



An tSeirbhís Oideachais Leanúnaigh agus Scileanna  
Further Education and Training Authority

# Craft Apprenticeship Assessment Rules



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# About this Document

## Overview

The SOLAS Craft Apprenticeship Assessment Rules underpin the planning, coordination, conduct, marking and storage of assessments, the recording and approval of results, and the verification and authentication of all craft apprenticeship assessments leading to the request of an award from recognised bodies whose awards are within or aligned with the National Framework of Qualifications (NFQ). This document was prepared by SOLAS to meet the requirements of the Qualifications (Education and Training) Acts 1999 and the Education & Training Act 2012.

The documents and systems listed below are also related to SOLAS Craft Apprenticeship Assessment:

- SOLAS Craft Apprenticeship Policy on Assessment Development, Marking and Grading
- SOLAS Overarching Quality Assurance Manual v1.3
- SOLAS Craft Apprenticeship Apprentice Guide to Assessment
- SOLAS Craft Apprenticeship Procedures for Managing Assessment System Malpractice

Where there is any lack of clarity or a conflict of interpretation, the content of this document takes precedence. Requests for changes to this document should be made to the chair of the Apprenticeship Quality Assurance Group.

## Scope

The document applies to **craft apprenticeship** assessment activities conducted by external providers operating the SOLAS quality assurance system. The document provides all assessment personnel with a set of overarching rules which will enable a common approach to assessment practice across all apprenticeship activity. As such, the rules are designed to encompass best practice in assessment in the broadest sense. Where the contents of this document differ from the rules of an Awarding Body, rules of the Awarding Body take precedence.

Non-conformance with the requirements outlined in this document or any of the above-listed documents constitutes a non-conformance with SOLAS quality assurance policy and procedure.

## Introduction

### **What is the purpose of the SOLAS Craft Apprenticeship Assessment Rules?**

The purpose of the SOLAS Apprenticeship Assessment Rules is to ensure that assessment of apprentices is fair and consistent and is administered in line with SOLAS Apprenticeship and relevant awarding body requirements

### **What key areas do the SOLAS Craft Apprenticeship Assessment Rules cover?**

The SOLAS Apprenticeship Assessment Rules cover the following areas:

- Planning and coordination of assessment
- Preparing for, conducting and concluding assessment events
- Marking assessments
- Handling apprentice assessment non-attendance or lateness, and deferral or deadline extension requests
- Feedback approach
- Handling apprentice assessment rechecks, reviews, and re-sits, repeats and appeals (APPENDIX 1)
- Maintaining the security of assessment
- Conducting internal verification and external authentication
- Conducting the results approval process
- Requesting certification
- Maintaining assessment records and evidence (APPENDIX 2 & 3)
- Providing assessment adaptations and apprentice supports to meet the needs of apprentices with disabilities (APPENDIX 4)

## **Where do the SOLAS Craft Apprenticeship Assessment Rules Apply?**

The document applies to all craft apprenticeship training and assessment activities conducted by external providers operating the SOLAS quality assurance system. These rules cover all assessment processes (including on-line assessment activities) undertaken by an apprentice which are an agreed part of the validated programme leading to an award.

The rules will be reinforced through either SOLAS contractual arrangements or via a Memorandum of Understanding, which indicates that the provider subscribes to the SOLAS Apprenticeship Assessment Rules.

These rules do not deal with any specific arrangements that SOLAS may put in place for assessment under Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL).

## **Who has responsibility as regards the SOLAS Craft Apprenticeship Assessment Rules?**

### **Management of the Assessment Process**

Assessment management ensures the allocation of resources, time, expertise and staff development to support all stages of the assessment process.

The second provider designated **Training Manager** shall have overall responsibility for the integrity and operations of the assessment process.

### **Apprenticeship Assessment Coordination Responsibilities**

Apprenticeship assessments are coordinated and administered in accordance with the assessment procedures for apprenticeship programmes.

Within an Education & Training Board the assessment coordination is typically undertaken by the Training Standards Officer (TSO) and/or the Assistant Training Standards Officer (ATSO). In other second providers the assessment coordination may be undertaken by other assigned personnel.

### **Assessment Supervision Responsibilities**

The Training Standards Officer and or the assigned personnel are responsible for ensuring the assessors/invigilators are informed of their duties and responsibilities.

Assessment supervision ensures that the conduct and integrity of assessment complies with the Awards Councils' and SOLAS quality assurance requirements.

This includes:

- Supervising tests and assessments including the election of assessment version for assessment events
- Ensuring rules, legislative rules, and health and safety requirements are observed
- Undertaking relevant administration
- Completing required reports
- Verifying apprentice identity in assessment

### **Role of Assessor/Invigilator in conducting apprenticeship assessments**

Within apprenticeship, the Instructor/trainer is often responsible for both assessment supervision and assessing. The role of the assessor/invigilator is to ensure the assessment event is conducted in accordance with the SOLAS apprenticeship assessment rules.

Assessors and Invigilators are required to study these assessment guidelines carefully and familiarize themselves with these rules before commencing an assessment event.

### **Role of Assessor post apprenticeship assessment**

Apprentice performance and related knowledge is assessed in a range of areas to ensure that the knowledge, skill and competence demonstrated meet the requirements of the national standards for the award. Assessor responsibilities include:

- Assessing and reviewing apprentices' assessment evidence against the assigned assessment criteria appropriate to the award standard
- Allocating apprenticeship assessment marks in accordance with the apprenticeship marking and grading criteria
- Ensuring that the apprenticeship assessment grading is applied in a fair and consistent manner
- Providing feedback on formative assessments and provisional summative assessment results

### **Internal Verification Responsibilities**

Internal verification is the review and evaluation of the assessment process and provisional results by persons other than those involved in course delivery and assessment for the programme in question.

Internal verification includes checking assessment procedures have been applied and the checking/monitoring of the conduct of assessment and of assessment results to ensure apprentice evidence exists and that results and grades are properly computed and recorded.

Internal verification also includes the peer review of assessment results. Those responsible for internal verification must:

- Review assessment documentation and records
- Check that all assessment procedures were adhered to
- Monitor assessment results on a sample basis
- Acknowledge good practice and identify any areas for improvement
- Complete, date and sign the Internal Verification Report
- Communicate findings to relevant assessment personnel and to management
- Carry out any other administrative duties related to internal verification
- Make all documentation arising from Internal Verification available to external authentication personnel, the Results Approval Panel, and others as appropriate

Internal verification of the assessment process and results is undertaken by the Training Standards Officer or other personnel responsible for assessment coordination.

### **External Authentication Responsibilities**

External authentication is the independent review of assessment processes and results. The purpose of external authentication is to ensure the credibility of SOLAS apprenticeship assessment processes and ensure that assessment results have been marked in a valid and reliable way in compliance with the requirement of the National Standard for the award. External authentication personnel provide independent confirmation of fair and consistent assessment of apprentices and ensure consistency of assessment results against the national standards.

External authentication includes checking and authentication of internal verification reports, sampling a range of apprentice evidence and moderating assessment results in accordance with standards outlined in the Award Specification. It also involves the provision of constructive feedback to second provider Management, completion of External Authentication Reports, outlining areas for improvement and good practice, and providing recommendations on assessment results for consideration by the Results Approval Panel.

### **Results Approval Panel Responsibilities**

The Results Approval Panel (RAP) is a decision making forum which formally reviews and approves provisional assessment results and authorises requests for certification. The RAP reviews all information submitted, including the External Authentication Report, the Internal Verification Report along with all appropriate assessment-related records and reports. Having adjudicated on the evidence presented the RAP will then make an evidence based decision regarding the authorization of assessment results. The RAP is prohibited from issuing Pass or Upgrade of results by compensation.

## Section 1. The Craft Apprenticeship Assessment Process

Throughout the apprenticeship assessment process:

- 1.1 The ETB Training Manager shall have overall responsibility for the implementation of the apprenticeship assessment process.
- 1.2 The ETB Training Manager shall assign relevant assessment duties to designated assessment personnel
- 1.3 The ETB Training Manager shall ensure assessment duties are carried out in a way that preserves the integrity of the assessment process, assessment instruments, assessment evidence and assessment records are made available for authentication purposes.
- 1.4 Conflicts of interest are declared and managed.<sup>1</sup>
- 1.5 All designated ETB assessment personnel are responsible for the accurate and timely completion and sign-off of all relevant assessment documentation.
- 1.6 Any record, as defined in the Freedom of Information Acts, 1997 and 2003, is made available according to second provider FOI procedure.
- 1.7 The rights of apprentices are at all times respected and apprentices are treated with confidentiality, fairness, courtesy and dignity. In carrying out their duties assessment personnel do not engage in any activity that constitutes bullying, harassment, or discrimination.
- 1.8 Apprentices are entitled to feedback during the programme and/or assessment in a timely, accurate and constructive way. Received feedback from Apprentices should be made available to SOLAS Apprenticeship Services for the purpose of continuous improvement of programmes and services.

