



QUALITY ASSURANCE SYSTEM FOR QUALITY & QUALIFICATIONS IRELAND PROGRAMMES & PROCEDURES MANUAL



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DOCUMENT CONTROL

Document approvals

The signature below certifies on behalf of G Holland Limited t/a Holland Safety (CRO 499092) the manual has been reviewed and accepted and demonstrates that the signatories are aware of all the requirements contained herein and are committed to ensuring their provision.

	Name	Signature	Position	Date
Author/ Prepared By:	B. Holland		QAC	26-3-2021
Reviewed By:	G. Holland		MD	26-3-2021
Approved By:	G. Holland		MD	26-3-2021

Amendment record

This Quality Assurance System manual is reviewed to ensure its continuing relevance to the systems and process that it describes. A record of contextual additions or omissions is given below:

Page No.	Context	Revision	Date
All	New	0	26-3-2021
Appendices	New Appendix 3 added to include ToR for Ops	1	02-06-2021
Appendix 7	Profile of Independent FE Professional as chair of Quality Committee	2	27-08-2021

TERMS & DEFINITIONS

Audit: An audit is a routine inspection performed by either internal staff or an external third-party auditor. Audits may be internal or external in nature and aim to assess the organisation's performance and implementation of it.

Blended Learning: blended learning is "the integration of classroom face-to-face learning experiences with online learning experiences" (Garrison and Kanuka, 2004) as adopted by QQI.

Competence: demonstrated ability to apply knowledge and skills.

Continual Improvement: Recurring activity to increase the ability to fulfil requirements.

Continuous Professional Development: Continuing Professional Development (CPD) and is the term used to describe the learning activities professionals engage in to develop and enhance their abilities.

Corrective Action: action taken to eliminate the cause of a detected non-conformity or other undesirable situation.

Face-to-Face Learning: Face-to-face learning is defined as classroom-based delivery where a set period of time is spent with a tutor for lectures, discussions, and workshops. This may also include other learners and involve group activities.

Further Education (FE): the education of people who are adult learners, but which does not lead to a formal university award (Level 1 – 6 of the National Framework of Qualifications).

Information Communication Technology (ICT): an extensional term for information technology (IT) that stresses the role of unified communications and the integration of telecommunications (telephone lines and wireless signals) and computers.

Interested Party: An interested party can be a stakeholder, person or organisation that can affect, be affected by, or perceive itself to be affected by a decision or activity.

International Standards Organisations (ISO): an international standard-setting body composed of representatives from various national standards organisations around the world.

IOSH: The Institution of Occupational Safety and Health which are the largest membership organisation for health and safety professionals, established in 1945.

Management System: The management system is a process organisation use to help set up and organise policies, objectives, and more.

NISO: The National Irish Safety Organisation is Ireland's oldest voluntary health and safety association open to membership to those wishing to develop the sector, established in 1963.

Non-Conformity: a nonconformity (sometimes referred to as a defect) is a deviation from a specification, a standard, or an expectation.

Online Learning: When referring to online learning, all course content is provided online, with no requirement for classroom-based or face-to-face tuition. Some Holland Safety-certified training is offered via online delivery.

Opportunity: Opportunities refer to favourable external factors that could give an organisation a competitive advantage.

Organisational Context: the business environment which includes a combination of internal and external factors and conditions that can have an effect on an organisation's approach to its services and investments and interested Parties.

PESTLE: PESTLE is a mnemonic which in its expanded form denotes P for Political, E for Economic, S for Social, T for Technological, L for Legal, and E for Environmental.

Policy: the overall intentions and direction of an organisation related to quality, environmental, health and safety management as formally expressed by top management.

Procedure: a specified way to carry out an activity or process.

Process Flowchart (PFC): A process flowchart is a graphical representation of a business process through a flowchart. It is used as a means of getting a top-down understanding of how a process works, what steps it consists of what events change outcomes, and so on.

Process: process is a set of tasks that are completed to work towards an ultimate goal. Within ISO 9001, all processes are focused on satisfying the customer.

QEHS: Stands for Quality, Environmental, Health & Safety management.

Quality Assurance (QA): is a term generally used to describe the processes that seek to ensure that the learning environment (including teaching and research) reaches an acceptable threshold of quality. QA is also used to describe the enhancement of education and training provision and the standards attained by learners.

Risk: According to ISO 31000, risk is the "effect of uncertainty on objectives" and an effect is a positive or negative deviation from what is expected.

SWOT: SWOT stands for Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats, and so a SWOT Analysis is a technique for assessing these four aspects of your business.

Virtual Learning Environment: virtual learning environment (VLE) in educational technology is a web-based platform for the digital aspects of courses of study, usually within educational institutions. They present resources, activities, and interactions within a course structure and provide for the different stages of assessment.

INTRODUCTION

Company Profile:

Holland Safety is an integrated safety solutions provider with over fifteen years' experience as specialists in Safety Training, Consultancy and Contract Placements. We support some of Ireland's largest organisations operating in manufacturing, construction, pharmaceutical and government sectors.

We are committed to excellence and have a culture of continuous improvement within the organisation, investing in our people and systems to ensure our activities remain aligned with our customers' expectations and requirements. Our success has been built around staff dedication supported by strong and proven management.

We are committed to developing innovative solutions for our clients that are compliant, sustainable, efficient, and cost effective, enabling the achievement of their health and safety goals.

Our ability to deliver a "best in class" service allows our clients to focus on their own core activities. We consider ourselves more than just suppliers, but rather "partners for safety" and this is why many of Ireland's leading companies and organisations depend on us.

Through our experience and expertise, we can respond to the most challenging of client demands. This is achieved by focusing our team of diverse industry professionals on the challenge, developing a solution, and implementing it in an efficient and cost-effective manner.

Our Mission:

To enable our customers to achieve Health and Safety compliance through Best in Class Training & Consultancy

Our Vision:

To be the leading provider of Health & Safety Training & Consultancy in Ireland

1. PURPOSE AND SCOPE

Our quality assurance system has been developed to support the development and delivery of quality education and training services to Holland Safety’s learners. In so doing, this system sets out the parameters for the following:

- Education, training, and related activities (for example, programme development prior to approval and submission for evaluation or validation).
- Internal and, where appropriate, external programme approval (validation) procedures.
- Learner results prior to submission for approval as qualifications/awards and for certification
- Self-evaluation findings, programme and related service improvement reports, including agreed follow-up action.

In developing our quality assurance system, Holland Safety has taken time to embed a quality assurance culture within the organisation in relation to both operational activities and academic oversight of education and training provision. This culture includes ongoing monitoring, review, and a focus on continual improvement.

We ensure that every member of the Holland Safety team has clearly defined roles, responsibilities, and authorities. Management and academic leadership are clearly defined and highly valued. A core aspect of these roles and responsibilities is a focus on consistent standards of quality assurance as the ultimate objective of the education and training services provided by Holland Safety.

In addition to adhering to QQI’s Quality Assurance framework, Holland Safety is accredited by a number of other awarding bodies for the delivery of training and education programmes (e.g., City & Guilds, ECITB, SOLAS, PHECC, IOSH, IPAF). Each of these accreditations incurs its own quality assurance requirements, and we maintain an overarching quality, environmental, health & safety management system certified to ISO 9001:2015, ISO 14001:2015, and ISO 45001:2018 which is externally audited on an annual basis.



The scope of this comprehensive, integrated Quality Assurance (QA) system is to cover the 11 main policy areas, informed by:

- Core Statutory Quality Assurance Guidelines published by QQI (April 2016).
- Sector Specific Quality Assurance Guidelines –Independent/Private.
- Statutory QA Guidelines for Blended Learning Programmes.

2. ORGANISATIONAL CONTEXT OF HOLLAND SAFETY

2.1 Mission and Vision

Our Mission:

To enable our customers to achieve Health and Safety compliance through Best in Class Training & Consultancy.

Our Vision:

To be the leading provider of Health & Safety Training & Consultancy in Ireland.

2.2 Position in Education & Training Landscape

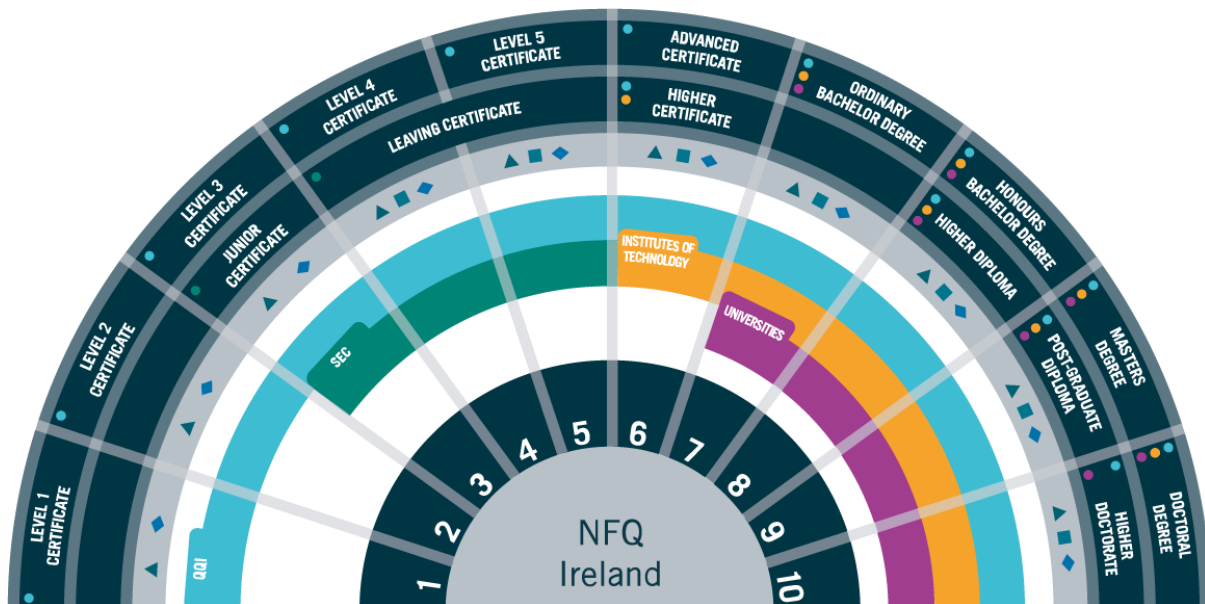


Figure 1 - National Framework of Qualifications (QQI, 2021)

Holland Safety has been active in education and training for more than 15 years with a particular focus on providing flexible, industry-driven qualifications to meet the needs of a diverse client base incorporating both public, private, and multi-national organisations.

Holland Safety’s scope of delivery includes technical, management, environmental, health and safety training programmes utilising Component Awards at Levels 5 and 6 of the National Framework of Qualifications (NFQ). The delivery modes which we may use, subject to agreement and individual programme approval with QQI, include:

- **Public Programmes** – these are delivered at central locations, mainly in our training centre at Rathcoole, Co. Dublin. Occasionally, public programmes are delivered in hotels/training /client venues across Ireland.

- **In-house Programmes** - these are tailored for a particular organisation and generally cater for groups between four and twenty learners. Such programmes are usually delivered at the company's own training facilities.
- **Blended Learning** - In line with Government restrictions and Protocols for COVID-19 pandemic we are now offering since 12th March 2020 blended learning programmes. This is following QQI's Topic Specific Guidance for provision of Blended Learning Programmes (2018) and our contingency plan.

As a company, we are also accredited for education and training delivery by the following entities:



EQA (Ireland) Ltd Quality Assurance System Certification



City & Guilds Approved Centre



IPAF Training Centre



PHECC Approved Training Institution



SOLAS Approved Training Organisation



ECITB Approved Provider



IOSH Approved Training Provider

3. OVERVIEW OF QUALITY ASSURANCE

3.1 Leadership of Quality Assurance

Senior Management is actively involved in maintaining the high standards of quality. This commitment from management provides the vision and strategic direction for the growth of our organisation's approach to quality, and establishes the necessary objectives and policies considering alignment with the context and strategic direction of our organisation, including:

- Ensuring that the necessary processes and resources are in place to deliver upon the operational and academic requirements associated with our scope of training provision.
- Supporting the separation of academic and operational decision-making to maintain robust oversight of the company's education and training direction.
- Managing the planning of change within operations and academic environments including issues affecting teaching and learning, information technology, quality assurance, and new products or services.
- Maintaining clear communication and feedback at all levels of the organisation regarding quality assurance.

3.2 Quality Committee

In line with QQI's Core Statutory Quality Assurance Guidelines, Holland Safety has responded to the need to have a separate determination of academic and operational decisions. This development ensures that operational management are free to focus on business operations, while education and training issues are addressed by a separate Quality Committee.

Policies and procedures relating to training provision are developed and approved by the Quality Committee under its Terms of Reference and separately approved by the Operations Department to ensure independence in decision making. The development of policies and procedures is intended to respond to experience, quality assurance requirements, and opportunities for improvement consummate to the level of a SME-operated Provider.

3.3 Benchmarking

Holland Safety has recognised the importance of a process of benchmarking to compare current standards and processes with the operation of similar organisations to initiate defining and development of new standards or objectives. These standards and objectives are intended to enhance performance and development of our education and training practice.

Benchmarking also involves reviewing information obtained from Quality and Qualifications Ireland in regard to quality assurance statistics, current trends in education and training provision, new and upcoming award developments, national assessment, grading and completion statistics. The resulting outputs from benchmarking are further used to inform quality assurance practices within Holland Safety.

3.4 Commitment to Learners

Holland Safety is committed to achieving a high standard of service which our learners have come to expect from us, including:

- A learning environment which welcomes diversity and promotes integration and equality regardless of individual status.
- The availability and provision of clear and relevant information on QQI programmes, their certification status, admission criteria, and criteria for access, transfer and progression.
- That all education and training programmes are delivered by competent and experience tutors who maintain continuous professional development.
- That prompt feedback is given to learners and that learners are heard when they provide their own feedback. All complaints or negative feedback are dealt with through non-conformance and corrective action in a timely manner.
- That assessment is delivered in a fair and structured manner, with transparent and fair deadlines on when work must be submitted and how it will be assessed.
- That all information and learner data is treated in confidence and processed in accordance with the Data Protection Acts 1988 – 2018 and the General Data Protection Regulation 2016/679.
- That all equipment and venues used as part of training courses are safe and conform to legislation including the Safety, Health & Welfare at Work Act 2005, and the CE Directives.

3.5 Programme Review and Delivery

In order to ensure that our programmes of education and training continue to meet the highest standards and reflects up-to-date knowledge and cultural currency, Holland Safety reviews each accredited programme through annual meeting of the Quality Committee. This meeting reviews feedback from interested parties, completion rates, benchmarked grades, and any proposed changes to a programme.

The core aspects of programme delivery are overseen by the Training Coordinator including oversight and adequacy of resources such as tutors, administrators, and learner support services on a day-to-day basis. The Training Coordinator works closely with Programme Leaders in resourcing programme content, supporting new programme design, and aiding the implementation of overall teaching and learning policies.

4. MONITORING EFFECTIVENESS OF THE QUALITY ASSURANCE SYSTEM

4.1 Risk Management Policy

As part of its overarching approach to quality assurance, Holland Safety undertakes to identify risks and opportunities to its current quality management arrangements. The aim of risk and opportunity management within Holland Safety is to ensure that organisational capabilities and resources are employed in an efficient and effective manner to take advantage of opportunities and to mitigate risk to our strategic direction.

All managers are responsible for implanting risk-based thinking into our organisation's quality culture, taking account of strengths, weaknesses, and the micro and macro environment in which we operate. This includes the establishment of risk management procedures and processes to ensure the effective management of risk, opportunities and activities by:

1. Providing sufficient resources to carry out risk and opportunity management activities.
2. Assigning responsibilities and authorities for risk and opportunity management activities.
3. Reviewing information and results from audits to identify risks & opportunities.
4. Ensuring contingency planning and succession arrangements.

Holland Safety record, review, monitor and plan for the risks and opportunities that we perceive to be relevant. This approach allows our organisation to methodically assess each risk and to study each opportunity associated with our organisational context, strategy, legal requirements, and compliance obligations affecting our education and training service delivery. This includes those that relate to the needs and expectations of our learners and other stakeholders.

Outputs from our consideration of risks and opportunities include:

- Risks & Opportunities Register.
- SWOT Analysis.
- PESTLE Analysis.
- Five Forces Analysis.

4.2 Internal Audits

Holland Safety operates several processes of internal self-monitoring and review in relation to its education and training. In the first instance, as part of its ISO integrated management system the QEHS Management Representative details a programme of internal audits of all company processes, procedures, and related documentation on an ongoing basis ahead of the scheduled external surveillance audit by our external accreditation body for ISO 9001:2015, ISO 14001:2015, and ISO 45001:2018.

The criteria, scope, frequency, and methods of each audit are defined in the completed audit reports. The audit process ensures that:

1. The results of each are reported to the QEHS Management Representative and to Top Management of Holland Safety.
2. That timely appropriate corrective action is undertaken where required.
3. Documented information such as audit checklists and audit reports are retained as evidence of the effective implementation of the audit programme in respect of each audit.

4.3 Management Review

The Holland Safety Management team meets on a monthly basis with a formal agenda covering quality assurance progress against action plans, internal audit feedback, stakeholder feedback and opportunities for development and embedding improvement. The Management Review Meeting involves an oversight of core business processes such as day-to-day operations, programme delivery, and provision of support including human resources.

The primary outputs of management review meetings are management actions that are taken to make changes or improvements to our quality assurance system. During management review meetings, senior management identifies appropriate actions to be taken regarding the following issues:

- Improvements needed to maintain the effectiveness of quality assurance system and associated processes.
- Improvement of customer satisfaction and service delivery.
- Resource needs and financial planning.
- Required internal audits and self-evaluation.

Relevant outputs from the management reviews are made available for communication and consultation throughout the company.

4.4 Customer Satisfaction

The success in meeting our customer's requirements and in achieving a high level of customer satisfaction with Holland Safety services is evaluated on a regular basis. This is done using, but is not limited to, monitoring customer feedback through evaluation forms, feedback directly from customers through our account management process, the results of internal audits, and other appropriate means. The levels of customer satisfaction are summarised and discussed on an ongoing basis at both weekly Operations Meetings, monthly Management Review meetings and by the Quality Committee.

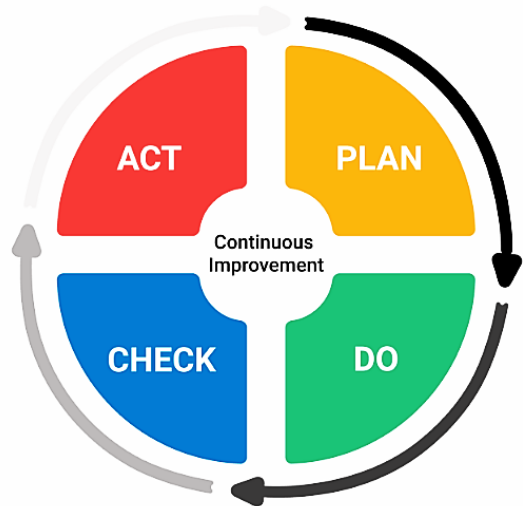
Where customer dissatisfaction is identified, Holland Safety develops and implements plans for customer satisfaction improvement that address any deficiencies identified by these evaluations and assess the effectiveness of the results following the Plan-Do-Check-Act (PDCA) approach. Following implementation of these plans, we monitor their effectiveness and impact upon improving levels of customer satisfaction.

Holland Safety has implemented a method of handling customer enquiries and this is established to provide a rapid response to customers who have an urgent need for assistance, or a complaint, which would adversely affect customer satisfaction. Where non-conformances affecting the quality of service provision are identified, these are recorded and investigated to establish corrective and preventative action which prevents reoccurrence.

