the assessment process aware of all the relevant policies and procedures, and of their assessment responsibilities under the Provider's QA system?

Provider notes, comments, evidence, plans for improvement

Examples of evidence; Work Experience Employer's Report, National Governing Bodies' Requirements (Football Association of Ireland, Water Safety Association), Copy of Provider Pack given to External Stakeholders (covering letter, Policies on Assessment Malpractice, Repeat opportunities, Provider QA Agreement on Assessment)

COMMUNICATION FROM EXTERNAL STAKEHOLDERS

Can all relevant third parties provide feedback on the Provider's assessment process?

Provider notes, comments, evidence, plans for improvement

Examples of evidence; External Examiner / External Authenticator reports, Providing feedback as part of the Provider's Self Evaluation process where appropriate (Work Experience employer comments, NGBs)

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FESS COMMUNICATIONS AUDIT AND PLANNING TOOL

FETAC Quality Assurance: B9 Self Evaluation of Programmes and Services

COMMUNICATION TO LEARNERS

	Provider notes, comments, evidence, plans for improvement
Are Learners aware that they may be involved in an evaluation of programmes and services?	Examples of evidence; Learner Handbook, Copy of Learner Induction, Learner Noticeboard, Minutes of Focus Group Meetings, Minutes of Student Council Meetings, Copies of Emails, Texts
Is clear direction on participating in the evaluation process given to the appropriate Learners?	Examples of evidence; Copies of Evaluation Forms
Are Learners on a programme informed of the outcome/s (as appropriate) of the Provider's Self Evaluation process?	Examples of evidence; Copy of Programme Improvement Plan, Learner Noticeboards

COMMUNICATION FROM LEARNERS

	Provider notes, comments, evidence, plans for improvement
Are Learners included in the Self Evaluation process and have they the opportunity to contribute feedback in all relevant areas?	Examples of evidence; Surveys, Focus Groups, interviews

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FESS COMMUNICATIONS AUDIT AND PLANNING TOOL

FETAC Quality Assurance: B9 Self Evaluation of Programmes and Services *(continued)*

COMMUNICATION TO STAFF	Provider notes, comments, evidence, plans for improvement
Are Staff aware of the Provider's Self Evaluation policy and procedures including frequency, methodology, range of programmes and services to be evaluated, involvement of the External Evaluator, Co-ordination responsibilities, Staff involvement?	Examples of evidence; Provider QA Agreement, Minutes from Staff Meetings, Staff Handbook, Staff Induction
Are Staff informed of their role in compiling the Self/Programme Evaluation Report and the Programme Improvement Plan?	Examples of evidence; Minutes from Programme Team Meetings, Staff Meetings, Self Evaluation Team Meetings
Are Staff informed of the outcomes and of their associated responsibilities arising from the Programme /Self Evaluation Report and Programme Improvement Plan?	Examples of evidence; Programme /Self Evaluation Report and Programme Improvement Plan

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FESS COMMUNICATIONS AUDIT AND PLANNING TOOL

FETAC Quality Assurance: **B9 Self Evaluation of Programmes and Services** *(continued)*

COMMUNICATION FROM STAFF

	Provider notes, comments, evidence, plans for improvement
Are **all** Staff given the opportunity to participate in the Self Evaluation Process?	Examples of evidence; Questionnaire, Minutes of Meetings, interviews, reports
Are Staff offered an opportunity to give feedback on the Provider's Self Evaluation process?	Examples of evidence; Questionnaire, Minutes of Meetings, interviews, reports

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FESS COMMUNICATIONS AUDIT AND PLANNING TOOL

FETAC Quality Assurance: B9 Self Evaluation of Programmes and Services *(continued)*

COMMUNICATION TO EXTERNAL STAKEHOLDERS

Provider notes, comments, evidence, plans for improvement

Is the External Evaluator briefed by the Provider on the Provider's Self Evaluation process?

Are the role and responsibilities of the External Evaluator clearly defined and agreed in advance of the Self Evaluation Process?

Are all other stakeholders / contributors (as identified by the Provider to take part in the Self Evaluation process) briefed on the Provider's Self Evaluation process and on how they will be expected to contribute?

Are copies of the Self / Programme Evaluation Report and Programme Improvement Plan forwarded to FETAC?

Is feedback on the Self Evaluation process disseminated to all relevant stakeholders, as appropriate?