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<sup>1</sup> Conflict of interest in the assessment process refers to any situation which compromises, or appears to compromise the objectivity of personnel involved in the assessment process (e.g. conducting an assessment in which a family member or friend is being assessed / the same person undertaking the conduct and verification of the same assessment).

## Section 2. Planning the Assessment Process

### 2.1 Pre-Assessment Information to Apprentices:

Apprenticeship assessment schedules are devised locally for each apprenticeship programme and are required to specify the off-the-job phase, the date, the time and location of a named assessment and at what stage in apprenticeship programmes the assessment takes place. ETB are required to brief apprentices on this issue and other pre-assessment information including:

- a) Information on appropriate assessment for the programme e.g. Skills-Demonstrations, Practical Assessments, Theory examinations, e-Portfolio, Reflective Journal, Project work, Assignments
- b) Outline the weighting and duration of assessments.
- c) Outline the expected standards of attainment for particular grades and the marking criteria used to achieve grades.
- d) State when and how apprentices will be informed of assessment outcomes.
- e) Indicate when performance feedback will be provided to apprentices.
- f) Include information on the three strike rule, what constitutes an attempt and the repeats and appeals processes.(APPENDIX 1)
- g) Indicate the apprentice's expected performance including explanation of the programme version relevant Overall Phase Allocation Criteria in the Apprenticeship IT System (samples in APPENDIX 3)

### 2.2 Apprenticeship Assessment Attempt:

The Labour Services Act 1987 Apprenticeship Rules 1997 stipulates.

“Every contract of apprenticeship shall be deemed to be automatically terminated on an apprentice failing to reach after three (3) attempts the minimum qualifying standard as specified by An Foras in any of the modular assessments during off-the-job training. Second and subsequent attempts must be taken in accordance with the procedures for such attempts in each trade, as specified by An Foras.”

**ATTEMPT:** An apprentice entering the examination hall or venue is required to sign an attendance sheet (register). Any apprentice who is registered and admitted to the examination hall or venue for the purpose of undertaking an assessment is deemed to have “attempted” an assessment.

### 2.3 **Three Strike Rule:**

Apprentices who fail to achieve the standard after 3 attempts on any assessment will be notified of the termination of the apprenticeship. Apprentices are entitled to make an application to appeal the termination of their apprenticeship in accordance with SOLAS procedures set out herein.

### 2.4 **Results Approval Educational Training Boards**

The results of assessments including e-Portfolio (detailed in 2.6 below) are approved through a results approval process as documented in the Transition Quality Assurance System (TQAS) Assessment Results Approval Guidelines and Work Instructions/V1.0. All Results are provisional until approved by the Results Approval Panel.

- Assessors will export and print the Moodle Grade book for the apprentice Class as results evidence for the Results Approval Panel.
- Once Results are approved, the e-Portfolio assignment results in Moodle are **Released** (by TSO in workflow). Moodle web service will automatically transfer the approved and released assessment results to Apps Client Services System.

### 2.5 **Appeals Process**

All assessment events (including e-Portfolio) will be subject to the normal Learner Assessment Appeals Process/V1.0 under the TQAS.

## 2.6 e- Portfolio Assessment

1. Portfolio evidence is marked in Moodle using Assignment workflow
2. Assessor **Locks** Portfolio evidence before marking commences
3. Portfolio evidence is marked using Rubric, workflow set to – **In marking**
4. When marking is completed, workflow is changed to – **Marking completed**
5. The Moodle Grade Book is exported for Results Approval
6. When Results Approval Process is complete, the Moodle marking workflow is set to – **Released**
7. When workflow activity is set to **Released**(by Exam Staff), the Web Service returns the % grades, phase UID etc. to Apps Client Services
8. All results are recorded. The three attempt rule is NOT active for Portfolio. Calls are not recorded for Portfolio.
9. For Referral results – Evidence of Referral is retained (PDF Export, Video)
10. When Referral % mark is recorded, a second assessment record for Portfolio is created for the apprentice in Apps Client Services
11. Within the Phase a 2<sup>nd</sup> Attempt may occur including the 4 weeks after Phase allowance for Phase 2. The Portfolio evidence is **unlocked** by the Assessor. The Assignment marking activity workflow for referred apprentice is set to **Not Marked**. Assessor sets submission date for 2<sup>nd</sup>attempt.
12. Apprentice updates Portfolio evidence based on Rubric results and assessment feedback.
13. Following submission date, Assessor Locks portfolio evidence and sets assignment marking activity workflow for referred apprentice is set to **In marking**.
14. When marking is completed workflow changed to – **Marking completed**.
15. Moodle Grade Book exported for Results Approval.
16. When Results Approval Process complete workflow set to – **Released**
17. When Marking Activity is set to **Released**(by Exam Staff) Web Services returns the % grades, phase UID etc. to Apps Client Services and records 2<sup>nd</sup>or subsequent Attempt. On a second or subsequent attempt any result greater than 50% is capped and the web service only returns 50% while Moodle records the actual grade.

## **Section 3. Coordinating the Apprenticeship Assessment Process**

Coordination of the assessment process ensures that:

- 3.1 Resources and personnel are in place to support the coordination of the SOLAS Apprenticeship assessment as specified.
- 3.2 Communication mechanisms for the dissemination of information on assessment to assessment personnel and apprentices are in place and implemented.
- 3.3 Assessment personnel are briefed on, have access to and comply with the relevant elements of:
  - a. SOLAS Apprenticeship Assessment Rules
  - b. Relevant legislation regarding Equality, Health and Safety, etc.
  - c. Any additional Awarding Body requirements if relevant
- 3.4 Responsibilities related to the assessment are clearly assigned
- 3.5 Assessment personnel are technically competent to carry out the roles assigned to them.
- 3.6 The training needs of assessment personnel related to assessment are identified and addressed.
- 3.7 Assessment personnel have sufficient resources to enable them to fulfill their responsibilities.
- 3.8 Approved assessment procedures are implemented for each programme.
- 3.9 Assessment arrangements and schedules are established.
- 3.10 A system for the approval and coordination of reasonable accommodation requests is in place. (APPENDIX 4).

3.11 A process for dealing with issues of compassionate consideration is in place.

Acceptable reasons for requesting compassionate consideration include:

- a. Sickness, as evidenced by a doctor's medical certificate
- b. Family bereavement
- c. Other reasons that are accepted by the relevant second provider Training Manager<sup>2</sup>

Any procedure in relation to compassionate consideration should require the apprentice to provide appropriate evidence/documentation e.g. a statement from a medical practitioner

3.12 Arrangements are in place for internal verification (on conduct of assessment process, results and peer review) and the relevant personnel briefed in advance of assessment.

3.13 Arrangements are in place for external authentication and the relevant personnel briefed in advance of assessment

3.14 Arrangements are in place for results approval and the relevant personnel briefed in advance of assessment

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<sup>2</sup> **QQI - Quality Assuring Assessment Guidelines for Providers**

- physical injury or emotional trauma during a period four to six weeks previously
- a physical disability or chronic or disabling condition such as epilepsy, glandular fever, or other incapacitating illness of the apprentice.
- recent bereavement of close family member or friend
- severe accident
- domestic crisis
- terminal illness of a close family member
- other extenuating circumstances.

## **Section 4. Preparing for the Assessment Event**

### **4.1 Preparation of the Assessment Location**

The Assessors/Invigilators will ensure the following:

- 4.1.1 The assessment environment is appropriate for the assessment event and complies with health and safety rules.
- 4.1.2 The assessment location has been set out with the required materials, in accordance with the assessment being held.
- 4.1.3 Clock(s) are available and clearly visible to each candidate
- 4.1.4 Candidates do not access to assessment papers before the Assessor/Invigilator conducts the assessment event.