4.5 Continual Improvement

We continually improve the effectiveness of our quality assurance system through the effective application of policy, objectives, auditing, data analysis, corrective and preventive actions, and management reviews. Our approach to continually improving our business performance is based on the premise that everything we do can be done better. We adopt the Plan, Do, Check Act cycle to embed quality assurance within our activities. This can be summarised as follows:

- **Plan:** at the beginning of each year, we draw up a yearly planner which documents our timetable of internal audits and management review meetings. Here we establish our objectives necessary to deliver improvements in accordance with our customers' requirements and our own internal policies.
- **Do:** Any changes identified are implemented on a trial basis to determine their effect on the relevant processes.
- **Check:** We monitor and measure our processes against our policies and objectives and check that our activities and the quality of our services are conforming.
- **Act:** We action the permanent implementation of improvements which have passed the trial period and integrate these changes into our everyday activities.



5. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

5.1 Executive Management

5.1.1 Managing Director

The Managing Director has ultimate accountability for Holland Safety's quality assurance systems. They have overall responsibility for ensuring that personnel performing quality assurance related activities are competent to carry out the job to the required standard and that proactive quality assurance practices are implemented at all levels.

They have overall responsibility for the following:

- Providing adequate human resources, infrastructure, plant, and equipment for quality assurance and operations as required.
- Ensuring a process of continual improvement of the quality assurance system is in place and functioning effectively.
- Ensuring that the company remains focused on satisfying learner needs.
- Development of new markets and new services.
- Development of new and existing major customers.
- Ensuring environmental, health and safety compliance obligations are met.

5.2 Operations Management Role

5.2.1 Commercial Manager

The Commercial Manager is responsible for day-to-day operational management. They are also responsible for the following:

- Carrying out the role in conformance with the quality assurance parameters.
- The development of new and existing customer base.
- Carrying out sales and promotional planning.
- Overseeing the allocation of work to consultants and tutors as required.
- Ensuring availability of delivery sources including equipment, training aids, etc.
- Assessment and approval of new suppliers and sub-contractors and monitoring performance.
- Specifying equipment, preparation, and approval of quotations.
- Ensuring that personnel under their control adhere to quality assurance and QEHS procedures.
- Identifying and implementing actions to resolve and prevent problems and complaints.
- Ensuring that all communications given to potential customers clearly define company capabilities.
- Defining the price structures and discounts given to customers.
- Approval of purchases.

5.2.2 Training Coordinator

The Training Coordinator is the focal point of our training delivery and is the bridge between the operational and quality aspects of our education and training services. In addition to being at the core of the business, their responsibilities include:

- Maintain training calendar and ensure actions are completed in line with upcoming requirements and anticipated workload.
- Maintain external accreditation bodies online portals in line with the specific requirements for each e.g., QQI QBS, City & Guilds Walled Garden, etc.
- Ensure that the appropriate tutor is booked for each course and is briefed on the requirements.
- Preparing and distributing any Tutor Notes or additional course resources as required.
- Sitting on the Quality Committee to assist in operationalising reviews of course quality, customer feedback, the development of new programmes, etc.
- Communicating quality assurance requirements to tutors and operational staff to ensure robust implementation of the embedded quality culture.
- Arrange for provision of any equipment or learning aids required for the specific course.
- Complete course returns, certification, cards, and issue attendance confirmation letter.
- Ensure ongoing compliance with day-to-day requirements of the external accreditation bodies.
- Oversee the maintenance of training facilities at our main training facility in line with requirements.
- Liaise with Account Managers regarding customer satisfaction on course delivery, including review of any feedback, both positive and negative.

5.2.3 Business Development Manager

The Business Development Manager has a key role in driving business growth across our range of services. Their core responsibilities include:

- Developing growth strategies and plans.
- Providing approved course information to prospective clients.
- Managing and retaining relationships with existing clients.
- Increasing client base in a sustainable manner.
- Having an in-depth knowledge of business products and value proposition.
- Ensuring a balance between commercial and quality assurance imperatives at point of sale.
- Negotiating with stakeholders.
- Researching business opportunities and viable income streams.
- Following industry trends locally and internationally.

5.2.4 Marketing Manager

The Marketing Manager has responsible for building the company brand awareness within the sectors which we operate.

- Communicate approved course information through the company's communication channels e.g., website, brochures, and social media.
- Develop and monitor the use of Google Analytics, organic search trends and PPC marketing return for investment.

- Adherence to quality assurance guidelines in marketing information regarding courses and engagement with the quality assurance system.
- Analyse and research prevailing market trends within our business sector.
- Identify the company's target market and target these markets.
- Develop marketing campaigns while remaining within the budget set.
- Organising the creation of marketing materials such as online flyers, website, and brochures, and upkeep of the company website.
- Monitoring and reporting on campaigns (digital, advertising etc) to determine their effectiveness.
- Attending sales meetings, conferences, and trade shows.

5.2.5 Account Managers

Our Account Managers are the central point of contact for our customers. They engage with customers and communicate key service information, receiving bookings, identify new client opportunities, etc. They also:

- Generate sales among client accounts, including upselling and cross-selling.
- Adhere to quality assurance guidelines in providing information regarding courses.
- Point of contact for customer feedback and complaints.
- Operate as the point of contact for assigned customers.
- Develop and maintain long-term relationships with accounts.
- Make sure clients receive requested products and services in a timely fashion.
- Communicate quality assurance needs to clients.
- Forecast and track client account metrics.
- Manage projects within client relationships, working to carry out client goals while meeting company goals.
- Identify opportunities to grow business with existing clients.
- Coordinate with staff members working on the same account to ensure consistent service.
- Collaborate with sales team to reach prospective clients.

5.2.6 Training Administration

Training Administrators manage the training lifecycle from start to finish, organising the necessary course resources and ensuring that all post-delivery requirements are met. They also:

- In carrying out all functions outlined below, a commitment to and adherence with the quality assurance systems and culture of the organisation is maintained.
- Interact with all external accreditation bodies on a day-to-day basis.
- Participate in the planning, development, creation, and implementation of training programs.
- Maintain up-to-date, correct, and accurate training records.
- Book classrooms and set up online spaces and ensure that they are properly set up.
- Oversee the preparation and dissemination of materials such as instructional notes, feedback forms, and so on.
- Handle and resolve issues as they arise and referring these to Account Managers.
- Gather, file, and submit reports as they come up on site.
- Ensure that the company follows established quality assurance guidelines and policies of external accreditation bodies.

5.3 Quality Committee

5.3.1 Quality Assurance Coordinator

The Quality Assurance Coordinator has specific responsibility for assisting the Quality Committee in the development, implementation, and maintenance of the various quality assurance management systems. They also:

- Ensure that the organisation conforms to the requirements of ISO 9001, ISO 14001, and ISO 45001:2018.
- Report on the performance of the QEHS and quality assurance practices to the Quality Assurance Committee, including any recommendations for its improvement, and ensuring that all staff and contractors are fully aware of their responsibilities.
- Support the development of the quality assurance and QEHS management systems on the basis of performance evaluation and continual improvement.

5.3.2 Internal Verifier

The Internal Verifier plays an important role in ensuring the validity of assessment decisions, and that tutors are conducting assessments in the prescribed manner and delivering consistent results. They also:

- Verify education and training assessment decisions, ensuring that the relevant qualification standards and requirements are maintained, and that appropriate assessment of candidates is being carried out.
- Implement verification methodologies including sampling of assessment decisions for consistency with qualification requirements and good practice.
- Maintain the Provider files and up-to-date records relating to tutors and the assessments carried out.
- Ensure the quality assurance is at the core of the assessment practices of Holland Safety at all times.
- Liaise with External Authenticators/Verifiers and preparation of data for EA/EV visits and follow-up of action plans within specified timescales.
- Maintain accurate assessment records for inspection by external accreditation bodies and upload onto the relevant accreditation body's portal.

5.3.3 Independent FE Professional

The core role of the Independent FE Professional is to provide an expert, independent and external voice on academic matters within the organisation, including:

- Chair the Quality Committee during its regular, periodic meetings and exercising the casting vote in any contentious matter.
- Ensure that all programmes of education and training are delivered in line with the external accreditation requirements including internal verification and validation.
- Advise the company on the protection of all existing and future learners throughout the training lifecycle.
- Participate in the review of each course as part of the Quality Committee's scheduled reviews of existing courses.

- Contribute to the development of new programmes of education and training including their academic integrity and effectiveness.
- Ensure the company implements its strategies in relation to the enhancement of quality on an ongoing basis and assisting in embedding a quality culture.

5.3.4 FE Programme Leader

The FE Programme Leader is the 'owner' of a particular programme of education and training and has core responsibilities in this regard. Their responsibilities include:

- Report to the Quality Committee regarding key metrics applying to the particular programmes for which they are designated the Programme Leader.
- Maintain awareness of changes in learning and industry practices, particularly in relation to the programme which they lead, and quality assurance at industry level.
- Review all learner feedback with relevant stakeholders including the Quality Committee, the Training Administrators, and the Internal Verifier as appropriate.
- Implement and support the further development of any Programme which they will lead upon including contribution to the course design and review process.
- Provide support to the Internal Verifier in the verification and certification process and liaising with programme tutors as required.
- Uphold quality assurance practices when participating in development and delivery of education and training courses, and in their dealings with each learner.
- Oversee the implementation of quality assurance policies and procedures at a course level and contribute to the recruitment, selection and development of new programme tutors.

5.3.5 Learner Representative

The Learner Representative is a key member of the Quality Committee and ensures that the voice of the learner is at the core of Holland Safety's approach to embedding a quality culture. Their responsibilities also include:

- To represent their peers' opinions and interests and actively address issues that impact upon the quality of their experience.
- To participate in, support, and promote quality assurance initiatives aimed at soliciting feedback from learners and actively improving the student learning experience.
- To advise and provide constructive feedback – from the learner's perspective – on matters such as programme assessment strategies, learner workloads, programme development, the learning environment, quality assurance, and learner supports.
- To support and enhance the role of the FE Programme Leaders in managing the development and quality of their respective programmes using input from the learner's perspective.

6. OUR QUALITY ASSURANCE SYSTEM

The Quality Assurance (QA) system covers 11 main policy areas. These have been informed by the core Statutory Quality Assurance Guidelines published by QQI (April 2016), together with QQI guidance for Private Providers and in the area of Blended Learning.

The policies are listed below, and the following sections of the QA manual provide a detailed explanation of each policy area, as listed below:

No.	Policy	Overview	Responsibility
P01	Governance & Management of QA	Establishes structures for activities with clear lines of responsibility and segregation between commercial and academic decision making.	Quality Committee. Operations Department.
P02	Documented Approach to QA	Sets out documented policies supporting the embedding of a robust quality assurance culture.	Quality Committee
P03	Programmes of Education & Training	Establishes a robust approach to the evaluation of new programmes and clear separation of development and approval processes.	Quality Committee
P04	Staff Recruitment, Management & Development	Provides strong recruitment and staff development processes.	Quality Committee
P05	Teaching and Learning	Establishes principles for effective teaching and learning practice.	Quality Committee
P06	Assessment of Learners	Establishes principles for effective, fair, consistent assessment methodologies in relation to learner effort.	Quality Committee
P07	Support for Learners	Provides an overview of supports to aid learner performance throughout their course.	Quality Committee
P08	Information and Data Management	Establishes the management and analysis of information and data sources within the company.	Operations Department.
P09	Public Information & Communication	Sets out the criteria for providing high quality, accurate and up-to-date information on Holland Safety's programmes.	Quality Committee. Operations Department.
P10	Other Parties involves in Education & Training	Sets out processes governing relationships and interaction with the wider FE community.	Quality Committee. Operations Department.
P11	Self-Evaluation, Monitoring & Review	Establishes processes of internal self-monitoring, self-evaluation, and review to support continuous improvement.	Quality Committee. Operations Department.

7. GOVERNANCE & MANAGEMENT OF QUALITY ASSURANCE

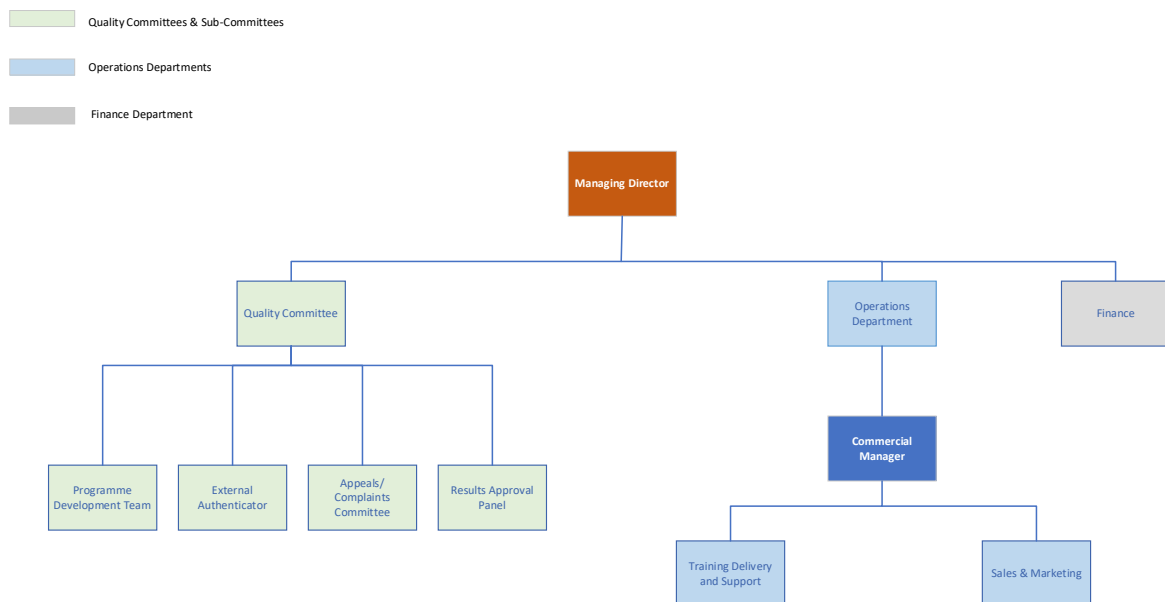
7.1 Governance

7.1.1 Summary

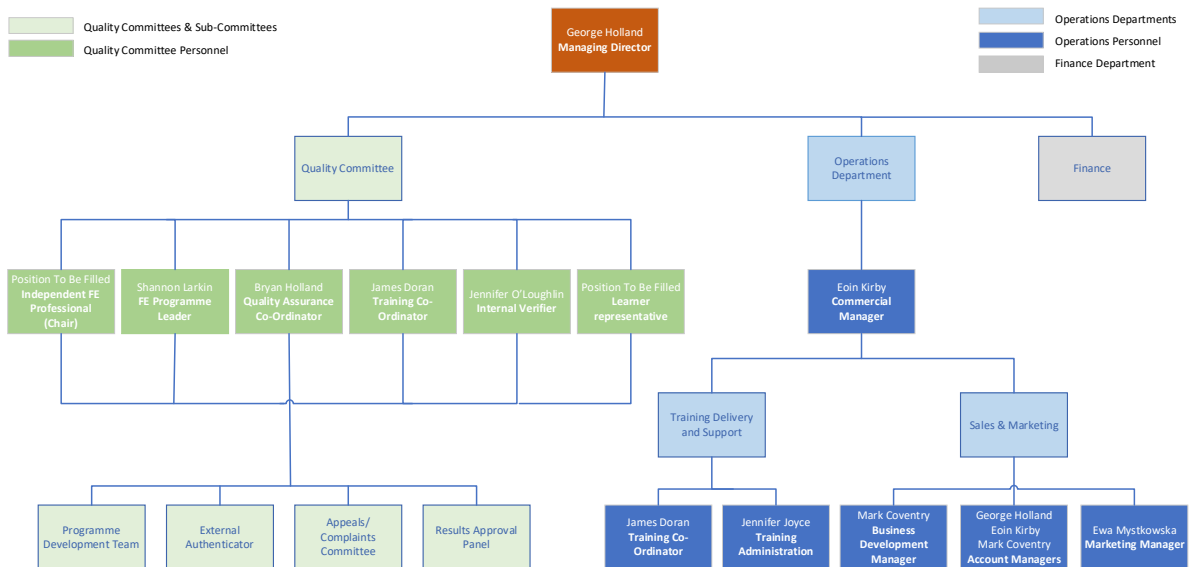
Holland Safety’s governance structures ensure a separation of academic and commercial activities within the organisation. Both the Operations Department and Quality Committee are committed to the effective monitoring and continual improvement of governance across the organisation. Appropriate structures, processes and measures are used to provide a robust system of governance to oversee all education and training activities.

7.1.2 Holland Safety’s Governance Structure

Holland Safety – Governance Chart



Holland Safety – Organisational Chart



Holland Safety recognises the importance of situating appropriate governance structures within the wider organisational context. The quality assurance system we have developed focuses on the objectives and outcomes we have set for ourselves, and that these are translated into operational objectives which are dynamically aligned with our mission, strategic direction, and the views of interested parties (stakeholders including QQI, our tutors, our learners, etc.).

Through our integrated ISO management system (ISO 9001:2015, ISO 14001:2015, ISO 45001:2018), we ensure that an integrated approach to quality assurance is taken within all areas of the organisation and all staff understand their role in maintaining a dynamic quality culture. Ownership of the quality assurance system is maintained on a cross-organisational basis with involvement of all provider staff. This includes all levels of management, administration, teaching staff and learners.

Our Quality Committee ensures that academic decision-making reflects the interests of learners and the maintenance of high standards. The Committee operates independent of commercial considerations. The overall corporate decision-makers within the provider, including owners and operational managers, do not exercise exclusive authority or undue influence over quality assurance decision-making and the Committee is chaired by an external FE professional. Quality Assurance decision-makers are appropriately qualified and experienced including our Independent FE Representative and Independent Learner Representative; they are aware of available resources for programme delivery and ensure that standards are maintained in the approval and validation of programmes of education and training.

The approach to governance ensures that there is robust identification, assessment, and management of risk as a core aspect of both our day-to-day operations and strategic decision-making. As a QQI Provider, we recognise our role in the integrity and stewardship of all awards under the National Framework of Qualifications and that the integrity and sustainability of the Framework is essential to

meeting the requirements of our customers. There is robust consideration of both risks and opportunities within our management system and structures as discussed in Section 5.1.

A core part of integrating our approach to quality assurance is a company-wide process of Management Review which addresses the findings of internal and external evaluation, including the results of internal and external audits, feedback from customers, national benchmarking data, and External Authenticators and accreditation bodies. The minutes of Management Review meetings feed into the development of actionable Quality Improvement Plans.

7.2 Management of Quality Assurance

Holland Safety's Quality Assurance System has been designed to:

1. Support the ongoing development, delivery, assessment and review of education and training programmes provided by the organisation.
2. Comply with the Core Statutory Quality Assurance Guidelines (April 2016) as published by Quality & Qualifications Ireland (QQI).
3. Entrench our commitment to, and culture of, continuous improvement to achieve and maintain a high quality of service to all our learners.
4. Set out various organisational roles and responsibilities for the implementation of quality assurance policies and procedures.
5. Facilitate equality, integration and diversity within our staff and learner cohort, ensuring that the voice of the learner is at the core of everything we do.

The established Quality Assurance System implemented by Holland Safety is based upon the following components:

- Our **Mission** and **Vision** which 'set the scene' for our strategic direction in terms of both operational and quality assurance considerations in our education and training provision. Our organisation is passionate about learning and delivering best in class service to our customers. Our approach to quality assurance is top-down and is cascaded throughout all levels and aspects of the organisation.
- Our **Policies** as articulated through this **Quality Assurance System Manual** have been developed with the aim of communicating to all levels of management and staff as to the general approaches to follow in their work, and to communicate to learners and other stakeholders as to what they can expect of the organisation as an education and training provider.
- Our **Procedures** and **Processes** which are designed to support the effective implementation of the management system through providing clear and easy-to-follow pathways in terms of key quality assurance activities including development of programmes, assessment of learners, certification of results, and the handling of learner appeals. These processes provide clarity to our team and aid in efficient management of quality assurance.
- Our system of **internal audits and self-monitoring** which regularly check the effectiveness of the procedures and processes, and act as an early warning system in areas of provision requiring improvement. These audits are reviewed by the Quality Committee and presented to senior management for their Management Review meetings, actions are identified, assigned, and closed out in a progressive manner.
- Our **Self-Evaluation Process** through which Holland Safety will review and report on the quality of its own programmes and related services, including the views of independent FE professionals and learners. This Self-Evaluation process is a 360° Feedback approach which

looks at where we are now, where we would like to be, and what steps we may need to take to align our strategic direction.