Examples of evidence: Copies of Emails, Letters, Copy of Provider QA Agreement, Copy of Programme Improvement Plan forwarded to FETAC

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FURTHER EDUCATION
SUPPORT SERVICE

FESS COMMUNICATIONS AUDIT AND PLANNING TOOL

FETAC Quality Assurance: B9 Self Evaluation of Programmes and Services *(continued)*

COMMUNICATION FROM EXTERNAL STAKEHOLDERS

Provider notes, comments, evidence, plans for improvement

Examples of evidence; List of all relevant stakeholders, Copy of FETAC response to Self Evaluation Report and Programme Improvement Plan, Copy of External Evaluation Report

Are all relevant stakeholders included in the Self Evaluation process?

Has FETAC acknowledged receipt of the Programme / Self Evaluation Report and Programme Improvement Plan?

Has the External Evaluator provided a Report if appropriate and agreed with the Provider?

Are relevant stakeholders offered an opportunity to review and give feedback on the Provider's Self Evaluation process e.g. External Evaluator's Report?

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FURTHER EDUCATION
SUPPORT SERVICE

FESS Checklist for Providing Information to Learners

FETAC-registered Providers must inform all Learners, both prospective and participating, of relevant information in relation to programmes leading to FETAC awards.

This checklist will assist Providers in meeting their legislative and Quality Assurance responsibilities when communicating with Learners. It is structured in accordance with procedures for each Quality Assurance area, and provides a list of statements which can be ticked when the action is complete.

Successful completion of this checklist will assist Providers in ensuring that all relevant information is communicated to Learners.

FESS Checklist for Providing Information to Learners

Learners must be informed of the following:

B1 Communications

Procedures for communicating information to Learners ☐

Procedures that facilitate feedback from Learners ☐

Communications with External Stakeholders that are relevant
to Learners' participation on the programme ☐

B2 Equality

The Provider's Equality policy ☐

Procedures for making and handling complaints (grievance procedures) ☐

B3 Staff Recruitment and Development

Staff Development days effecting the Learner calendar
(These should be included in the Learner calendar with related instructions for Learners) ☐

B4 Access, Transfer and Progression

Information provision for prospective Learners:

The National Framework of Qualifications (NFQ) and National Qualifications Authority
of Ireland (NQAI) statements of knowledge skill and competence needed
as a basis for successful participation on every programme offered ☐

Entry arrangements including:

- statement of the entry requirements for the programme ☐
- details of how decisions are made regarding allocation of places ☐
- advice / guidance for Learners to assist them in making informed
  choices in programme selection ☐
- details of supports / accommodations available ☐
- the appeals mechanism for Learners refused access to the programme ☐

Arrangements to assess a Learner's eligibility to access a programme (see FETAC Information
for Learners – Guidelines for Providers page 7 to develop 'Equipped to Participate' statements) ☐

Arrangements for the Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) including:

- entry onto a programme ☐
- exemptions within a programme ☐

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download at

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FESS Checklist for Providing Information to Learners

Learners must be informed of the following:

Tick (✓) when satisfied

B4 Access, Transfer and Progression *(continued)*

- receiving credit towards an award ☐
- access to a full award if applicable including information on mentors and Learners' responsibilities in seeking RPL ☐
- steps in the process in making an application ☐
- list of appropriate agencies to support recognition of prior learning and / or other awards (FETAC, NQAI) ☐
- an appeals procedure to appeal unsuccessful applications for entry to a programme on basis of RPL ☐

Programme information including:

- name of awarding body(ies) ☐
- programme content ☐
- programme structure and duration ☐
- award title(s) ☐
- award type(s) ☐
- National Framework of Qualifications (NFQ) level(s) ☐
- fees, grants and associated regulations ☐
- protection for learners if programme ceases ☐

Opportunities for transfer or progression to other programmes ☐

Procedures to facilitate diversity (including information on adaptations and supports) for Learners when:

- applying for entry to programme
- participating on a programme ☐
- availing of transfer and progression opportunities (if appropriate)

Information for Learners on commencement of the Programme:
Note: It is assumed that these Learners will have been informed of the above prior to commencing the programme

FETAC Learner Charter ☐

Learner calendar / timetable ☐

Assessment Details (see following for more detail) ☐

Procedures to access learning supports ☐

Relevant Health and Safety information including the Provider's Health and Safety statement ☐