### **4.2 Pre Assessment Activities**

The Assessors/Invigilators will ensure the following:

- 4.2.1 All candidates sign an attendance sheet immediately upon entry into the assessment location and complete any necessary documentation.
- 4.2.2 Each candidate's identity is verified.
- 4.2.3 Assessment paper packs are not to be opened without first ensuring the seal of the assessment paper pack is in order and the correct and full complement of assessment papers are in place for the assessment which is about to begin. The Assessor/Invigilator shall record this event in the Assessment Report.
- 4.2.4 No candidate shall receive an assessment paper or commence practical work unless the candidate has signed the attendance sheet or been recorded as present by the Assessor/Invigilator.
- 4.2.5 Conditions detailed in the Specific Instructions in the Assessors/Invigilators Instructions are met.
- 4.2.6 Remind candidates of the rules of conduct during the assessment, including adherence to health and safety requirements.
- 4.2.7 Remind all candidates of the assessment rules as specified in the Candidates Instructions and the Assessors/Invigilators Instructions.
- 4.2.8 Candidates are informed of the relevant instructions relating to the specific assessment.

- 4.2.9 The assessment is run in accordance with the conditions of assessment as detailed in the assessment programme.
- 4.2.10 Assessment instruments and assessment materials are distributed to each candidate.
- 4.2.11 Candidates do not bring into the assessment room, or have in their possession, any materials other than those explicitly permitted for that assessment. This applies particularly to mobile phones and electronic devices

## Section 5. In-Assessment Event Activities

The Assessors/Invigilators must ensure the following:

- 5.1 Candidates are in position in good time before the start of assessment and remain in place until the assessment duration has expired and candidates have left the area.
- 5.2 Each candidate is satisfied that he/she is in possession of the correct assessment paper.
- 5.3 Candidates do not practice on valid/live assessments prior to the assessment.  
The commencement of the assessment is formally announced.
- 5.4 Candidates are supervised at all times to ensure candidates do not avail of unfair assistance by consulting unauthorised material or by communicating with any other candidate or unauthorised person in any manner.
- 5.5 The time allotted for the assessment is accurately observed.
- 5.6 A tardy candidate is compliant with all elements stated in the Pre Assessment Activities Section (4.1).
- 5.7 Candidates remain silent during written assessments.
- 5.8 Candidates fully comply with the on-line system requirements during on-line assessments.
- 5.9 No candidate is allowed to undertake an assessment under the influence of alcohol or any other behaviour modifying drug or substance, save such drugs as are formally and duly prescribed for medical purposes by an authorised medical practitioner.
- 5.10 No candidate is allowed to communicate with any other candidate during the course of an assessment event.
- 5.11 No candidate is allowed to pass materials to any other candidate or to receive materials from any other candidate.
- 5.12 No candidate is to communicate with any person, databank or information source either internal or external to the assessment location, either in person or electronically.
- 5.13 No candidate receives information from any person external to the assessment location, except through the Assessor/Invigilator.
- 5.14 Candidates do not borrow materials from other candidates.
- 5.15 The Assessor/Invigilator and candidates strictly adhere to safety procedures.

- 5.16 Conduct of the assessment is monitored and any unplanned events (including breaches or rules) are recorded and dealt with appropriately.
- 5.17 The assessment is stopped immediately, if a candidate engages in an unsafe practice. The Assessor/Invigilator shall record any such event in the Assessment Report.
- 5.18 Implement the applicable rules governing late arrival and early departure of a candidate; no candidate will be allowed to leave an assessment location for the first thirty minutes or last fifteen minutes of the assessment event.
- 5.19 No candidate shall be allowed to enter the Assessment Location after an assessment event has been in progress for thirty minutes save with the explicit permission of the Training Standards Officer<sup>3</sup>, which shall not be given if any candidate has left the location. A time extension equal to the period of absence from the assessment event may be granted at the discretion of the Training Standards Officer. The Assessor/Invigilator shall record any such event in the Assessment Report.
- 5.20 No candidate will be given permission to attend a toilet, save in the event of sickness or with a Doctor's certificate during the assessment event unless the candidate is authorised to leave an assessment location and is accompanied by a person nominated, prior to the assessment, by the Training Standards Officer.
- 5.21 Candidates are not allowed to leave an assessment area unless the Assessment Supervisor/Assessor has collected his/her answer script(s).
- 5.22 A candidate who leaves the assessment location during the assessment event without the permission of the Assessor/Invigilator shall not be re-admitted for the remainder of the assessment. The Assessor/Invigilator shall record any such event in the Assessment Report.
- 5.23 In the event a candidate becomes distressed or ill, the Training Standards Officer must be immediately informed. Such a candidate will be allowed to leave the assessment location and is accompanied by a person nominated, prior to the assessment, by the Training Standards Officer. In such circumstances, and at the discretion of the Training Standards Officer, a time extension may be allowed to the candidate to complete the assessment. The Assessor/Invigilator shall record any such event in the Assessment Report.

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<sup>3</sup> Within an Education & Training Board the assessment coordination is typically undertaken by the Training Standards Officer (TSO) and/or the Assistant Training Standards Officer (ATSO). In other second providers the assessment coordination may be undertaken by other assigned personnel.

- 5.24 No candidate is allowed to behave in a manner, which disrupts or interferes with the orderly operation of the assessment. No candidate is allowed to behave in a manner which interferes with the general quiet nature of an assessment event, or which interferes with or disrupts the work of any other candidate or of the orderly organisation and management of the assessment event.
- 5.25 A candidate whose behaviour is disruptive and who persists in such behaviour following a warning will be reported to the Training Standards Officers. Any expulsion of the disruptive candidate from the Assessment Hall will be at the discretion of the Training Standards Officer in consultation with the Assessor/Invigilator. In such circumstances the Assessor/Invigilator will retain all materials issued to the candidate. The Assessor/Invigilator shall record any such event in the Assessment Report.
- 5.26 In the event of equipment failure, where such equipment is essential for the conduct of the assessment, an appropriate time allowance shall be provided by the Assessor/Invigilator to enable the candidate to complete the assessment. The Assessor/Invigilator shall record any such event in the Assessment Report.
- 5.27 The final 15 minutes of the assessment event is announced to all remaining candidates.
- 5.28 The conclusion of the assessment is formally announced.

## Section 6. Assessment Event Emergencies

- 6.1 Where it is necessary to evacuate the assessment location the Assessors/Invigilators must ensure the following:
- Make a note of the time that the assessment location was evacuated.
  - Instruct candidates to leave their assessment papers and answer scripts on their desks.
  - Bring the candidates to a safe place having first instructed candidates that they must not discuss the assessment. While they are out of the assessment location, candidates are to be under continuous supervision.
- 6.2 Re-start the assessment when the all clear is given.
- 6.3 The candidates are to be allowed the full time lost by the emergency to complete the assessment
- 6.4 In the event of fire or other serious cause the safety of the candidates and staff shall be the primary concern and the Assessor/Invigilator shall evacuate the Examination Location in an orderly manner and without delay. In such circumstances the assessment shall be declared void and shall be rescheduled.
- 6.5 The Assessor/Invigilator shall record any such event in the Assessment Report.

## Section 7. Post Assessment Event Activities

The Assessors/Invigilators must ensure the following:

- 7.1 Candidates cease work on the assessment immediately upon instruction.
- 7.2 The information required on the front of the assessment script is completed in respect of each script submitted.
- 7.3 The remaining candidates remain seated while the candidates' answer scripts and all other assessment materials are being collected.
- 7.4 Each candidate submits his/her script to the Assessor/Invigilator who will check the attendance sheet confirming the answer script has been collected
- 7.5 The Assessor/Invigilator will collect and account for all answer scripts and all related materials including assessment papers, candidates' instructions, unused answer sheets, practical assessment pieces and I.T. storage devices
- 7.6 A candidate who has finished their work at least fifteen minutes before the time appointed for the conclusion of the assessment may be permitted to leave the assessment location on handing their answer script and all related materials including the assessment paper, the candidate's instructions, unused answer sheets, practical assessment pieces and I.T. storage devices to the Assessor/Invigilator
- 7.8 A candidate who completes their assessment during the last fifteen minutes of the assessment shall be instructed to remain in their seat until the Assessor/Invigilator has collected their candidates' answer script and all related materials including the assessment paper, the candidate's instructions, unused answer sheets, practical assessment pieces and I.T. storage devices. The candidate will not leave the assessment location until the time appointed for the conclusion of the assessment, unless permitted to do so by the Assessor/Invigilator.
- 7.9 A candidate may not seek the return of an answer script once it has been handed to and accepted by the Assessor/Invigilator.

