P9 S9 C11 Security of Assessment Policy and Procedure

Ownership:	Managing Director, Academic Manager, Head of Certification, Course Coordinator
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Reviewed by:	Quality Assurance and Academic Governance Council (QAAGC), QA Officer, PDAC
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1. PURPOSE AND POLICY CONSIDERATIONS

In order to ensure mechanisms are in place for the security, supervision, and integrity of assessment materials, learner assessment documentation/project work submissions, and the maintenance and security of assessment records, Forus Training aims to ensure that assessment materials and accompanying instruments are prepared and distributed in a secure manner amongst relevant assessment personnel and managed securely upon receipt from learners.

In the context of a secure system, Forus Training provides locked locations with secure filing systems to protect both the security and the integrity of the assessment process in its entirety.

2. DEFINITIONS

Security in assessment is defined as the capacity to protect and secure the integrity of the assessment process, including the securing of learner data. The Security of Assessment refers to any resources associated with the process of facilitating and carrying out an assessment. These can be listed as but are not limited to;

- Programme/module assessment materials and instruments,
- Learner assessment documents,
- Learner assessment evidence,

- Learner assessment results and records

- Details of the invigilation/proctoring of examinations,

- Documents relating to the conduct of assessment,

- Documents relating to issues presenting that have impacted on the conduct of assessment, either with or without intent but in doing so, may have influenced the validity of the assessment process,

- Additional papers, drawings, supports and equipment including module component specifications and assessment plans.

Verification of Assessment Submissions

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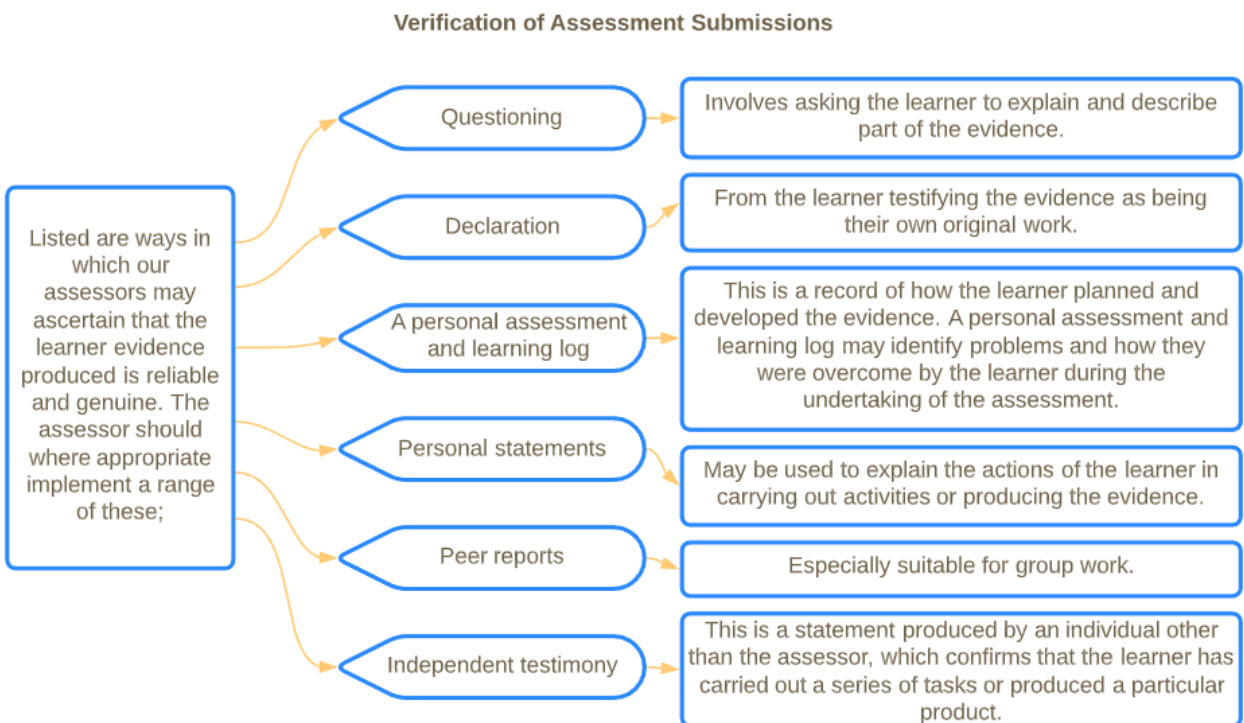
3. SCOPE

