Learner Handbook

QQI AWARD

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Introduction

Dear Student,

Welcome and thank you for choosing to study with New Links Training Solutions. We are dedicated to providing quality training and development opportunities to our learners. Your success, and progression are to the core of our business. We are committed to creating an environment where you can enjoy a positive learning experience and achieve your goals.

We are an Irish owned training and job placement company providing training and career services to a wide variety of clients. Our team of experts are enthusiastic and ready to respond to the needs of our learners. We are dedicated to help our learners achieve their full potential by ensuring that all our courses are engaging, relevant and progressive.

The purpose of this handbook is to provide you with information which will assist throughout your learning journey. It will provide you with guidance and useful information relating to study and assignments along with information for those who will complete a work placement programme during their time. Information is also available regarding the policies and procedures that underpin our quality assured services.

During your training if you require any assistance, please do not hesitate to contact your tutor or any member of the New Links Training Team.

I would like to take this opportunity to wish you the very best of luck and success with your training programme.

Janet Tumulty

Director of Training & Quality Assurance

New Links Training Solutions

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Approaches to Teaching and Learning

Making the most of your learning

Congratulations for making the decision to learn new skills and recognise the need for your own development in order to further your skills and knowledge. Studying and learning new skills can be frustrating, it takes time and there are no shortcuts that you can take to jump to your end goal, but by working hard alongside your colleagues and tutors you will soon see the results.

When completing your training programme, don't be afraid to push yourself further and make mistakes – this is truly what learning is.

This section will provide you with information which will allow you to make the most of your learning experience with the New Links Training Solutions team.

Study Skills

Your path of most effective learning is through knowing yourself and how you have previously studied. What has worked for you in the past and what you need to look at differently?

If you have not undertaken a course of study in a long time it can be quite daunting and difficult to know where to start. These are a few hints and tips which will hopefully aid your return to student life.

- Organise yourself – create a timetable around your classroom, personal and relaxation time.

- Prioritise your study around the most important items. Try starting with the most difficult so that you can finish on your favourite subject or study area.

- Ensure you leave time to study before any examinations.

- Clear a space in a quiet room so that you can concentrate on your studies.

- Make sure you have enough supplies to complete your studies and they are nearby e.g. pens.

- Reward yourself with a treat when you have successfully reached your study goal.

- To do well on a test, you must first learn the material and then review it before the test.

Course Delivery

The way which we delivery our training programme to you will vary from a presentation style to an open discussion. This is in order to that all learners get the maximum benefit from their training. We pride ourselves in ensuring a relaxing, comfortable and fun environment for you to develop your skills. Throughout all our courses, two-way participation is an essential format. Studies have shown that you truly learn and remember your new skills through open participation in a classroom environment.

Workbooks

Depending on the relevant training programme you are undertaking, learners will receive a workbook in order to complete their training. This workbook will contain the necessary content for you to complete your training. Your tutor will provide each learner with a copy of their workbook and dependent on the training programme, this will be yours to keep for your own future reference.

Group discussion

From time to time, your tutor will facilitate a group discussion between your class mates on various topics surrounding your programme. It is important that you can participate in these class discussions in order to further your knowledge and create a bond with your classmates.

Individual Presentation

Occasionally you will be asked to complete a presentation on your own. This will involve you researching a specific area either defined by you or your tutor. During your research for your presentation ensure that you follow the rules contained in this document for referencing, quotations and other presentational styles. Ensure you have allowed sufficient time for a run through of your presentation so as ensure you reach the required time allowed.

Group presentation

Your tutor may ask to complete a presentation with other members of your group. If you are asked to complete a presentation, please ensure that each member of the group is provided with equal responsibility to complete the presentation – do not rely solely on one member of the team to complete the work. When presenting, ensure that each member of your team is given an area on the presentation to speak about, ensuring a time at the end for questions from your tutor or other learners.

Writing material supplied

New Links Training Solutions will provide you with the relevant pens and pencils required to complete through your workbook for that day. We respectfully request that all materials provided to you are returned to your tutor at the end of your training day.

Listening

As much as discussion and presentations are important to aid your learning, listening is also an important skill. Please ensure that you do not interrupt other learners or your tutors when they are talking to the rest of the class. If you feel you have an important question or point to raise in a discussion, please wait until the person speaking has finished and proceed with your point. If appropriate raise your hand to get the attention of the tutor or speaker.

How to be a better listener?

What do you THINK about listening?

- Understand that listening is a complex process.
- Prepare to listen
- Adjust to the situation
- Focus on ideas/key points

What do you FEEL about listening?

- Want to listen
- Delay judgement
- Admit biases
- Don't tune out on a dry subject
- Accept responsibility for understanding
- Encourage others to talk.

What do you DO about listening?

- Keep eye contact with the speaker
- Take notes effectively
- Avoid negative mannerisms
- Practice listening

Importance of your involvement

Your involvement is defined by listening and interacting with your tutor and others in your group. New Links Training Solutions encourage all learners to participate in their classroom time through open discussion and active listening.

It is amazing what you can learn from listening to others and sharing your experience.   By encouraging your own involvement and those in your classroom you will learn more than you expected and meet new friends.

Blended Learning

What is Blended learning? QQI refers to Garrison and Kanuka's definition of blended learning as "the integration of classroom face-to-face learning experiences with online learning experiences" (QQI 2018, p.3). QQI guidelines also state that *'blended learning will always involve face-to-face learning'*. In compliance with these core guidelines our Blended Learning programmes will consist of a range of proven integrated teaching and learning approaches which will include:

- Synchronous, collaborative virtual training
- Asynchronous learning resources and communication pathways
- Online assessment tools
- Learner supports and resources
- Traditional learning (face-to-face, tutorials, and work-based learning experiences)

The topic of the effectiveness or not of Blended Learning is a much-debated subject and one that we have considered extensively in the preparation of this BL policy.

Advantages & Disadvantages of Blended Learning

Advantages	Disadvantages
Flexibility - learners can study in their own time with the possibility of scheduling study around work and personal commitments	**Instructors must be highly skilled** in the use of educational technologies particularly if they have been conditioned to face-to-face learning in the past.
Flexibility in delivery (training provider) - class size, location, duration, etc	**Internet issues** can cause disruptions
Suitable for learners who are **geographically dispersed**	**Not all learners have access to the required technologies** which may leave some learners at a disadvantage
A broad range of learning methods and learning resources are used which will suit a variety of learning styles	**Engagement and relationship building** is more difficult to achieve - blended learners may not suit highly social individuals
Use of learning materials for reinforcement e.g. Videos, quizzes, resources repository may be very beneficial to some learners.	**Requires the discipline of self-directed learning** with a higher emphasis on work completed outside of session time
The pace of learning is set by the learner – some learners learn quicker than others	**Some activities are challenging to duplicate** online - this may require additional time spent preparing and developing new materials
Asynchronous communication - learners have controlled access to their tutor outside of course delivery time	VLE is not ideal for classes longer than three hours
Modern Technology – most adults are using their phone or tablet to perform everyday tasks such as banking, shopping, and entertainment – they are familiar with interactive technologies.	Learners who have little access to technology or who are IT illiterate will struggle with Blended Learning
The items marked in the right-hand column above will inform our Risk Assessment.	

Definitions

→ **Asynchronous activity:** "Learners engage with material online at different times and different locations that suit their personal needs. Examples of learning material or activities include pre-recorded videos, self-guided lessons or quizzes" (FESS 2020 p.8).

→ **eLearning Platform:** "This refers the any learning management system which facilitates the delivery of the course content. Can be used to deliver both online asynchronous and synchronous learning material/activities"(FESS 2020 p.8).

→ **Flipped Learning:** refers to "a pedagogical approach in which direct instruction moves from the group learning space to the individual learning space, and the resulting group space is transformed into a dynamic, interactive learning environment where the educator guides students as they apply concepts and engage creatively in the subject matter"(Flipped Learning.org https://is.gd/Hjylq9)

→ **Independent/Self Directed Learning:** Learners take responsibility for their own learning to complete course content and/or assessment.

→ **Offline content:** Content that is provided to facilitate learning outside of the directed and non-directed (using IT equipment) training time this might include on-the-job practice, work placement, job shadowing, or mentoring.

→ **Online Content:** Content/material that is available to learners on the eLearning platform and the internet. This can include text, images, animations, music, and videos (FESS 2020 p.8).

→ **Synchronous activity:** "Learners engage in learning at the same time but not the same location with activities such as a webinar or chat. Educators and learners engage in real-time" (FESS 2020 p.9).

→ **TEL:** Technology Enhanced Learning

→ **VLE:** a real-time e-learning experience where learners can interact with their tutor in the presence of their fellow learners. Learners can also interact with each other through chat, breakout sessions, and other interactive eLearning functions.

1. **Public Information:** We believe that it is important to instruct learners towards an

understanding of the learning pathway that they are undertaking as the idea of 'online learning' has many interpretations. We commit to educating people through our public information channels on the different modes of online learning emphasising the importance for the learner of making the right choice to meet their needs. Our **Public information policy** is available in the **(Operations Manual Section 9A, 9D, 9J & 9K)**

Website Public Information: https://www.newlinkstraining.com/about/mission

The Moodle LMS

Moodle is an eLearning Management System (LMS) that gives instructors and learners the tools and technologies they need to teach and learn in a professional and secure online learning environment. Moodle comes from a background of Social Constructionist pedagogy, however, it can be used to support any style of teaching and learning. Moodle operates effectively with other systems for enhancement of functionality; for instance, Zoom can be embedded into the Moodle system so that learners have a one-stop sign-in option. Within the system there is a wide range of plugins that will be used to enhance the functionality of the system and the experience for the end-user (the learner).