- 7.10 The Assessor/Invigilator will count and check the answer scripts as per signature sheet and place them with the attendance forms assessment papers, candidates' instructions and the Assessment Supervisor & Assessor Report in the large envelope provided. The total number of candidates is to be reported on the envelope. The envelope should then be sealed and returned to the appropriate authorised officer.
- 7.11 The Assessor/Invigilator will ensure the security of assessment material is maintained at all times
- 7.12 The Assessor/Invigilator will complete the Assessment Supervisor & Assessor Report, which will cover the conduct of the assessment and noting of anything of significance, which needs to be brought to the attention of the Training Standards Officer. If an assessment has taken place without any such information being necessary to report then the report is to be marked - "Assessment Conducted Satisfactory"
- 7.13 The Assessor/Invigilator will ensure any complaints received from candidates regarding the improper conduct of the assessment rules are recorded in the Assessment Supervisor & Assessor Report and submitted to the Training Standards Officer for processing
- 7.14 The Assessor/Invigilator will ensure restricted assessment papers or material are not to be taken from the Assessment Location. Retention of any unauthorised material by a candidate will be taken as constituting evidence of infringement of the rules. The Assessor/Invigilator shall record any such event in the Assessment Supervisor & Assessor Report.
- 7.15 The Assessor/Invigilator shall report all suspicions of breaches of rules in the Assessment Supervisor & Assessor Report as outlined in SOLAS Craft Apprenticeship Procedures for Managing Assessment System Malpractice.

## **Section 8. Non-Attendance or Lateness, Deferral Requests or Deadline Extension Requests<sup>4</sup>**

With regard to the assessment non-attendance, deferral of an assessment or a deadline extension, the following rules apply:

- 8.1 Deferral requests are made in writing by the apprentice and must state the reason for the deferral request.
- 8.2 Requests for deadline extensions are made in writing by the apprentice and must state the reason for the deadline extension request.
- 8.3 Apprentices who do not turn up for assessment must submit a written explanation to the relevant instructor/trainer within two working days of the missed assessment.

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<sup>4</sup> Acceptable reasons for request of a deferral of assessment non-attendance or lateness, deferral of assessment, or extension to a deadline include:

- a. Sickness, as evidenced by a medical certificate
- b. Family bereavement
- c. Other reasons that are accepted by the relevant assessment personnel and the relevant Manager

## Section 9. Marking of Assessment

All results are provisional until approved by the Results Approval Panel (Section 15). When marking assessments, the rules below apply:

- 9.1 Assessments are marked in accordance with the SOLAS Policy on Assessment Development, Marking and Grading.
- 9.2 Evidence of attendance of an apprentice at an assessment by sign-in is recorded as an attempt, except in the case of apprentices who could not continue with an assessment due to sickness or unforeseen emergency.
- 9.3 Apprentice assessment evidence is verified as the apprentice's own work via an authorship statement <sup>5</sup>or other appropriate means must be submitted in the case of portfolios, projects, coursework etc.
- 9.4 The use of photographic evidence may be appropriate to record practical events as standard in the event of appeal.
- 9.5 If plagiarism is suspected, it must be recorded and dealt with in line with the malpractice document.
- 9.6 Apprentice performance is marked in accordance with directions outlined in the assessment marking instructions.
- 9.7 Apprentice assessment results are recorded and collated using approved documentation and systems.

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<sup>5</sup>Signed declaration that the work presented for assessment is the author's own work and does not include the unacknowledged work of any other person, organisation or body

## **Section 10.     Apprentice Assessment Rechecks, Reviews, Re-sits, Referrals, Repeats and Appeals.**

Apprentices who do not reach pass standards shall comply with the existing SOLAS rules on repeats printed in assessment programmes.

“Every contract of apprenticeship shall be deemed to be automatically terminated on an apprentice failing to reach after three (3) attempts the minimum qualifying standard as specified by An Foras in any of the modular assessments during off-the-job training. Second and subsequent attempts must be taken in accordance with the procedures for such attempts in each trade, as specified by An Foras.”

An apprentice can:

- Make an initial assessment attempt, which will occur during the course.
- Avail of a Re-sit (opportunity to retake an assessment abandoned due to sickness or emergency)
- Avail of a Repeat which are Second and third attempts, taken during the course are called Repeats – these are allowable to facilitate the apprentice achieve a pass result in order to progress and can only take place 5 working days after the initial attempt)
- Avail of Referral – this is a repeat exam taken after the course has ended (Appendix 1)
- Make an Appeal this is to challenge the outcome of rechecks or reviews

When administering assessment, rechecks, reviews, resits, referrals, repeats and appeals, the following rules are adhered to:

- 10.1 Assessment personnel are familiar with the rules governing rechecks, reviews, re-sits, referrals, repeats and the Apprentice Assessment Appeals Process.
- 10.2 Apprentices are to be facilitated in receiving feedback on their assessment, including viewing their marked assessment(s) in a timely, accurate and constructive manner.
- 10.3 Apprentices are advised on the processes and procedures relating to referrals, repeats and appeals of assessment(s) prior to assessment.

- 10.4 Apprentices who fail to meet the minimum requirements of an assessment are afforded the opportunity to repeat an equivalent assessment in accordance with SOLAS policy on repeats.
- 10.5 Apprentices who cannot continue an assessment due to sickness or unforeseen emergency are afforded the opportunity to re-sit the assessment as per rules outlined previously.
- 10.6 Referrals, re-sit and repeat assessments are conducted in the same conditions as previously outlined for regular assessment event activities.
- 10.7 An equivalent assessment is selected by the Training Standards Officer for referral, re-sit and repeat assessments, where applicable.
- 10.8 All requests for rechecks, reviews, repeats, re-sits, and appeals are processed in accordance with procedures outlined in APPENDIX 1: Appeal of Assessment Results Procedure relevant timeframes outlined therein.

## Section 11. Appeal of Assessment Results

11.1 An appeal must be facilitated in the following circumstances:

- a) Apprentice believes that assessment results were recorded inaccurately (recheck)
- b) Apprentice believes that assessment was marked inappropriately (review)
- c) The assessment rules were not properly implemented
- d) Assessment conditions did not comply with specification. An appeal on these grounds will be considered if the Apprentice has reported the situation to the Assessor during or immediately after the test. This will be documented in the Assessor's report
- e) The rules did not adequately cover the Apprentice's circumstances
- f) Compassionate or medical circumstances existed which were not taken into account
- g) Circumstances existed that may not have been covered by the assessment rules
- h) The Apprentice believes that significant performance-related information was not considered by the assessor
- i) New information becomes available that was not available to the original assessor
- j) There is evidence of irregularity in the conduct of the assessment, which might have affected its outcome

11.2 A re-check of results is the first stage of an appeals process. An appeal application for the SOLAS Apprenticeship Programme must be received by the relevant ETB manager no later than 10 working days from the receipt of results

11.3 Assessment personnel are required to:

- a) Undertake a re-check of the assessment results and communicate the outcome in writing to the apprentice within 10 working days from the completion of the re-check
- b) Document the process and retain documentation for the appropriate time (Section 12)
- c) Communicate the adjusted outcomes, if any, to SOLAS Apprenticeship Services Unit.
- d) In the event the Apprentice remains unsatisfied, relevant personnel to communicate the process for an appeal.

11.4 For Appeal 'Review' assessment personnel are required to:

- Consider the validity of the request
- Conduct the appeal process in accordance with the Appeal of Apprenticeship Assessment Result Procedure (Appendix 1)
- Communicate the outcome of the appeal in writing to the Apprentice within 10 working days of the conclusion of the appeals process
- Advise apprentices who are unsuccessful in their appeal about the mechanisms available for escalating the appeal
- Document the process and retain documentation for the appropriate time
- Communicate the adjusted outcomes, if any, to SOLAS Apprenticeship Services Unit.

## **Section 12. Security of Assessment Documentation, Processes and Material**

Assessment procedures and systems should have in-built secure mechanisms for recording, storing and accessing apprentice's records.

Specific assessment techniques e.g. examinations in order to ensure validity and consistency require secure mechanisms for storage and confidentiality.

