

LMETB RAA External Authentication Policy and Procedures

POLICY VERSION CONTROL

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Document Title/Reference	LMETB/AMTCE Draft RAA External Authentication Policy and Procedures
Purpose	The purpose of these guidelines is to assist LMETB AMTCE managers in the quality assured process of External Authentication. The role of the External Authenticator is to provide independent confirmation of fair and consistent assessment of learners in line with QQI requirements to ensure consistency of assessment results with national standards. These guidelines can be read in conjunction with the Quality Assuring Assessment Guidelines for Providers (Revised 2013, version 2 – revised 2018) ¹ .
Scope	These guidelines apply to all further education and training programmes provided by LMETB AMTCE as Co-ordinating provider of the RAA programme and to Collaborating providers who provide RAA apprenticeships.
Contents	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Purpose and Role 2. Process of engaging an External Authenticator 3. External Authenticators Code of Practice 4. Points to remember when engaging an External Authenticator <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 4.1 Before the visit: 4.2 During the visit, 4.3 After the visit: 5. Sampling Procedures 6. Grading criteria and Awards Standards 7. Glossary <p>Appendix 1 – LMETB External Authentication Report (EA Report Form)</p> <p>Appendix 2 – Summary of LMETB Assessment Procedures relevant to the IV & EA processes</p> <p>N.B.: This document and appendices are available from the LMETB website or from: QualityAssurance@lmetb.ie or pquinn.AMC@lmetb.ie</p>
Related Policies	<p>LMETB assessment procedures</p> <p>LMETB FET Quality Assurance Policies and Procedures</p> <p>LMETB Internal Verification Policy and Procedures</p>
Audience & Communication	Applicable to all staff and learners of LMETB. This procedure will be made available on the LMETB website and Learner Handbooks.
Policy/Procedure Owner & Implementation	The Policy owner is the CE of LMETB. It is the responsibility of the QA sub-committee and AMTCE as Coordinating provider and to Collaborating Providers to ensure the policy/procedure is implemented.

Monitoring, Evaluation and Continuous Improvement	<p>The LMETB/AMTCE QA Office shall be responsible for keeping the policy and procedure up-to-date and for ensuring that only approved versions of the Policy/procedure are accessible via the LMETB website.</p> <p>The Procedure Owner shall periodically review this policy.</p>
Revision History & Commencement Date & Date of Next Review	<p>Commencement Date:</p> <p>Date of next review:</p>

External Authentication Procedures

Purpose & Role

The External Authenticator's visit should take place following the Internal Verification of **apprentice** evidence and before the Results Approval Panel meeting, where the results will be declared for submission to QQI for certification.

The feedback that AMTCE receives from an External Authentication report is an integral part of LMETB's commitment to delivering a quality experience to our learners, and as such, their role in the assessment process is very valuable.

When authenticating a component, the External Authenticator (EA) will check that:

- There is evidence for each learner entered on QBS/RCCRS.

For the sample moderated that:

- The assessment material has been marked and graded by the assessor.
- Feedback on assessment has been given to the apprentice.
- There is a marking sheet for each piece of evidence in the folder.
- The marks have been totalled correctly and entered correctly on QBS/RCCRS.
- The assessment briefs are clear, concise, and correctly mapped to the learning outcomes as per the component descriptor.
- The examination paper is clear, concise, and correctly mapped to the learning outcomes as per the component descriptor and outline solutions are available (when relevant to the component).
- The evidence has been marked in accordance with national standards.
- Provider policies and procedures have been correctly applied, e.g. in relation to plagiarism, late submission etc.
- If a grade is judged to be awarded incorrectly the External Authenticator will moderate and recommend a change to the result by annotating the Learner Marking sheet and changing to the next grade band. This will also be noted on the Authentication Report.
- If the External Authenticator makes a grade change, they will then extend the sample to review the portfolio of evidence for the apprentice with the next closest total marks until the External Authenticator is satisfied that the grade cut off is satisfactory.
- The apprentice marking sheet is signed for each apprentice who has been authenticated. However, in the case of electronic authentication work, it is recognised that this may be more difficult to achieve, therefore the signature on the EA report will be deemed to apply to all changes carried out by the EA and highlighted in the report.
- Areas of component specific good practice are noted on the EA Report.
- Recommendations of component specific areas for improvement are noted on the EA Report.