These include:

→ **Courses and activities:** A Moodle course is a sequence of activities and resources grouped into sections.

→ **Users:** are anyone who uses the Moodle system. To participate in the course users need to be enrolled into the course with an assigned role either learners or tutors.

→ **Course enrolment**: gives the user the possibility to participate in the course as a learner or a tutor.

→ **User functionality:** roles assigned to users give them a set of capabilities in a given context e.g. tutor, learner, or moderator.

→ **User's capabilities:** a capability is a description of a particular Moodle feature. Capabilities are associated with roles.

→ **Context:** a context is a "space" in the Moodle, such as courses, activity modules, blocks, etc.

→ **Permissions:** A permission is a value that is assigned for a capability for a particular role e.g. allow or prevent.

→ **Additional facilities:** create and edit user profiles, groups and cohorts, enrolments, and access control.

→ **Activity and course completion:** activities such as quizzes, assessments, etc. to be marked complete when specified conditions are met.

→ **Navigation, settings, and configuration blocks:** provide easy access to view various sections of the Moodle site and includes:

  o **My home** - a personalised home page displaying links to the courses a user is associated with and activity information
  o **Site pages** - links to site pages and resources from the front page of Moodle
  o **My profile** - quick links allowing a user to view their profile, forums posts, blogs, and messages as well as manage their private files
  o **My courses** - lists and links to courses the user is associated with.

→ **Logs and statistics:** statistics graphs and tables show how many hits there have been on various parts of the Moodle site during selected time frames. Logs are activity reports. Logs are available at the site level and course level.

The Moodle eLearning Classroom Layout:

We have customised our Moodle eLearning platform to make resources accessible for learners to study remotely. We aim to ensure the Moodle eLearning platform is presented as user-friendly, informative, and easy-to-navigate. The homepage has headline sections at the top with breadcrumb tabs for easy forward and backward access to pages & resources. Moodle is a sophisticated system with multi-use functions that will ensure that learners can avail themselves of all the supports they need to complete their eLearning experience. Moodle is designed to be intuitive and user-friendly.

8Moodle Security (Accessing the Moodle Platform)

Learners and tutors will be added as users to www.academy.newlinkstraining.com to enable secure access to the Moodle portal. The Moodle system will generate a random password for each user who will be required to set their own password for subsequent access to the Moodle platform. New Links Training Solutions has no visibility of, or access to, user passwords once they are activated. Learners can reset their passwords at any time as needed. All other security-related information is outlined described in the IT and Systems usage policy in **Section 8 of the Operations Manual**.

Use of Zoom, Access & Security

NLTS uses the recommended best practice in the setup and use of Zoom for our VLE and will continue to apply security updates as recommended by Zoom as the application is updated in the future.

The following recommended security features have been applied:

- All participants must register before joining a session
- All meetings are set up with a password
- Random ID's are allocated to each session
- Only authenticated users can join a session
- The host controls the Chat and Screen Sharing Functions to ensure that participants can chat
- The host can remove users and report users to Zoom
- Compliance/GDPR instructions are issued to all users in advance of training

Learners will receive an individual email in advance of the programme start date with details of the Zoom meeting. All emails contain a link to the session and (depending on the programme) they may also have additional link(s) to our Moodle site. The following features have been updated by Zoom recently which improves the Zoom environment from an operational and security perspective.

Technical Support

A systems communications coordinator will be appointed to oversee the day-to-day operations of teaching and learning activities and IT infrastructure. This role will encompass IT, QA, administration, and customer support.

Tutors: receive in-depth training on the system and will have access to a **course monitor** during all live training sessions. Outside of live sessions, tutors can access the **systems communications coordinator or other designated support** via mobile phone.

Learners: technical support on the Moodle Application is available to learners by contacting tutorinfo@newlinkstraining.com or by sending an internal communication using the Moodle Forum. Queries are responded to within 12 hours based on a 5-day working week.

Copyright and Intellectual Property Rights

Moodle is a web application written in PHP. Moodle is open source. Copyright is owned by individual contributors, not assigned to a single entity.

All legal and regulatory obligations including Intellectual property, copyright and GDPR, and aligned data protection are adhered to.

The Blended Learning Journey (Learner)

The process diagram below shows the milestones in the learner journey with particular emphasis on the type of supports the learner is likely to benefit from while they are studying their blended learning module. A similar type chart will be used for each blended learning module uploaded on Moodle – this may take the form of an animated short video tutorial.
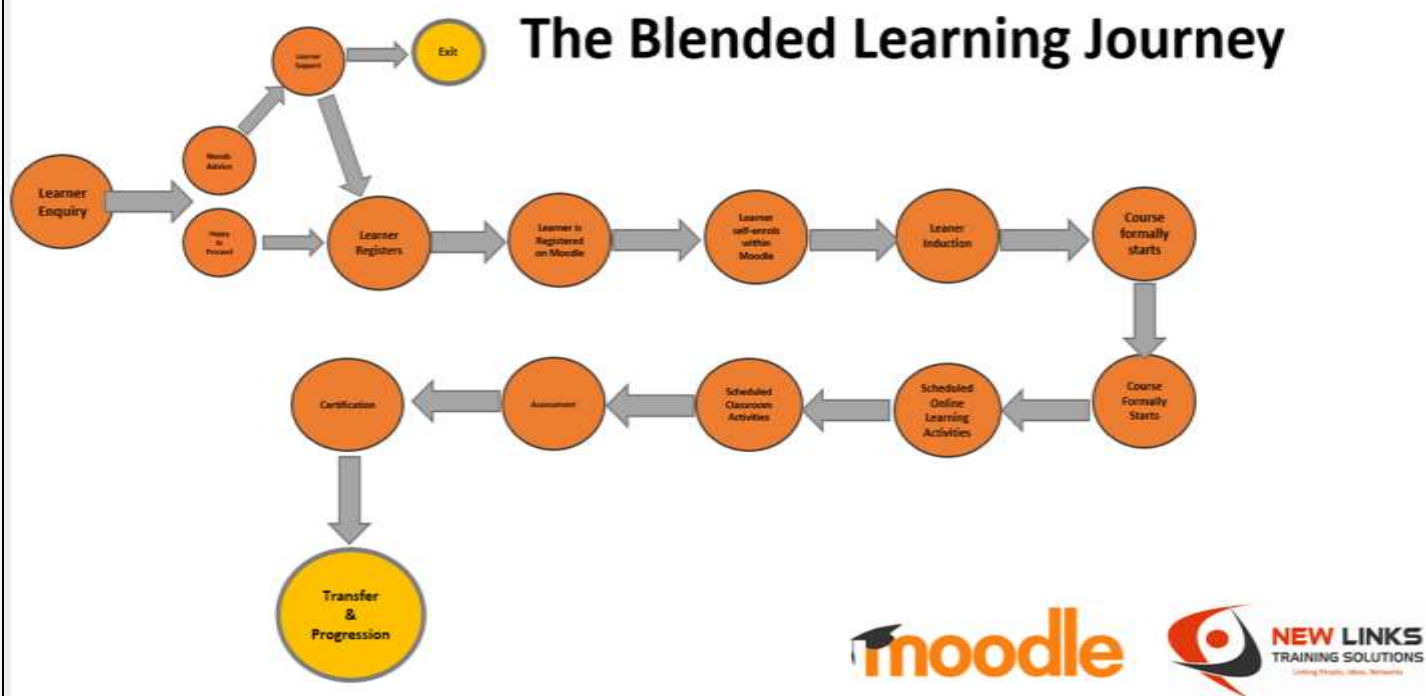
Grading

All training programmes have their grading methods outlined prior to the course commencement. A course may be graded in various ways such as:

- An assignment - Written essay on a topic given by your tutor

- Presentation - Use of computer to create a presentation to display your skills and knowledge on a certain topic or area

- Examination - sit down exam which a student will answer pre-determined questions to how they have an understanding of the information learned and have the ability to discuss a topic in detail.

- Project - research and investigating a topic or creating and organising an event.

- Skills demonstration - an opportunity for you to showcase your new-found skill and may be assessed whilst students are on work placement.

Your programme could be graded with one or a combination of two of the above. Your tutor will advise you of the method of assessment on the first day of your programme.

Support to Learners

Your assigned tutor has the overall responsibility for any support needs and requirements you have throughout your training programme. However further support will be provided to you throughout your time by the larger team at New Links Training Solutions. We aim to offer a high level of support to those who are enrolled with us and we focus and commit ourselves and our resources. If you wish to contact a member of the team, please see the contact us section at the back of this handbook.

New Links Training Solution Policies

Recognition of Prior Learning

New Links Training Solution has arrangements in place to facilitate learners who wish to gain entry to a programme on the basis of prior learning experiences. We are committed to the process of RPL mentoring and have a trained RPL mentor on staff.

In the event that a learner or a group of learners expresses a wish to **enter a programme based on prior learning experiences** the following will be made available:

- List of competencies needed to complete the programme.
- Programme entry requirements.
- State in such a way the entry requirements for a programme so that learner/s who possess the required competencies but are not certified may achieve entry.