To guarantee assessment security and integrity, the following rules are adhered to:

- 12.1 All assessment information and related documentation is treated as confidential
- 12.2 Security procedures are applied at all times during:
  - a. assessment development
  - b. transit of assessment papers to and from assessment locations
  - c. distribution of assessment documents to assessment personnel and apprentices
  - d. marking of assessment
- 12.3 Assessment papers are printed only as needed
- 12.4 All assessment papers are collected after the assessment event.
- 12.5 Following an assessment event, assessment papers including unused assessment papers, apprentice answer sheets and model answers are not copied or reproduced electronically, and are returned to a designated place. Unused assessment papers will then be destroyed in a secure manner.
- 12.6 The relevant SOLAS Manager and relevant assessment personnel are informed if the security of an assessment is breached by theft, loss, damage, unauthorised disclosure, fire or any other circumstances.
- 12.7 In the event of an alleged breach of assessment security, SOLAS Apprenticeship Procedures for Managing Assessment System Malpractice are adhered to.
- 12.8 Assessment evidence submitted should be recorded as such by use of signature or receipts to prevent disagreements.

With regard to assessment evidence, the following rules apply:

- 12.9 File storage, back-up and recovery systems are in place for on-line and PC-based assessments.
- 12.10 Assessment materials and, where possible, evidence of assessed work – including photographic evidence are retained until such time as all results have been approved, or in the case of results under appeal, until the appeals process has been exhausted.
- 12.11 A record of the disposal/destruction of assessment evidence is maintained.
- 12.12 Disposal mechanisms for assessment evidence are appropriate, safe and confidential.

With regard to assessment records, the following rules apply<sup>6</sup>:

- 12.13 Accurate records of apprentice attendance, achievement and certification, malpractice and appeals of assessment results are maintained.
- 12.14 Any assessment record (as defined in the Freedom of Information Acts, 1997 and 2003) is made available according to FOI procedure.
- 12.15 Assessment records are maintained for 6 years,
- 12.16 Minutes of ETB Results Approval Panel meeting are maintained indefinitely
- 12.17 Assessment results are maintained indefinitely through the SOLAS Apprenticeship Client System
- 12.18 A system for the storage and deletion and/or archiving as appropriate of hard copy or electronic assessment records is established and a record of the disposal/destruction of assessment records, including electronic records, is maintained.
- 12.19 Disposal mechanisms for records are safe and confidential.

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<sup>6</sup> Appendix 2 SOLAS Apprenticeship Policy on Assessment Record Retention and Disposal

## Section 13. Internal Verification of Assessment

When implementing internal verification processes<sup>7</sup>, the following rules are adhered to:

- 13.1 The internal verification of assessment is organised and conducted as per the SOLAS Apprenticeship Training Standards System (TSS) and/or the requirements of the relevant Awarding Bodies.
- 13.2 Internal verification personnel are fully briefed by the relevant second provider manager on the role of internal verification of the conduct of the assessment process, internal verification of results and peer review.
- 13.3 Assessment personnel are prohibited from verifying assessments on which they have instructed, supervised, conducted or marked.
- 13.4 The appropriate assessment documentation and evidence is made available to the internal verification personnel by the Training Standards Officer.
- 13.5 Assessment process is reviewed by the Internal Verifier to ensure that correct procedures have been consistently applied throughout.
- 13.6 Internal Verification Reports are completed, dated and signed by the relevant internal verification personnel.
- 13.7 Any non-conformances, areas of improvement or good practice identified are documented in the Internal Verification Report in accordance with ATSS processes.
- 13.8 All documentation arising from internal verification is made available to external authentication personnel<sup>8</sup>, Results Approval Panel and others as appropriate.
- 13.9 Issues identified in the Internal Verification Reports are addressed by the Results Approval Panel.
- 13.10 It is imperative that confidentiality is maintained throughout the internal verification process.

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<sup>7</sup> Internal Verification applies to 100% of Apprenticeship Assessment.

<sup>8</sup> External Authentication can be either SOLAS Apprenticeship of Awarding Body e.g. QQI

## Section 14. External Authentication of Assessment

SOLAS external authentication of assessment is arranged by the Apprenticeship Services Unit. When implementing external authentication processes, the following rules must be adhered to:

- 14.1 The external authentication of assessment is conducted as per SOLAS policy and procedures and the requirements of the relevant Awarding Bodies.
- 14.2 The external authentication of assessment is carried out on a sample basis in line with a national sampling strategy.
- 14.3 SOLAS Apprenticeship Services shall ensure that external authentication personnel are fully briefed on the role of the external authenticator.
- 14.4 SOLAS appointed external authentication personnel are suitably qualified to moderate assessment results in accordance with standards outlined in the Award Specification.
- 14.5 The second provider must provide all appropriate documentation and evidence to the external authentication personnel including internal verification reports.
- 14.6 Any non-conformances, areas of improvement or good practice identified are to be verbally outlined to Second Provider Management in a closing meeting and documented in the External Authentication Report
- 14.7 External Authentication Reports are completed, dated and signed by the relevant external authentication personnel.
- 14.8 External Authentication Reports are submitted to SOLAS Apprenticeship Services and the Second Provider Management in advance of Results Approval Panel.
- 14.9 Issues identified in the External Authentication Reports are addressed by the Results Approval Panel.
- 12.10 It is imperative that confidentiality is maintained throughout the external authentication process

## **Section 15. Results Approval**

When conducting the results approval process, the following rules are adhered to:

- 15.1 The results approval process is organised and conducted as per the Transition Quality Assurance System (TQAS).
- 15.2 All provisional assessment results are processed through the Results Approval Panel (RAP).
- 15.3 Results are approved by the chair of the RAP as having complied with SOLAS quality assurance procedures and awarding body Quality Assurance requirements.
- 15.4 The RAP is prohibited from issuing Pass or Upgrade of results by compensation.
  
- 15.4 Actions agreed during the results approval process are documented and dealt with appropriately, by second provider prior to requesting certificates.
- 15.5 All results approval documentation is fully signed off and retained on file indefinitely.

# APPENDICES

## **Appendix 1. Appeal of Apprenticeship Assessment Result Procedure**

### **Appeal of Assessment Results Procedure**

#### **11.1 Purpose**

11.1.1 To facilitate Apprentices who wish to appeal an assessment decision.

#### **11.2 Responsibility**

11.2.1 ETB are responsible for ensuring that Apprentices are informed of the appeals process and of their right to appeal an assessment result decision.

11.2.2 ETB are responsible for implementing this procedure.

#### **11.3 Procedure**

##### **11.3.1 Appeal: Re-check**

A re-check of the results of the assessment is the first stage of the appeals process. An appeal application for the SOLAS Apprenticeship Programme must be received by the relevant ETB manager no later than 10 working days from the receipt of results.

##### **11.3.1.1 Relevant ETB assessment personnel will:**

- Undertake a re-check of the assessment results and communicate the outcome of the re-check in writing to the Apprentice not later than 10 working days from the date the re-check is completed
- Document the process and retain documentation for the appropriate time as outlined in SOLAS Apprenticeship Policy on Record Retention and Disposal
- Communicate the adjusted outcomes, if any, to SOLAS Apprenticeship Unit
- In the event that the Apprentice is not satisfied with the re-check, relevant assessment personnel will communicate the process for a Review of the assessment marks.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> In the case of practical tests, re-check and appeal are based on assessment records and not assessment evidence, i.e., they are not based on the piece of work produced by an apprentice in a practical test.

**Appeal: Review**

An appeal may be requested by the Apprentice if s/he is dissatisfied with the outcome of the assessment or re-check process. An appeal application for the SOLAS Apprenticeship Programme must be received by the relevant SOLAS manager no later than 10 working days from the issuing of results.

**11.3.2.1** The relevant ETB Manager will facilitate an appeal in the following circumstances:-

- a) Apprentice believes that assessment results were recorded inaccurately (recheck)
- b) Apprentice believes that assessment was marked inappropriately (review)
- c) The assessment regulations were not properly implemented
- d) Assessment conditions did not comply with test specification. An appeal on these grounds will be considered if the Apprentice has reported the situation to the Assessor during or immediately after the test. This will be documented in the Assessor's report
- e) The regulations did not adequately cover the Apprentice's circumstances
- f) Compassionate or medical circumstances existed which were not taken into account
- g) Circumstances existed that may not have been covered by the assessment regulations
- h) The Apprentice believes that significant performance-related information was not considered by the assessor
- i) New information becomes available that was not available to the original assessor
- j) There is evidence of irregularity in the conduct of the test/assessment, which might have affected its outcome

**11.3.2.2** Relevant ETB assessment personnel will: -

- Consider the validity of the request
- Conduct the appeal process in accordance with SOLAS Apprenticeship Assessment Rules
- Communicate the outcome of the appeal in writing to the Apprentice within 10 working days of the conclusion of the appeals process
- Advise apprentices who are unsuccessful in their appeal about the mechanisms available for escalating the appeal
- Document the process and retain documentation for the appropriate time
- Communicate adjusted outcomes if any, to the SOLAS Apprenticeship Services Unit.