This policy and supplementary supporting standard operating procedures are designed to ensure an increased focus on the security of assessment throughout Forus Training provision of service and

related activities. This has been further influenced by updated Data Protection legislation (GDPR). The Forus Training GDPR and Privacy Policy P4 S1.1 - Data Protection (GDPR) Policy and P4 Privacy Policy provides specific detail to the security of personal information in the following 3 areas;

1. Assessment Materials
2. Records and Record Retention
3. Learner Assessment Evidence

Materials can be defined as: Assessment Briefs, Examination Papers, Examination Solutions, Skills Demonstration Practical Assessment Instruments, Marking Criteria, Marking Schemes,

Records can be defined as: Attendance Sheets (completed), Invigilator/Proctor Reports, Seating Plans (written examinations), Trainer Verifications, Visual/Recorded Assessment Evidence, Signed Assessment Documentation, Internal Verification and External Authentication Reports, Appeals Documentation,

Learner Evidence can be defined as: any content, including aural and practical, that is used as assessment evidence and has been developed/written/performed by a learner and thus, forms part or all of their 'assessing' of assessment. This can include hard copies and soft copies.

4. POLICY STATEMENT

The Forus Training Security of Assessment policy and associated standard operating procedures must be adhered to ensure operational compliance and integrity of the assessment process. This policy gives specific detail to roles and responsibilities in quality assuring the security of assessment and learner evidence.

5. PROCEDURES AND PRACTICES

Learner Evidence

At Forus Training we wish to ensure reliability of learner evidence. Where the assessor is not in a direct position to observe the learner carrying out the assessment activity or collecting the evidence first hand,

e.g. when a portfolio or project is used, he/she must be confident that the evidence was actually produced by the learner.

The following details ways in which our assessors may ascertain that the learner evidence produced is reliable and genuine. The assessor should where appropriate implement a range of these;

1) **Questioning**; this involves asking the learner to explain and describe part of the evidence. At Forus Training we believe that It is important to understand how the evidence was produced. This may enable the learner to show that they were responsible for producing the evidence and will also give the learner the opportunity to apply the knowledge and skills required.

2) **Declaration;** from the learner testifying the evidence as being their own original work. This is included as standard within each assessment brief. This declaration needs to be provided with regard to all evidence submitted (See P9 S19 Learner Declaration).

3) **A personal 'assessment and learning log';** this is a record of how the learner planned and developed the evidence. A personal assessment and learning log may identify problems and how they were overcome by the learner during the undertaking of the assessment.

4) **Personal statements;** this is a personal statement which may be used to explain the actions of the learner in carrying out activities or producing the evidence. Personal statements should be clear and explain the learner's role and the context in which the evidence was produced. Personal statements can provide evidence of knowledge and understanding

5) **Peer reports;** these are especially suitable for group work. Peer reports are reports drafted by group members which can help explain individual involvement in a task or project that required collaboration.

6) **Independent testimony;** this is a statement produced by an individual other than the assessor, which confirms that the learner has carried out a series of tasks or produced a particular product. It should record what the learner has demonstrated and corroborate the learner evidence submitted. The identity and role of the individual to provide the testimony for the learner should be agreed in advance between

the assessor and the learner. The use of independent testimony is not intended as a mechanism for assessing learner evidence but as a tool to corroborate the reliability of that evidence

The Head of Centre must ensure that the:

1. Staff are compliant with the assessment procedures of Forus Training, which reflects the requirements of the awarding body.

2. Assessment storage facility is secure with authorised access only.

3. A tracking and storage system which ensures that the location of assessment materials and evidence is known is safely implemented (P9 S9 C11 Assessment - Conduct of assessment and security of assessment materials).

4. Manages the secure storage of assessment evidence and materials.

The Head of Certification must ensure that:

1. The trainers and assessors each understand, and are compliant with the security of assessment procedures of Forus Training.

2. Through the induction process, each trainer/assessor is made aware of their responsibilities in relation to the secure storage of both assessment material and learner assessment evidence.