- Our ethos regarding **Continual Improvement** including response to the findings of non-conformances, complaints, self-monitoring, and review which will address both organisational and specific programme(s) area(s) for improvement. The continual improvement process is an essential component of our approach to quality.

Management makes a formal review of quality during its monthly Management Review Meeting, addressing any issues in relation to people and resourcing plus reviewing self-evaluation and internal audit reports. This is supported by clear processes and procedures so that managers can track progress against KPIs and other quality measures which are integrated in their line responsibilities and recognised as a core function.

The Quality Committee is enabled to provide feedback to the commercial and operational management of the company in regard to its ongoing work including programme development, programme review, quality improvement, and its responsibilities in hearing appeals and assessing the levels of learner support and effective assessment practices in place. The Committee also works to support management in embedding a quality culture.

Senior management is committed to ensuring that all activities of the company meet customer requirements in line with applicable legal and regulatory requirements, including relevant obligations under employment and equality law. In addition, the Quality Committee ensures that education and training is delivered in line with the criteria set out by QQI. The following legislation is relevant to Holland Safety's education and training provision:

- Terms of Employment (Information) Acts 1994–2014.
- Employment (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 2018.
- Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Act 2005.
- National Minimum Wage Act 2000.
- Payment of Wages Act 1991.
- Minimum Notice and Terms of Employment Acts, 1973–2005.
- Industrial Relations (Amendment) Act, 2015.
- Organisation of Working Time Act, 1997.
- Organisation of Working Time (Records) (Prescribed Form and Exemptions) Regulations, 2001.
- Maternity Protection Act, 1994.
- Maternity Protection (Amendment) Act, 2004.
- Paternity Leave and Benefit Act, 2016.
- Adoptive Leave Act, 2005.
- Parental Leave Acts, 1998-2019.
- Parent's Leave and Benefit Act, 2019.
- Carer's Leave Act, 2001.
- Employment Equality Acts, 1998–2015.
- Equality (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act, 2015.
- Protection of Employees (Part-Time Work) Act, 2001.
- Protection of Employees (Fixed Term Work) Act, 2003.
- Protected Disclosures Act, 2014.
- EC (Protection of Employees on Transfer of Undertakings) Regulations 2003.
- Redundancy Payments Acts, 1967–2014.
- Protection of Employment (Exceptional Collective Redundancies and Related Matters) Act, 2007.
- Unfair Dismissals Acts, 1977–2015.

- Workplace Relations Act, 2015.
- Mediation Act, 2017.
- Education Act, 1998.
- Further Education and Training Act, 2013.
- Data Protection Acts 1988 – 2018.
- General Data Protection Regulation 2016/679.
- Qualifications and Quality Assurance (Education and Training) (Amendment) Act 2019.

7.3 Embedding a Quality Culture

Holland Safety consider the following to be key enablers for embedding a cohesive and coherent culture of quality in our organisation’s approach to education and training provision:

- A clear and transparent commitment to quality at all levels.
- The allocation of adequate time and resources to quality planning and implementation.
- Maintaining staff engagement through regular discussion of quality assurance issues.
- The creation of the right conditions for quality improvement.
- An appropriate infrastructure in place to support staff in identifying and implementing quality improvements.



Figure 2 - Components of Quality Culture (Sattler et al., 2016)

As an organisation we believe that a holistic approach towards quality assurance, where an emphasis is placed on continuous improvement, and active development is key. This involves a strategy to develop the continuous enhancement of quality. Our processes and procedures are integrated into all aspects of our activities with adequate administrative and quality assurance support. To aid in embedding this culture, Holland Safety ensure:

- That policies and procedures are developed in consultation with all those involved in their implementation, as well as harnessing the insight from our Independent FE Professional and Learner Representative.
- That our staff understand the importance of a “think quality” approach where the Plan-Do-Check-Act cycle is applied to the identification, correction, and prevention of quality assurance issues.
- That all staff attend a Quality, Environmental, Health & Safety (QEHS) induction regarding their role in achieving the organisation’s QEHS objectives, maintaining consistent quality and customer focus, and ensuring a sustainable and safe place of work.
- A proportionate approach to the implementation of quality assurance procedures to ensure that the burden of procedures does not obscure the purpose of establishing and maintaining a quality culture.

8. DOCUMENTED APPROACH TO QUALITY ASSURANCE

8.1 Documented Policies & Procedures

8.1.1 Introduction

Holland Safety's quality assurance system is fully documented; comprising robust, documented policies and associated procedures for the assurance of the quality and standards of provision. Our documented quality assurance system sets out our commitment to quality in terms of education and training delivery, programme development, assessment and verification, and related activities undertaken within our scope of education and training delivery.

Our policies, procedures and other quality documents have been developed to support an appropriate, proportionate, and operational quality assurance system to support the range of services which we provide. Our quality documents promote a culture of quality, facilitate diversity and support innovation as part of a strategic management approach. These documents are owned in the first instance by the Quality Committee but are made available to all staff utilising a cloud-based shared drive, this ensures that staff have access to the correct documents in a timely manner.

Our documentation considers and is informed by the following (but is not limited to):

- QQI's Core Statutory Quality Assurance Guidelines (April 2016).
- QQI's Sector-Specific Quality Assurance Guidelines for Independent/Private Providers.
- QQI's Topic Specific Quality Assurance Guidelines for Providers of Blended Learning Programmes (2018).
- The relevant legislative and regulatory context and provisions:
 - Qualifications and Quality Assurance (Education and Training) Acts 2012-2019.
 - Data Protection Act 1988 – 2018 & GDPR 2016/679.
 - Safety, Health & Welfare at Work Act 2005, and delegated legislation.
 - Employment Equality Acts 1998 – 2015.
 - The Equal Status Acts 2000 – 2018.

Approved quality assurance documents will be made publicly available to learners and other interested stakeholders through appropriate channels such as the company website. All staff have access to the full range of quality assurance documents in a usable format which is fit for purpose and appropriate to our context as an education and training provider.

8.1.2 Control of Documented Policies and Procedures

Senior Management ensures that when we create documented information it is appropriately identified and described (e.g., title, date, author, reference number) and is available in an appropriate format (e.g., language, software version, graphics, etc.) and on appropriate media (e.g., paper, electronic). All documented information is reviewed and approved for suitability and adequacy.

An electronic document management system, which is backed up and updated as required, is used to retain documented information ensuring only the current versions are available to users. Records from process outputs are generated and maintained by the departments responsible for their creation.

For electronic records, server back-up procedures are established. Staff are responsible for ensuring that their data has been backed-up satisfactorily by the IT services provider on a four-hourly basis.

All documents and data are reviewed and approved by authorised personnel prior to issue. Current revisions of appropriate documents are available at locations where they are used. A Master Document & Record List is maintained and circulated. Documents controlled by this procedure include but are not limited to the following:

1. Quality Assurance System Manual
2. Procedures, reports, and forms.
3. Management review and Programme Review minutes.
4. External documents; Guidelines, Codes of Practice, etc.



Figure 3 - Document Hierarchy (ISO, 2008)

Obsolete documents are removed from points of use and may be retained for reference or for legal obligations. They are marked 'OBSOLETE' and kept separate from active documents. All obsolete electronic documents are removed from the network drives and are stored in media that is accessible upon request. Any obsolete documents that need to be reactivated must be reviewed, approved, and released in the same manner as newly established documents.

8.1.3 Review of Documents

All documents required to deliver education and training services are periodically reviewed by the relevant document owner to ensure that they remain effective and 'fit for purpose' and are aligned to the overall strategic direction of the company. This ensures that staff can only use the current approved version of each document. Factors to be considered in making amendments to documents may include the need for:

- Changes in stakeholder requirements (e.g., new, or emerging QQI guidelines).
- Taking account of operational feedback (both internal and external).
- Supporting new and innovative approaches to education and training provision.
- Responding to findings and recommendations arising from internal and external audits.
- Addressing feedback from Learner Representatives and other interested parties.
- Supporting the development of an inclusive and equitable learning organisation.
- Ongoing continuous improvement.

8.2 A Comprehensive System

Holland Safety's quality assurance policies, procedures and systems are designed as a comprehensive system which are implanted across our education and training activities at all levels. These policies, procedures, and systems span both the operational domain (e.g., governance, finance, human resources) and academic domain. These policies and procedures are translated into practice through a variety of internal quality assurance processes that allow participation by all staff within the company.

As part of Holland Safety's quality assurance activities and our ISO 9001:2015, ISO 14001:2015, and ISO 45001:2018 certified integrated management system, we maintain an integrated management system incorporating all aspects of our quality, environmental, health & safety (QEHS) performance.

We ensure that all staff attend a QEHS induction regarding their role in achieving the organisation’s QEHS objectives, maintaining consistent quality and customer focus, and ensuring a sustainable and safe place of work. Ownership of quality assurance is implemented through the assigning of responsibility for the function of individual processes, and this ensures all staff have a vested interest in our comprehensive system.

9. PROGRAMMES OF EDUCATION & TRAINING

9.1 Introduction

Holland Safety is committed to the development and delivery of programmes that meet the needs of its learners and anticipate future training needs. Both the Operations Department and Quality Committee engage in long-term planning to support the design and external approval of new courses and programmes of study. Programmes are developed and reviewed in order to ensure that they:

- Meet the course specification, learning outcomes and standards for the award.
- Meet QQI’s validation requirements.
- Offer suitable learning and progression paths for a diverse range of learners; and
- Meet the emerging needs of learners, the economy and society.
- Ensure continuous improvement in order to meet national quality standards.

9.2 Programme Development and Approval

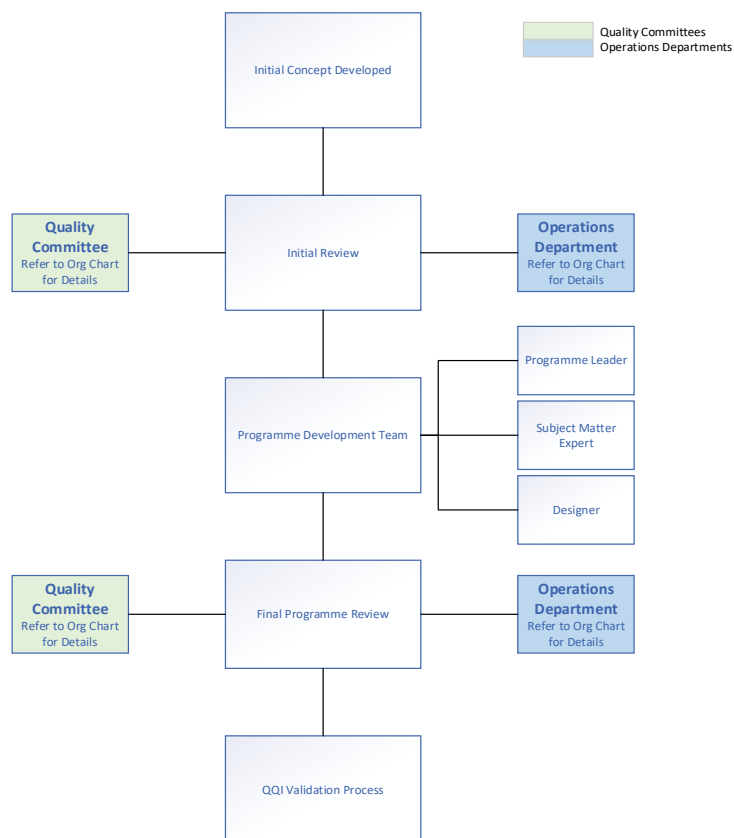


Figure 4 - Holland Safety Approval Process

Holland Safety's programme development and approval process involves the following stages which ensures a clear separation between those who develop material and those who approve it:

- **Stage 1:** a firm rationale / business case is developed by the relevant interested party within Holland Safety which includes staff, tutors, and other interested parties. The initial concept sets out both the commercial and academic aspects to the proposed programme in terms of business case, prospective learners, positioning in the education and training marketplace, learning outcomes and potential assessment methods situated at the relevant level of learner effort, and any other relevant matters.
- **Stage 2:** the first formal stage of the process involves an initial review carried out separately by the Operations Department with the Managing Director providing ultimate approval for commercial and financial aspects, and the Quality Committee in relation to the academic features of the programme. Only when both teams have reached a decision supporting the programme in its current form will the proposal progress further. Where, in either commercial or academic aspects, the programme is felt to be lacking in a specific area it will be referred back to the proposer for review with an outline of the reasons and any relevant recommendations. This process ensures a separation between commercial and academic decision making is maintained.
- **Stage 3:** if the programme concept is successfully approved by both the Operations Department and the Quality Committee, it will move forward, and a Programme Development team will be assigned to oversee the development of the programme in line with the recommendations from both commercial and academic review. The Programme Development team will consist of at least a minimum of:
 - An assigned "Programme Leader".
 - An assigned "Subject Matter Expert".
 - An assigned "Instructional Designer".

Once assigned, the Programme Development team organise their work around a realistic project development timeline and carry out the development of all aspects of the programme in line with the relevant rationale, QQI's Component Specification and Validation Requirements, the appropriate assessment methods, and content proposed by the Subject Matter Expert which adds value to the overall programme. Full Terms of Reference for the Programme Development Team are outlined in Appendix 3.

- **Stage 4:** following full development of the proposed new programme, the Programme Development team present the draft programme separately to both the Operations Department and the Quality Committee, this process ensures a separation between commercial and academic decision making is maintained. This presentation includes review of, inter alia, the following:
 - Presentation / eLearning SCORM Content.
 - Course Timetable / Module Structure / Lesson Plan.
 - Course Handouts / Notes.
 - Learning Aids including audio-visual elements, equipment, etc.
 - Assessment Materials including Assessment Brief, Assessment Paper (where required), and proposed Marking Scheme.
 - Tutor Notes to support the effective delivery of the programme and the conduct of specific assessment activities.

Following this thorough review, both the Operations Department through final approval by the Managing Director, and Quality Committee must separately approve the programme in its current form. If approved, the proposed programme will move to external validation. If rejected, the programme is referred back to the Programme Development team with recommendations for further improvement. This ensures an appropriate separation between those who produce material and those who approve it.

- **Stage 5:** following the approval, QQI programmes must undergo a formal process of Programme Validation by QQI in line with the *QQI Policies and criteria for the validation of programmes of education and training (November 2017)* and be submitted via the QBS online system along with completed application form to begin the validation process. Following QQI's analysis of the programme, the validation may either be approved, approved with changes, or rejected.

In the event of a decision for approval with changes or rejection, the programme is re-evaluated by the Programme Development team and must be separately approved by the Operations Department and Quality Committee before it may be sent forward for validation with future changes.

This process is subject to ongoing monitoring and periodic review.

9.3 Learner Admission, Progression, and Recognition

9.3.1 Admission

In the case of QQI programmes, the admission requirements and progression opportunities for a specific module are documented in the Component Specification and the approved QQI validation. These are then communicated through the company website and any other relevant promotional materials for the course. This information always includes clear information on the programme and award title, the relevant awarding body (e.g., QQI), routes to access the course, an outline of the content covered by the programme, and the relevant level on the National Framework of Qualifications.

In the case of prospective learner's whose first language may not be English, Holland Safety have adopted the following admissions requirements to ensure that learners are in a position to achieve the best possible outcome in their programme:

Minimum English Language Requirements:

Education and training at Holland Safety is through the medium of English. Therefore, learners must demonstrate a high level of competence in the English language to be admitted. The minimum English language requirements apply to all applicants at all levels of study.

Learners whose first language is not English must show that they meet a certain standard of English language proficiency. This can be proven through any one of the following methods:

- Merit or Distinction in the QQI Level 5 modules English as a Second Language 5N1632, or Communications 5N0690, Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) Level B2 or higher.
- International English Language Testing System – Academic (IELTS) – Minimum overall band score of 7.0, with a result not less than 6.5 in each of the individual sections.
- Leaving Certificate results of H7/O6 in English.
- Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL) – Internet Based Test: Minimum total score of 100 out of 120, with a score not less than 22 in Reading and Listening. Not less than 26 in Speaking and NOT LESS than 24 in the test of written English.

Applicants must complete the English language proficiency test prior to enrolling on a Holland Safety training programme. In all cases the test results must not be more than 2 years old.

Additional Requirements Specific to Learners Engaging in Blended Learning:

Applicants must be self-motivated and have the capacity to take responsibility for their own learning as they progress through a blended learning programme. Basic computer literacy is required to enroll on a blended learning programme e.g., opening an internet page, following simple instructions, and creating a Word document. Applicants must also have the following:

- Access to a laptop with functioning camera and audio **or** access to a PC with functioning camera and audio (earphones may be required when using PC) **or** access to a mobile device with functioning camera and audio.
- Strong internet connection.
- Microsoft Teams/Zoom Meetings/Cisco WebEx downloaded.
- Photo ID in the form of a Driving Licence or Passport.

Learners with a Disability, Medical Condition or Learning Difficulty:

Under the Equal Status Acts 2000 – 2015 and the Employment Equality Acts 1998 - 2015, Holland Safety is fully committed to providing reasonable accommodation to meet the needs of learners with a disability, a significant on-going medical condition or learning difficulty to enable them to successfully complete their programme on an equal footing with other learners. A reasonable accommodation might be any action that helps alleviate a substantial disadvantage arising from the learner's disability, significant medical condition or learning difficulty, without changing the demands or the integrity of the examination or the programme.

The objective of this approach is to ensure that all learners accessing a programme delivered by Holland Safety have the capacity to achieve the learning outcomes of the course to the highest level. Our Account Managers ensure that appropriate pre-course discussions are carried out with prospective learners regarding the suitability of the programme to meet their training needs and may explore in broad terms the experience and qualifications of the prospective learner in light of the anticipated learner workload for the particular programme.

9.3.2 Transfer and Progression

Holland Safety support the transfer and progression of learners to further qualifications in co-operation with other QQI approved education and training providers with regard to the levels outlined on the National Framework of Qualifications and European Qualifications Framework. Within our scope of provision, we recognise that completion of a Component Awards enables the learner to progress to achieve a full Major Award or to transfer from one programme of education and training to another programme where the component is a mandatory or an elective requirement.

Where learners intend to progress their learning, we recommend they review the available information for linked Major Awards on the QQI website and opportunities available with other providers for obtaining Major Awards including those involved in the wider Further Education community such as the Education and Training Boards and Institutes of Technology.

9.3.3 Recognition

A procedure for Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) in relation to access to programmes is in place and requests are handled on a case-by-case basis. As a small voluntary provider delivering Component Awards, the extent to which RPL may be requested is limited as such Awards do not lead to a linked Major Award with Holland Safety. Therefore, the most significant aspect of RPL which Holland Safety encounter is towards verification of learning carried out on our programmes for progression to higher level Major Awards with other education and training providers.

Holland Safety also provide recognition of certified education and training programmes where learning has been conducted outside of Ireland through the National Academic Recognition Information Centre (NARIC), the National Europass Centre, and other appropriate certifying authorities in line with current national standards and quality assurance guidelines published by QQI. The learner must provide evidence of equivalence of qualifications at their own cost (should a fee for recognition be charged by any of the authorised bodies or certifying authorities).

To avail of RPL, the learner must have been in relevant employment for a minimum of 1 year and have met some or all of the learning outcomes of the programme in this time which should be evidenced through a reference from their previous employer. An application for RPL must be submitted to the Training Coordinator stating the exact role and skills relevant to the application. The Training Coordinator will review the application and inform the learner of their decision in writing within 2 weeks.

9.4 Programme Monitoring & Review

Holland Safety has a cycle of reviews and evaluations to ensure regular academic quality assurance and to allow continued improvement for each of its programmes:

- Internal Programme Monitoring.
- External Evaluation.