Employment References

It is policy that New Links Training Solutions will <u>not</u> provide an employment reference for a learner who completes or is registered on a training programme. As courses are of a short duration, your tutor may not be able to adequately determine your suitability for the position which you are applying for. Therefore New Links Training Solutions will not provide an employment reference for any learner who has undertaken a training programme.   Note, that there is no legal obligation for New Links Training Solutions to provide a reference.

Where applicable and at the discretion of New Links Training Solutions an academic reference can be provided to you.

An academic reference will address the following areas only:

- Verification that you were a learner with New Links Training Solutions
- The course that you completed
- The duration of the course
- Grade achieved

A request for an academic reference must be submitted in writing to the address below and must contain the following information: Your full name, the course you successfully completed along with the dates that you attended.

Reference Request
New Links Training Solutions
1 Boeing Ave,
Airport Business Park,
Killowen,
Co. Waterford.

Alternatively, you can email info@newlinkstraining.com with the information above.

Note as learner files may be archived a response may take up to 14 working days.

New Links Training Solutions Company Policies

The following is an overview of our policies and procedures. For a more in-depth view of any of the policies listed below please contact us at tutorinfo@newlinkstraining.com and a member of the team will forward the requested information. Policies and procedures are updated regularly.

Communication

New Links Training Solutions is committed to providing the highest standards of service provision to our clients, learners and other users of our services. Effective communication and consultation methods are essential to our goal. Through the process of effective listening and responding we aim to develop and fortify good relationships with employees and stakeholders alike. In order to achieve this we wish to promote and encourage open, honest and transparent dialogue on a day to day basis. Communication always needs to be seen as a two way process where feedback from consultations is viewed as an essential part of our existence and where outcomes of dialogue are acted upon in a timely and professional manner.

Equality

We are committed to equality within our organisation and to ensuring that fair treatment is an important part of our day to day business. We wish to promote the philosophy of equality with our staff, associates, service users and other stakeholders.   We aim to ensure that services and programmes are provided fairly to all sections of our wider community. We aim to provide equal opportunities to existing and future employees, service users, associates and stakeholders. We are committed to taking action to eliminate any direct or indirect practices or acts of discrimination which act as a barrier to achieving our equality goals. We oppose any form of unlawful or unfair discrimination covered in the 9 grounds of discrimination legislation or any condition or requirement which places another person at a disadvantage and cannot be justified.

Programme Delivery Development and Review

New Links Training Solutions is committed to developing, delivering and reviewing a range of programmes and services that respond to the needs of learners. We are committed to understanding the needs of our learners by:

- Provision of a request for additional supports forms
- Reviewing and monitoring client's folders.
- Reviewing and monitoring client /learner feedback and evaluation summary.
- Recording and evaluating learner enquiries
- Pre-course consultation with learners.
- Keeping up to date with current and national trends.

Access Transfer and Progression

New Links Training Solutions is committed to doing as much as we can to facilitate learners entry and successful participation in our programmes. We are equally committed to ensuring that learners are given all the information necessary to make informed choices in relation to transfer and progression in relation to the courses on offer and in accordance with national practice.

Fair and Consistent Assessment of Learners

New Links Training Solutions aims to implement fair and consistent assessment of learners. We will develop and review on a continuous basis processes which will assist learners to achieve their specific learning outcomes, monitor learner progress and provide learner feedback. This policy will be achieved by implementing the following procedures:

- Co-ordinated Planning and Assessment
- Information to Learners
- Security of assessment & Related Processes and Materials
- Reasonable accommodation of students.
- Consistency of marking between assessors
- Internal Verification Process
- External Authentication
- Feedback to Learners
- Learner Appeals Process
- Results Approval

Protection for learners

New Links Training Solutions aims to provide a facility to protect learners in the event of the unexpected cancellation of a programme. In the event that of such an occurrence, procedures are in place to facilitate the learner through: transference to another programme, programme deferral or refund.

Evaluation of programmes and Services

New Links Training Solutions is committed to ensuring that a comprehensive and inclusive evaluation process exists to ensure that all its programmes and additional services are maintained to an excellent standard. Learner input and feedback from learners is an essential part of this procedure and New Links Training Solutions is committed to ensuring that learner input is integrated in all aspects of the process.

Staff Recruitment and Development

We aim to recruit and select our staff and subcontractors that we need to achieve our strategic goals and who also demonstrate the skills and attributes that are consistent with our philosophy and culture. Recruitment and selection of staff and sub contractors will comply with all legal requirements, and with relevant equal opportunity legislation, affirmative action and human resource management principles, policies and guidelines adopted by New Links Training solutions. This policy applies to all continuing and fixed term - full and part time appointments and sub contracting trainers.

Subcontracting / Procuring Programme Delivery

New Links Training Solutions has the ultimate responsibility for all programmes being delivered including those programmes which are delivered by a second provider on a sub-contracted basis. New Links Training Solutions has put in place the procedures to ensure consistency of quality of delivery to learners.

Health and Safety

The policy of the Company is to provide a safe and healthy working environment for all staff, learners, contractors and members of the public who may visit the premises. It is also our policy to ensure that health and safety practices are adhered to by tutors and trainers in external training venues.

The Company recognises its obligations and duties as an employer to direct and manage and to ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, the safety, health and welfare of all employees, contractors and members of the public who may visit its premises as required under the Safety, Health and Welfare At Work Act 2005

First Aid

There is a comprehensive first aid box available in each centre office to deal with any minor injuries. In the event of a serious injury the ambulance service must be called and the Safety Officer notified.

The Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Act requires that in work places where there are frequent injuries to workers, a large number of employees or where there is a significant risk to health and safety, an employer should ensure that there are adequate arrangements to provide first aid treatment.

First aid boxes are to be made available in all premises and offices.

Accident/Incident Reporting

All incidents, no matter how trivial, and whether to employees or visitors must be reported immediately to the Manager / Supervisor or in their absence their deputy on the appropriate form. This is necessary to monitor the progress of safety standards and to ensure that proper medical attention is given where required and as an aid in the identification of hazards so that the appropriate measures can be taken to prevent the accident from reoccurring.

Non-harassment Policy

The Company is committed to providing a work environment free of any kind of harassment. The Company maintains a strict policy prohibiting all forms of harassment. The Company non-harassment policy applies to all persons involved in the operations of the Company and prohibits harassment by any employee of the Company, including supervisors, managers, co-workers and guests, as well as by any person doing business with or for the Company. Harassment in any form, including verbal, physical and visual conduct, threats, demands and retaliation, is prohibited. Harassment includes but is not limited to:

- Verbal conduct such as derogatory comments, slurs or unwanted sexual advances, invitations or comments.
- Visual conduct such as derogatory posters, photography, cartoons, drawings or gestures.
- Physical conduct such as assault, unnecessary or unwanted touching, blocking normal movement or interfering with work, directed at you because of your sex or race or any other protected basis.
- Threats and demands to submit to sexual requests in order to keep your job or avoid some other loss, and offers of job benefits in return for sexual favours.
- Retaliation for having reported or threatened to report harassment.

Fire Protection

Fire extinguishers and fire blankets are provided and correctly sited to meet safety requirements. These appliances are provided to deal with incipient small fires.

All fire fighting equipment is tested and serviced annually by specialised contractors. In accordance with the recommendations of the appropriate Irish Standard for such equipment, 20% of extinguishers will be discharged each year, and relevant employees trained in the safe and efficient use of the equipment.

Smoking Policy

Smoking is forbidden in enclosed places of work in Ireland. This includes office blocks, various buildings, public houses/bars, restaurants and company vehicles (cars and vans). The ban was introduced by the [Tobacco Smoking (Prohibition) Regulations 2003](#). The only place where smoking is permitted is in an open yard provided that those who do smoke ensure that they:

- Carefully extinguish all naked flames, matches/lighters.
- Use the ashtrays /receptacles provided
- Make sure that all cigarette ends are fully extinguished when finished.

Note, the above policy applies to E-Cigarettes also.

Disciplinary Action

Where advice and persuasion fail to achieve compliance with safety and health rules, it is the policy of the Company to take disciplinary action on the matter.

Alcohol /Substance Misuse/ Medication Policy

A trainee must not attend a classroom or their work placement under the influence of alcohol or any illegal substance. Any trainee found to be drunk or smelling of alcohol may be asked to leave the training room until further notice. Note, if under the influence of any of the above within the work place, your placement could be terminated immediately.

The use of non-prescription drugs is prohibited by law, should a trainee be found to be under the influence of non-prescription drugs, they will be asked to leave the training room until further notice. Note, if you are using non-prescription drugs within the work place, your placement could be terminated immediately and your employer may report you to the Gardaí / Police.

Disciplinary action may be taken against the trainee as per the disciplinary procedures found within this handbook.

Observations and Complaints

We aim to listen and action where appropriate and possible any and all observations and complaints which you have relating to your training programme and / or course location and facilitate any other items brought to the attention of the New Links Training Solutions team.

In the first instance, all observations must be reported to your assigned tutor who will escalate the issue as necessary with a view to addressing the problem. Should you wish to report any issue to another member of the New Links Training Solutions team you may do by contacting us directly. You will find our contact information at the back of this handbook. We want to offer a high level of support to those who are enrolled with us and appreciate any feedback that you may have to help us improve our service to you.