Evidence may be available to the External Authenticator electronically or in hard copy.

Process of engaging an External Authenticator

All FET centres are responsible for making arrangements associated with the visit of External Authenticators including the payment of fees and expenses to the EA. The AMTCE as Co-ordinating provider and Collaborating Providers will

assign EAs for second providers who are overseen by the RAA TSO. Collaborating providers will make arrangements associated with the visit of External Authenticators including the payment of fees and expenses to the EA.

External Authenticators for the RAA will be sourced from the national ETBI EA Directory.

The EA will moderate results for awards in fields in which s/he has broad subject matter expertise. Given their professional status, it is expected that all authenticators will possess the expertise necessary to moderate results in generic modules such as Communications, Teamworking, Work Experience, etc. at levels 4, 5 and 6 and in all modules at levels 1, 2 and 3.

External Authenticators for the RAA programme will be suitably qualified and sourced from the ETBI EA Directory.

When selecting an appropriate EA from the national EA panel, care should be taken to ensure that where possible the authenticator:

- Is registered on the national ETBI EA Directory
- Can undertake to operate within the code of practice and guidelines issued by LMETB and QQI
- Is independent of the FET centre to which s/he is assigned.

External Authenticators' Code of Practice

The QQI Guidelines for External Authenticators² specify that the EA will undertake to:

- Exercise their role with utmost integrity and professionalism when undertaking external authentication for a [provider/collaborating provider](#)
- Comply with QQI's FET policies and procedures specifically in relation to awards and assessment
- Fully comply with LMETB and [the relevant provider/Collaborating Provider's policies and procedures](#)
- Inform the [provider/Collaborating Provider](#) of any potential conflict of interest which may compromise their role
- Communicate appropriately with the [provider/Collaborating Provider](#) about planned visits and information required
- Inform the [provider/Collaborating Provider](#) of availability
- Provide constructive feedback to the [provider/Collaborating Provider's](#) management and staff
- Compile an external authentication report on time and based on an independent evaluation of the process and procedures.

Please note:

LMETB will endeavour to have:

- All major/special purpose/supplemental award areas and all FET centres externally authenticated per annum
- All individual module components authenticated every two years.

It is LMETB policy, where feasible, not to employ the same EA in the same FET centre for more than 3 consecutive visits, **regardless** of which components are being authenticated. It is noted that occasionally there may be difficulty in securing EAs in specific subject areas. If this is the case, [the provider/Collaborating](#) must notify the [relevant](#) QA Office of their difficulty in acquiring an EA and of their

intention, therefore, to employ the same EA as previously employed.

² [QQI Quality Assuring Assessment Guidelines for Providers \(revised 2013 and 2018\)](#)

Points to remember when engaging an External Authenticator³

Please ensure that all new revised EA documentation is being used.

Before the visit

AMTCE as the Coordinating Provider, and respective Collaborating Providers should discuss with the EA:

- How many groups/portfolios will need external authentication
- How long will be needed to complete the job
- When and where the visit is to take place; or if the external authentication is to take place remotely via a suitable online platform.
- Any special requirements of the EA
- Any digital skills required to carry out this authentication
- Whether they will be available, if required, to take part in the Results Approval Panel
- How payment is processed

Note:

Please ensure that the EA has the relevant technical/subject expertise within the appropriate award area/field of learning and that the EA is engaged to moderate and not to monitor.