9.4.1 Internal Programme Monitoring

The following sources of data informs Holland Safety internal programme monitoring:

Source	Interested Party	Content Reviewed	Frequency
Learner Evaluation Forms	Enrolled learners.	Standard of delivery including facilities, resources, tutor, etc.	After each course is completed.
Tutor End-of-Course Reports	Tutors involved in delivery.	Training venue and resources allocated to delivery, learner issues and supports.	After each course is completed.
External Authenticator Reports	External Authenticators.	Learner results and attainment of intended learning outcomes.	Twice a year
Account Management of Clients	Account Managers & Training Coordinator	All aspects of programme delivery.	Once per course
Management Meetings	Quality Committee & Operations Department	All aspects of programme delivery and learner attainment, supports, resources, etc.	Monthly
Informal communication with staff, learners, and Tutors	Learners, Tutors and Staff	All aspects of programme delivery and quality assurance.	Once per course delivered.

The process of programme review for specific programmes is conducted by an independent Programme Leader (i.e. peer review) who will gather the available internal monitoring data, consult with the independent FE professional and learner representative, and identify areas which may require programme modifications and opportunities for improvements.

During the independent peer review, the reviewer may consult the following data:

- Learner Evaluations.
- Tutor/Tutor Evaluations.
- Component Specification for Award(s).
- Programme resources.
- New relevant legislation.
- Attendance records.
- Daily reports.
- Grade distribution and benchmarking.

- QQI analytics and benchmarking.
- Course meeting records.
- IV reports.
- EA reports.
- RAP minutes
- QQI Validation reports
- Any other relevant reports or feedback from external experts or stakeholders.

Any significant changes which are recommended would require QQI approval and must be in line with the Component Specification for the relevant Award(s), examples would include:

- Addition of modules.
- Change to credit weightings.
- Changes to learning outcomes.
- Change to programme title.

For any recommended changes to progress regardless of how minor, each must be approved by the Quality Committee.

9.4.2 External Programme Review

This is a formal evaluation of our validated programmes by our various accrediting bodies. It is carried out on a five-year cycle. This project is managed by the Training Coordinator.

This review has 3 stages:

- Internal review.
- External review.
- Final overall review by Holland Safety.

Internal Review

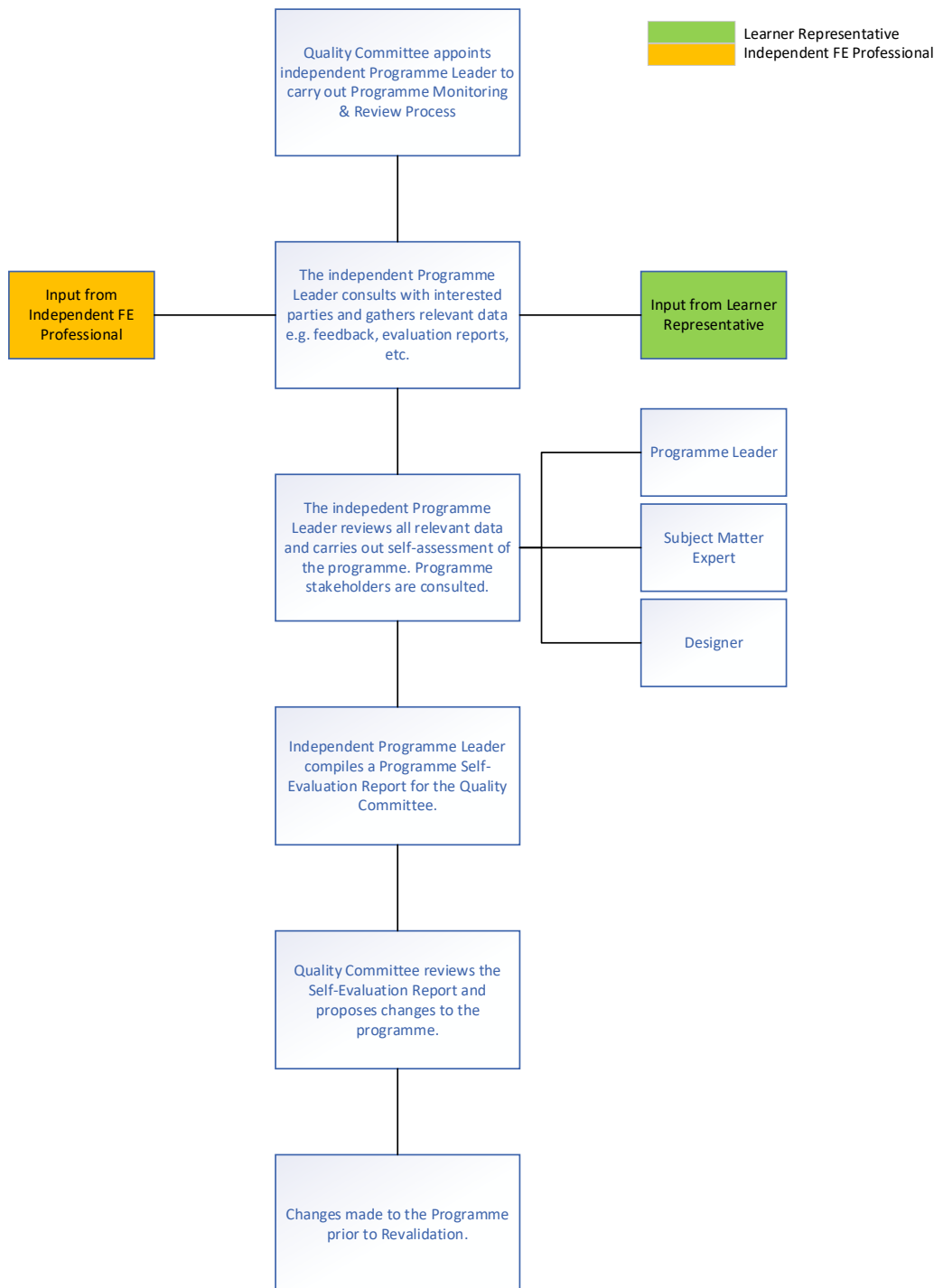
Formation
The internal review team is appointed by the Quality Committee. This process is the responsibility of and is co-ordinated by the Training Coordinator who will develop a project plan with timelines, key tasks and review meetings.
Consultation with Relevant Stakeholders
The appointed internal review team will make contact with the relevant interested parties which may include learners (past and present), relevant managers, programme tutors, and relevant subject matter experts should it be required.
Review of Collected Data
The feedback which has been canvassed from the interested parties is reviewed along with the previous Annual Programme Review reports. The information is analysed to determine the extent of the programme's conformance with the QQI validation criteria and Component Specification for the Award. Recommendations are communicated in the Self-Evaluation Report.
Self-Evaluation Report (SER)
The Self-Evaluation Report (SER) is compiled by the Training Coordinator and presented to the Quality Committee before submission to QQI. This report provides the external expert panel with an organisational context and overview of developments over the five-year period.

The External Review

Formation
QQI will form an expert panel which is composed of subject matter experts from the relevant fields of learning and the wider Further Education community.
Site Visit
The conduct of a site visit allows the expert panel to review the relevant documentation and meet the relevant Holland Safety personnel, and to gather an overall impression of the education and training services provided. The agenda for the Site Visit is agreed with the expert panel and QQI in advance to allow for optimum availability of resources and utilisation of the available time.
Panel Review and Feedback Report
Following the completion of the site visit, the expert panel will prepare their formal report based on the combined review and analysis of the Self-Evaluation Report submitted by Holland Safety and the outcome of the site visit. This report will contain a recommendation in respect of the continued validation of the specific programme of education and training.

Review by Holland Safety

The Quality Committee and Operations Department within Holland Safety will review the findings of the Expert Panel's final report and decide whether or not to consider revalidation of the specific programme of education and training. A formal response will be submitted to QQI in regards to the finding of the expert panel.



10. STAFF RECRUITMENT, MANAGEMENT & DEVELOPMENT

10.1 Staff Recruitment

As part of ensuring the competence of people engaged in programme and service delivery, all positions are supported by job specifications and descriptions prepared by senior management. These descriptions set out the expected qualifications, experience and responsibilities that are required for each position that may affect the ability of the company to deliver upon its core education and training services and associated support activities.

Employment vacancies may be advertised in multiple forums including local newspapers, on the Holland Safety social media accounts, and through the use of online recruitment websites such as Indeed Jobs and recruitment agencies. Applications are shortlisted by senior management prior to interviews taking place, and all interview candidates are required to provide copies of relevant qualifications. These are kept together with CVs and other relevant documentation such as completed interview sheets.

In relation to administrative staff, the following criteria are applied:

- Qualifications – staff members have a relevant qualification.
And/Or:
- Experience – staff members have a minimum of 2 years work experience in a relevant field.
- References – a minimum of two references may be provided. Referees will be contacted by senior management prior to appointment.

The selection criteria for Programme Tutors include:

- Qualifications – Tutor must have minimum QQI Level 6 Special Purpose Award in Training & Development/Train the Tutor or equivalent pedagogical qualification, e.g. First Aid Response Instructor, Instructing Manual Handling qualification. This must supplement a qualification in the tutor's specific area of expertise, minimum one level above the level of delivery. Best practice would require a minimum Level 8 degree in the area.
- Experience – Tutors must have minimum 2 years training experience prior to delivering accredited programmes for Holland Safety. This can be offered to new tutors in the form of non-accredited programmes. Tutors delivering blended learning programmes must have demonstrated excellent IT skills and have undergone the Holland Safety blended learning induction.
- Reference checks – At least two referees must be contacted. References will be based on training delivery experience. In the event of new tutors with no previous experience, an academic and/or character reference will be required.

A large tutor panel exists for each area of expertise within Holland Safety's scope which allows us to cater for situations where a tutor originally due to deliver training is no longer available. Emergency out of hours contact information is provided to tutors on induction should these situations arise. The following contingency measures are in place should the need arise:

- Tutor contacts Holland Safety staff member to advise of inability to deliver training as scheduled.
- Staff member contacts Training Coordinator to advise of the situation and to activate contingency arrangements.

- The Training Coordinator contacts all inducted and qualified tutors to check availability of any person who may be in a position to provide cover.
- The Training Coordinator facilitates the new tutor with a programme briefing via Zoom Meetings / Cisco WebEx / Microsoft Teams.
- New tutor is met by a member of Holland Safety staff at training venue prior to deliver any relevant paperwork.

As part of the recruitment process, senior management review employee qualifications prior to hire, when an employee changes positions, or the requirements for a position change. Qualifications include desired requirements for education, skills, and experience. Appropriate qualifications, along with the provision of any required training, provide the competence required for each position. This process ensures that recruitment ends with the appointment of suitably qualified staff to the role of tutor, and to all other roles responsible for related services. The Top Management maintains records of employee qualifications in the organisation's *Training Matrix*. If any differences between the employee's qualifications and the requirements for the job are found, training or other action is taken to provide the employee with the necessary competence. The results of training are evaluated for effectiveness.

In relation specifically to the recruitment, selection and appoint of Tutors, Holland Safety ensures that the following requirements are met:

- The Tutor is provided with a clear understanding of their role, responsibilities, and the company's Code of Conduct for Tutors.
- That they maintain appropriate academic, professional and technical standards through ongoing continuous professional development (CPD) and engagement with professional bodies e.g. IITD, IOSH, NISO, CIWEM, Engineers Ireland, etc.
- That relevant appropriate and pedagogical standards are in place using approved methodologies e.g. Gagne's Five Steps of Instruction.
- Benchmarking of programme delivery with available QQI benchmarking data and the experience of similar providers within the commercial environment.
- Appropriate training and certification of teaching staff at an appropriate level to the respective qualifications delivered i.e., in general one level above the level of the relevant course on the NFQ.
- Ongoing monitoring and management of Tutor performance using appropriate methods including the obtaining of suitable learner feedback and peer review.

10.2 Staff Communication

10.2.1 Induction

Prior to commencement of employment, it is mandatory for the academic and administrative staff to complete an induction process. The staff member must attend an induction workshop which includes a presentation outlining role and responsibilities, policies and procedures, and code of conduct. This is further detailed in a handbook which is part of the induction pack presented to staff members on the day.

Induction for administrative staff is completed on the first day of employment by the Managing Director or whoever is delegated to this role. Academic staff inductions are scheduled as required, and this is facilitated by the Training Coordinator. An induction record is completed and maintained to safeguard compliance with all aspects of this procedure and a declaration confirming understanding and agreement must be signed following this induction.

During the induction workshop, incoming academic staff will be asked to review the official programme documents together with all associated material such as learner handouts and assessment briefs. To ensure that the tutor has a clear understanding of the assessment standards required, they may be asked to assess an assessment element (project or case study) using specific grading criteria. The grade and associated marking scheme are reviewed by the Programme Leader and feedback is provided. Further assessment material may be cross moderated until such time that the required grading standard is met by the tutor.

If the tutor is employed to deliver training via blended learning, tutors receive an induction from eLearning Project Manager in addition to the induction delivered by the Training Coordinator. This covers the processes and procedures relevant to this mode of delivery. The Managing Director will have the responsibility of verifying the authenticity of a potential tutor's qualifications and references.

10.2.2 Ongoing Communication

Holland Safety communicates information internally regarding all its activities, through documented training, internal audit reports/self-monitoring, and continual improvement processes. All managers and supervisors are responsible for establishing regular formal and informal communications as needed to convey to their staff the relevance and importance of their activities. Typically, this information is conveyed through team meetings.

Communications regarding how staff contribute to the achievement of objectives are also conveyed and reinforced during staff performance reviews. Issues pertaining to our quality assurance system that may be communicated internally include:

1. Day-to-day operations and general awareness.
2. Relevant policies, processes, and procedures.
3. Information on achieving objectives and targets.
4. Risk and opportunities.

Senior Management and their direct reports are responsible for communicating the corporate policies as well as the importance of meeting customer, statutory and regulatory requirements to staff within their respective departments. On an ongoing basis there are informal staff meetings at operational level to ensure service delivery is maintained, in addition to informal meetings there is a weekly

Operations and Sales meeting which all management personnel attend reviewing current workload, future workload and resources as well planning and sales forecasting.

10.3 Staff Development

10.3.1 Continuous Professional Development

A Continuous Professional Development (CPD) programme is maintained for Tutors involved in the delivery of education and training programmes. The programme includes 40 hours of CPD activities which are agreed with each Tutor and may include attendance at relevant education and training events, participating in induction and staff meetings regarding programmes, attendance at external training events or undertaking of relevant courses of further education, researching and practicing with new techniques such as blended learning, eLearning, etc.

From time to time, Holland Safety may also organise relevant CPD workshops, training and attendance at professional networking events. Where required, specific training is provided to support programme or organisational development including in the areas of quality assurance, pedagogical practice, operations and management. All our Tutors are provided with the opportunity to attend any training programme provided by Holland Safety. In recognising the scope of their own competence, tutors are expected to keep up-to-date with research and changes in their field of learning, including legislative changes and significant changes in pedagogical practice. Details of attendance of such training and other relevant information is added to the tutor's CPD log.

Holland Safety will organise a virtual tutor development day at least once per year to support development of tutors and to maintain open communication. All tutors involved in delivery of the programme are expected to attend and may make suggestions on items to be included as part of the agenda. The event may include workshops, presentations and focused discussion between staff, programme leaders, and tutors. This provides an opportunity for tutors to provide feedback and suggestions for improvements. The day is scheduled in advance with notice to ensure maximum availability and the participation of as many tutors as practicable.

10.3.2 Performance Management

The purpose of procedures in this area is to ensure that staff receive constructive feedback on their performance in order to allow them to identify key strengths and areas for improvement and agree action plans where necessary.

A number of feedback mechanisms are used in the monitoring of effectiveness of tutors:

- Learner end of course evaluation forms.
- Tutor end of course evaluation form.
- Attendance/retention rates.
- Internal verification reports.
- External authenticator reports.
- Company feedback (for programmes delivered in-house).
- Performance review.
- Peer review.

In addition to the formal methods of performance monitoring outlined above, Holland Safety tutors are asked to review learner course assessments during the programme and at the end of each programme. This affords the tutor the opportunity to reflect on and review the effectiveness of his/her work and seek improvement, as well as providing ongoing review of the programme content. The Training Coordinator will identify any adverse course performance and any issues are logged as a non-conformance.

10.3.3 Support for Staff and Tutors

Where it is identified that a tutor has experienced shortcomings in their performance or the tutor self-reports performance-related issues, the Managing Director will discuss these issues and a plan of action may be put in place to provide support including forms of mentoring such as shadowing of experienced tutors or further training and development. Signposting to external support services may also be discussed such as counselling, addiction services or similar specialist external services.

Where consistent application of informal and formal interventions fail to impact on shortcomings in performance and where consistent levels of working towards improvement are not sustained to the level expected, as a last resort the tutor may be subject to dismissal by Holland Safety either through termination of their contract for services, or for employees, the disciplinary process contained with the Holland Safety Employee Handbook.

11. TEACHING & LEARNING

11.1 Teaching and Learning

Holland Safety is fully committed to monitoring the learning experience on an ongoing basis with a view to improving the quality of its teaching and learning across its training and education programmes. In addition, a process of objective review and continuous improvement seeks out opportunities to improve the quality of delivery across Holland Safety's full range of training and education programmes.

The strategy for teaching and learning at Holland Safety is intended to achieve learner-centred learning that empowers individual learners and ensures continuously evolving innovative approaches to teaching and learning, support and guidance structures and programmes. The overall approach to teaching and learning will integrate core principles of adult education:

- Acknowledge the prior experience of the learner and integrate this experience into the learning process.
- Reflection as an integrated and active process.
- Learners take ownership and responsibility for their own learning.
- Formative assessment and feedback where learners will be given the opportunity to discuss their own performance and plan improvements for future efforts.
- Constructive pedagogy where knowledge is created together, and all theories/models are subject to critique of real-life application.

The foundations for the Teaching and Learning Strategy are:

- Learning outcomes.
- Establishing a learner-centred culture.
- Ensuring fairness and consistency.
- Promoting the continuous improvement of the learning process.

Learning outcomes are sets of competences, expressing what the learner will know, understand or be able to do after completion of a process of learning, long or short (*European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System (Key Features)*", European Commission, 2004).

The minimum intended programme learning outcomes (MIPLOs) and minimum intended module learning outcomes (MIMLOs), while important and intrinsic to the programme, do not define it. All programmes offered by Holland Safety will have an associated set of MIPLOs and MIMLOs. Learning outcomes at programme and module level will be used as the basis on which decisions regarding teaching, learning and assessment approaches will be used. During the monitoring and review stage, MIPLOs and MIMLOs are reviewed by the Quality Committee, Programme Leader, and relevant interested parties.



Figure 5 - Gagne's Nine Steps of Instruction (R. Gagne, 1985)

The most appropriate delivery methods and supports are selected and customised based on the specific requirements of a particular programme:

- **Face-to-Face Learning:** keeping with the ethos of adult learning and the integration of work based assessment, much of our programme content has, and where possible continues to be, facilitated through appropriate traditional delivery mechanisms such as classroom based group discussion and workshops.
- **Virtual Learning Environment (VLE):** the development of a virtual learning environment is a key strategic priority for Holland Safety. This platform will greatly assist in our ability to support effective learning for a much wider range of learners including those cohorts who

struggle to balance work obligations with face-to-face training. The VLE will allow learners to learn at their own pace while still having the support of our expert tutors.

- **Training Materials & Programme Resources:** Holland Safety provides all learners with both hard and soft copies of programme specific notes, which are supported by self-directed assessment. Programme material is updated as necessary to ensure it is up to date, whilst ensuring that programme and module specific learning outcomes are delivered and appropriately assessed. Case samples, self-directed group work learning strategies and quizzes are reviewed on a programme basis, and where necessary are updated to reflect the profile of the specific learner group.



Figure 6 - Relationship of Holland Safety's Teaching & Learning Strategy & Pedagogic Approach

11.2 Ethos that Promotes Learning

Holland Safety maintains an open community within our organisation that places a high value on collaboration and critical reflection to foster personal and professional development among both learners and staff. Our staff bring their knowledge, experience, and qualifications to add value to our organisations collaborative culture which is ideally placed to harness advances in multi-disciplinary practice and evolutions in pedagogy.