List of Learner rights and responsibilities ☐

Mechanisms for giving and receiving feedback ☐

Qualifications / specific levels of achievement required for progression ☐

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FESS Checklist for Providing Information to Learners

Learners must be informed of the following:

Tick (✓) when satisfied

B5 Programme Development, Delivery and Review

Details of records on Learner participation and achievement including attendance, progress, assessment and certification records ☐

Their participation in needs identification processes and programme review (in relation to programmes and services) ☐

List of required resources and / or available facilities ☐

Programme-specific health and safety responsibilities ☐

B6 Fair and Consistent Assessment of Learners

Learner responsibilities and entitlements including:

- Procedures to comply with Provider's Quality Assurance assessment policy(ies) and procedures (B6)
- Appropriate opportunity provided to Learners to demonstrate the standards for the award ☐
- Receive the award on demonstration of the standards
- Appeal any assessment decision, firstly to the Provider and then to FETAC

Provider's assessment and appeals procedures including:

Assessment calendar including assessment deadlines and examination dates ☐

Provider policy and procedures on assessment deadlines. This will include:
- how to apply for an extension due to extenuating circumstances
- consequences for late submission of work ☐
- list of extenuating circumstances

Procedures in relation to compassionate consideration including:
- how Learners can apply for compassionate consideration ☐
- required supporting documentation

Assessment methods and techniques used in the programme ☐

Grading classifications - Distinction, Merit, Pass, Referred, Successful, as appropriate ☐

Clear assessment briefs indicating
- instructions and guidelines for Learners
- assessment criteria and marking schemes (allocation of marks) ☐
- dates for distribution of assessment briefs
- deadline for submission

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FESS Checklist for Providing Information to Learners

Learners must be informed of the following:

Tick (✓) when satisfied

B6 Fair and Consistent Assessment of Learners *(continued)*

Information on appropriate formats for submission of Learner assessment evidence (written, audio, multi-media, etc.) ☐

Procedures for submission of assessment evidence in line with Provider's policy for example,
- labelling of all assessment evidence prior to submission
- receipting of assessment evidence ☐

Procedures in relation to reasonable accommodations including:
- how Learners can apply for reasonable accommodation
- supporting documentation required
- list of possible reasonable accommodations ☐

Procedures relating to assessment malpractice including:
- what constitutes assessment malpractice
- penalties for assessment malpractice
- procedures to verify that assessment evidence is the Learner's own original work (for example, authorship statements)
- how allegations of assessment malpractice will be dealt with by the Provider including actions to be taken ☐

Procedures for repeating an assessment activity, if applicable ☐

Procedures for feedback on assessments ☐

Procedures for accessing assessment records ☐

Procedures in relation to storage and security of assessment evidence and materials including retention / disposal / return of assessment evidence and breaches of security ☐

General information in relation to the authentication and results approval processes (or the external examining process) including availability of the Learner for these processes, as appropriate ☐

Procedures to make approved results available to Learners ☐

Procedures on requesting certification from FETAC ☐

Procedures for the distribution of certificate(s) ☐

Procedures in relation to Provider Appeals including:
- grounds for appeal ☐
- lodging an appeal of an assessment result and / or assessment procedure(s) and associated implications including cost ☐
- Provider timescale for appeals ☐
- how appeals are dealt with by the Provider ☐

This template is available to download at

Learners must be informed of the following:

Procedures in relation to FETAC National Appeals including:

- the grounds on which a Learner can make an appeal to FETAC (via the Provider) ☐
- timescale (within 6 months from receipt of the result of appeal to Provider and within 12 months of receipt of certification) ☐
- requirement for the appeal to be in writing using the Learner appeals submission form ☐
- fee ☐
- possibility of further evidence being sought by FETAC ☐
- possible requirement to attend a meeting with FETAC appeals review panel ☐

B7 Protection for Learners
For Providers offering programmes on a commercial and profit making basis

Inform Learners of arrangements in place to protect Learners in the event of a programme ceasing unexpectedly. This may include information on appropriate referral points ☐

B9 Self Evaluation of Programmes and Services

Provider's policy and procedures that enable feedback / contributions from Learners in relation to Programmes and Services including:

- How Learners will contribute during the Self Evaluation process ☐
- How the outcomes of the Self Evaluation process are disseminated
- Subsequent action to be taken

Other information that should be communicated to Learners

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FURTHER EDUCATION
SUPPORT SERVICE

FESS Checklist for Providing Information to Staff

FETAC-registered Providers must inform Staff of the Provider's Quality Assurance Agreement with FETAC, the Provider's policies and procedures and of the roles / responsibilities associated with them.