## **Appendix 2. SOLAS Apprenticeship Policy on Assessment Record Retention and Disposal**

### **Assessment Records**

Assessment Records are mechanisms for recording that an assessment event has taken place and which document the assessment outcomes for each apprentice. Records relating to Fair and Consistent Assessment of apprentices may be electronic or paper and consist of the following:

- Notifications assessment events and requests for test packs (F11s)
- Apprentice requests for assessment support and copy of approval decision.
- Assessment instruments and briefs including drawings, instructions, etc., marking / scoring sheets, individual marking sheets, summary assessment sheets
- Assessment Supervisor & Assessor Reports
- F12B -Course Summary Assessment Sheet and Results Approval Form
- Apprentice requests for recheck / review
- Outcome of the recheck and review process
- Internal verification on the conduct of assessment process reports
- Peer reviewer reports
- Checklist for submitting results to TSO
- Internal verification of assessment results report
- External authentication reports
- Minutes of ETB Results Approval Panel meeting (to be retained indefinitely)
- Record of apprentice notification of change to provisional result following RAP (to be retained indefinitely)
- Record of apprentice appeal requests and appeal request outcome
- Copy of the record of assessment evidence disposal.

**Assessment Record Retention**

- Apprentice assessment and training records are confidential.
- Assessment records should be maintained in a safe and secure location with only authorised access to the data permitted.
- Records should be retained in a manner that facilitates easy retrieval of the record.
- Assessment records are maintained for a period of 6 years
- Assessment results are maintained indefinitely through FÁS electronic certification systems.
- Minutes of ETB Results Approval Panel meeting are maintained indefinitely.

**Assessment Record Disposal**

A register of records should be maintained, cataloguing the;

- record title (e.g. assessment records, assessment evidence)
- record reference (e.g. course code and F12 id number)
- period record relates to(e.g. contract period or course duration period)
- date scheduled for disposal
  - when (e.g. 6 years after the date of record closure)
  - how disposed (e.g. confidentially shredded)
  - authorisation for disposal (e.g. name of Manager that approved the destruction of the record)
- date disposed (e.g. actual date of disposal)

**Appendix 3. SAMPLE Overall Phase Result Allocation (v2/v3)**

Based on the details provided below for each individual course assessment component, an overall Phase result will be returned based on the following:

Overall Phase Result Code	Detail
PASS	A candidate will be awarded an overall result of PASS once a pass has been obtained in all assessments.
MERIT	A candidate will be awarded an overall result of MERIT once the required number of credits has been obtained in specific assessments at the first attempt and a pass has been obtained in all assessments. A candidate may obtain a Merit award after repeating specific assessments, once adequate credits were obtained in the first attempt in the successful assessments to meet the course requirements.
EXEMPTION	A candidate will be awarded an overall result of EXEMPTION, if an Exemption is granted in <u>all</u> module components.
REFERRAL	A candidate will be awarded an overall result of REFERRAL if a pass or merit is not attained in all assessments and no other results describe the status of the candidate more appropriately.
UNFINISHED	A candidate will be awarded an overall result of UNFINISHED where the candidate was coded as <i>Absent; DNA; Deferral; Incomplete</i> for any assessment.
WITHHELD	A candidate will be returned an overall result of WITHHELD in the event of outstanding issues preventing a definitive determination of results at the time of the assessment validation process.
WITHDREW	A candidate will be returned an overall result of WITHDREW where the candidate was coded as <i>Withdrew</i> for any assessment and has completed insufficient time on the course to be deemed to have completed the Phase.
WHC	A candidate will be returned with an overall result of WHC (Withheld Charges) if the candidate has not fulfilled Institute regulations related to payment of examination fees or other charges for which the candidate is personally liable. All outstanding charges must be paid before results will be released and your apprenticeship progressed.

**Individual Result Allocation**

Indiv. Result Code	Detail
PASS	Assessment is satisfactorily completed. Such effort will be counted as an attempt and a call.
CREDIT	Assessment is satisfactorily completed at the level required for a Credit grade. Such effort will be counted as an attempt and a call. <i>A Credit result may only be attained at the first attempt at the individual module assessment component.</i>
EXEMPT	The candidate is deemed to be exempt from this assessment in recognition of prior learning.
REFERRAL	The required standard is not achieved. Such effort will be counted as an attempt and a call. A candidate is required to re-sit such assessments.
ABSENT	The candidate is absent from the scheduled course assessments including scheduled *re-sit (repeat) course assessments. An absence will not be counted as an attempt but it will be counted as a call.
DNA	The candidate was notified of a *referral examination but the candidate did not respond, apply for or attend the assessment event. A DNA will not be counted as an attempt but it will be counted as a call.
DEFERRAL	The candidate has been granted approval by the Provider to defer an assessment event. for compassionate reasons. Such effort will not be counted as an attempt and it will not be counted as a call. INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY EXAM FEES WILL NOT APPLY for any further assessment coded as deferral. However, you must register for the exams using the REGISTRATION SLIP overleaf.
INCOMPLETE	The candidate has still to take an assessment but the Provider could not offer an assessment event to the candidate or in a situation where it was necessary for the Provider to cancel an assessment event. Such effort will not be counted as an attempt and it will not be counted as a call. INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY EXAM FEES WILL NOT APPLY for any further assessment coded as incomplete. However, you must register for the exams using the REGISTRATION SLIP overleaf.
WITHHELD	There are outstanding issues preventing a definitive determination of results at the time of the assessment validation process, for example, <i>an investigation into possible cheating</i> . Such effort will not be counted as an attempt and it will be counted as a call.
WITHDREW	The candidate is absent from the scheduled course assessment following withdrawal from the programme, having completed insufficient time to be deemed to have completed the phase. WITHDREW will not be counted as an attempt but will be counted as a call.

**SAMPLE Overall Phase Result Allocation (Curriculum v4)**

Based on the details provided below for each individual course assessment component, overall Phase result will be returned based on the following:

Overall Phase Result Code	Detail
PASS /MERIT/ DISTINCTION	<b>Overall Phase results for off-the-job Phases are based on a weighting model derived from contributing component assessment techniques</b> and are determined by multiplying the average of the assessment types by their contributing weighting factor to give the phase result. There are three possible result outcomes: Pass (50-64%); Merit (65-79%) and Distinction (80-100%). See <a href="http://www.Solas.ie">www.Solas.ie</a> \ insert relevant webpage
EXEMPTION	A candidate will be awarded an overall result of EXEMPTION, if an Exemption is granted in <u>all</u> module components.
REFERRAL	A candidate will be awarded an overall result of REFERRAL if a Pass, Merit or Distinction is not attained in all assessments and no other results describe the status of the candidate more appropriately.
UNFINISHED	A candidate will be awarded an overall result of UNFINISHED where the candidate was coded as <i>Absent; DNA; Deferral; Incomplete</i> for any assessment.
WITHHELD	A candidate will be returned an overall result of WITHHELD in the event of outstanding issues preventing a definitive determination of results at the time of the assessment validation process.
WITHDREW	A candidate will be returned an overall result of WITHDREW where the candidate was coded as Withdrew for any assessment and has completed insufficient time on the course to be deemed to have completed the Phase.
WHC	A candidate will be returned with an overall result of WHC (Withheld Charges) if the candidate has not fulfilled Institute regulations related to payment of examination fees or other charges for which the candidate is personally liable. All outstanding charges must be paid before results will be released and your apprenticeship progressed.