As part of our approach to teaching and learning, we recognise the importance of maximizing the availability of different modes of delivery to support the diversity of our learners and their needs for flexibility. We openly engage with our learners and maintain a position for a learner representative on our Quality Committee to ensure that the voice of the learner is at the heart of what we do, and that learner feedback is addressed in a timely and effective manner. This approach aids in monitoring our learner experience on an ongoing basis in a formal manner, supporting the day-to-day feedback obtained from sources such as feedback and evaluation forms.

We aim to provide a learning ethos which supports mutual respect between tutors and learners. We are proactive in addressing feedback and have robust complaints and appeals processes in place to vindicate the rights of learners who feel that this relationship of mutual respect has broken down or where the manner of conduct in the assessment process fell below their expectations and the requirements for fair and objective assessment.

11.3 National & International Effective Practice

Holland Safety engages with the wider national education and training landscape to support the development of effective best practice. We do this through engagement with national and international bodies including the Irish Institute of Training & Development (IITD), the national training agency SOLAS, the National Irish Safety Organisation (NISO), the Institute of Occupational Safety & Health (IOSH), the Chartered Institute of Water & Environmental Management (CIWEM), and the European Agency for Occupational Safety & Health (EU-OSHA).

Additional sources of “organisational knowledge” to support effective best practice include ISO standards, research papers, webinars from conferences, or knowledge gathered from, or about our customers, stakeholders, or other external parties. We also obtain specialist external organisational knowledge from independent Further Education and Training professionals and subject matter experts, including previous learners who provide a unique insight into the experience of our learners in terms of our overall learning environment.

11.4 Learning Environments

11.4.1 Virtual Learning Environments / Blended Learning

As part of our strategic development, Holland Safety is prioritizing the development of the virtual learning environment which has been accelerated due to the restrictions placed on the delivery of physical training by the Government response to the Coronavirus (COVID-19) public health emergency.

- **Webinar-based Training:** this delivery methodology implements a tutor-led format using common webinar software platforms including Microsoft Teams, Cisco WebEx, Zoom Meetings, Go To Training, and similar platforms. Learners attend on a live basis, participating in interactive discussions with co-learners and tutors including ‘break-out’ sessions in individual virtual meeting rooms.
- **eLearning Platform:** the prototype e-learning platform involves the use of emerging technology to provide learner-focused content which is primarily self-paced. The software utilised includes Adobe Storyline, Articulate, Moodle, and similar authoring and Learning Management System tools.

11.4.2 Physical Learning Environments

The company provides and maintains a comprehensive, state-of-the-art physical learning environment to support its education and training services. The infrastructure comprising this learning environment includes buildings and office space, work equipment including ICT equipment and telecommunications, transport where necessary for the effective delivery of services, and any associated items such as Personal Protective Equipment (PPE).

The Commercial Manager has overall responsibility for overseeing the operation and maintenance of our facilities which impact upon our ability to provide a high-quality, safe, and efficient learning environment. The range of facilities which are maintained on an ongoing basis include our:

1. Offices.
2. Training Facility.
3. Canteens.
4. Workshop.
5. Extensive outdoor and indoor practical training areas.
6. ICT infrastructure including the Virtual Learning Environment.
7. Extensive free car parking for staff and learners.



Figure 7 - Illustration of Holland Safety Physical Learning Environment

12. ASSESSMENT OF LEARNERS

12.1 Introduction

Holland Safety is committed to ensuring the quality and integrity of all assessment, so that arrangements are valid, reliable, and secure. Holland Safety also recognises the diversity of potential learners so reasonable accommodation provisions are made available to support learners. Assessment forms part of the overall learning experience with Holland Safety. Therefore, it is important to provide learners with appropriate feedback on their progress in a spirit of dignity, courtesy, and professional respect.

12.2 Assessment of Learner Achievement

Holland Safety's policies and procedures in relation to the assessment of learners are informed by the following core documents:

- QQI document *Assuring Assessment, Guidelines for Providers* (2013).
- QQI's *Core Statutory Quality Assurance Guidelines* (2016).
- QQI's *Sector Specific Quality Assurance Guidelines - Independent/Private* (2016).
- QQI's *Topic Specific Guidance for Providers of Blended Learning Programmes* (2018)

Drawing upon these core documents, the principles applied to assessment are:

- I. Learners are responsible for demonstrating their learning achievement.
- II. Assessment supports and standards are based on learning outcomes.
- III. Assessment promotes and supports effective teaching and learning.
- IV. Assessment procedures are credible, secure, and carried out with integrity.
- V. Assessment methods are reviewed and renewed, as necessary, to adapt to evolving requirements.
- VI. Learners are well informed about how and why they are assessed.
- VII. Assessment is carried out at appropriate points during the programme, and it is ensured that feedback is provided in a timely manner.
- VIII. A Learner Representative appointed to the Quality Committee ensures that the voice of the learner is heard in the periodic reviews of assessment practices.

In assessing students for certification, it is our policy to comply with the criteria and procedures set down by the awarding and funding bodies. Quality assured assessment ensures student achievement is assessed in a fair and consistent manner in line with the national standards for the award. Holland Safety will ensure all assessments for certification are fair and consistent and carried out professionally at all times.

Assessment is quality assured through the following processes:

- Assessment Activities
- Authentication Process
 - Peer Review
 - Internal Verification of the Process and Results
 - External Authentication
 - Results Approval Process

- Appeals Process

The Assessment Process

Holland Safety's assessment process involves the following elements:

1. Provide the learner with all information related to the assessment including information on learner supports and learner appeals.
2. Plan and schedule the assessment in advance.
3. Allow for time to carry out the assessment within the duration of the programme.
4. Allow for External Authenticator costs or other resources that may be required for the assessment.
5. Ensure the Learner is ready to be assessed.
6. Clearly define what is being assessed.
7. Ensure assessment arrangements are appropriate to the standard.
8. Carry out a fair and consistent assessment to provide equity of opportunity.
9. Be consistent in approach and grading.
10. Ensure the assessment is valid and reliable e.g., is the assessment technique appropriate to the purpose: a practical assessment should be used to assess practical skills and will the assessment produce similar results under similar conditions, etc.
11. Select the appropriate technique to measure learner attainment in accordance with the QQI Component Specification.
12. Comply with all policies, procedures and guidelines related to assessment.
13. Provide timely feedback to learners both written and oral.

Authentication of Assessment

The purpose of the authentication process is to ensure fair, consistent, and valid assessment of students. Assessment must be completed in line with funding and awarding body requirements and the following parties are involved:

- Programme Leaders support the process of quality assuring assessment.
- Internal Verifiers systematically check that the assessment procedures have been applied across all assessment activities.
- External Authenticators with subject matter expertise are appointed to independently confirm fair and consistent assessment of students in line with the national standards.
- The Results Approval Panel meets as required to approve assessment results. The panel considers the internal and external reports and agrees the final results. A terms of reference is set for the Results Approval Panel in Appendix 3.

All reports are available on SharePoint and good practices identified are shared. Where an appeal is raised a review of the assessment process will take place. The appeals procedure involves a review of the assessment process by a person who was not involved in the original assessment process.

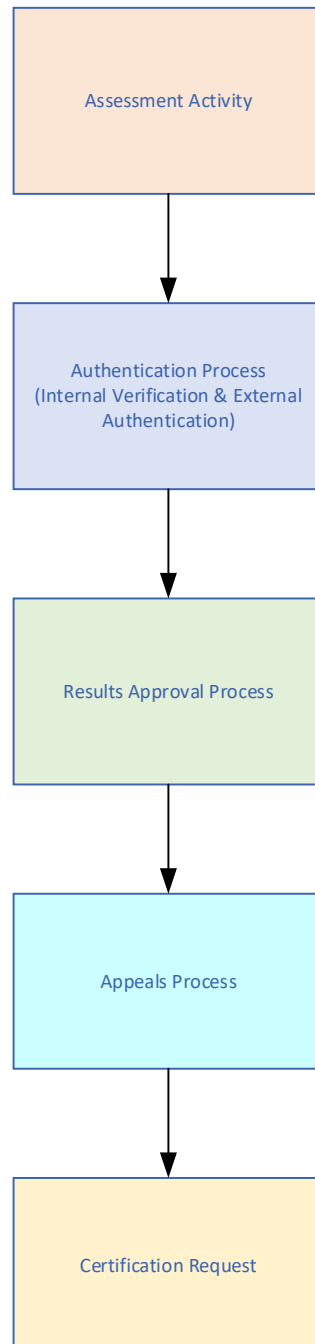


Figure 8 - Holland Safety Learner Assessment Process

12.3 Certification of Assessment

Assessment of awards is criterion referenced i.e., students are assessed, and the assessment decision is made based on whether the student has reached the required national standards of knowledge, skill, and competence for the award. The process of judging learning achievement and making the assessment decision is the responsibility of the assessor. Assessment of students may take place in a range of settings including the classroom, the home or on the job.



Holland Safety – Learner Certification Process

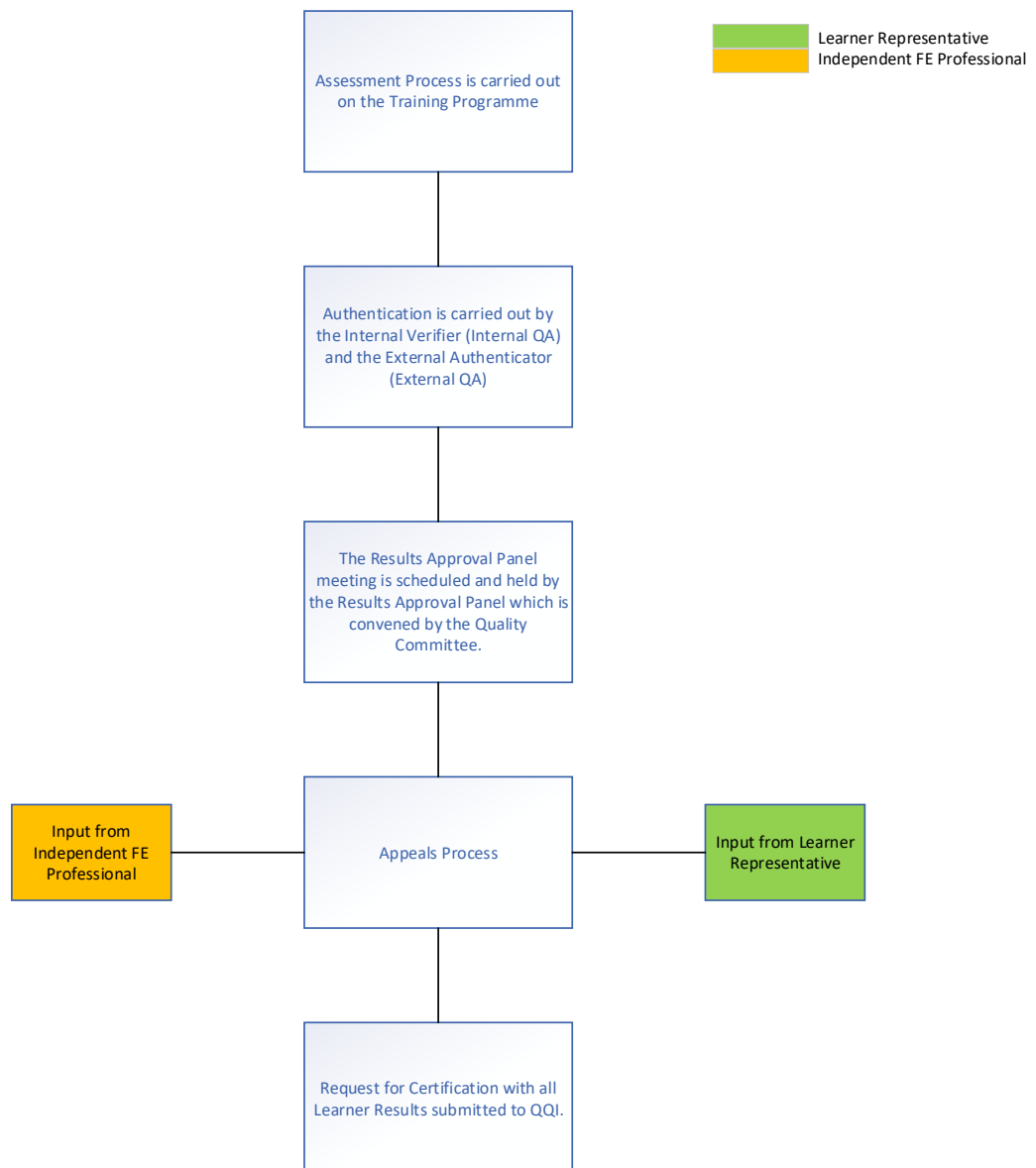


Figure 9 - Holland Safety Learner Certification Process

12.4 Integrity and Security of Assessment

Holland Safety recognises the importance of maintaining the integrity and security of our assessment practices. The integrity and security of Holland Safety's assessment arrangements will influence the credibility of the process and the confidence of learners in training with Holland Safety. Holland Safety recognises that online and blended learning assessment may present different challenges in terms of integrity, anti-plagiarism, authenticity, reliability, and security.

Tutors are responsible for the secure storage of all assessment related materials while in their possession and must report any breaches to the Training Coordinator as a matter of urgency. Procedures are in place for dealing with incidents of cheating/suspected malpractice and this is highlighted at Learner induction and in the Learner Handbook.

Assessment malpractice includes any act that may undermine the integrity or validity of the assessment. In cases where tutors suspect assessment malpractice, the matter should be reported to the Training Coordinator. If there is insufficient evidence, then no further action will be taken. Otherwise, the Training Coordinator and tutor, with appropriate witnesses, will conduct a preliminary investigation, which will include an interview with the learner(s) concerned. If there is insufficient evidence of an offence, then no further action will be taken.

If sufficient evidence that an offence has been committed exists, the Training Coordinator will decide on a course of action, which may include any of the following:

- Reduction in the mark (including a mark of 0) for the work affected.
- Resubmission of the work subject to a reduced maximum mark awardable of grade Pass.
- Referral of the matter to the Quality Committee who will review the case and recommend an appropriate action.

Examples of assessment malpractice include the following:

- Plagiarism.
- Impersonation of another learner.
- Fabrication of evidence.
- Wrongly obtaining secure assessment materials, e.g. examination paper.
- Behaving in such a way that would undermine the assessment process, e.g. mobile phone use during an exam, communication with others during an exam, bringing prohibited materials into the exam centre.

Detailed security arrangements are in place for the conduct of examinations and all examination papers issued are previously 'unseen'. There is a strict protocol around issue/receipt of examination papers/scripts etc.; seating plans, attendance records, examination regulations, verification by Verifier/Tutors as appropriate.

12.5 Reasonable Accommodation in Assessment Practice

Holland Safety is fully committed to complying with relevant policies and legislation with respect to equality and disability. Registered and potential learners with verified disabilities or specific learning difficulties may be given compassionate consideration and reasonable accommodation to enable them to successfully complete their programme.

A reasonable accommodation is any action that helps to alleviate a substantial disadvantage due to an impairment or medical condition. Such accommodations are put in place to help reduce these barriers in order to provide equality of access and opportunity for all. Compassionate consideration may be approved in circumstances where a learner experiences an extenuating situation which duly impacts upon the capacity to participate in class and/or, complete assessment evidence by the scheduled submission date. The process applied in relation to reasonable accommodation is as follows:

1. The Learner informs Holland Safety of any reasonable accommodation(s) or special requirement(s) with as much advance notice as possible e.g., at enrolment.
2. The Learner informs the Tutor or any member of Holland Safety staff of their need for reasonable accommodation in relation to their assessment.
3. The Learner is directed to complete a reasonable accommodation form and return this to Holland Safety along with relevant evidence from their doctor or consultant to confirm their needs in relation to reasonable accommodation.

The form is available via the Holland Safety Learner Handbook provided to all QQI Learners at the commencement of their programme of education and training. Following submission of the form and supporting evidence, the Learner will be notified of the outcome. The following evidence is required to support an application for reasonable accommodation in the applicable case:

Type of Disability	Type of Documentation	Appropriate Professional
Attention Deficit Disorder (ADD)/Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD)	Evidence of Disability Form OR Existing report	Consultant Psychiatrist OR Psychologist OR Neurologist
Autistic Spectrum Disorder (including Asperger's Syndrome)	Evidence of Disability Form OR Existing report	Consultant Psychiatrist OR Psychologist OR Neurologist
Blind/Vision Impaired	Evidence of Disability Form OR Existing report N.B. Evidence from high street retailers not acceptable	Ophthalmologist OR Ophthalmic Surgeon OR Letter from the National Council for the Blind confirming registration with the council OR If a learner has attended a school for the Blind, a letter on headed notepaper signed by the principal which confirms attendance at the school

Deaf/Hard of Hearing	Evidence of Disability Form OR Existing report N.B. Evidence from high street retailers not acceptable	An audiogram from a professionally qualified Audiologist and/or ENT Consultant, with signature, clearly indicating moderate to profound bilateral hearing loss (i.e. above 40dB). OR If a learner has attended a school for the Deaf, a letter on headed notepaper signed by the principal which confirms attendance at the school
Developmental Coordination Disorder (DCD) - Dyspraxia/ Dysgraphia.	Full psychoeducational assessment AND Evidence of Disability Form OR Existing report	Psychologist AND Occupational Therapist OR Neurologist OR Chartered Physiotherapist
Mental Health Condition	Evidence of Disability Form completed no more than 5 years before point of Needs Assessment OR	Consultant Psychiatrist OR Specialist Registrar

12.5.1 Options for Reasonable Accommodation

Alternative Venues – Learners receiving reasonable accommodations normally sit their examinations in a different venue to their peer group and can, if necessary, sit an examination in a room of their own. Alternative venues should be fully accessible to learners with disabilities. The physical space available should be appropriate for the effective provision of the reasonable accommodation, for example:

- A large table to accommodate enlarged papers, Braille material, and/or technological aids.
- Adequate floor space for manoeuvring wheelchairs, mobility aids, crutches, canes and any other physical aid.
- Access to power points for equipment and/or assistive technology.

Time Allowance – Learners whose examination performance is significantly impacted by a disability/significant medical condition/learning difficulty may require extra time in examinations. Extra time is set at 10 minutes per hour. In exceptional circumstances this extra time may be extended.

Rest Breaks – Learners who may require a rest break in examinations include learners whose ability to complete the examination within the required time is significantly impacted by a medical, sensory, psychological or physical disability. Rest breaks should be considered as pauses in the exam and the exam time should be stopped when a learner takes a rest break. Learners will have 10 minutes per hour. Learners should tell the invigilator when they wish to have a rest break. They may take as much or as little out of their allocation as they wish at any one time. Learners can choose to stay in the room

for their rest break or may leave the room if supervised. This can include going to the bathroom, taking a drink or snack if recommended, or moving around to relieve physical discomfort. Learners may not talk about or work on the examination during their rest break. The learner's examination paper(s) should also be turned over during rest breaks.

Reader – Learners whose ability to read is significantly impacted by a disability may require a reader in examinations. Most learners will be accommodated together in the same venue with a shared reader. In exceptional cases only an individual reader may be required. If the examination is assessing competence in reading and reading comprehension the provision of a reader may not be appropriate. Both the learner and reader should have access to training and practice sessions before the examination. The reader should be an independent person and not known to the learner. In the case of a foreign language, scientific, mathematical, or technical subject, the reader should have a working knowledge of that subject/language. The reader should be able to read accurately and at a reasonable rate. The reader may also act as the invigilator for the examination. Sometimes a learner may require a reader and a scribe. In such instances the same person may act as both.

Sign Language Interpreter – A sign language interpreter translates oral-based language, text and speech, into Irish Sign Language (ISL) so a Deaf person can understand what is being communicated. The interpreter should arrive before the commencement of the examination, to make seating arrangements and to interpret interactions between invigilators and learners. This time should also be used as an opportunity for the learner and the interpreter to become familiar with each other's communication styles. The interpreter should translate all announcements and information given by the invigilator prior to and during the examination. The interpreter should translate all interaction between the examiner and the learner, including questions and clarifications.