This checklist will assist Providers in meeting their Quality Assurance responsibilities when communicating with Staff. It is structured in accordance with procedures for each Quality Assurance area, and provides a list of statements which can be ticked when the action is complete.

Successful completion of this checklist will assist Providers in ensuring that all relevant information is communicated to Staff.
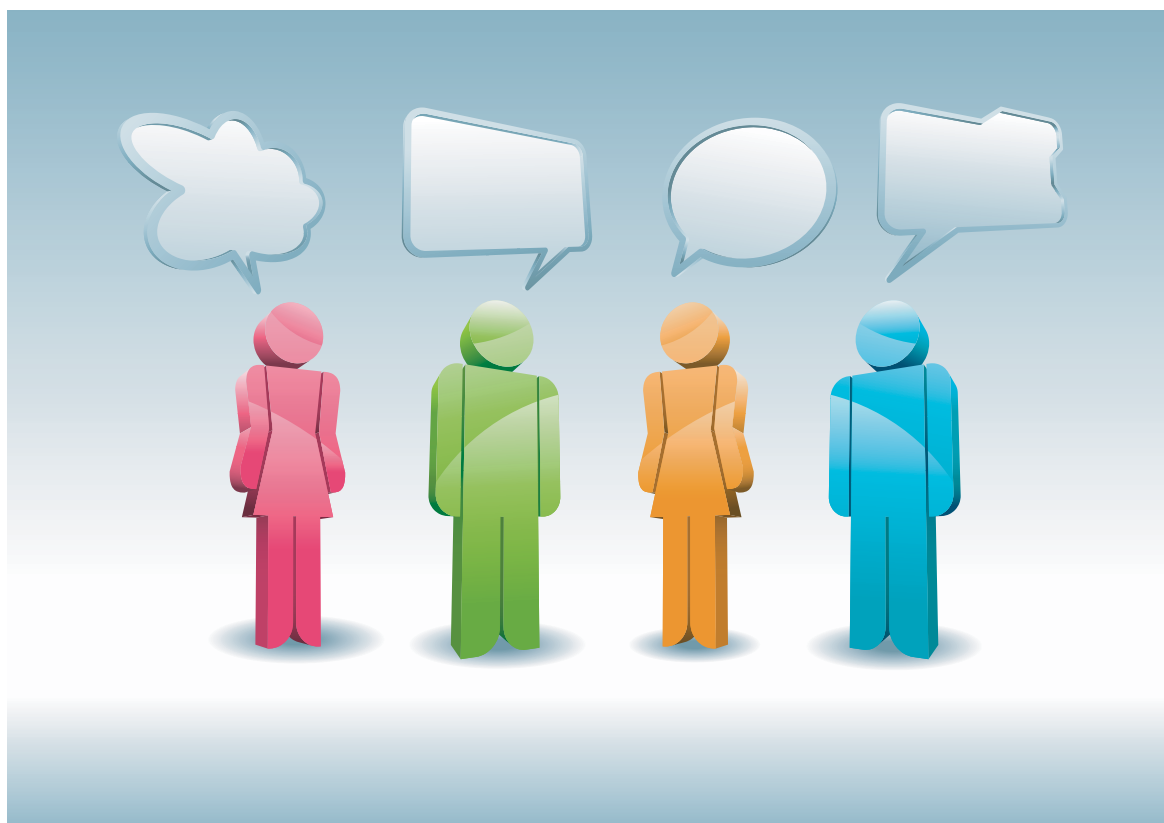
FESS Checklist for Providing Information to Staff

Staff must be informed of the following:

Tick (✓) when satisfied

B1 Communications

Procedures for communicating information to Staff ☐

Procedures that facilitate feedback from Staff ☐

Procedures for communicating with Learners and other Stakeholders ☐

B2 Equality

The Provider's Equality policy ☐

Equality Training opportunities for Staff ☐

The Provider's Equality Plan ☐

Procedures for lodging and handling complaints (grievance procedures) ☐

B3 Staff Recruitment and Development

Job vacancies and appointments, as appropriate ☐

The Provider's selection procedures when appointing Staff ☐

Staff Training / Development including induction training and other Continuing Professional Development (CPD) events ☐