Communication

New Links Training Solutions is committed to providing the highest standards of service provision to our clients, learners and other users of our services. Effective communication and consultation methods are essential to our goal. Through the process of effective listening and responding we aim to develop and fortify good relationships with employees and stakeholders alike. In order to achieve this we wish to promote and encourage open, honest and transparent dialogue on a day to day basis. Communication always needs to be seen as a two way process where feedback from consultations is viewed as an essential part of our existence and where outcomes of dialogue are acted upon in a timely and professional manner.

Enquiries via our website

New Links Training Solutions endeavours to answer all enquiries which are submitted and received through our customer website (www.newlinkstraining.com), within a 24 hour timeframe during business hours via return email.

Enquiries via telephone

Our office opening hours are 0900 – 1700 Monday to Friday.   We aim to provide information on the telephone to all those who enquire about our training programmes. Should a client require a brochure providing further information for their consideration a brochure can be provided either via post or via email.

Note, our telephone numbers are:

Waterford: 051 385 720

Dublin: 01 539 7234

Cork: 021 202 9199

Course Confirmation

Once you have submitted an enrolment form for your programme, we aim to send you confirmation with 5 working days.   In this enrolment pack, you will receive a letter of confirmation of your enrolment, course start date, time and location of your training in the post.

Data Protection Act & Privacy

New Links Training Solutions understands the importance of the Data Protection Act which was established in 1988 to protect the rights and content of data held about you on file by a company.

Your rights under the Data Protection Act apply when information is held about you on computer, on paper or other manual form as part of a filing system and made up of photographs or video recordings of your image or recordings of your voice.

General Data Protection Regulation Policy

The GDPR places direct data processing obligations on all businesses at an EU-wide level. According to the GDPR, we can only process personal data under certain conditions. For instance, the processing should be fair and transparent, for a specified and legitimate purpose and limited to the data necessary to fulfil this purpose. It must also be based on one of the following legal grounds.

1. The **consent** of the individual concerned.
2. **A contractual obligation** between ourselves and the individual.
3. To satisfy a **legal obligation.**
4. To protect the **vital interests** of the individual.
5. To carry out a **task that is in the public interest.**
6. For the company's **legitimate interests**, but only after having checked that the fundamental rights and freedoms of the individual whose data we are processing are not seriously

impacted. If the person's rights override the company's interests, then we cannot process the data.

https://www.dataprotection.ie/

Role Definitions:

Data Controller: A Data Controller is the person or organisation who decides the purposes for which, and the means by which, personal data is processed. The purpose of processing data involves 'why' the personal data is being processed and the 'means' of the processing involves 'how' the data is processed.

Data Processor: A person or organisation that processes personal data on the behalf of a data controller.

Data subject: A Data subject is the individual the personal data relates to.

It is imperative that all staff, leaners and clients are aware of their rights and our response to the GDPR guidelines. The following is an overview of our policy and associated procedures:

The of Data We Collect: Personal data relates to a specific individual who may be identifiable from that data. This can include:

- Contact information such as address and phone number
- 3rd party referral
- Notes from meetings/interviews/phone calls with you
- Portfolio of your work
- Videos/photographs related to assessment and/or award ceremonies
- Compliance data for QQI and/or any other certifying body e.g. date of birth, PPS number and medical card number. This information is only recorded on the QQI Business System (Cloud-based system) to validate identities of learners as part of the certification process. New Links Training Solutions does not store this information electronically. This information is stored in learner portfolios which are stored securely until they are disposed of by a licensed document waste disposal service.

Who will be collecting your personal data?

Your personal data will only be collected by New Links Training Solutions Ltd to provide you with current or future training services.

How your data will be collected?

New Links Training Solutions Ltd collects personal data directly from you when you:

- Deal with us by phone, letter, email or web
- Supply a CV or other form of application
- Subscribe to email updates
- Submit any information regarding an application or enquiry
- Complete training assessments

We may also collect personal data from 3rd parties, including Supervisors, Managers, referral agencies or the person or employer/agent who is funding your course. If collecting information from a 3rd party, we will seek your consent or otherwise make you aware of the collection and the

reasons for it. All learners will complete an enrolment form which outlines our policies in relation to personal information at the start of any training programme.

What we will do with your data?
New Links Training Solutions Ltd may use and disclose your personal data for the following reasons:
- To process your assessments for certification
- to market our training services to you
- to improve our customer service
- to contact you on occasion with information with progression opportunities

Unless required or permitted to do so by law, New Links Training Solutions Ltd will not otherwise share, sell or distribute any of your personal data without your consent.

QQI Certification: For QQI Courses it is necessary to collect your PPS Number and your Date of Birth for certification purposes – the following guidelines apply in this instance:
(QQI Memo 5 October 2018) - QQI has a range of statutory functions detailed in the Qualifications and Quality Assurance (Education and Training) Act 2012. One of those functions is to make awards to learners who complete a programme validated by QQI. To make these awards, QQI requires a Personal Public Service Number (PPSN), name, date of birth and relevant results of each learner. This information is transferred by the provider (New Links Training Solutions) to QQI through QBS. In this transaction, the provider is acting on behalf of the learner with whom we have entered into an appropriate legal arrangement (including consent for data collected) that permits the transfer of this data. QQI receives the data and retains it in the pursuit of its statutory function.
Restriction on the use of the Personal Public Service Number (PPSN) As stated above, QQI requires NLTS to provide it (QQI) with the PPSN of each learner enrolled on a validated programme in order for QQI to make an award to that learner, and to retain a record of each award made to each learner. QQI retains this data so that a learner can confirm with it at any point that such an award was made. We are not permitted to process this data, for example by accessing it or by storing it, except for the single purpose of registering the learner with QQI for the purposes of the making of the relevant award. The PPSN should not be processed by NLTS for any other purpose and should not be retained by you or in your records once used for the sole purpose for which it was collected **(See Records Retention policy NLTS P104).**

Your security, our priority: Our security procedures protect data from being misused, misplaced, or accessed, changed or disclosed by unauthorised people. Your data can only be accessed by authorised persons to provide you with training and training -related services. We normally retain data on our database for a period of up to 7 years. This is to allow us to provide you with a quality ongoing training service and may be a compliance requirement by an awarding body or funding authority. However, you can request removal of your data at any time.

When to get in touch with us: to further ensure the integrity of your data, you can get in touch with us at any time for any of the following reasons:
- Requesting access to your data
- You may request access to any personal data New Links Training Solutions Ltd holds about you.

- Keeping your personal data up to date

To ensure that your personal data is accurate, complete and up to date, please alert New Links Training Solutions of any changes to your details. Alternatively, we may contact you from time to time. If you have any concerns about the accuracy of the data get in touch.

To request removal of your data from our database: Under data protection laws, you have the right to be forgotten. New Links Training Solutions Ltd recognises and respects this right. You have the right to get in touch with us at any time to request removal at any time. For any of the above matters of other queries related to your data, please contact our Data Protection Officer.

Disciplinary Policies.

All those who are enrolled on a training programme with New Links Training Solutions are expected to conduct themselves with due regard to the Health and Safety of their tutors, class mates and the facility where training is being conducted.   We expect that all those attending a programme will conduct themselves in a professional and respectful manner at all times.

Whilst New Links Training Solutions aims to resolve any issue directly on a one to one basis, where it is felt necessary either by the class tutor or a senior member of the team disciplinary procedures may commence.

The following is a brief list of items which may lead formal disciplinary procedures.

- Continual absence or lateness without prior notification
- Misconduct such as disruptive behaviour, abusive behaviour or language, harassment, bullying
- Consuming or being under the influence of alcohol or drugs on the premises
- Smoking in non-designated areas
- Failing to produce assignment, projects or other documentation as requested by your tutor.
- Use of mobile phone in class.

Please note, that the above is not an exhaustive list.   Your tutor or work placement supervisor may brief you on other items which may lead to formal disciplinary procedures.

Disciplinary Procedures

Any breach of the policies listed above may result in disciplinary procedures being implemented against the trainee.   The disciplinary procedure is a four stage process which is implemented and is similar to a work place disciplinary procedure.

1. First Written Warning
2. Second Written Warning
3. Final Written Warning
4. Termination of your place on the programme.

Rules and Regulations

What to wear / appropriate dress

Whether you are attending a training programme with New Links Training Solutions or undertaking a work placement, it is important to remember that you provide a first impression on the company and most importantly on yourself. Your dress, grooming and conduct must be representative of the image you want to portray of professionalism. People draw conclusions from our appearance therefore it is important to put some time, thought and judgement into what you chose to wear and what you would like to perceive.

Each person must use good judgement and taste in his/her choice of workplace/training attire. Workplace attire includes attire worn, both during normal working hours and at all other times when you are conducting business activities or representing yourself.

By dressing professionally or in a certain way we can change the way we feel about ourselves, the motto dress for the job you want not the job you have is an important point of note when considering what to wear in certain situations.

Unfortunately, what we wear effects how the public perceive us therefore it is important to remember, if we look sharp, others will see us as capable, people will assume we are confident, professionals who are good at what we good. If we look sloppy, others may think we are not competent in our roles.

You only have one chance to make a first impression

The way we dress affects the way we **think**, the way we **feel**, the way we **act**, & the way others **react** to us.