Scribe – Scribes may only be granted for learners who cannot handwrite due to the nature of their disability/significant medical condition/learning difficulty. Additional time of ten minutes per hour and a separate venue will be provided when using a scribe. Both the learner and scribe should have access to training and practice sessions before the examination. The scribe should be an independent person and not known to the learner. The scribe may also act as the invigilator for the examination. Sometimes a learner may require a reader and a scribe. In such instances, the same person may act as both. A recording of the session is recommended as this will act as a secondary source of information for the examiner if required. Scribes should be capable of writing legibly at appropriate speed when writing a learner's dictated answers.

Flexible Examination Arrangements – Flexible examination arrangements refer to any alteration in the standard form of assessment in order to accommodate a learner's disability/significant medical condition/learning difficulty. This might include:

Provision of an oral examination instead of a written test

- Some flexibility around the scheduling of examinations, such as, allowing more time between examinations for a learner with a physical disability or medical condition who experiences fatigue.
- Examinations split into more than one session.

It should be noted that flexible examination arrangements are granted in exceptional circumstances only.

12.6 Appeals

Holland Safety recognises the following grounds of appeal:

- There was an error of calculation or judgement on the part of the Course Tutor.
- There was unfair and inconsistency during the conduct of the assessment.
- My performance in the assessment was adversely affected by illness or other factors, which I was unable or unwilling to divulge prior to completion of the assessment.
- The tutor did not give sufficient weight to any extenuating circumstances previously notified to Holland Safety or did not meet the request for reasonable accommodation.

Stage 1 – Review by the Course Tutor

If any learner wishes to proceed with Stage (1) which involves a review of all assessment evidence (provisional results only) by the relevant Course Tutor, contacting them in writing no later than 10 days after the original provisional score has been communicated to them. After this 15-day period has lapsed Stage (1) and subsequently Stage (2) of the appeals request can no longer be considered.

The written request must outline clearly the reasons for the request with reference to where any learner feels that marks have been lost or where it is felt that a submission has been marked unfairly. All applications will be reviewed by the Internal Verifier and learners will be notified of the outcome of their request in writing by Holland Safety within 4 weeks.

Stage 2: An independent review of the assessment evidence

If the learner is dissatisfied with the outcome of Stage 1, the learner may submit a formal appeal within 15 days of the assessment decision, appeals filed outside of this period will not be considered. This appeal will be examined by the Appeals Committee, convened by the Quality Committee, involving three persons who have not been involved in the prior assessment decision nor have any commercial input within the organisation (the Independent FE Professional, and one other member).

The process involves a review of all learner evidence, marking documentation and additional feedback emerging from Stage 1 of the appeals process by the Independent FE Professional sitting on the Quality Committee who may draw upon independent subject matter expertise as required. The Independent FE Professional will compile their findings in writing and the outcome will be communicated in writing to the learner within four weeks.

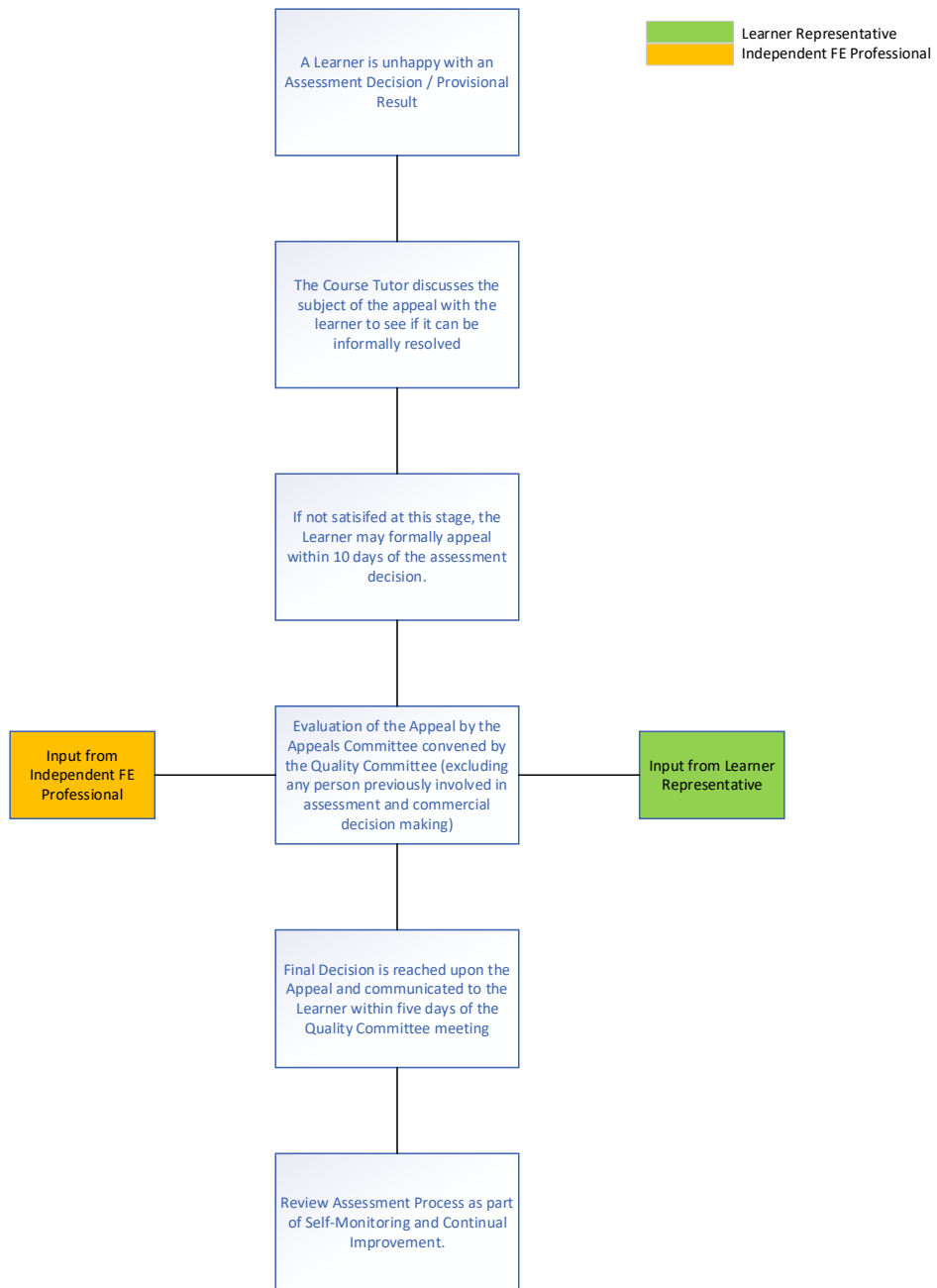


Figure 10 - Holland Safety Appeals Process

12.7 Consistency of Assessment

Specific programme assessment strategies are documented for all QQI programmes offered by Holland Safety. The assessment strategy for each programme should:

- Illustrate a link between summative and formative assessment methods to the minimum intended learning outcomes as validated by QQI.
- Establish a rationale for each choice of assessment task, supported by the validation criteria and the Component Specification published by QQI.
- Set out any specific assessment rules or regulations associated with a specific programme e.g., if the learner is required to achieve a minimum grade in each assessment to be eligible to receive the overall award.
- Maintain an appropriate balance and ensure that the learner effort required in each assessment methodology is proportionate to the relevant credit value / assessment weighting.
- Be consistent with Holland Safety's overall teaching and learning approach, our teaching and learning ethos, and the embedded quality culture.

In cooperation with the Programme Development team, the relevant Programme Leader reviews and supports the establishment of a generic marking criteria for their programme(s) in the form of a set marking scheme for each assessment element which accurately reflects the validation received from QQI and the Component Specification requirements.

The setting of such marking criteria ensures the maintenance of accuracy and consistency of standards across all tutors involved in summative and formative assessment on their respective programmes. Once marked, the assessment material is subject to internal verification by the Internal Verifier and any discrepancies in marking is queried with the Tutor, and the reasons for any inconsistency found in order for corrective action. Only after assessment material has been judiciously moderated and marks have been recommended by the External Authenticator will they be submitted to the Results Approval Panel of the Quality Committee for approval.

12.8 Benchmarking

Holland Safety has recognised the importance of a process of benchmarking to compare current standards and processes with the operation of similar organisations to initiate defining and development of new standards or objectives. These standards and objectives are intended to enhance performance and development of our education and training practice.

Benchmarking also involves reviewing information obtained from Quality and Qualifications Ireland in regard to quality assurance statistics, current trends in education and training provision, new and upcoming award developments, national assessment, grading and completion statistics. The resulting outputs from benchmarking are further used to inform quality assurance practices within Holland Safety.

13. SUPPORT FOR LEARNERS

13.1 Supports for Learners

Holland Safety aims to provide a comprehensive range of learner supports, with information being made available to learners within the Learner Handbook and upon the company's website, and in contact with our Account Managers at point of initial access. Supports available to learners include:

- Administrative support throughout engagement with Holland Safety.
- One-to-one mentoring support from programme tutors.
- Provide signposting to pastoral care & counselling e.g., HSE Turn2Me, etc.
- Study skills, 'learning to learn' plus a range of academic supports.
- IT support for blended and eLearning courses.
- Peer-to-peer support (e.g., online Moodle forum).
- Signposting to SDCC Libraries for book loans, online resources, and study aids.

All learners are provided with support in conducting their assessments, including information within the Learner Handbook on useful resources to assist the development of study and learning skills, including information on Harvard Referencing and methods of note-taking and study e.g, links to the Further Education Support Service (FESS), etc. We also network and signpost with relevant public services including the Department of Employment Affairs and Social Protection (DEASP), the Citizen's Information Service, and similar organisations.

Learners are provided with Course Evaluation Forms to monitor their engagement with the existing learner supports and the inclusion of a Learner Representative on our Quality Committee adds value to our assessment and development of future learner supports in line with our scope of education and training provision. We benchmark our level of learner supports against industry best practice and our knowledge of similar providers of similar size who provide similar awards.

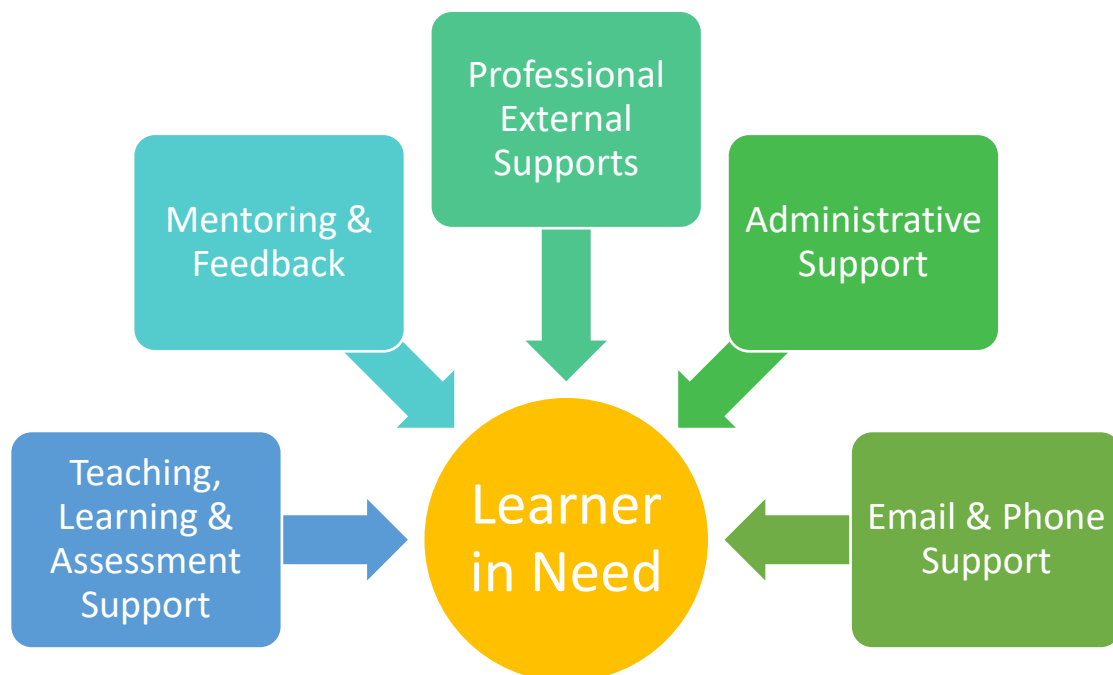


Figure 11 - Representation of Learner Supports at Holland Safety

13.2 Pastoral Care

Holland Safety recognises that in our ever more increasingly diverse and complex world, the need for learner-centred pastoral care is greater than ever. At Holland Safety, the goals of pastoral care include:

- To create a safe, secure, and well-structured learning environment where all members will feel valued and respected.
- To provide help, support, advice, and encouragement to all members of the learner community.
- To create an atmosphere of mutual respect where learners will learn to be understanding and sensitive to the needs of others.
- To enable learners to develop and learn and know that they can offer unique and valuable contributions to our community.
- To prioritise the nurturing of warm and positive relationships between learners, staff, and the wider community.
- To build self-esteem and self-confidence within each learner and provide opportunities for each learner to succeed.

Our professional tutors are supported by the Training Coordinator in their provision of pastoral care. The Training Coordinator organises regular CPD for tutors and staff alike, outside of academic requirements, e.g., mental health awareness and equality, diversity and inclusion awareness which are applicable to an education and training context.

General career guidance and development information is available to our learners through the signposting of relevant services:

- AONTAS - National Adult Learning Organisation: www.aontas.com
- City of Dublin ETB: www.cityofdublin.etb.ie
- Qualifax National Learning Database: www.qualifax.ie
- Careers Portal: www.careersportal.ie
- SOLAS: www.solas.ie
- Irish Institute of Training & Development: www.iitd.ie
- Institute of Occupational Safety & Health: www.iosh.com



Figure 12 - Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs (Abraham Maslow, 1943)

14. INFORMATION & DATA MANAGEMENT

14.1 Information System

Holland Safety's policy on Information and Data Management is to ensure the appropriate use and security in order to comply with best practice, comply with statutory obligations, and enhance organisational performance. The Managing Director has the primary responsibility for the management of Information and Data within the business, in accordance with the following policy principles:

- Ensuring that information is maintained secure and is only available to those who require such information to carry out their work.
- Assessing the measures in place to safeguard personal data and special category personal data, ensuring there is a firm legal basis for processing in line with the Data Protection Acts 1988 – 2018, the GDPR 2016/679, and the requirements of QQI and other interested parties.
- Ensuring that external service providers including consultants and IT Services provider maintain the integrity, security, and business continuity arrangements for information systems.
- Facilitating the retention and communication of information which is considered “organisational knowledge” to support the operation and development of all business processes.

In regard to our provision of education and training, appropriate benchmarks are identified regarding issues such as minimum and maximum learner numbers, learner profile, learner feedback and satisfaction, completion rates, and grades achieved, and further progress of learners through our range of QQI programmes.

14.2 Learner / Management Information Systems

Holland Safety operates a range of information management systems in support of its education and training operations which are used to support decision-making and facilitate effective management of learner cohorts. Information includes attendance, completion rates, grades obtained, etc. and our systems enable us to make this information available in a transparent manner to external quality reviewers.

The largest data and information management systems used by Holland Safety include:

- **Microsoft Office365** – provides email, database and spreadsheet processing, word processing, PowerPoint Presentations, and similar services.
- **Microsoft SharePoint** – facilitates the usage of a cloud-based Training Calendar which maximises the workflow of information regarding upcoming training events through the organisation.
- **OnePage CRM** – the primary company Customer Relationship Management (CRM) software used to support the learner lifecycle, identify, and follow up sales aspects, and to support the early identification of learner needs such as for reasonable accommodation, specific training outcomes, etc.
- **Moodle** – as part of the development of our e-learning delivery services, Holland Safety maintains a Learner Management System utilising the open source Moodle platform for hosting content, enrolment of learners, etc.

- **Zoom / WebEx / Microsoft Teams:** to support the rapid development of online webinar-based and blended training within the emergent public health emergency regarding COVID-19.

The use of these systems allows Holland Safety to collect and process accurate data in a timely manner, while making it available to both learners and staff as appropriate. This data helps inform further planning and the future development of our education and training services and provide the best possible quality of experience to our valued learners.

14.3 Records Maintenance & Retention

Records may exist in either hard copy or electronic formats. Hard copies may be stored where they are protected from physical deterioration, loss, and damage due to environmental conditions. Electronic back up data and contract documents are stored in a lockable, fire resistant cabinet or off site. The Managing Director, aided by the IT service provider, ensures that computer backups are made every four hours on an ongoing basis, that virus protection is in place, and that access to the network is via a secure portal.

Records are labelled and indexed for ease of retrieval and for proper referencing. All filing cabinets, containers, and devices are clearly marked and labelled to identify their contents. Retained records are indexed and grouped for expedient retrieval. Retained records must not be stored on personal storage drives or files.

Retention period for records:

Document	Suggested Retention Period
Management Review Minutes	2 Years
Internal and External Audit Reports	5 Years
Legal and Compliance Records and Registers	10 Years
Health & Safety Statement	10 Years
Health & Safety Risk Assessments	10 Years
Health and Safety Incident Reports	10 Years
Risk and Opportunity Assessments and Registers	10 Years
SWOT Analysis Records	5 Years
PESTLE Analysis Records	5 Years
Non-Conformance Reports	5 Years
Complaint Records	2 Years
Inspection and Test Reports	3 Years
Staff Training and Competence Records	5 Years
Learner Records	5 Years

14.4 Data Protection & Freedom of Information

14.4.1 Data Protection

As part of its education and training activities, Holland Safety processes a variety of categories of personal data in accordance with the fulfillment of its contractual obligation, legal obligations, and legitimate interests. In relation to the provision of QQI programmes, the following personal data is required to be processed:

- Full Name of Learner.
- Address of Learner.
- Telephone Number.
- Date of Birth.
- Employer Details (if applicable).
- PPS Number.
- Email Address.
- Enrolled Programmes.
- Programme Assessment Results.

The personal data is provided at varying points throughout the learner's engagement with Holland Safety such as during engagement with the Account Management team handling initial enquiries, and also when engaged with Tutors and the Internal Verifier during and after completion of their chosen programme. Information on data protection is made available in the Learner Handbook and on the Holland Safety website in accordance with the requirement for transparency embodied in legislation.

All personal data is held securely whether in electronic or physical format based on the risks posed to the data subject. In general terms, appropriate organisational and technical measures implemented by Holland Safety include segregation of learner data from all other data stored within ISO 27001 Information Security Standard (ISS) certified cloud-servers, the maintenance of company-wide anti-virus and firewall software, the provision of locked storage rooms, filing cabinets for physical records, a secure physical perimeter at our head office, and a monitored fire and security alarm system.

In accordance with the Data Protection Acts 1988 – 2018 and the General Data Protection Regulation 2016/679, Holland Safety maintain a Data Protection Policy which sets out our adherence to the seven data protection principles, the lawful basis under which data is processed, how issues relating to data breaches are responded to, and how individual data subjects may avail of their data protection rights including access, rectification, objection/restriction, and erasure.

14.4.2 Freedom of Information

Holland Safety is not a prescribed public body under the Freedom of Information Act 2014 and is not in a position to process requests under this Act. However, we recognise that the public may request information under the Act from any public bodies with which we engage and would advise any person wishing to make such an enquiry to contact the relevant public body.

15. PUBLIC INFORMATION & COMMUNICATION

15.1 Public Information

Holland Safety is committed to creating and maintaining open, accurate, two-way communication to enable all interested parties (i.e. learners, our staff, and other stakeholders including QQI) to send and receive information. All information which is communicated externally is approved prior to publication and Holland Safety commits resources to ensure the clarity, accuracy and relevance of all public information retaining a Marketing Manager and part-time Web Designer to assist in this function.