During the visit

Each External Authenticator should be provided with:

- Details of designated contact person during the authentication period/visit
- A list of assessors per programme and/or class group and how they can be contacted if required during this procedure
- Names of new assessors whose work should be sampled
- Signed Internal Verification report
- Sampling strategy to be applied
- Appropriate equipment to moderate assessment evidence produced in multi-media format

and, **for each module:**

- Module descriptor.
- Relevant assessment instruments and appropriate supporting documentation
- Extended marking sheets & sample answers where applicable
- Learner assessment evidence
- Learner assessment results recorded (QBS Authentication Report or F12)
- Portfolios from different class groups should be easily distinguishable
- Individual learner portfolios within class groups should be easily distinguishable
- Each batch of portfolios should be in alphabetical order

And **for each Candidate Portfolio**

- Final marking sheet at front of portfolios.

³ Authentication processes taking place during times of restrictions due to COVID-19 measures or other contingencies will be guided as to on-site visits by EAs as per [LMETB's Guidelines and Procedures for COVID-19 Contingency Planning of Internal Verification and External Authentication](#)

- Individual Candidate Marking sheet attached to each piece of work.
- Briefs signed by learner or an equivalent digital signature.
- Each piece of evidence clearly labelled.
- Highlighted if used in internal verification sample and, if necessary, the learner's initials included in the EA report if mentioned there.
- Please ensure there are no poly pockets used and work is clearly laid out whether in hard copy or in electronic format.

All additional evidence should be clearly labelled, e.g. if a DVD or digital audio-recording is submitted, it should, where necessary, be accompanied by a list of learners shown/heard and their time-slot on the recording.

No evidence or supporting documentation can be removed from the examining room or electronic platform until the EA has completed their work. Candidate evidence and tutor supporting documentation must then be retained in the assigned storage area until the end of the appeals period. **The EA is not permitted to remove any item from the centre or to take any photographs or video.**

It is LMETB policy **not** to include learner PPS numbers on the marking sheets to safeguard data protection concerns. Should two learners have the same name within the same learner group, the Internal Verifier will consult with the learning practitioner to ensure that marks are correctly assigned, and this will be noted on the provisional results sheet.

The FET Coordinator/Deputy Principal/Designated Person should be available to the EA should any queries arise that need to be clarified.

If an EA wishes to escalate an issue, they may contact the FET Coordinator/Deputy Principal/Designated Person initially and then, if necessary, they should contact QualityAssurance@lmetb.ie and pquinn.AMC@lmetb.ie

After the visit

- The FET Coordinator/Deputy Principal/Designated Person should supply the EA with a soft copy of the LMETB External Authentication Report template (Appendix 1). The EA should write up the report, sign it and, in order to maintain the integrity of the authentication process, return it to the centre in pdf format. The EA Report should be returned to the centre as soon as possible after the EA visit, and **no later than within two working days of authentication.**
- The EA report, along with IV and RAP Centre Summary document, should be uploaded to the specific MS Team site that will have been set up for the appropriate Results Approval Panel meeting. The report may also be emailed to QualityAssurance@lmetb.ie and pquinn.AMC@lmetb.ie
- The writing of the EA Report is included in the fee for external authentication work.
- The EA should not retain the EA report on file once the authentication work and associated follow-up activity has been concluded

Remote/Online External Authentication Process

In the event that remote/online external authentication is the preferred or necessary option, the following should be implemented in addition to the preceding sections:

- All assessment material and evidence will be uploaded onto a storage platform e.g. SharePoint, OneDrive, Microsoft Teams, OneNote, Moodle.
- The e-mail address of the appointed EA will be shared with the centre in advance.
- The relevant folders will be shared with the EA in advance of the agreed start date.
- The FET centre designated person will be available by phone or e-mail to address any queries.
- The report will be submitted electronically as outlined above.
- The centre will confirm with the EA in advance that they have the necessary software/hardware required to view assessment material.

Sampling Procedures

In the first year of the RAA programme, all apprentice work will be put forward for both Internal Verification and for External Verification. This policy will apply until further notice is given by LMETB as Coordinating Provider.