~Judith Rasband

www.conselle.com | www.cablecarcouture.com

Behaviour in class

All those who attend a training programme with New Links Training Solution must be respectful to others within their classroom. The following are some useful rules for you regarding the behaviour which is required when in class.

- Trainees are advised to come to class prepared and ready to participate actively in class.
- Participate in class, by asking questions, actively listening to others, taking notes, taking part in discussions and actively engaging your mind in the topics discussed.
- Be on time! Always ensure your arrive to your training location no later than ten minutes prior to your start time. This will give you time to interact with other members of group.
- If you are late, knock on the door until your tutor acknowledges you. Apologize to your tutor for being late and take the first available seat nearest to you in order to avoid any other disruption to the class.
- Do not leave class early, unless you have spoken to your tutor prior to the commencement of the session.
- Food or drinks are not permitted in the classroom environment – this also includes chewing gum.
- No attendee should interrupt another person when speaking, if you wish to be heard please raise your hand to indicate to your tutor you have a point to contribute to the discussion or a question to ask.
- Respect your class mates and display courteous and professional behaviour at all times.

Personal hygiene

A classroom although large when you walk in first, can become a hot room when it is full of your other class mates.   Depending on the space in the class room, people may be sitting quite near to each other. In these cases, those with poor personal hygiene must be considered. In particular, training provides ample opportunity for generating high workloads that are not always a no sweat situation.

It is recommended that all classroom and work placement participants look after their own personal hygiene.

Mobile phones in class

Always ensure that your mobile phone is turned off or in silent mode with vibration turned off.

If you are on a telephone call prior to class commencement and your tutor is in the room – hang up and turn it off.   It is disrespectful to be talking on the telephone when your tutor is in the room and ready to commence class.

If you phone is turned off or in silent mode, the person calling you will leave a voicemail for you. Voicemail can be accessed on most phones by dialling 171 and you can contact your mobile phone provider for more information on these settings.

Your mobile phone can be a distraction to you and others in the room therefore it is important that you observe the rules above by turning off your phone or placing it on silent mode with the vibration mode turned off.

Nobody wants to hear your phone call – so don't make them listen.

Laptops in class

Unless specified or permitted by your tutor a laptop is not permitted in the classroom environment. If a trainee wishes to take notes of their training session, they must take written notes and type them up for themselves if required at a later date.

Absence Policy

In the unfortunate event that a trainee is sick and is unable to attend their training day, it is important that either your tutor or New Links Training Solutions is notified. All days of absence must be certified by a medical profession after three days.   If a trainee has more than one absence during their programme time, they may be asked to meet with their tutor to discuss further.

Literacy and numeracy

If you have any concerns regarding your literacy and numeracy skills, please ensure that you discuss these with your tutor or at enrolment.   Where possible we will make every effort to ensure that your needs and requirements are supported through out your training.

Learners Conduct Policy

The following has been provided to learners as a policy surrounding their general conduct during their time with New Links Training Solutions.   We operate the following policy on general conduct.

1. As Learner it is your responsibility to understand and adhere to all NLTS procedures as part of the self-directed learning element of your training.
2. Learners are expected to recognise other trainees worth and dignity.
3. All Learners have a right to learn in an appropriate environment and be free from any form of harassment and/or discrimination (refer to equality policy).
4. Learners will be made aware of the learning outcomes of each course and the associated assessment detail. Competencies are assessed throughout the course and each course will consist of one or more forms of assessment.
5. If a competency is not achieved at the initial assessment/s, Learners will be given the opportunity to be re-assessed at a time that is mutually convenient to both the tutor and learner and relevant to any mandatory requirements (see assessment policy).
6. Refunds will only be granted in accordance with our refund policy. (See fees and refund policy)
7. All Learners are required to turn off mobile phones during session time to avoid disruption to other learners and the class in general.
8. If a trainer perceives that a learner is disruptive and regularly interrupts the flow of training and negatively impacts the learning experience of other trainees   New Links Training Solutions reserves the right to remove that learner from the training. The following protocol will be followed:
    — Trainer will draw learner's attention to the behaviour
    — If behaviour continues - Trainer will draw learners' attention to the behaviour and refer to ground rules
    — If behaviour continues – trainer will ask to speak to learner on a one to one basis
9. If behaviour continues – learner will be asked to leave the training New Links Training Solutions also reserves the right to refuse enrolment as permitted by law where a learner does not meet the selection criteria for a particular course.
10. Learners who refuse to behave in an acceptable and appropriate manner towards tutors, other learners, stakeholders or who fail to respect the property of New Links Training

Solutions, or the premises in which courses are delivered may also be asked to leave a course.

Learners Rights and Responsibilities

Each trainee who is undertaking and registered on a programme offered by New Links Training Solutions has the right to:

- Expect their training and assessment to be of a high quality. Have their individual needs and learning styles recognised and appreciated.
- Have access to all training programme they are eligible to attend regardless of gender, marital status, sexual preference, race, colour, pregnancy, national origin, ethnic or socio-economic background, physical impairment and religious or political affiliation except where physical agility or where units of competency specific prerequisites or is a requirement for the course.
- Have prior learning, acquired competencies and experience appropriately recognised in determining their requirements for accredited courses.
- Be advised of the learning outcomes and prescribed assessment tasks for the course of their choice prior to its commencement.
- Appeal for a review of any results on assessments completed.
- Expect to achieve the published outcomes of their course as long as they have given and undertook the necessary steps and learning's outside of the classroom as required by their individual need.
- Clean and appropriate environment to promote safe learning free from all forms of harassment and discrimination.
- Be treated with dignity and fairness.

Work Experience

Some training programmes undertaken by learners may have requirement for a work placement to be completed. New Links Training Solutions will assist the learner in obtaining a placement suitable to their needs and abilities.

Whilst undertaking your work placement programme it is important to remember or to learn some valuable information relating to the work placement and some common standards which exist in our society.

What to wear?

This has been covered in the section above relating to the rules and regulations of training at New Links Training Solutions, you are advised to read over this again in full to understand what is required by you as appropriate dress in a working environment.   It is important to note that your employer may require you to wear a uniform or conform with other Health and Safety requirements such as wearing a net hat, covering over any visible piercing.   Your employer will brief these to you on the first day of your placement.

Behaviour during Work Hours

Whilst you are in attendance of work placement, your behaviour must be professional at all times. Remember that you are there to learn and gain valuable experience in work process. Therefore a few rules are available for your reference below

- Do what is asked of you.
- Act professionally – no matter what your job title.
- Go on your scheduled breaks – not when you feel like it.
- Ensure you are not standing idle – always ask what is next for you to do once you are ready?
- Do not stand around gossiping to other colleagues or on your phone.
- Be honest – if you don't know something ask! If you broke something tell someone! Honesty is always the best policy.
- Go that extra mile!

Personal hygiene

When you are working for a number of hours during the day, moving around and sometimes under pressure, it is inevitable that you will become hot! In these cases, those with poor personal hygiene must be considerate.

- It is important to ensure that you shower/Wash daily prior to your departure to work.
- Ensure your clothes are clean and pressed on a daily basis.
- Shoes must be shined and not scuffed.

It is recommended that all classroom and work placement participants look after their own personal hygiene.

Mobile phones in work

Most employers do not allow for the use of the mobile telephone during work hours. Therefore, you must always ensure that your mobile phone is not with you on a shop floor.

Ensure that your mobile phone is stored away in a secure location; most employers will offer you a locker to store away personal belongings during your work day.   Place your mobile phone, coat/jacket and any other valuables in this locker. Bring the key with you and keep it safe on your person.

Although your phone is the locker, it is still recommended that your phone is turned off or on silent so as not to disturb who may use that room for their breaks.

If you do need to take a telephone call during your break, be respectful to others and go to a quite location of the break room or outside to make the call.

Laptops in work

For security reasons it is recommended that unless it is for work purposes do not bring a laptop in to the work environment.

Use of Facebook and other social media sites.

Whilst the use of Facebook and other social media sites during work hours is not acceptable, either is speaking about your boss or colleagues on them in such an open forum. Be careful of what you post on these websites.

Do not post negatively about people or the company as your friends could be their friends or you may want a job with that company again at a future date.

Work Regulations and the law.

All workers are entitled to have breaks while they are work. The Organisation of Working Time Act 1997 sets out the statutory minimum entitlement for employees.

Breaks

The general rule is that you are entitled to a 15 minute break after a 4 ½ hour working period. If you work more than 6 hours you are entitled to a 30 minute break.

There is no entitlement to be paid during these breaks and they are not considered as part of your working time.

Example: If you start work at 7am you are entitled to take a 15-minute break at 11.30am. At 1.15pm when you have worked 6 hours you are entitled to take a break of 30 minutes. As you have already taken a break at 11.15, your employer can limit this break to 15 minutes. (If you are working in a shop you are entitled to a one-hour break at 1.15pm.) If you start working again at 1.30pm or 1.45pm and continue working until 6 or 6.15pm you are entitled to another 15-minute break.

Rest Periods

The definition of a rest period is a time that you are not scheduled to work. The Organisation and Working Time Act 1997 sets out the requirement by law.