Public information from Holland Safety is communicated through its website, hollandsafety.ie, and also through flyers, email newsletters and social media i.e., LinkedIn and Facebook. The website also holds information on company policies and information regarding accredited and non-accredited programmes of education and training to allow prospective learners to make an informed decision regarding their engagement with Holland Safety and to communicate any enquiries they may have.

If successful in carrying out reengagement with QQI in accordance with Qualifications and Quality Assurance (Education and Training) Act 2012, Holland Safety is committed to publishing its quality assurance manual, reports of self-evaluation activities, and QQI reports on its website in order to ensure open and transparent communication with interested parties including prospective learners, QQI and other accreditation bodies.

15.2 Learner Information

It is Holland Safety's view that both providers and learners benefit from clear communication regarding their prospective education and training programme and we recognise the important role the provider has in ensuring that the most accurate and up-to-date information on a programme is available to learners. The minimum information which Holland Safety communicates regarding a programme is:

- The type of Award and Awarding Body (e.g., QQI, ECITB, City & Guilds, SOLAS, etc.)
- The full name of the Award and/or the relevant QQI Code.
- The relevant level on the National Framework of Qualifications (NFQ).
- Any access, transfer, or progression requirements.
- Any Protection of Enrolled Learners (PEL) arrangement (where applicable).

All information intended for communication to learners is approved based on the risk arising from inaccurate information or miscommunication. The following information approvals are in place at Holland Safety:

Category	Risk	Approval By	Review Interval
Course Information on Website	High	Operations Department & Quality Committee	Annual
Course Information on Flyers	High	Operations Department & Quality Committee	Annual
Course Module Sheets	High	Operations Department & Quality Committee	Annual
Learner Handbook	High	Operations Department & Quality Committee	Annual

Quality Assurance Information	High	Operations Department & Quality Committee	Annual
Social Media Postings	Medium	Operations Department & Marketing Manager	Annual

Holland Safety adopts a consistent ‘brand identity’ in its communications to ensure consistency and ease-of-recognition for learners and other interested parties. This identity includes our QA documentation which is made readily available to learners through our website e.g., policies, procedures, learner handbook, access, transfer & progression arrangements, useful forms which learner’s may require, etc.

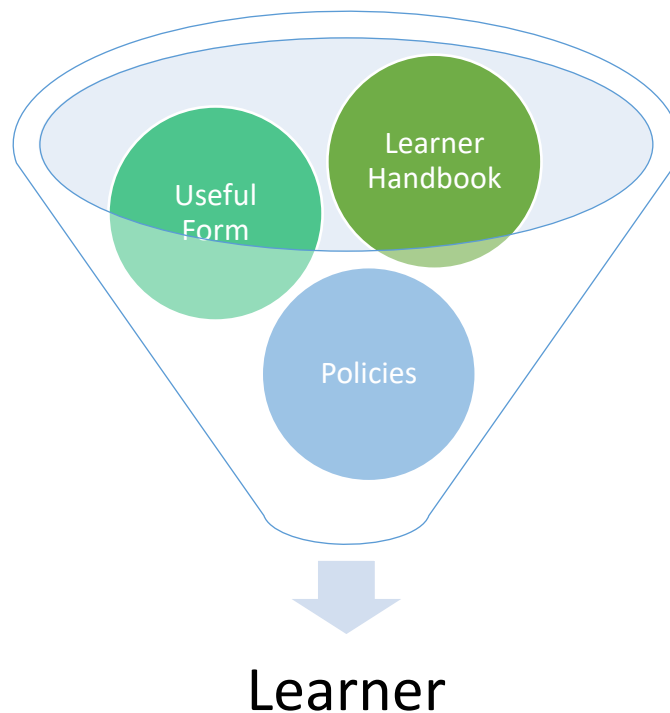


Figure 13 - Learner Information Funnel

15.3 Publishing of Quality Assurance Evaluation Reports

If successful in carrying out reengagement with QQI, Holland Safety is committed to publishing its quality assurance manual, reports of self-evaluation activities, and QQI reports on its website in order to ensure open and transparent communication with interested parties including prospective learners, QQI and other accreditation bodies.

16. OTHER PARTIES INVOLVED IN EDUCATION & TRAINING

16.1 Peer Relationships with the Broader Education & Training

Holland Safety maintains strong peer relationships which can help to support its activities in education and training. This includes keeping abreast of current issues and emerging trends in the sector communicated by industry and maintaining best practice approaches in relation to the evolution of further education and training delivery.

The maintenance of peer relationships and knowledge of best practice is ensured by:

- Benchmarking of education and training information and comparison using QQI data and information from similar providers.
- Attendance at conferences and CPD events organised by interested parties in the education and training space including IOSH, NISO, the IITD, the CIF, and similar umbrella groups.
- Participating in industry consultations such as those occasionally developed by QQI, IOSH, etc. and statutory consultations regarding education and training issues such as those commenced by the Health & Safety Authority.
- Maintaining knowledge of education and training practices by continual CPD and attendance at formal learning organised by bodies such as the Education and Training Boards and Institutes of Technologies.

16.2 Conflicts of Interest

The Training Coordinator is responsible to both the Quality Committee and Operations Department in identifying and managing any potential conflicts of interest. Therefore, any proposed employee or contractor is required to:

- Understand that an activity may be prohibited where necessary in order to protect quality assurance or commercial interests.
- Disclose any potential conflicts of interest prior to their engagement, particularly in the case of Tutors, External Authenticators, and Learner Representatives and Independent FE professionals.
- Assist the Training Coordinator in managing the conflict wherever possible to mitigate the risk to the quality or commercial interests of the organisation.

A panel of External Authenticators is available to ensure that, in the event of a conflict of interest, there are alternative, suitably qualified External Authenticators available to ensure independence in the face of any such conflict of interest.

16.3 External Partnerships and Second Provider

Holland Safety does not engage with any second providers in the delivery of any of its QQI accredited programmes. In the case of any prospective external partnerships and second providers, the Quality Committee will be required to evaluate the relationship, develop robust procedures for maintaining the highest standards of quality assurance and formal approval would be required by both the Quality Committee and the Operations Department.

16.4 Expert Panellists, Examiners & Authenticators

When engaging external subject matter experts, the Training Coordinator (in coordination with Programme Leaders) ensure that all subject matter experts are suitably qualified and orientated into the quality assurance system. Holland Safety will select External Authenticators from the QQI panel, and External Authenticators are required to moderate results for awards in fields in which the Authenticator has broad subject matter expertise. Our external authenticators:

- Have appropriate subject matter expertise within the broad area of learning.
- Have experience in programme assessment and best practices.
- Maintain appropriate competency in terms of training and experience.
- Have appropriate organizational and ICT skills using a range of infrastructure.
- Comply with QQI's Guidelines on External Authentication and Quality Assurance.
- Are independent of the provider and assessment decisions.

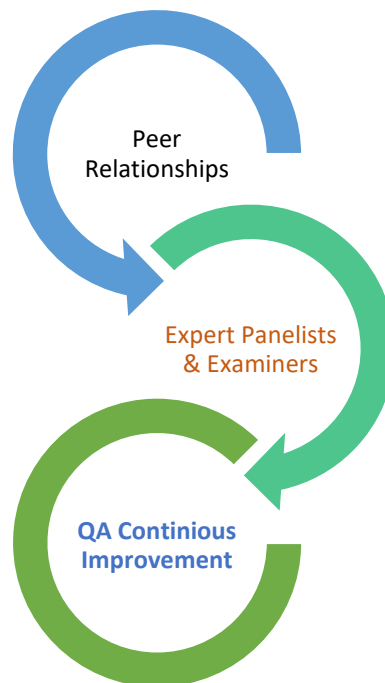


Figure 14 - Contribution of External Relationships to Culture of Continuous Improvement

17. SELF-EVALUATION, MONITORING & REVIEW

17.1 Provider Internal Review, Self-Evaluation & Monitoring

Holland Safety is committed to improving its educational and training programmes, together with its associated services, through the regular evaluation of its core activities. This ensures that the Quality Assurance system and its related processes undergo formal review, with areas for improvement being identified and acted upon by the Operations Department and Quality Committee.

Holland Safety recognises and complies with the external quality assurance obligations imposed by through the Quality and Qualifications Assurance (Education and Training) Act 2012 and our engagement with QQI. Our quality assurance system aims to facilitate the internal review for improvement and enhancement, while also facilitating statutory external reviews.

17.2 Internal Self-Monitoring

Internal Self-Monitoring is a fundamental part of our quality assurance system. Internal Self-Monitoring is a structured and systematic process to explore, reflect and report on the effectiveness of a programme. The aim of self-evaluation is to identify good practice/new innovations and areas for improvement to inform future practice.

The ongoing internal self-monitoring of programmes provides an opportunity to:

- Inform the annual planning for the programme.
- Provide re-assurance that the programme meets funding & awarding body requirements.
- Ensure the programme remains appropriate.
- Identify resources, supports and staff training needs.
- Share good practice and innovations.
- Give feedback on the programme – e.g., what works well, what needs to change.
- Make recommendations to improve the quality of the programme.

Internal Self-Monitoring inputs at Holland Safety include:

- Results of Internal Audits conducted in line with ISO 9001 / ISO 14001 / ISO 45001.
- Discussions arising from Management Review Meetings.
- Review of Course Evaluation Forms received from learners.
- Communications between Customers and Account Managers regarding courses.
- Feedback from Programme Leaders and Tutors involved in delivery.
- Benchmarking based on comparable providers and QQI national benchmarking data.

Holland Safety quality assurance evaluation outcomes are used to produce a quality improvement plan which sets out a schedule of actions to be undertaken following internal evaluation. This plan will identify the person(s) responsible for corrective actions, actions needed to develop identified opportunities, and all necessary follow up.

17.3 Self-Evaluation, Improvement & Enhancement

Holland Safety's process of self-evaluation focuses on primary outputs: a self-evaluation report, including findings and recommendations for improvement, and an improvement or action plan detailing how and when we will address the recommendations made in the self-evaluation report, and who will have responsibility for doing so.

Self-Evaluations will be conducted on an annual basis and will draw upon:

- Review of Course Evaluation Forms received from learners.
- Feedback from Programme Leaders and Tutors involved in delivery.
- The views of the Independent FE Professional and Learner Representative.

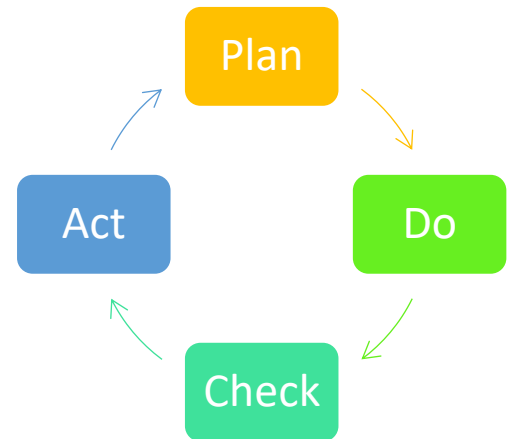


Figure 15 - The Plan-Do-Check-Act Cycle

Our self-evaluation process is developed to be independent of commercial imperatives and is handled exclusively by the Quality Committee which is chaired by the Independent FE Professional and incorporates the voice of the learner through an independent Learner Representative. The outcomes of the Self-Evaluation process are presented to the Quality Committee for approval and any necessary actions, such as updates to the Quality Assurance Manual or to specific programmes, are actioned with a clear timeline.

17.4 Engagement with External Quality Assurance

Holland Safety recognises the organisational and quality assurance benefits which can be gained from External Quality Assurance (EQA) activity and has a history of engagement with such activity across a range of different accreditation bodies. This includes our scope of ISO certification which includes the design, development, delivery, and certification of training services. We ensure that engagement with EQA is carried out in a manner which ensures:

- Appropriate objectivity is maintained.
- An accurate picture of the organisation and its scope of service is provided.
- That our quality assurance systems are appropriate for education & training.
- That those involved in EQA have education and training experience.
- That those involved understand our industry e.g., EH&S.

18. BLENDED LEARNING PROGRAMMES

18.1 Introduction

This section outlines the principles applied in the specific case of development and delivery of blended training programmes at Holland Safety. The QQI Blended Learning guidelines state in the context of the blended and online provision that *“it is important that the teaching and learning experience is a positive quality experience, with quality assurance, improvement and enhancement in place”* and we are committed to delivering upon this principle.

The implementation of blended learning as a mode of education and training offers significant benefits to learners in the form of a different mode of learning which is both time efficient and learner-centred. This allows learners to structure their learning around their lifestyle and utilise a range of self-directed learning in collaboration with other learners through the use of online tools ranging from webinar software to e-learning platforms.

18.2 Strategy & Planning for Blended Learning

Holland Safety has traditionally delivered conventional training in a classroom-based environment. However, due to the acceleration of the digital economic during the COVID-19 public health emergency and as a result of demand from a wide variety of client organisations, we have set out to develop both our on-demand self-paced eLearning capabilities and instructor-led webinar delivery programmes. We see blended learning as being the future of health and safety training in Ireland and have invested personnel and infrastructure in order to develop this service.

1. Moving traditional theory courses to blended/webinar delivery.
2. Developing a suite of eLearning and eLearning blended programmes.

The majority of education and training programmes within Holland Safety’s scope of delivery are of short duration (<5 days) and this restricts the amount of blended/online delivery which is involved in the programme. Bearing this in mind, we are committed to developing our webinar and eLearning blended options with a focus on appropriate pedagogical methodologies. This strategy is implemented at functional and programme level with accountable roles identified to ensure effective and efficient implementation.

18.3 Holland Safety’s Approach to Blended Learning

All procedures for Holland Safety are fit for purpose in the context of blended learning and all the necessary resources are researched and allocated to ensure the additional costs of blended learning provision are taken into account.

At the organisational level, the provision of blended learning should occur in a context where:

- Legal obligations including data protection and intellectual property rights are respected.
- Resources are provided including appropriate training for staff involved in blended learning.
- Appropriate online infrastructure is provided to support high quality blended learning.
- Continuous improvement must be at the heart of blended learning programme design.

18.3.1 Staff Recruitment, Selection & Development

Employment vacancies may be advertised in multiple forums including local newspapers, on the Holland Safety social media accounts, and through the use of online recruitment websites such as Indeed Jobs and recruitment agencies. Applications are shortlisted by senior management prior to interviews taking place, and all interview candidates are required to provide copies of relevant qualifications. These are kept together with CVs and other relevant documentation such as completed interview sheets.

In relation to administrative staff, the following criteria are applied:

- Qualifications – staff members have a relevant qualification.

And/Or:

- Experience – staff members have a minimum of 2 years work experience in online / blended learning and excellent IT skills.
- References – a minimum of two references may be provided. Referees will be contacted by senior management prior to appointment.

The selection criteria for Programme Tutors include:

- Qualifications – Tutor must have minimum QQI Level 6 Special Purpose Award in Training & Development/Train the Tutor or equivalent pedagogical qualification, e.g. First Aid Response Instructor, Instructing Manual Handling qualification. This must supplement a qualification in the tutor's specific area of expertise, minimum one level above the level of delivery. Best practice would require a minimum Level 8 degree in the area.
- Experience – Tutors must have minimum 2 years training experience prior to delivering accredited programmes for Holland Safety and experience of online / blended learning delivery.
- Reference checks – At least two referees must be contacted. References will be based on training delivery experience. In the event of new tutors with no previous experience, an academic and/or character reference will be required.

All staff involved in online / blended learning delivery (both administration and tutors) receive an induction on online / blended learning and participate in a live online / blended learning programme as part of this induction process. The induction process is supported by ongoing CPD including initiatives that guide staff to advance their skills to continually develop pedagogical approaches relevant to the domain of online / blended learning.

18.3.2 Information Technology Resources

The information technology of Holland Safety is constantly tested for reliability, and security and is regularly updated. Appropriate contingency plans are in place should there be a failure. This is the responsibility of the eLearning Manager. In the unlikely event of an LMS, hardware or software failure, the following measures are in place:

- Learner details are kept in separately and securely outside of the LMS. This is backed up to Cloud every four hours.
- Learners can be contacted, and have resources sent to them by email or post, scheduled contact days confirmed, quizzes for formative assessment sent, feedback provided, assignment feedback given.

- There are alternatives in place for any software used (e.g., Zoom Meetings, Cisco WebEx, Microsoft Teams, Moodle, Digital Chalk, etc.) should any item of software fail.

Holland Safety is committed to the use of an LMS that meets the following requirements:

Accessibility

- Provide a course with accessible text and images in files, documents, VLE pages, and web pages to meet the needs of diverse learners.
- Provide a course with an alternative means of access to multimedia content in formats that meet the needs of diverse learners.
- Videos and screencasts are closed-captioned.
- Audio materials (mp3, wav, etc.) are accompanied by a transcript.
- Images are accompanied by text descriptions (Alt text) or captions for images that require a more complex description.

Usability

- Provide a course delivery LMS that is easy to use for all stakeholders.
- Environment entry point is clear, simple, and welcoming.
- Course design facilitates readability.
- Course multimedia facilitates ease of use.
- Ensure mobile/tablet readable.
- Course materials are presented using appropriate formats.
- Enable upgrades and functionality enhancements as they become available.

Security

- Provide a fully secured online learning environment that ensures user confidence and adheres to national and international data protection standards.

Holland Safety is cognisant of the three principles of Universal Design to ensure that the LMS is accessible to all:

- Provide multiple means of Engagement.
- Provide multiple means of Representation.
- Provide multiple means of Action and Expression.

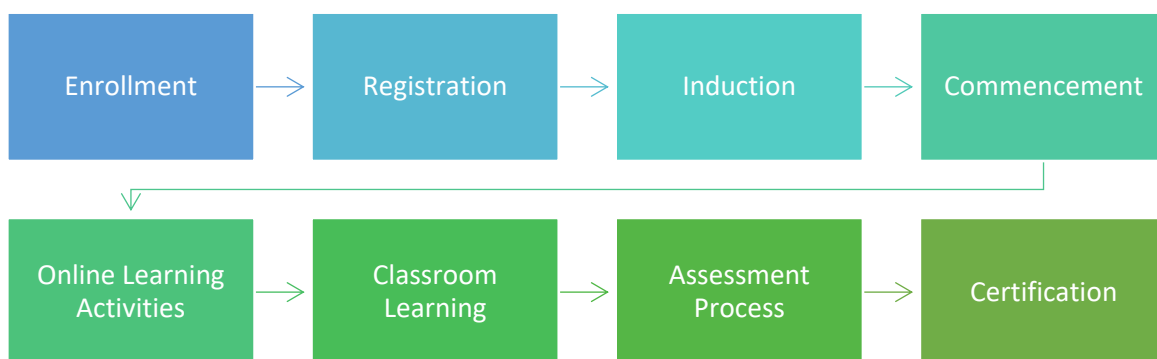


Figure 16 - Blended Learning Process

Our record system is adapted to support online and blended learning delivery through the integration of Moodle Learning Management System software and Microsoft Office 365 products and includes provision for quality assurance, certification and collecting payment. Data held on the system is backed up every four hours in accordance with our policies for Information and Data Management.

18.3.3 Learner Support

Prior to enrolment on a blended learning programme, learners are provided with an induction to the programme. This includes, but is not limited to, the nature and extent of autonomous learning, collaborative and supported aspects of learning, details of specified timings for synchronous learning or assessment, rules governing flexibility for learners, and regulations in place to protect learner information.

The learner induction will also specify requirements for access to the online learning environment – detailing the required broadband specification and any specific hardware or software requirements, for example. The learner induction will provide information on the level and nature of support available, including but not limited to academic, technical, and pastoral support.

18.4 Quality Assurance of Blended Learning

18.4.1 Admission Criteria

Applicants must be self-motivated and have the capacity to take responsibility for their own learning as they progress through a blended learning programme. Basic computer literacy is required to enrol on a blended learning programme, e.g., opening an internet page, following simple instructions, and creating a Word document.