## Individual Result Allocation

Indiv.Result Code	Detail
PASS	Assessment Result = 50-64%. Such effort will be counted as an attempt and a call.
MERIT	Assessment Result = 65-79%.. Such effort will be counted as an attempt and a call. <i>A MERIT result may only be attained at the first attempt at the individual module assessment component.</i>
DISTINCTION	Assessment Result = 80-100%. Such effort will be counted as an attempt and a call. <i>A DISTINCTION result may only be attained at the first attempt at the individual module assessment component.</i>
EXEMPT	The candidate is deemed to be exempt from this assessment in recognition of prior learning.
REFERRAL	Assessment Result = 0-49%. Such effort will be counted as an attempt and a call. A candidate is required to re-sit such assessments.
ABSENT	The candidate is absent from the scheduled course assessments including scheduled *re-sit (repeat) course assessments. An absence will not be counted as an attempt but it will be counted as a call.
DNA	The candidate was notified of a *referral examination but the candidate did not respond, apply for or attend the assessment event. A DNA will not be counted as an attempt but it will be counted as a call.
DEFERRAL	The candidate has been granted approval by the Provider to defer an assessment event. for compassionate reasons. Such effort will not be counted as an attempt and it will not be counted as a call. INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY EXAM FEES WILL NOT APPLY for any further assessment coded as deferral. However, you must register for the exams using the REGISTRATION SLIP overleaf.
INCOMPLETE	The candidate has still to take an assessment but the Provider could not offer an assessment event to the candidate or in a situation where it was necessary for the Provider to cancel an assessment event. Such effort will not be counted as an attempt and it will not be counted as a call. INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY EXAM FEES WILL NOT APPLY for any further assessment coded as incomplete. However, you must register for the exams using the REGISTRATION SLIP overleaf.
WITHHELD	There are outstanding issues preventing a definitive determination of results at the time of the assessment validation process, for example, <i>an investigation into possible cheating</i> . Such effort will not be counted as an attempt and it will be counted as a call.
WITHDREW	The candidate is absent from the scheduled course assessment following withdrawal from the programme, having completed insufficient time to be deemed to have completed the phase. WITHDREW will not be counted as an attempt but will be counted as a call.

## **Appendix 4. Adaptation of Assessments to Meet the Needs of Apprentices with Disabilities<sup>10</sup>**

Apprentices with disabilities must make their course instructor aware of their impairment and the need for reasonable accommodation at the beginning of their course. The apprentice will complete the Apprentice Request for Assessment Support Form for processing, with supporting evidence (where required). This form must be completed as early as possible, but no later than four weeks prior to the commencement of assessment. This is to allow for the reasonable accommodation to be facilitated.

### **Individualisation**

As a general rule, an adaptation to the form of delivery, which makes learning possible, will also assist in making assessment possible. The apprentice is usually the best authority on what form of delivery is the most effective and the same method(s) may then be possible during any assessment. However, it is important that the standard of the assessment is not diminished. Only the method(s) by which the apprentice demonstrates his/her attainment of the standard can be adjusted.

### **Rest Breaks**

Supervised rest breaks either inside or outside the assessment area should be allowed as is appropriate. A rest break can be flexible according to individual needs, e.g. 15 minutes every hour as opposed to one 30-minute period during a three-hour assessment. The time so used should not be deducted from the time allowed (where specified) to complete the assessment.

### **Split Sessions**

Splitting the assessment into two or more sessions may be an appropriate alternative for some students.

### **Extra Time**

In the case of assessments that are based on time, additional time of up to 25% is the usual rule of thumb.

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<sup>10</sup> The contents of this Appendix represents best practice in line with the Disability Act 2005 following Awarding Bodies: QQI, City and Guilds, Irish Computer Society

**Readers<sup>11</sup>**

A reader is a person provided to assist a disabled student by reading assessment questions aloud without suggesting the answer. A reader is a person who, on request, will read to the apprentice:

- a. The entire or any part of the assessment;
- b. Any part of the apprentice's answers (exactly, as they are 'spoken').

Readers are typically used by people with visual impairments, people who tire easily, people who have extreme muscle weakness and people with learning difficulties.

Only one reader per apprentice is permissible and the assessment should take place in a separate room or area. Such provision may give rise to the need for extra Assessment Supervision personnel.

**Writers/Scribes<sup>12</sup>**

A writer is a person who will, on request, write the answers exactly as given or dictated by an apprentice. A writer may also act as a reader and is often used in similar circumstances to a reader. As in the case of a reader, only one writer per apprentice is permissible and the assessment should take place in a separate room or area. Such provision may give rise to the need for extra assessment supervision personnel.

**Sign Language Interpreters<sup>13</sup>**

Sign language Interpreters must be qualified to interpret sign or other similar types of language. Only one Sign Language Interpreter per apprentice should be used. The assessment for apprentices (usually those who are deaf or hard of hearing) should take place in a separate room or area. Such provision may give rise to the need for extra assessment supervision personnel. For extra transparency it may be necessary to video-tape the assessment for translation later. Similarly, some apprentices may prefer to sign their answers directly to video. A signed response should be transcribed to print by someone proficient in sign language. Any words or phrases re-interpreted for the apprentice should be underlined and noted in the question paper.

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<sup>11</sup> <sup>11</sup> A reader or writer/scribe should not normally be the apprentice's own instructor/trainer but there may be circumstances where this is necessary. Only in exceptional circumstances, and subject to approval by the relevant SOLAS Manager, may a relative/somebody known to the apprentice act as a writer/scribe.

<sup>13</sup> Only in exceptional circumstances, and subject to approval by the relevant SOLAS Manager, may a relative/somebody known to the apprentice act as a sign language interpreter.

### **Overwriting**

Overwriting involves rewriting a question on an examination paper in such a way as to make it as explicit as possible. It is a technique primarily used with apprentices who are deaf or hard of hearing or who have a learning difficulty. Overwriting should be **in pen** on the answer paper. This is done by assessment supervision personnel in situ. Where extensive modifications are necessary, a separate sheet of paper with the questions written in full should be attached by staple to the original answer paper. Technical terminology should not be overwritten. In case of doubt about technical terminology a subject matter expert can be consulted. **Care must be taken to retain the original emphasis of the question.**

### **Computers**

The use of computers by disabled apprentices may be necessary as their primary means of communication, for example, for apprentices with physical impairments for whom writing is difficult, for apprentices with visual impairments/blindness and for apprentices with learning disabilities such as dyslexia.

The definition of a 'computer' generally refers to hardware and/or software which facilitate effective communication for people for whom this may not otherwise be possible. It may be standard equipment, e.g. the use of word processing software by someone with motor difficulties which impede handwriting or may be specially adapted, e.g. speech synthesisers and text enlargement software/hardware for people with visual impairments. Where voice activated software is used, the assessment should take place in a separate room or area. Such provision may give rise to the need for extra assessment supervision personnel. It is the responsibility of the assessment/training location to supply the appropriate hardware/software

### **Audio Tapes**

Audio-taped assessments and responses are useful in some cases, e.g. visual impairment, motor difficulties. The centre should supply the assessment tape and a blank tape to apprentices at the same time as other apprentices. However, in order to minimise disruption to other apprentices, the person should either use headphones or complete their assessment in a separate room or area. Such provision may give rise to the need for extra assessment supervision personnel.

**Braille, braille-mate, braille 'n speak, braille 'n print, etc.**

Braille is generally, though not extensively, used by apprentices who are blind or visually impaired. It is generally advised that the Braille machine is attached and adapted to a printer which will produce a printed text. The responses of the apprentice should not be printed until after the end of the assessment time, as the noise levels may be too high for other apprentices. The assessment/training location should supply the printer, braille paper and/or the computer print-out paper

**The use of CCTV (closed circuit television)**

This is a technological aid that magnifies print. It is usually used for apprentices with visual impairments. The apprentice can read the assessment paper as well as his/her answers from a TV screen. The apprentice uses the base under the screen to write and this is simultaneously magnified on the screen.

**Enlarged print to A3 size**

Some apprentices, usually those with visual impairments, may simply require their assessment papers in enlarged print, i.e. A3 size paper.

**Examination papers in colour**

Some apprentices, especially those who have dyslexia, may require their assessment paper in a colour other than black and white - for example, black on yellow, or black on grey. A gloss/highly sheen coated paper may also be unsuitable. The apprentices themselves should be consulted.

**Other technologies**

The whole area of new technologies and access to information is rapidly changing. The opportunities for apprentices to demonstrate their abilities are increasing with the advent of assistive devices like the 'true-type talking microphone' – a device which with practice can type onto a computer screen a person's spoken word. Such technologies are also becoming more accessible in terms of general availability and price.

## Appendix 5. Definitions

**Appeal (Apprentice)** is the process whereby a apprentice can appeal an assessment result that they consider to be unfair.

**Apprentices** are employed persons registered to the SOLAS Standards Based Apprenticeship programme.

**Assessment** is the process whereby apprentice performance in a range of areas is established to ensure that the knowledge/skill/competence is demonstrated to meet the requirements of the National Awards Standards for the award.

**Assessment Attempt:** An apprentice entering the examination hall or venue is required to sign an attendance sheet (register). Any apprentice who is registered and admitted to the examination hall or venue for the purpose of undertaking an assessment is deemed to have “attempted” an assessment.

**Assessment Coordination** ensures that assessments in SOLAS provided, organised or procured training are planned, coordinated and administered in accordance with the assessment procedures for the training programme.