1. You are entitled to an 11 hour break between finishing work and starting again the following day.
2. You should get 24 hours consecutive rest in any period of 7 days; this should normally follow on from the 11 hour break as mentioned above. I.e. a day off.
3. Alternatively, you can receive a two 24 hour rest periods in a week that follows one in which you did not get the breaks as specified above in point number 1.   Unless specified otherwise, your rest period should include a Sunday.

There are some exceptions to the above rule such as those who are required to work shift work or those who are to work in a company that has an agreed deal with an union.

If you would like to learn further information about your rights and the law surrounding employment - please take a visit the website below.

http://www.workplacerelations.ie/en/

Assessments

You may be asked to submit assessments during your time as a learner with New Links Training Solutions, the following are some useful terms for you to reference when drafting your assessment or presentation.

Assessment and Skills Demonstration Protocol

It is essential that all learners follow a strict set of protocols in order for an examination or skills demonstrations to commence with New Links Training Solutions.   Note, that this list below is not an exhaustive list.

Some breaches in protocol may allow for the:

1. Examination to still continue.
2. Learner to repeat the examination.
3. Learner to fail the examination.

This decision is at the discretion of the Tutor, Training Director and/or External Authenticator, and the decision reached is final.   The Learner responsible for the breach in protocol may be required to pay any required fees for the repetition of the examination by them and other learners effected.

- Learners must prepare themselves for the examination/SD in advance – pens/paper/calculators. If the learner does not have the necessary materials to complete their examination or SD they will not be permitted to retrieve them once the exam has started.
- No Bags/Laptops are permitted in the vicinity of the examination area – bags etc. to be placed at the back of the room
- No Mobile Phones are to be used or evidenced in the vicinity of the examination area – it is advised that phones should be turned off and either stored in the learner's bag or if in the learner's pocket MUST NOT BE ACCESSED DURING THE ASSESSMENT OR EXAM
- If a learner is found to be in breach of the above rule, they should be asked to vacate the examination room immediately
- If a learner wishes to leave the room to use the bathroom, they must make this request to the tutor so that the tutor can effectively monitor the activity throughout the examination period
- No food should be consumed during the examination/SD – drinks are permitted
- It is recommended that learners remain in the room until the end of the examination period – in the event that a learner chooses to leave the examination room they will not be permitted to re-enter the room until after the examination has been completed by other learners
- Learners are not permitted to talk to other learners for the duration of the examination
- Learners are not permitted to copy the work of another learner in the examination
- Breaches of 8 & 9 above will result in instant expulsion of the learner from the examination and their work will not be graded by the tutor
- Learners must include their name/date of birth/PPS number on all examination scripts
- The use of swear words or profanities during an examination is strictly prohibited, this also relates to the use of swear words or profanities during an instance whereby your examination or skills demonstration is being recorded for marking at a later date.   Any instances of this will result in the learner being eliminated from the process and possibly not receiving a mark (for multiple instances/serious breach) having to repeat the assessment (for minor breach).

Plagiarism

Plagiarism means that you use someone else's ideas or words of another person without giving them explicit credit. The 'other person' can be a published or non-published author, a colleague or a person who completes assignments for others, or an internet source.

The following are examples of plagiarism in your assessments or presentations

- Directly copying notes from a book or other published material.
- Paraphrasing notes from a book or other published material.
- Using pictures you found on the internet.
- Using statistics without quoting your source

When you are given an assessment or a presentation to research and submit/present you must investigate the topic yourself, explore the subject in depth so as to form your conclusions. Always reference where you have read the information contained in your work.

Referencing

Referencing means that you are giving credit to the owner of the work you have used. E.g. Author and book. By using references it shows to your tutor that you research your work fully on your own initiative and have a firm understanding of the topics discussed.

A style of referencing which is commonly used is known as the Harvard Style of Referencing. This means that you quote the author and the required information in the text of your assignment but also use a reference table at the end of ensure full credit is given to the author and the book used.

To use this style of referencing you will require the following:

- The author's name,
- The year published
- The title of the book,
- Edition of the book i.e. first or second edition.
- The city the book was published
- Name of the publisher.

Quoting in your assignment - an example.

The old man and the boy had known each other for more than a year, and enjoyed talking together (Johnson, 2004, p13.)

Example of referencing the book used.

Johnson, 2004, The Present, 2nd Ed. , Great Britain, Bantam Books

Referencing from the Internet

When you are quoting material from a website, you still must reference where you obtained the material.

Janet Tumulty, 2012, "We are committed to creating an environment where learners can think, learn and achieve by engaging in the combined process of experiential and taught learning models." [online] Available from http://www.newlinkstraining.com/our-mission/

Please ensure you reference that your material has been gathered online by using the brackets like the example above.

Using Quotations

Always ensure any quotations that you use correctly and do not overuse. Set your quotations in a different font style and move in the page slightly, an example is below.

> *"The old man and the boy had known each other for more than a year, and enjoyed talking together",* (Johnson 2004)

Style Guidelines for your written assignments

All written assignments where possible should be submitted in printed format by using Microsoft Word and printed on A4 paper.

When selecting a font please use Arial Font. Your font should be a size 12.

When using a heading on your document – your main title should be **Arial Font size 16 and in bold font.**

Using a sub-heading please use Arial Font size 12 and using bold font.

Remember to start a new paragraph every time you have a new point to make.

Submitting your assignments

Your tutor will provide you with information on how to submit your assignment and the date which the assignment must be received.

- You may be asked to print your assignment so make sure that you will have access to a printer prior to your assignment submission date. Do not leave it until the last minute to print your assignment.   If you will not have access to printer please advise your tutor prior to the submission date.

- Another method to submitting your assignment is via email.   If you are asked to email your tutor your assignment – please ensure that you have the correct email address.   Ensure you write the email fully and professionally like the example below.

Note, the following:

- Email Subject.
- The way in which tutor is addressed in the email.
- Confirmation of the course location.
- Closing greeting.
- Always check your spelling prior to hitting the send button.

Penalties for late submission of your assignment (see page 49-51)
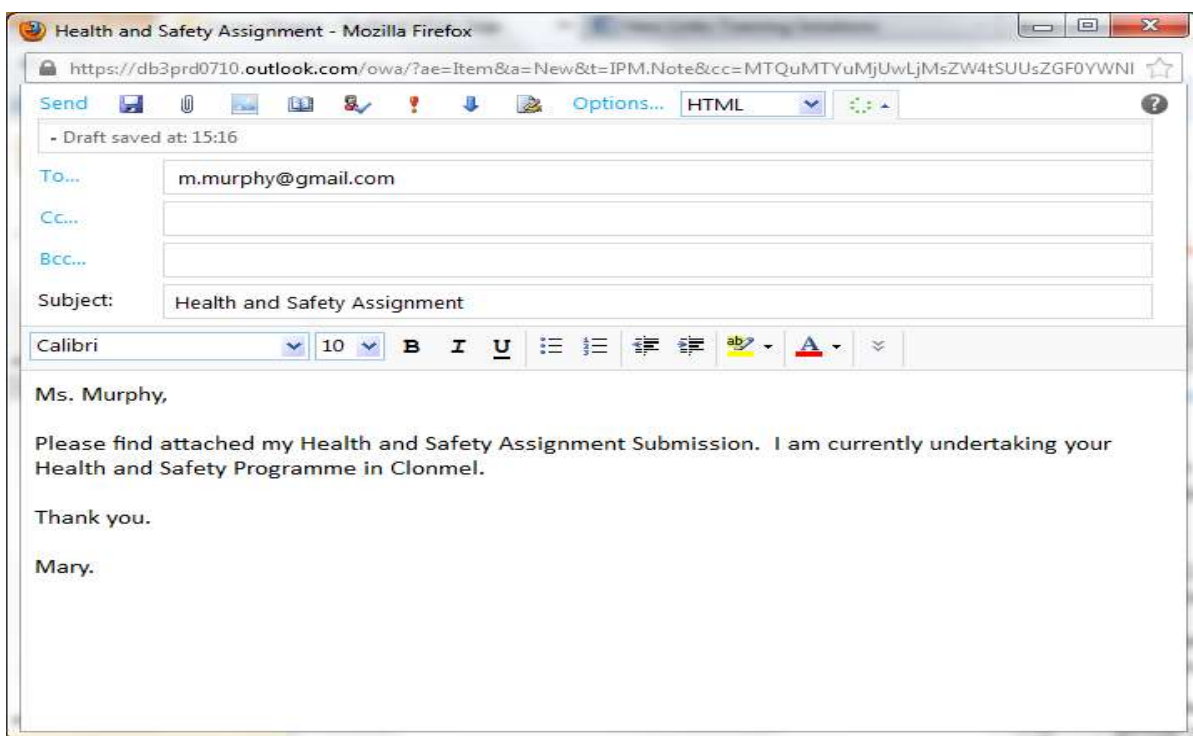
- It is our agreed policy that learners are subject to a stringent, open fair and consistent assessment process that is in line with QQI requirements and national guidelines.
- Please refer to Learner Policy NLTS LP 004 Assignment Submission Procedures and Learner Appeals.

Late Assignment Submissions (see page 49-51)

It is our agreed policy that learners are subject to a stringent, open fair and consistent assessment process that is in line with QQI requirements and national guidelines.

- Please refer to Learner Policy NLTS LP 004 Assignment Submission Procedures and Learner Appeals.

Please note this is not an open ended process and learners must adhere to the decision of the internal results panel.