The External Authenticator will apply LMETB's strategy above to moderate all apprentice evidence.

Moderating assessment results involves reviewing results and checking the standard of evidence at each grade band: Successful (Levels 1-3), Distinction, Merit, Pass (Levels 4-6) and Unsuccessful/Referred, by examining samples of evidence within each grade band and at the borders of grades.

Please note the following:

- It is the EA, not the FET centre/LMETB who selects the evidence to be sampled, applying LMETB's sampling strategy.
- The sample portfolios chosen at IV stage may be therefore different to those chosen by the External Authenticator.
- The sample must be sufficient to enable the EA to make an informed judgement on the consistency of the assessment decisions in the context of the awards standards.
- The sample should reflect the spread of grades and borderline grades to ensure grading criteria are being applied consistently. The critical points at which judgement is applied are the boundaries between bands/grades: Referred/Pass, Pass/Merit, Merit/Distinction.
- New assessors should be included in the sample at least once during the assessment cycle.
- If the EA is moderating results from a number of assessors and programmes, then the sample of evidence should reflect each assessor and each programme sufficiently.
- If the EA is moderating results from a number of centres for the provider, the sample should reflect all centres sufficiently.
- If significant issues are identified within a sample, the evidence for the whole cohort of learners from which the sample was taken may be reviewed by the EA.

Sampling may be applied to:

- a) the total group of learners
- b) individual programmes
- c) an individual component.

In the Pilot year of the LMETB RAA Programme, and until further notice is given by LMETB, the sample size will be 100% for EA purposes.

In subsequent years, LMETB may decide to revert to allowing a sample of a minimum of 15% of the total number of apprentices in the selected population in line with Table 1 below.

The sample should be based on a minimum of 15% of the total number of learners in the selected population in line with Table 1 below.

If there are 12 or less assessment portfolios a minimum of 6 portfolios will be externally authenticated, to allow for the cut-off points between the grades to be established.

If there are more than 12 assessment portfolios for a Minor Award, the sample will normally be 15% of the total population and will not be less than 6 assessment portfolios for External Authentication, as per Table 1 below.

Unsuccessful portfolios should be included in the overall sample.

Where the sample is based on the total group, it should be representative of all minor awards. Assessment by each assessor should be sampled at least once. In order to include every module (minor award) and every assessor it may be necessary to increase the sample size.

Where significant errors are found the sample may be extended to include all of that Assessor's portfolios.

When an assessor is delivering to QQI for the first time, the sample may be extended to include all their portfolios, if deemed necessary by the EA.

Table 1: LMETB's Sampling Strategy for Internal Verification and External Authentication

Number of assessment portfolios for a Minor Award	Number of assessment portfolios to be included
0 → 12	Minimum 6
13 → 50	15% with not less than 6
51 → 100	15% of Total
101 → 200	15% of Total
201 → 300	15% of Total
300 → 400	15% of Total

Grading Criteria

Grading Criteria	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3
	The learner has achieved the learning outcomes for the award in a structured and supported learning setting. The outcomes have been achieved with <i>significant support</i> and <i>direction</i> from the assessor, but the learner has demonstrated <i>substantative achievement</i> on their own.	The learner has achieved the learning outcomes for the award in a <i>structured and supported</i> setting with <i>clear direction</i> from the assessor. The learner has demonstrated <i>some autonomy</i> of action and has taken <i>limited responsibility</i> for the activities and for generating evidence.	The learner has achieved the learning outcomes for the award with <i>some supervision</i> and <i>direction</i> . The learner has demonstrated <i>autonomy of action</i> and has taken <i>responsibility</i> for generating appropriate evidence.