3. Learners are made aware of their responsibilities for their completion of their assessment evidence and the procedures relating to the submission process.

4. Trainers and administrative staff are compliant with Forus Training's arrangements on the timely return of corrected learner assessment evidence, or secure disposal of assessment evidence following certification.

The Trainer/assessor is responsible for:

1. The understanding of and compliance with the assessment procedures of Forus Training, which reflects the requirements of the awarding body.

Pre Assessment:

- Secure storage and transportation of assessment material (related to programme delivery).
- Ensuring due care in the secure storage (e.g. USB storage), printing and photocopying of assessment briefs and examination papers (where applicable) so that assessment integrity is not compromised.
- Compliance with Forus Training arrangements for receipt of learner evidence.

Post Assessment:

- Compliance with arrangements for the secure transportation, retention and storage of assessment materials and learner assessment evidence (see relevant definitions).

The Learner is responsible for:

1. Submission of assessment evidence in accordance with the assessment deadlines.

2. Retention of any receipt of submission of assessment evidence in line with Centre policies and procedures.

3. Management of and the security and integrity of, their own assessment work in advance of submission. At Levels 1-3, support will be provided by the trainer.

4. Retention of backup copies of assessment evidence. In the case of original documents, it is advisable to ensure photographs are taken as backups if not possible. All learners are instructed to keep copies of all work submitted.

Secure storage of assessment material and learner assessment evidence by staff:

Pre Assessment: Assessment material is stored securely by a designated member of staff for each programme module being taught in advance of the assessment/examination date.

Additionally, other relevant documentation that may be required to be completed (invigilator report, seating plan, attendance/sign in register etc.), and other relevant examination material (the correct number of examination papers) are stored securely, with authorised access only.

Post Assessment: On completion of assessment, all learner assessment evidence together with relevant assessment documentation must be stored securely, with authorised access only.

Any breaches to the integrity of assessment evidence (e.g. loss/damage etc.) should be disclosed to the Head of Centre immediately.

As learner assessment evidence may have documented personal data of a learner, storage arrangements for both hard and soft copy evidence must have regard to the Forus Training's Data Protection Policy and Procedures.

Learners have a right of access to their personal data and a right of access to assessment evidence, should they wish to consider an appeal of an assessment result or assessment process.

Learners do not have a right to correct errors in their assessment answers. However, they do have the right to have processing errors corrected.

Learner assessment evidence: hard copy and practical/artefact

In order to ensure best practice exists, Forus Training provides secure and locked facilities, with authorised access only, to facilitate the storage of all hard copy learner assessment evidence. This is retained over the course of the programme delivery and until after all assessment QA procedures have been duly carried out and closed off. All staff and trainers must comply with the Forus Training's's Data Protection Policy and Procedures while they are in possession of assessment evidence.

Learner assessment evidence: Soft copy

In order to ensure best practice exists, Forus Training provides storage for learner assessment evidence on a computer network with backup capacity with authorised access only. The learner assessment evidence is then made securely available for the Internal Verifier and the External Authenticator as and when it is required. Appropriate security is in place for networks and online platforms and login details are made available for the IV and EA with live/active accounts. Access to these accounts is destroyed post the external authentication, RAP and certification process.

Any assessment evidence stored on a trainer's mobile/portable device (such as an ipad or laptop) must comply with the Forus Training's Data Protection Policy on Use of Mobile /Portable Devices. P4 S1.1 - Data Protection (GDPR) Policy

Marking and grading

In order to ensure best practice exists, where possible, Forus Training makes available, secure and safe space for trainers to mark and grade assessment evidence in a secure location within the Centre.

Internal Verification/External Authentication

In preparation for the Internal Verification process, the Head of Certification must ensure that learner assessment evidence is tracked using the centre's tracking process.

On completion of the Internal Verification, learner assessment evidence may be moved into the allocated rooms/storage facilities with authorised access (using the centre's tracking processes) for relevant programmes in order for external authentication to take place.

During the External Authentication process, only authorised staff should have access to the allocated rooms/storage facilities.

On completion of External Authentication, learner assessment material should be moved to the appropriate secure storage space using the centres tracking process, to facilitate ease of access in the event of learner appeals.

At the end of the certification process and when results can no longer be challenged it is advised that all assessment evidence be safely destroyed.