**Assessment Event** is an occasion of formal testing, usually for summative purposes.

**Assessment Evidence** is created during the assessment event or as part of an assigned assessment task and includes assessment scripts, coursework, projects, portfolios, work competence schedule workbooks, logbooks, soft copy evidence etc. apprentice assessment evidence must be the work of the apprentice.

**Assessment Instruments** are used to assess a apprentice’s attainment of required standards of knowledge, skills and/or competence. Assessment instruments include implements such as written, oral and practical tests, including project and portfolio briefs

**Assessment Materials** are any material relating to the carrying out of an assessment, e.g. assessment instruments, test papers, drawings, supports and equipment, specifications and records.

**Assessment Methods** are mechanisms devised for assessment purposes, e.g. including multiple choice, practical demonstrations, written answers, portfolios, projects, assignments.

**Assessment Plans** clearly identify the stages in the training programme when assessment will occur and the type of assessment that will take place at each stage.

**Assessment Programmes** detail the various methods by which progress is recorded and attainment is measured, i.e. practical tests, multiple choice tests, short answer tests and coursework or profiles. An assessment programme also identifies the stage in the training programme when assessment takes place.

**Assessment Records** are mechanisms for recording that an assessment event has taken place and which document the assessment outcomes for each apprentice. They include assessment marking sheets, summary assessment sheets, assessment attendance records, records of online and electronic assessment, marks and records of assessment decisions, documentation relating to non-conformances, results of appeals against assessment outcomes, certification records, internal verification and External Authentication Reports, coursework submission records, outcomes of deferral applications, extensions to deadline applications, and records of non-conformances and breaches of conduct.

**Assessment Schedules** specify the dates on which named assessments will be held in a specified training location.

**Assessment Specifications** are detailed statements of the items to be addressed through a specified assessment approach when designing any block of training

**Assessment Supervision** involves overseeing the implementation of an assessment and may also involve overseeing the conduct of assessments. Assessment Supervision requires the invigilation of the assessment process in the context of formal assessments and must ensure that the conduct and integrity of assessments comply with the Award Councils' and ' Quality Assurance requirements.

**Authorised Persons** are those who are permitted to access an assessment location, as appropriate, before during and after an assessment. Authorised persons include: apprentices who are registered to undertake the assessment in question, personnel responsible for the conduct and supervision of assessments, other support personnel as necessary, e.g., IT support staff, readers, etc.

**Authorship Statement** is a written declaration by the apprentice that a portfolio, project, coursework submission etc is the apprentice's own work.

**Awards** are conferred, granted or given by an Awards Council and which records that an apprentice has acquired a standard of knowledge, skill or competence.

**Awarding Body/Awards Council** is a national body that has the power to give an apprentice a qualification (award).

**Cheating** is defined by SOLAS as:

- Obtaining an assessment paper ahead of its release
- Copying any assessment material without permission
- Having, using, or attempting to use any unauthorised material in an assessment, namely mobile phones, books, notes, electronic aids or other materials
- Giving or receiving help from another apprentice or any other person, where such help is forbidden
- Plagiarism
- Impersonation

**Competence** is the proven ability to use knowledge, skills and personal, social and/or methodological abilities, in work or study situations and in professional and personal development.

**Conducting an Assessment** involves assessing apprentices' performance and related knowledge in a range of areas, to ensure that the knowledge/skills/competence demonstrated meet the requirements of the National Standards for the award. An assessment is usually conducted by the instructors/trainers of the programme.

**External Authentication** is the independent review of the assessment process for a particular training programme, carried out by examining a sample of assessments in terms of:

- The assessment process, to ensure adherence to National Assessment Procedures
- The technical content of the assessment and the consistency of assessment marking against the assessment specification and standards set out in the marking criteria

**External Authentication Personnel** conduct external authentication of the assessment process for a particular programme (see above)

**Fair and Consistent Assessment** involves the following:

- Planning and implementation of assessment arrangements that are appropriate to the standards set out in the in programme's learning outcomes
- Provision of adequate opportunities and resources for apprentices to prepare for assessment
- Openness and transparency
- An unbiased, impartial and inclusive system that provides equity of opportunity
- Consistency in terms of assessment procedures, including marking and grading

**Impersonation** is the act pretending to be another person.

**Internal Verification** is the process by which SOLAS reviews the assessment process and provisional assessment results on a sample basis and conducts peer review, to ensure adherence to National Award Standards.

**Internal Verification Personnel** conduct internal verification of the assessment process and internal verification of assessment results as per the SOLAS Training Standards System and/or the requirements of the relevant Awarding Body/Bodies. Internal verification personnel may also be responsible for assessment coordination. It is possible for internal verification personnel to conduct assessments, but they cannot verify their own assessment decisions or the process used in reaching them.

**Knowledge** is the cognitive representation of ideas, events or happenings.

**National Award Standards** are the benchmarks for all assessment activity conducted for the purposes of national recognition of the achievement of those standards through an award. The format of National Award Standards will also specify assessment requirements for an award.

**Peer Review** is the process whereby the assessor of a particular course and a subject matter expert review results to ensure assessments were marked in line with the relevant award standard and the assessment specification. Peer review is carried out on a sample basis.

**Plagiarism** is defined as copying the words of others, or using someone else's work or ideas and passing them off as one's own. If a apprentice uses the words or ideas of someone else, he or she must clearly state where they came from.

**Programmes** are learning processes designed and offered by a provider, based on predetermined National Awards Standards and leading to an award.

**Reasonable Accommodations (Appendix 4)** are concerned with enabling individuals with disabilities to enjoy equal benefits and conditions to their non-disabled peers in accessing and participating in training and assessment. This may require a training provider to take reasonable account of apprentices with disabilities' needs and requirements in the training

environment. What reasonable accommodation entails varies from apprentice to apprentice, depending on their individual needs and requirements.

**Re-check of Assessment** involves checking and ensuring that all parts of an assessment have been properly recorded and that there are no errors in the recording, collating or combining of marks which determined the result. This is the first stage of an appeals process.

**Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL)** is a systematic recognition process to enable individuals to enter programmes and attain full awards based on prior learning experiences, regardless of how that learning was acquired.

**Referrals:** A Referral Assessment is a re-sit assessment that takes place after the delivery of the course.

**Relevant Manager** has overall responsibility for assessments run in a training location. The assessment manager provides support and guidance to all assessment personnel in the SOLAS Training Centre/external trainer/second provider environment.

**Reliability** in an assessment is the confidence one can have in the fairness of the result. Outcomes of assessments should be as consistent as possible. Those conducting assessments should produce similar results when using the same assessment for similar groups of apprentices. Measures should be used to reduce the variability in grading that may be due to those conducting assessments, the assessment instruments or the assessment methods.

**Repeat** is defined as an opportunity afforded to a apprentice who fails to meet the required standard in an assessment to repeat an equivalent assessment. Only referred or pass grades can be awarded in repeat assessments. Second and third attempt exams, taken during the course are called Repeat Exams.

**Resit** is defined as an opportunity afforded to a apprentice who abandoned an assessment due to sickness, emergency, etc., to re-sit an equivalent assessment. In such cases normal marking and grading policy applies.

**Results Approval Panel** is a panel convened by the training provider to formally review and approve assessment results.

**Review of Assessment** is the reconsideration in detail of all or part of the existing assessment material by internal assessment personnel and reconsideration of a full set of results. This is the second stage of an appeals process, subsequent to a recheck and prior to a possible final appeal.

**Sampling** is the process of selecting a portion of apprentice results and apprentice evidence for the purposes of completing internal verification and external authentication of assessment.

**Second Provider** is a person or body external to SOLAS that is contracted by SOLAS to conduct all or part of a training programme.

**Skill** is the goal-directed performance of a task, underpinned by know-how of the procedural knowledge required.

**Validity** essentially means fitness for purpose. To be valid an assessment measures what it was intended to measure. There are different types of validity:

- **Face Validity:** Does the assessment meet stakeholder and apprentice expectations? Is it the kind of assessment strategy you might expect to find in a particular programme?
- **Content Validity:** Is the assessment strategy, structure and methodology based on award standards, curriculum aims and learning outcomes?
- **Construct Validity:** Does the assessment method measure the intended specified learning outcomes or introduce and measure some other abilities which were not required in the specified learning outcome? For example, inappropriately high level of language in the question paper or demanding keyboard skills required to complete the test but not required by the specified learning outcomes in the award standard.