Information pertaining to professional bodies / certification bodies, as appropriate ☐

Provider's procedures to facilitate input from Staff on CPD needs ☐

List of Staff rights and responsibilities ☐

B4 Access, Transfer and Progression

The National Framework of Qualifications (NFQ) statements of knowledge skill and competence needed as a basis for successful participation on every programme offered ☐

Provider's 'Equipped to Participate' statements for each programme (see *FETAC Information for Learners – Guidelines for Providers*, page 7, available at www.fetac.ie, to develop 'Equipped to Participate' statements) ☐

This template is available to download at

www.fess.ie

FESS Checklist for Providing Information to Staff

Staff must be informed of the following:

Tick (✓) when satisfied

B4 Access, Transfer and Progression *(Continued)*

Provider's procedures for Learner entry arrangements including:
- statement of the entry requirements for the programme
- details of how decisions are made regarding allocation of places
- how advice / guidance is provided for Learners to assist them in making informed choices in programme selection
- details of supports / accommodations available
- the appeals mechanism for Learners refused access to the programme

Provider's arrangements for the Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) including:
- entry onto a programme
- exemptions within a programme
- receiving credit towards an award
- access to a full award if applicable including information on mentors and Learners' responsibilities in seeking RPL
- steps in the process of making an application
- list of appropriate agencies to support recognition of prior learning and / or other awards(FETAC, NQAI)
- an appeals procedure to appeal unsuccessful applications for entry to a programme on the basis of RPL

Procedures to facilitate diversity (including information on adaptations and supports) for Learners when:
- applying for entry to a programme
- participating on a programme
- availing of transfer and progression opportunities (if appropriate)

Provider's procedures to ensure that Learners have access to relevant Access, Transfer and Progression information

B5 Programme Development, Delivery and Review

Programme information:
- Programme content
- Programme structure and duration
- Name of awarding body
- Award title(s)
- Award type(s)
- Framework level(s)
- Awarding body(ies)
- Entry requirements
- Assessment Details
- Programme adaptations / Learner supports available

- Transfer and progression opportunities agreed for the award at national or local level and qualifications / specific levels of achievement required for progression
- Mechanisms for giving and receiving feedback
- Fees, grants and associated regulations
- Protection for Learners if programme ceases

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Staff must be informed of the following:

Tick (✓) when satisfied

B5 Programme Development, Delivery and Review *(Continued)*

Staff / Learner calendars / timetables, as appropriate ☐

Provider's procedures on maintenance of Learner records including attendance, progress, assessment, feedback and certification records ☐

The Provider's procedures enabling staff input into programme development and review ☐

Relevant Health and Safety information including the Provider's Health and Safety statement and Programme specific health and safety issues ☐

B6 Fair and Consistent Assessment of Learners

Provider's assessment and appeals procedures including

Assessment calendar including assessment deadlines and examination dates ☐

Provider policy and procedures on assessment deadlines. This will include:
- how a Learner applies for an extension due to extenuating circumstances
- consequences for late submission of work
- list of extenuating circumstances ☐

Procedures in relation to compassionate consideration including:
- how Learners apply for compassionate consideration
- required supporting documentation ☐

Assessment methods and techniques used in the programme ☐

Grading classifications - Distinction, Merit, Pass, Referred, Successful, as appropriate ☐

Procedures for devising clear assessment briefs indicating
- instructions and guidelines for Learners
- assessment criteria and marking criteria (allocation of marks)
- dates for distribution of assessment briefs
- deadline for submission ☐

Information on appropriate formats for submission of Learner assessment evidence (written, audio, multi-media, etc) ☐

Procedures for submission of assessment evidence in line with Provider's policy for example,
- labelling of all assessment evidence prior to submission
- receipting of assessment evidence ☐

Procedures in relation to reasonable accommodations including:
- how Learners can apply for reasonable accommodation
- supporting documentation required
- list of possible reasonable accommodations ☐

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FESS Checklist for Providing Information to Staff

Staff must be informed of the following:

B6 Fair and Consistent Assessment of Learners *(Continued)*

Procedures relating to assessment malpractice including:

- what constitutes assessment malpractice
- penalties for assessment malpractice
- procedures to verify that assessment evidence is the Learner's own original work (for example, authorship statements)
- how allegations of assessment malpractice will be dealt with by the Provider including actions to be taken