Arrangements for the Duration of Storage and Secure Disposal of Learner Assessment Evidence

All learner evidence will be retained until after the appeals process concludes (unless stated otherwise by the relevant awarding body) after which it will be disposed of securely (e.g. shredded/deleted from the relevant drive) by the Centre. Forus Training have developed standard operating procedures to comply with current legislation and GDPR (General Data Protection Regulation).

Arrangements for the Duration of Storage and Secure Disposal of assessment material

All assessment material (including application forms, learner contracts, exam sign-in sheets, course evaluations, etc.) will be retained securely until after the appeals process concludes unless stated otherwise by the awarding body or due to a funding requirement, after which it will be disposed of securely (e.g. shredded/deleted from the relevant drive) by the Centre. Forus Training has developed standard operating procedures to comply with current legislation and GDPR (General Data Protection Regulation).

The assessment record for each individual learner relevant to each individual module is contained as a scores template. Please see P9 S25 for more detailed specifics on what is kept in relation to each learner, in this context.

6. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The security of assessment aligns with information and data systems management and at a strategic level is governed by the Quality Assurance and Academic Governance Council. However, the information and data management pertaining specifically to the assessment of learners is managed operationally by the Programme Assessment and Delivery Committee.

7. RELATED DOCUMENTS AND COMMUNICATION PLAN

1. P4 S1.1 - Data Protection (GDPR) Policy
2. P4 Privacy Policy

3. P9 S8 C1 Academic Integrity Policy and Procedure
4. P1 S1 C7 Externality Policy
5. P9 S9 C11 Learner Declaration and Authorship Statement
6. P9 S11 C2 Receipt of Learner Evidence
7. S9 P15 Form Learner Evidence Handling
8. P5 S10 C1 Trainer Code of Conduct
9. P2 S2 C3 Learner Code of Conduct
10. P5 S1 Staff Recruitment, Induction and Development Policy
11. P2 S4 C2 Data Retention - Control of Records Policy and Procedure

Provide coherent procedures to ensure reliability, validity and security in the storage and assessing of assessments in learner evidence handling. This includes but is not limited to;

a. The supervision of assessments in action; skills demonstration activities, examinations

P9 S9 C8 Examinations Policy

b. The management of completed learner forms containing personal information and data

P4 S1.12 Data Retention - Control of Records Policy and Procedure

c. The submission of assessment from learners, currently in hardcopy
d. The submission of assessment from learners electronically
e. The distribution of receipts to learners upon assessment evidence submission
f. The storage and access to storage of learner assessment and supporting summative assessment evidence prior to distribution to Assessors for correcting and grading is managed by the Head of Certification.
g. The process of submitting learner assessment evidence to Assessors for correcting and grading

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h. The application of academic integrity and security of assessment in circumstances where Assessors are assessing evidence away from the Forus Training Head Office environment

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i. The maintaining and securing of assessment results and supporting records

LEGISLATION / STANDARDS

1. Qualifications & Quality Assurance (Education & Training) Act 2012
2. Further Education & Training Act 2013
3. QQI Quality Assuring Assessment - Guidelines for Providers 2013
4. QQI Insights: Quality in Irish Further Education & Training – September 2019
5. Qualifications and Quality Assurance (Education and Training) (Amendment) Act 2019

Legislative Changes:

On foot of representations by QQI to the Department of Education and Skills, a new provision was included in the Qualifications and Quality Assurance (Education and Training) (Amendment) Act 2019 which was enacted in July this year.

Section 43A of the legislation specifically empowers QQI to prosecute those who facilitate academic cheating. The provisions can be summarised as follows: assessment which uphold academic integrity.

8. ACTIONS TO BE FOLLOWED IF THE POLICY IS NOT IMPLEMENTED

Where a complaint of misconduct or alleged breach of the security of assessment policy and/or associated standard operating procedures presents, the staff member, trainer or learner will be brought before the Head of Certification. The Head of Certification will take steps as soon as is practicable to arrange a meeting (i.e., a preliminary hearing) with the person concerned and will provide in advance details of the alleged offence in the form of a P9 S6 Workable Improvement Notice (WIN) Learner Form.

9. CONTACT INFORMATION

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Amendment History			
Amendment summary sheet			
Revision	Date	Amendment summary	Training Requirements