Where a learner fails to submit their assignments within the timeframe set out in this policy it will be assumed that they have withdrawn from the process. These learners may reapply to New Links Training Solutions in writing to have their assignments submitted with another group; however learners who choose this option may be required to attend part of another programme to ensure that all learning outcomes have been achieved. *(see page 49-51)*

Grading and Marking Criteria

Your tutor will explain the grading / marking scheme for each subject of your programme.

Declaration of Original Work

It is accepted that all students will submit an assignment that has been created, written and reviewed by the student and that it is not somebody else's work.   However, your tutor may ask all students to submit a Declaration of Original Work with their assignment. If you are asked to submit this, please use the below wording.

Name of Student	
Course Name	
Assignment Title	
Date	

I declare that work which I have submitted in this assignment is my own.   Any quotations used from other sources such as the Internet, books or newspapers have been address correctly and the original author has been identified.

Signature

New Links Training Solutions

New Links Training Solutions is dedicated to providing quality training and development opportunities to our learners. Our learners' satisfaction and progression are to the core of our business. We are committed to creating an environment where our learners can think, learn and achieve.

We are an Irish owned training and job placement company providing training and career services to a wide variety of clients. We have an expert and enthusiastic team of trainers on board to respond to the needs of our learners. Our team is dedicated to help our learners achieve their full potential by ensuring that all our courses are engaging, relevant and progressive.

We aim to deliver accredited training and non accredited training to an equal standard of excellence. Our underlying philosophy is to emphasise the importance of ongoing personal and professional development to staff, associates, clients and learners alike. It is our stated intention to uphold ethical guidelines in all areas of our adult education and training programmes.

New Links Training Solutions Team

Our training programmes are designed to challenge, stimulate and promote the personal and professional development of our learners to reach their full potential and competency; with this in mind we only hire the best people to become a trainer with us. Your development and growth is our priority.

Our trainers are all QQI qualified and experts in their field of training. They have many years experience in working with others and to a very high standard.

Providing feedback to New Links Training Solutions

Communication always needs to be seen as a two way process where feedback from consultations is viewed as an essential part of our existence and where outcomes of dialogue are acted upon in a timely and professional manner.

We aim to listen and action where appropriate and possible any and all observations and complaints which you have relating to your training programme and / or course location and facilitate any other items brought to the attention of the New Links Training Solutions team.

If you wish to provide feedback directly to the Management and/or team at New Links Training Solutions you can do so by the following methods at:

  Email info@newlinkstraining.com

  Telephone us on : 051 385 720

  Post: 1 Boeing Ave, Airport Business Park, Killowen, Co. Waterford.

QQI Overview

New Links Training Solutions provide programmes which are certified and accredited by QQI.

On 6th November 2012, Quality and Qualifications Ireland (QQI) was established as a new integrated agency (replacing the Further Education and Training Awards Council, the Higher Education and Training Awards Council and the National Qualifications Authority of Ireland and incorporating the functions of the Irish Universities Quality Board)

QQI is responsible for the external quality assurance of further and higher education and training (including English Language provision) and validates programmes and makes awards for certain providers in these sectors.

Common Awards System

A new national qualification system has been introduced across further education and training in Ireland. Known as CAS or 'the commons awards systems', programmes leading to these awards are increasingly being offered to learners. CAS awards are part of the National commitment to the highest quality experience for you when you enrol on a course or programme.

QQI for Learners

Meeting the needs of the learners is central to New Links Training Solutions mission. Successful learners will, through the completion of prescribed assignments and assessments and and/or exams, receive QQI awards.

QQI for Employers

It is essential that your employees have the necessary skills to be effective in their current role. A QQI award, made by QQI tells you that the accreditation received by your employee is to a high standard and is quality assured. Through New Links Training Solutions, Learners will complete prescribed assignments and assessments and/ or exams in order to receive the relevant QQI award/s.

QQI Courses provided by New Links Training Solutions include:

•   Train the Trainer,
•   Applied Employment Skills,
•   Train to work
•   Career Preparation Programmes
•   Health and Safety Programmes

Please take a look at our website for up to date course information.

Useful Links – *Transfer & Progression*

Company/Service	Brief Description	Website Address
Careers Portal	Career Information for those still in school, college or a job seeker	http://www.careersportal.ie/
FETCH Courses	Further Education and Training Course Hub	https://www.fetchcourses.ie/
QQI	The Further Education and Training Awards Council (QQI) was the statutory awarding body for further education and training in Ireland. The awards presented from QQI are internationally recognised through the National Framework of Qualification (NFQ).	http://www.QQI.ie/
NARIC	IrelandHosted by QQI, NARIC Ireland provides free advice on the recognition of foreign qualifications in Ireland.	https://www.qqi.ie/
Career Guidance Ireland	Manage an independent network of the finest career guidance counsellors in Ireland, for all types of individuals	http://www.careerguidance.ie/
Blue Brick	BlueBrick.ie is website that allows learners to search for, to compare and to apply online for a range of programmes and modules available on a flexible basis within a range of higher education course providers in Ireland.	http://www.bluebrick.ie/
SOLAS	SOLAS Training Programmes	http://www.solas.ie/Pages/HomePage.aspx
Solas Ecollege	Provide a range of interactive online learning courses, available any time through broadband Internet access, for those who wish to learn at their own pace.	http://www.ecollege.ie/site/home.html
Qualifax	Qualifax is Ireland's National Learners' Database. It is the "one stop shop" for learners. We provide the most comprehensive information on further and higher education and training courses	http://www.qualifax.ie/
Indeed jobs	Indeed is the #1 job site in the world1 with over 250 million unique visitors2 every month. Indeed strives to put jobseekers first, giving them free access to search for jobs, post CVs, and research companies. Every day, we connect millions of people to new opportunities.	https://ie.indeed.com/
Citizens advice	Citizensinformation.ie provides comprehensive information on public services and on the entitlements of citizens in Ireland. We gather information from various government departments and agencies, and make sure that you have all the information you need, presented in an easy-to-understand way.	http://www.citizensinformation.ie/en/
Google digital garage	Master the basics of digital marketing with our free Interactive Advertising Bureau-accredited course. There are 26 modules to explore, all created by Google trainers, packed full of practical exercises and real-world examples to help you turn knowledge into action.	https://learndigital.withgoogle.com/
Skillnets Ireland	Skillnet funds and facilitates training through networks of private sector companies, in a range of sectors and regions. Each network delivers training that is relevant to specific industry and member company needs.	http://www.skillnets.com/

Company/Service	Brief Description	Website Address
National Learning Network	National Learning Network currently offers over 40 different vocational programmes which carry nationally and internationally recognised certification and are designed to lead directly to jobs or progression to further education.	http://www.nln.ie/
Skills Ireland	The Expert Group on Future Skills Needs (EGFSN) advises the Irish Government on current and future skills needs of the economy and on other labour market issues that impact on Ireland's enterprise and employment growth. It has a central role in ensuring that labour market needs for skilled workers are anticipated and met.	http://www.skillsireland.com/
ETBI	National representative association for Ireland's vocational education committees (EBTI).	https://www.etbi.ie/
Waterford Chamber Skillnet	The aim of the network is to identify common training needs, deliver training locally using the highest calibre trainers, dramatically reduce training costs through collaboration and attract grant aid from the National Training Fund through Skillnet Limited.	http://www.waterfordskillnet.ie/
Department of Education and Skills	Department of Education	http://www.education.ie/en/
MABs	The Money Advice and Budgeting Service is the State's money advice service, guiding people through dealing with problem debt over than twenty years.	https://www.mabs.ie/en/
National Adult Literacy Agency (NALA)	Literary Improvement Service	http://www.nala.ie/
EQAVET	European Quality Assurance in Vocational Education and Training	http://www.eqavet.eu/gns/home.aspx
Student Finance	This website is a convenient and user-friendly source of information on financial support for further and higher education.	http://www.studentfinance.ie/
National Qualifications Authority of Ireland	It has responsibility for developing and maintaining the National Framework of Qualifications and has three principal objects which are set out in the Qualifications (Education & Training) Act 1999	http://www.nqai.ie/
National Framework of Qualifications	The National Framework of Qualifications (NFQ) provides a way to compare qualifications, and to ensure that they are quality assured and recognised at home and abroad.	http://www.nfq.ie/nfq/en/
Europass Ireland	Helps you understand how to make your qualifications internationally recognised	http://www.europass.ie/europass/

	New Links Training Solutions	Form: NLTS LP 004
	Assignment Submission Procedures and Learner Appeals	Version 5

1. Assignment Submission Procedures & Learner Appeals

Learners are expected to submit all assignments within the timeframe set by tutors which is in accordance with New Links Training Solutions policies and procedures. Through our Quality Assurance agreement with QQI we guarantee fair and consistent assessment of all learners therefore the following procedure in relation to assignment submission must be strictly adhered to.

2. Submission of Assignments

Your tutor will outline the submission dates for assignments at the beginning of a programme. We acknowledge that difficulties can sometimes arise in relation to work, holidays or personal circumstances and tutors have a small degree of flexibility in agreeing submission dates with a group at the beginning of a programme. The onus lies on the learner to notify their tutor (in writing) of any impending delays with regard to submission of assignments. An extension to the allocated submission deadline may be allocated where a learner has notified the tutor in advance of an impending difficulty. If a learner fails to submit their assignments by the cut-off date and in addition fails to contact their tutor or New Links Training Solutions in writing; it will be assumed that they have withdrawn from the process.