☐

Procedures for repeating an assessment activity, if applicable ☐

Procedures for providing feedback on assessments ☐

Procedures for maintaining assessment records ☐

Procedures in relation to storage and security of assessment evidence and materials including retention / disposal / return of assessment evidence and breaches of security ☐

Procedures in relation to the authentication and results approval processes (or the external examining process) including availability of staff for these processes, as appropriate ☐

Procedures to make approved results available to Learners ☐

Procedures for requesting certification from FETAC ☐

Procedures for the distribution of certificate(s) ☐

Procedures in relation to Provider Appeals including:

- grounds for appeal
- lodging an appeal of an assessment result and / or assessment procedure(s) and associated implications including cost
- Provider timescale for appeals
- how appeals are dealt with by the Provider

☐

Procedures in relation to FETAC National Appeals including

- the grounds on which a Learner can make an appeal to FETAC (via the Provider)
- timescale (within 6 months from receipt of the result of appeal to Provider and within 12 months of receipt of certification)
- requirement for the appeal to be in writing using the Learner appeals submission form
- fee
- possibility of further evidence being sought by FETAC
- possible requirement to attend a meeting with FETAC appeals review panel

☐

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Staff must be informed of the following:

Tick (✓)
when satisfied

B7 Protection for Learners
For Providers offering programmes on a commercial and profit-making basis

Procedures that protect Learners in the event of a programme ceasing unexpectedly ☐

B8 Sub-contracting / Procuring Programme Delivery

Arrangements in place in relation to contracting, reporting and monitoring, if applicable ☐

B9 Self-Evaluation of Programmes and Services

Provider's policy and procedures to enable feedback / contributions from staff in relation to
Programmes and Services including:

- Frequency
- Range of programmes to be self-evaluated
- Co-ordination Responsibility
- Role of External Evaluator ☐
- Methodology
- How staff will contribute during the self-evaluation process
- How the outcomes of the Self Evaluation process are disseminated
- Subsequent action to be taken

Other information that should be communicated to Staff

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Suggested Methodologies for Communicating in a Further Education Context

It is important when considering Communications Strategies to choose the correct method of communication for the message. You will find below a listing of the most popular methods of communication that are used in the Further Education context. You may use this list to check the methodologies most appropriate to your context, and also to introduce more varied and effective methods of communication into your centre.

Category / Method	Advantages	Suitability
Printed / Written Materials - Print materials - Letters - Memos - Reports - Forms - Manuals/Handbooks - Brochures - Flyers - Visual images - Newsletters	- Accessible to a wide audience - Concrete evidence - Portable - Can be used when use of e-mail cannot be assumed - Formal - Recorded - Interactive, so opportunities for feedback - Recipient can control pace to respond - Message can be tailored - Locally developed, so potential for high quality - The written word can be specific, self-paced - Still images can be direct and memorable	- When hard copy is required, for example, formal communications - When signature is required - Useful for maintaining records
Online Methods - E-mail - Website - Social Networking (for example, Twitter, Facebook) - Web2.0 tools - Blogs - Wikis - Podcasts - iPod touch and iPad Apps - RSS Feeds	- Quick / instant does not depend on post - Cheap - Environmentally friendly - Can check delivery - Potential to reach large groups - Facilitate spontaneous communication - Facilitates communication with groups - Interactive - Multimedia format facilitates sound, animation etc. - Website updatable (unlike printed materials) - Can link to complementary materials - Can send attachments easily	- Instant contact seeking response - Communication with working groups - Communication with students - Dealing with online applications and responses - Distributing practical information, for example, timetables - Making announcements
Other Technology - Texting/SMS Short Message Service - Audio/DVD/Video - USBs/Memory Sticks - CD ROMs - Teleconferencing - Videoconferencing - Voice and video calls, for example, Skype ™ - Assistive technology - Accessibility for Visually Impaired	- Instant contact - Very common/almost universal - Potential to reach large groups - Facilitate spontaneous communication - Portability of material	- CD ROMs - Back up to written material - Low cost alternative to printed material - Environmentally preferable - Audio/Video - the spoken word and non-verbal sounds can convey tone and context that is much more difficult to convey through the written word. Provides accessibility for the visually impaired - DVD / Video - Publicity material