Grading Criteria for awards at Level 4 - Level 6

Pass	Merit	Distinction
<p>A Pass indicates that the learner has:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> achieved the learning outcomes as outlined in the minor award - a pass is the minimum acceptable standard used the language of the vocational/specialised area competently attempted to apply the theory and concepts appropriately provided sufficient evidence which has relevance and clarity. 	<p>A Merit indicates that the learner has:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> achieved the learning outcomes as outlined in the minor award - a merit implies a good standard has been achieved used the language of the vocational/specialised area with a degree of fluency expressed and developed ideas clearly demonstrated initiative, evaluation and analytical skills presented coherent and comprehensive evidence. 	<p>A Distinction indicates that the learner has:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> achieved the learning outcomes as outlined in the minor award - a distinction implies that an excellent standard has been achieved used the language of the vocational/specialised area fluently and confidently demonstration - depth of understanding of the subject matter demonstrated a high level of initiative, evaluation skills demonstrated analytical and reflective thinking expressed and developed ideas clearly, systematically and comprehensively presented coherent, detailed and focused evidence

Glossary

Assessment	The process by which evidence of performance is collected and compared with the standards of knowledge skill or competence and a judgement made on learner achievement of the standards.
Assessment Schedule	Or assessment plan is the timetable showing when the assessments will be issued and their deadline dates for submission.
Assessor	The assessor devises assessment instruments/marking schemes and assessment criteria provides opportunity for learners to generate evidence, evaluates learner evidence and makes an assessment decision.
Assessment Technique	An assessment technique is a valid and reliable way of assessing learner evidence for a particular range of learning outcomes, e.g. practical skills should be assessed in a practical manner. In QQI awards, assessment techniques specifically are: assignment, collection of work, examination, learner record, project and skill demonstration.
Assessment Instrument	An assessment instrument is the specific activity/task or question(s) devised by the assessor based on the specified assessment technique.
Authentication Process	The process by which providers will quality assure the devising, recording and verification of the assessment procedures. This process will include both Internal Verification and External Authentication.
Authentication Report	Result sheet printed following entry of all learner details and results on the QBS before submission for certification.
Designated IV person	The person who oversees the Internal Verification process in preparation for the External Authenticator visit as part of the authentication process.
Extended Marking Scheme	Marking scheme showing a more detailed breakdown than that in the programme module descriptor or AIS/AS.
External Authentication (EA)	The means by which learners, providers, assessors and QQI will be independently assured that the application of the provider's assessment procedures is carried out effectively on a fair and consistent basis in line with QQI requirements.
External Authenticator (EA)	Appointed by providers to provide independent authentication of fair and consistent assessment in line with QQI requirements.
F12	The results sheet used in the training centres obtained from the RCCRS.
Integrated Assessment	Where learning outcomes from two or more components match and can be assessed by one assessment instrument.
Internal Verification (IV)	The process by which learners will be assured that the provider's assessment procedures are applied in a consistent manner across the provider's assessment activities.
Learning Practitioner	The Learning Practitioner refers to any teacher, tutor, instructor or assessor.
QBS Results Sheet	Authentication Report by Learner Group by Minor Award Provisional Results printed following entry of all learner details and results on the QBS before submission for certification.
Soft Evidence	Any evidence that has been stored digitally for the purpose of evidencing an assessment.
Summary results sheet	List of learners and their results for submission to the QBS

Appendix 1: External Authentication Report Form Template

Provider/Centre Name			
QQI Centre Code			
Course Codes <i>(where applicable)</i>			
Co-ordinator in Centre:			
Date(s) of EA Process:	EA Visit		Certification Date

Indicate sample basis and sample size:	Total Number of Learners Sampled
<p>The basis on which the sample was selected should be identified here and in addition should include unsuccessful portfolios.</p> <p><i>(The sample should be sufficient in size to enable sound judgments to be made about the fairness and consistency of assessment decisions and should be aligned to LMETB's Sampling Strategy for External Authentication.)</i></p>	

Titles & Codes of Awards (major and component) for which results are being externally authenticated

External Authenticator Details (including name, address, phone number and email address)

[illegible]