3. Late Assignment Submissions

It is our agreed policy that learners are subject to a stringent, open fair and consistent assessment process that is in line with QQI requirements and national guidelines. Therefore, learners who are granted extensions to their submission dates will be subject to the following:

- Portfolios may be submitted for certification at a later date – i.e. NLTS next certification period with QQI.
- An administration fee of €60 will apply – please note that exemptions may be granted in the following circumstances:
    - Bereavement of a close family member
    - Illness
    - Exceptional circumstances other than those listed above.

Applicants are asked to provide evidence of the presenting situation in addition to the application form if an exemption is requested. All applications are considered on a case by case basis only.

Learners must follow the following protocol in order to be granted an extension date for late submission of part of their course assessments:

Contact the centre *in writing* requesting an extension using form NLTS 0053:

- State the reason for your request
- State the expected dates of submission of the delayed assignment/s and identify the assignment number/s that will be delayed.
- Any completed assignments should be submitted by the due date (where portfolio contains a number of assignments)
- You will receive a reply confirming acceptance of the proposed submission date or an alternative date may be given to you.

Please note this is not an open-ended process and learners must adhere to the decision of the internal results panel.

Where a learner fails to submit their assignments within the timeframe set out in this policy it will be assumed that they have withdrawn from the process. These learners may reapply to New Links Training Solutions <u>in writing</u> to have their assignments submitted with another group; however, learners who choose this option may be required to attend part of another programme to ensure that all learning outcomes have been achieved.

Resubmitting unsuccessful assignments: where a learner has received a grade of unsuccessful (U) in their assessment there are two options available: (1) appeal the result (see point 4 below) or (2) they may resubmit the assignment following feedback from the course tutor. There is a fee of €40 for a first assignment and €20 for each additional assignment to cover the cost of re-marking. There are no exemptions for this fee. Please request form NLTS 061 if you wish to apply for an assignment resubmission.

4. **Appeals Procedure**

- Learners are entitled to make an appeal if they are not satisfied with specific aspect of their learning experience as outlined in the appeals application form.
- Learners must complete an appeal application form **(NLTS 108 Appeal Application Form)** to New Links Training Solutions within three weeks of the issue of their statement of results.
- Assessments/module/s under appeal will not be submitted for certification until the appeals process has been completed.
- An appeals charge of €75 will be applied to cover appeal and NLTS administration/governance costs – there are no exemptions for this fee.
- No new evidence will be accepted for appeal, only the original work will be considered under the appeals process.
- Each appeal is considered on a case by case basis.
- The provider will ensure that all the appropriate learner instruction evidence as set out in the module descriptor and course scheme of work are made available to the Quality Committee for the appeal.
- Evidence that is not submitted with the appeal application will be assumed to have not been completed by the learner.
- The Quality Committee will review the learner appeal and examine all the evidence pertaining to the appeal application.
- The final decision regarding the appeal will be made by the Quality Committee which will comprise of a number of independent decision makers and further education experts.
- The final decision will be issued in writing to the learner and the provider 4-6 weeks from the date of receipt of the appeal application.

- The appellant may escalate their complaint to QQI if they are dissatisfied with the decision of the Quality Committee

5. Issue of Provisional Results

Provisional results will be issued to learners 6-8 weeks from the submission date of assignments/portfolios. Provisional results will be issued once the following procedures have been administered:

- All learners work has been submitted and marked and signed off by the tutor (with the exception of learners covered in section 3 above).
- Tutor submits results to QQI coordinator for Internal Verification (IV)
- Internal Verification panel meets and reviews the results and either:
    - Makes recommendations for adjustment of marks and/or
    - Addresses Queries in relation to learners work and/or
    - Signs off on the marks awarded by the tutor and approves the provisional results.
1. The above guideline may be affected by annual leave, seasonal holidays or sick leave therefore learners are only given the 6-8 week guideline.

6. Final Results

Following the issue of provisional results and any appeals issues, the results are then subject to examination by an External Authenticator (EA). The provisional results are entered in to the QQI Business System (FBS) stage one. Once stage one has been completed the following procedures are administered:

- Provisional results reports are generated by the FBS system for presentation to the EA.
- External subject matter expert/s are identified and scheduled to visit the centre.
- IV report is prepared in advance of the EA's visit
- Sampling procedures are identified and agreed with the EA and a schedule for the visit is prepared.
- Video evidence is collated and prepared in advance of the EA visit.
- Portfolios are double checked and presented to the EA for review (per learner group).
- EA requests sampling as per sampling policy.

The following may occur as a result of the recommendations of the EA:

- Marks adjusted up or down
- Queries addressed
- Areas for improvement identified
- Evidence of good practice identified
1. The EA signs of on the final mark and prepares an EA report which is signed off by NLTS representative and the EA.
2. NLTS holds a results approval panel meeting (RAP) to review the findings of the EA.
3. Learners are notified if any adjustment has occurred in their grade.
4. Final marks are submitted to QQI through the FBS – stage 2.
5. A summary report is generated by the FBS.
6. The QQI coordinator sends the following paperwork to QQI:
    - IV Report
    - EA Report
    - Minutes of RAP meeting

7. Issue of QQI Certificates:

QQI operates a number of certification periods in a calendar year. Centres may avail of all of these certification periods or some. NLTS issues QQI certificates a maximum of twice yearly due to the cost constraints. Learners are always notified of the next certification period during the course or in

their provisional results notification. Unlike the issue of results date this date is fixed as per annual guidelines issued by QQI at the beginning of each calendar year. On receipt of certificates from QQI learners are issued with their QQI certificates.

For further information please contact our head office at 051-385720 or email info@newlinkstraining.com.

8.   Return of Learner Portfolios
Learner Portfolios may be collected (by appointment) no later than 6 weeks from the date of receipt of your QQI certificate. Due to GDPR regulations we cannot guarantee return of learner portfolios after this date as uncollected portfolios will be destroyed as per our retention of records procedure **NLTS P104.**

Website: www.newlinkstraining.com

National Framework of Qualifications

This diagram illustrates the National Framework of Qualifications which allows qualifications to be compared nationally and internationally.
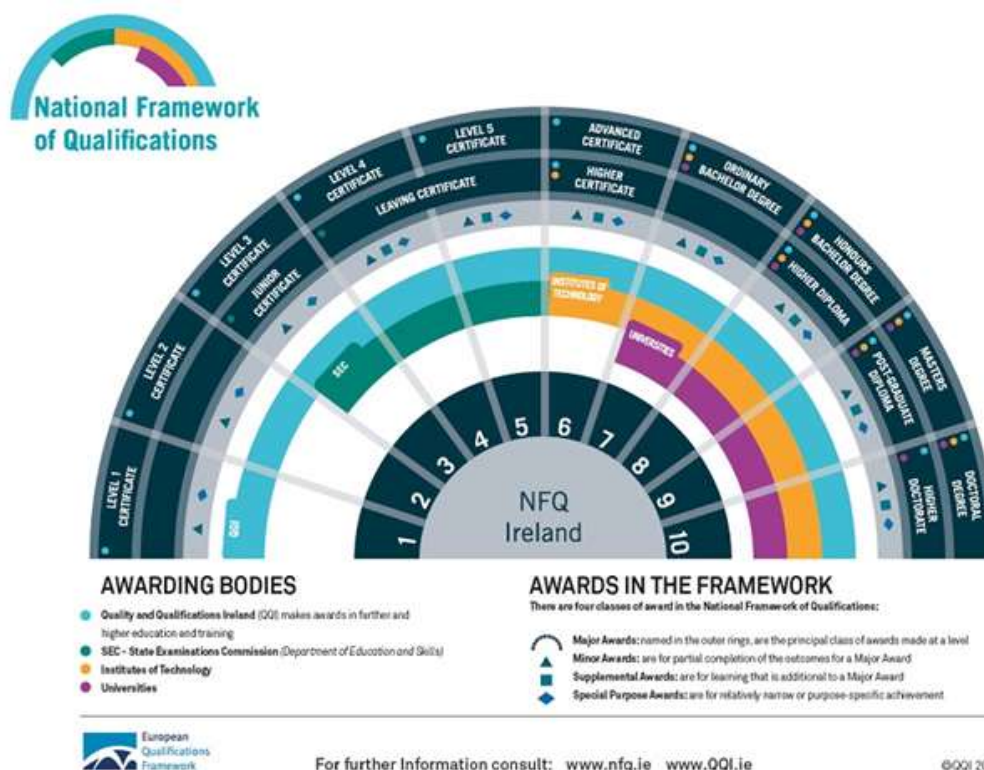
This framework includes all awards available in Ireland in training from the most basic (level 1) to the most advanced (level 10). It includes awards gained in schools, the workplace, the community, training centres, colleges and universities.

The award types are listed in the outer rings of the diagram and on the NQAI website www.nqai.ie. Awarding bodies whose awards are included in the framework are shown as coloured bands extending across the levels of the framework as appropriate.

QQI awards are placed at levels 1-6 on the National Framework of Qualifications.

Linking People, Ideas, Networks...
Our Clients Define the Outcomes, We Provide the Solutions

In-company Training

Public Training

Employee Training

Waterford: 051 385720

Cork: 021 2029199

Dublin: 01 5397234

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