Report on External Authentication of Assessment Results	
Describe examples of good practice observed	
Identify areas for improvement	
Number of grade changes recommended	
Recommendations	

Summary of External Authentication visit:			
<p>Based on the evidence reviewed, please indicate which one of the following best summarises the authentication process at the above centre:</p> <p>Please Tick as Appropriate (✓)</p>	<p>Very Effective:</p> <p><i>The centre is very effective at implementing the QA assessment process and procedures as required.</i></p>		
	<p>Effective:</p> <p><i>The centre is effective at implementing the QA assessment process and procedures with some minor areas for improvement.</i></p>		
	<p>Acceptable:</p> <p><i>The centre is acceptable at implementing the QA assessment process and procedures, with a number of minor and/or significant areas requiring improvement.</i></p>		
	<p>Unsatisfactory</p> <p><i>The centre is unacceptable at implementing the QA assessment process and procedures.</i></p>		
Assessment Procedures			
<p>LMETB Assessment Procedures and Forms are available on: LMETB FET Quality Assurance Policies and Procedures or from QualityAssurance@lmetb.ie tso.rst@lmetb.ie</p> <p>Please Tick as Appropriate (✓)</p>	<p>All LMETB assessment procedures have been followed in relation to appropriate documentation being included (where necessary) for reasonable accommodation extensions, malpractice and examinations.</p>	Yes	
		No	

Report on External Authentication of Assessment Results							
<p>I recommend these results for certification</p> <p>Please Tick as Appropriate (✓)</p>				<p>EA Name and Signature</p>			
Yes		No		Date		No. of EA Days	
<p>Report to be completed electronically and returned to centre as soon as possible and no later than within two working days of authentication ensuring:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A clear indication of the sampling strategy used and giving details of learner sample selected, awards and results moderated. • A clear indication of any recommended changes in results and identification of areas of good practice and areas for improvement. • The report should not identify any learner by name. 							

Appendix 2- Summary of LMETB Assessment Procedures relevant to the IV & EA processes

Relevant Procedure	Examples of Situations Covered	Forms required	Example of Supporting Evidence
Reasonable Accommodation in Assessment LMETB-Reasonable-Accommodation-in-Assessment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Modified presentation of assignment /examination paper e.g. Enlargements Scribes/readers Sign language interpreter Rest breaks Adaptive equipment/software Use of assistive technology Additional time Separate room/space 	Reasonable Accommodation in Assessment Application Form	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Medical Report Educational Psychologist Report Occupational Therapist Report Guidance Counsellor Report Report from LMETB staff trained by the Dyslexia Association of Ireland (DAI) using the Adult Reading Test (ART-2) and/or the Dyslexia Adult Screening Test (DAST) Rehabilitation Psychologist or Rehabilitation Office Report and support documentation, Proof of having had Reasonable Accommodation in the past, e.g. Scribe for Leaving Cert exams.
Assessment Deadlines LMETB-Assessment-Deadlines-Procedure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Short-term Extensions Compassionate Consideration in Extenuating Circumstances - <i>expected or unexpected</i> 	Application Forms: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Short-term Extension Compassionate Consideration Appeals Application 	Statement from: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Programme Coordinator or Centre Manager Qualified medical practitioner Legal professional An Garda Síochána RIP.ie

Assessment Malpractice LMETB-Assessment-Malpractice-Procedure	Learner Malpractice <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Plagiarism • Unacceptable behaviour 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Alleged Assessment Malpractice Report • Declaration regarding Conflict of Interest • Notification of Investigation Letter • Notification of Assessment System • Malpractice Finding • Appeals Application for Assessment System Malpractice 	
Examinations LMETB-Examinations-Procedure	Planning Conducting Concluding		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attendance Sheet • Seating Plan (where appropriate) • Invigilator Report

Appendix 3: Flow chart of RAA External Authentication and Internal Verification

Internal Verification (IV) and External Authentication (EA) Process