Learner requirements prior to commencing a blended learning programme:

- Access to a laptop with functioning camera and audio **OR** access to a PC with functioning camera and audio (earphones may be required when using PC) **OR** access to a mobile device with functioning camera and audio.
- Strong internet connection.
- Zoom Meetings, Cisco WebEx or Microsoft Teams downloaded as appropriate.
- Be able to provide photo ID in the form of a passport, public service card or driving licence.

18.4.2 Securing the Integrity of Assessment

All learners are contacted by the tutor on enrolment for the course. Upon entry to the course, learners must attend a learner induction which covers relevant policies for online / blended learning and rules relating to plagiarism, referencing and other similar matters.

Assessments that are completed online or live online lectures include the following practices:

- Digital mechanisms for the transfer of learners' work directly to assessors are approved and tested by Holland Safety to ensure they are secure and reliable.
- Learner is issued confirmation of safe receipt of assessment work.

- Only enrolled learners are permitted to attend and participate in assessment activities. If another individual is present at the time, they will be asked to leave by the tutor prior to the commencement of the assessment.

To confirm that learners' assessment work is their own original work, the following criteria for submission of assessment will apply:

- A statement and clear instructions about identity fraud and the consequences of academic malpractice that must be signed.
- Submission of assessments should incorporate the following:
 - Learners must confirm authenticity of own work by selecting an honesty and non-plagiarism box on each submission.
 - Learners verify their identity by logging into the LMS for the submission of assignments and/or completion of assessments with their private access details, i.e., username and password.
 - Alternatively, assignments may be submitted in exceptional circumstances via the learner's registered email address.

18.4.3 Learners from Outside of Ireland

Holland Safety do not enroll learners from outside of Ireland.

18.5 Blended Learning in a Programme Context

18.5.1 Programme Development

Holland Safety will develop and deliver programmes that are well-structured, relevant to the needs of learners and industry, and reflect the standards as set out by the National Framework of Qualifications. This process is guided by the Policies and criteria for the validation by QQI of programmes of education and training. See Section 9.2 regarding the development of new programmes of education and training.

18.5.2 Design of Blended Learning Programmes

Holland Safety adopt the principles of ABC Learning Design method by Clive Young and Nataša Perović, UCL (2015), namely:

1. Acquisition – Learners listen to a lecture, presentation, or podcast, watch videos or demonstrations, and read from books or websites.
2. Inquiry – Learners explore, compare, contrast, and critically analyse the texts, documents and resources that reflect the concepts and ideas being taught.
3. Practice – Learners adapt their actions to the task goal and use the feedback to improve their next action.
4. Production – Tutor motivates learners to consolidate what they have learned by articulating their current conceptual understanding and how they used it in practice.
5. Discussion – Learners articulate their ideas and questions and challenges and responds to the ideas and questions from the tutor and/or their peers.
6. Collaboration – Learners take part in the process of knowledge building itself.

The ABC curriculum design method is complemented by the Universal Design for Learning (UDL) – a set of principles for curriculum development that give all individuals equal opportunities to learn, including learners with disabilities. UDL aims to improve the educational experience of all learners by introducing more flexible methods of teaching, assessment, and service provision to cater for the diversity of learners in our classrooms.

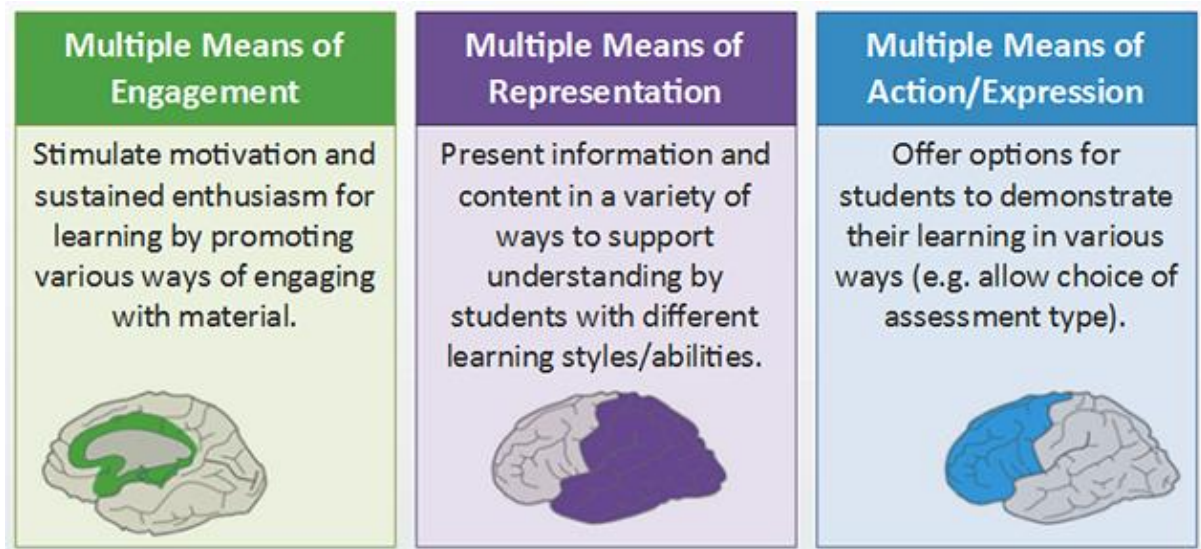


Figure 17 - Three core principles when designing learning experiences (AHEAD, 2017).

The quality assurance standards that inform the design of each module are key to the quality of the course and directly impact on the learner experience, namely:

- Course overview and introduction.
- Learning outcomes.
- Assessment.
- Learning resources.
- Learning activities.
- Interaction.
- Learner support.

18.5.3 Assessment

Holland Safety aims to provide a balance of formative and summative assessment in its training and education programmes, including blended learning programmes. The outcomes of these assessments provide an opportunity for the learner to give and receive feedback and aid their progress:

- Formative assessments are completed through quizzes and exercises on the LMS, and during classroom-based tutorials, where assessments are usually devised by the tutors, and are usually informal with no associated module marks or weighting.
- Summative assessments normally take place at the end of a module and measure the extent to which a learner has met the learning outcomes. Examples of this type of assessment include exams, skills demonstrations, assignments, projects, and portfolios. The result of these assessments will contribute to the learners overall grade for the module.

The module grading policy is stated clearly in the learner induction at the beginning of the module. The assessments used are sequenced, varied, and suited to the level of the course. The module provides learners with multiple opportunities to track their learning progress with timely, high-quality feedback. A detailed assessment brief is provided so that all learners in the module know what they are expected to do.

Consistency of style and structure across different assignment briefs is also important such that learners can easily navigate those documents and not miss key information on their assessment. Systems are in place to ensure that learners in the online environment have appropriate opportunities for timely, confidential feedback regarding formative assessment.

18.5.4 Learning Materials

Each programme has a resource pack which is available to the learner in PDF form or is available in units on the Learning Management System. Each unit is made up of relevant learning outcomes, learning materials including quizzes and activities to be used as part of formative assessment. The learning resources represent up-to-date theory and practice. Visual design is simple and organised, with a clean page design that supports clarity and understanding. Consistency of style and structure across learning resources/content is also important such that learners can easily navigate resources/content.

Additional resources for face-to-face days include the following:

- Projector or LCD Screen.
- Laptop/mobile device.
- Whiteboard and/or flipchart.

Skills demonstration equipment varies by module and the Programme Development team consider this early in the process. The following methodologies will be implemented for the delivery of blended learning programmes with Holland Safety:

- Online tutorials
- Learner Management System
- One-to-one support by:
 - Phone
 - Email
- Group meetings and discussions via webinar.
- Online exercises.
- Practical sessions to include role-play scenarios.
- Simulated environments on skills demonstration days.

18.5.5 Interactivity

Holland Safety is cognisant of the Universal Design for Learning and uses interactive material to engage learners in the virtual learning environment. Module design features such as facilitator photos and video introductions, a community forum for learners, and collaborative learning activities can facilitate social presence and enable learner-instructor and learner-learner interaction. Minimum levels of alternative formats are set out for all courses to provide multiple means of engagement to promote inclusivity in the learning environment for all learners.

18.5.6 Classroom Delivery

Learners on blended learning programmes are invited to classroom-based days which involve a variety of the following:

- Practical skills demonstrations and assessments.
- Exam (if applicable).
- Face-to-face tutor support.
- Group revision and study sessions.

Learners completing their QQI accredited training and education programmes through blended learning are invited to a classroom-based assessment day, where they will meet with their tutor for assessment of knowledge and practical skills. Classroom-based days for learners completing a blended learning programme are scheduled as required by the Training Coordinator.

18.6 Support available to Blended Learners

18.6.1 Induction

Prior to enrolment on a blended learning programme, learners are provided with an induction to the programme. This includes, but is not limited to, the nature and extent of autonomous learning, collaborative and supported aspects of learning, details of specified timings for synchronous learning or assessment, rules governing flexibility for learners, and regulations in place to protect learner information.

The learner induction will also specify requirements for access to the online learning environment – detailing the required broadband specification and any specific hardware or software requirements, for example. The learner induction will provide information on the level and nature of support available, including but not limited to academic, technical and pastoral support.

18.6.2 Technical Support for Blended Learning

Technical support on the LMS is available from the eLearning Manager by contacting info@hollandsafety.ie. All emails are responded to within 24 hours. The eLearning Manager is notified at each stage of a learner's, tutor's, or administrator's progress throughout the LMS.

18.6.3 Security of LMS

Learners will be assigned a private username and password for secure access to their personal account on the LMS. This will be issued to the email address provided at enrolment. If a learner has forgotten their password or inputs their password incorrectly, they will be prompted to reset their password. The link provided will be sent directly to the learner's email address. Holland Safety administration staff and tutors do not have access to the learners' access information at any point.

18.6.4 Equality of Opportunity

Holland Safety seeks to advance equality of opportunity in terms of access to programmes of study, training, development and career opportunities without any direct or indirect discrimination, or conscious or unconscious biases. Equality is ensuring individuals or groups of individuals are not treated less favourably, on the basis of the nine grounds for discrimination, which are:

1. Gender.
2. Civil status: single, married, divorced, etc.
3. Family status: if you are the parent or person responsible for a child over 18, or if you're the main carer or parent of a person with a disability.
4. Sexual orientation.
5. Religion.
6. Age.
7. Disability.
8. Race.
9. Being a member of the traveling community.

APPENDIX 1 – ASSESSMENT METHODOLOGIES

Assignment

An assignment is an exercise carried out in response to a brief with specific guidelines as to what should be included. An assignment is usually of short duration but may be carried out over a specified period of time. Assignments may take the form of a practical activity e.g., a practical assignment or a research activity/evaluation following investigation of a particular topic e.g., a written assignment.

Project

A project is a response to a brief and is usually carried out over a period of time specified as part of the brief. Projects may involve research, may require investigation of a topic, issue or problem, or may involve a process such as a design task, a performance or practical activity or production of an artifact or event.

Portfolio/Collection of Work

A portfolio or collection of work is a collection and/or selection of pieces of work produced by the learner over a period of time that demonstrates achievement of a range of learning outcomes. Guidelines and instructions are devised for the learner. Using these, the learner compiles a collection of their own work. The collection may be self-generated or may be generated in response to a particular brief or tasks/activities devised by the assessor.

Learner Record

A learner record is the learners self-reported and self-reflective record in which he/she describes specific learning experiences, activities, responses, and skills acquired. The record may take a number of forms: it can be a structured logbook, a (reflective) diary, a selective record of events or experiences over a period of time, a learning journal, a lab notebook or a sketchbook. For example, a lab notebook could record specific tasks or activities carried out and the analytical results obtained by the learner.

Skills Demonstration/Practical Tests

A skills demonstration is used to assess a wide range of practical based learning outcomes including practical skills and knowledge, such as laboratory skills, interpersonal skills or oral language skills. The demonstration of skill including process skills related to practical achievement is assessed by means of practical test. It is essential to use practical tests where key objectives state that the learner must demonstrate practical achievement in defined tasks.

Practical assessments are generally used where a set period of time is allocated to the learner to demonstrate practical knowledge, skills or competence. Sufficient learner evidence must be made available from the skills demonstration for internal and external verification. In the case of a practical task-based demonstration this may include a range of the following:

- Product/outcome of the tasks where applicable e.g. computer printout.
- Photographic or video evidence of learner completing the task.
- Learner account of task.
- Completed assessment sheets/checklists.

- A skills demonstration may take place in the workplace i.e. in a live environment, or in a simulated environment. In some specific cases the demonstration must take place in a real/live environment.

Theory Based Examinations

A theory based examination provides a means of assessing a learner's ability to recall and apply knowledge, skills and understanding within a set period of time and under clearly specified conditions. Theory tests are a form of assessment which normally require a fixed timeframe, a sight unseen question paper, and range of questions. The assessment instrument for theory tests is the test paper i.e., questions or tasks devised for the learner. The theory test may involve assessing listening and interpretation skills (aural testing) or may involve assessment through verbal questioning (one-to-one or in a group), or written responses. Assessment instruments used for the testing of theory can include:

- Short answer questions: these require a response of limited length and may take a number of forms. Some short answer questions may seek specific words or phrases in the response. Short answer questions are generally easy to construct and with the assistance of model answers are relatively easy to mark.
- Multiple choice tests/questions: these may be used to test factual knowledge, comprehension, application, analysis, problem solving and evaluation. As multiple choice questions are not open-ended, they are not useful in assessing communication skills such as the ability to organise and express information and to write fluently and quickly. Although multiple choice questions provide objectivity and reliability as regards marking, assurance of their reliability is an important factor in their design.
- Structured questions: these are divided into a number of related parts and generally require the learner to demonstrate more in-depth knowledge and understanding of a topic. Structured questions are useful for seeking evidence of cognitive skills such as ability to discuss, compare, analyse, evaluate, translate or solve an issue, problem or topic. However, structured questions can be difficult to mark reliably.
- Essay type questions: like structured questions, these require the learner to demonstrate an in-depth knowledge and understanding of a topic. Essay type questions usually focus on one particular area of knowledge and are useful for seeking evidence of cognitive skills such as the ability to discuss, compare, analyse, evaluate, translate or solve an issue, problem or topic. Essay questions can be difficult to mark reliably.

Competence Based Assessment

In addition to being criterion-referenced, some assessments are also competence based, because they involve certain assessment items that are designated as "essential" in order to achieve a pass grade. Assessment items are designated as "essential" only if identified as such in the related award standard and in the programme and assessment specifications prior to assessment development. The "essential" items can relate to areas such as health and safety or other critical legislative or industry standards.

APPENDIX 2 – QUALITY COMMITTEE TERMS OF REFERENCE

1. Introduction

The Quality Committee acts as an independent overseer of quality assurance practices within Holland Safety and functions to provide the primary source of internal guidance on quality and academic matters.

2. Membership

The membership of the Quality Committee includes:

- Independent Further Education Professional – who also Chairs the Committee.
- One of the relevant FE Programme Leaders.
- Quality Assurance Coordinator.
- Training Coordinator – acts as bridge between Operations & Quality.
- The Internal Verifier.
- The Independent Learner Representative.

In addition to the normal membership, the Committee has the discretion to invite any person to attend who it believes may assist with the carrying out of its functions – including tutors and other staff from within Holland Safety who deal with specific subject matters or functions.

3. Duration of Office

The term of office for Independent FE Professional is typically 3 years duration. The term of office for the Learner Representative is 12 months. The independent members are eligible to serve two terms of office.

4. Terms of Reference

4.1 Teaching, Learning & Assessment

1. Develop policies in relation to all aspects of teaching and learning, delivery of training and assessment within Holland Safety.
2. Ensuring consistency of high academic and quality assurance standards across all QQI validated programmes of education and training.
3. Consider issues arising from the reports received from External Authenticators and other interested parties.
4. Review on an annual basis the programme completion rates, grades and benchmarking data against similar providers and QQI national benchmarking data.
5. To prepare an annual Programme of Work for the Quality Committee and communicate this to the Managing Director.

4.2 Programme Offering

1. To set, scrutinise, and review Holland Safety's existing and planned programme offerings to ensure consistency with policies on approval, review and validation of education and training programmes.
2. Monitor the work of Programme Leaders on any matters arising from their review of Holland Safety's existing or proposed programme offerings.

4.3 Development of Quality Assurance Practice

1. To be responsible for monitoring programmes on annual basis and receive updates from Programme Leaders regarding emerging issues in their programmes.
2. To be responsible for development of Holland Safety's Quality Assurance Manual in compliance with QQI's Core Quality Assurance Guidelines and any other relevant external requirements.
3. To support and promote initiatives to improve quality assurance practices across the organisation.
4. To conduct, monitor and review the Self-Monitoring and Self-Evaluation processes to ensure the effective implementation of any necessary corrective actions or the development of opportunities for improvement.
5. To ensure appropriate processes for responding to, and addressing, learner complaints and appeals.

4.4 Conduct of Meetings

- The Quality Committee shall meet at least once per quarter.
- The quorum for the Quality Committee will be at least 4 members with at least one independent education professional member present. In the event that he/she is unable to attend a meeting, a member of the committee may exceptionally arrange for a suitably qualified deputy to attend in their place.
- All meetings of the Committee shall follow an agenda, to include the following items:
 - Minutes of the previous meeting and matters arising.
 - Policy Discussion.
 - Items for Formal Approval.
 - AOB
- Minutes of each meeting shall be recorded by the Internal Verifier who will act as Secretary.

4.5 Proposals & Voting

1. Where a motion is put formally to the meeting, the Chair will ask the Committee whether or not it agrees with the motion, and decision will normally be unanimous. Where a division exist, the Chair will call for a vote or a vote may be requested by any member.
2. The results from any vote will be counted by the Secretary and recorded in the minutes of the meeting.
3. The number of votes for and against a motion, and the number of abstentions, will be recorded in the Minutes of the Committee.
4. If the votes for and against a proposal are equal, the Chair has an additional, casting vote as Chair. All voting will be by majority vote.

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5. The Chair of the committee is empowered to take action on behalf of the committee in any matter which in the Chair's opinion is either urgent (but not of sufficient importance to justify a Special Meeting of the committee) or non-contentious. The reasons and outcomes of such actions shall be the subject of a formal report by the Chair to the next committee meeting.

APPENDIX 3 – OPERATIONS DEPARTMENT TERMS OF REFERENCE

1. Introduction

The Operations Department is appointed by the Managing Director following recruitment and positions are filled as they arise in the specific operation and management team roles within the organisation.

2. Membership

The membership of the Operations Department includes (but is not limited to):

- Commercial Manager.
- Key Account Managers.
- Accounts Manager.
- Training Coordinator.
- Strategic Business Development Manager.

3. Duration of Office

The Operations Department members are in place for the duration of their contracts of employment which may range over a short or extended period.

4. Terms of Reference

4.1 Roles & Responsibilities

1. The Operations Department has responsibility for people and operations, including effectiveness of processes, structures, day-to-day activity, and the utilisation of resources,
2. Providing the financial resources required to deliver services to customers and ensuring the sustainable growth of the enterprise.
3. Ensuring that legal obligations and QA requirements are being met and taking action to mitigate business risks.
4. Providing a basis for sales and marketing activity, including the identification of emerging trends within training and education services.
5. Ensuring that marketing is compliant with QA requirements and that it provides the customer with the information they require regarding programmes of education and training.
6. Cooperating with other structures and stakeholders, including the Quality Committee in the carrying out of its functions.
7. Participating in the Programme Development process.

4.2. Conduct of Meetings

- The Operations Department shall meet at least once per week for operational and day-to-day management activity. A management review of operations is conducted via a monthly meeting.
- The quorum for the meetings will be at least 4 members.

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- All meetings of the Operations Department shall follow an agenda, to include the following items:
 - Minutes of the previous meeting and matters arising.
 - Policy Discussion.
 - Items for Formal Approval.
 - AOB
 - Minutes of each meeting shall be recorded by the Commercial Manager who will act as Secretary.

APPENDIX 4 – RESULTS APPROVAL PANEL TERMS OF REFERENCE

1. Introduction

The Results Approval Panel is the final step in the quality assurance process to ensure fair and consistent assessment of learners. Results approval occurs after external authentication (EA) and before the learner's work is submitted to QQI through the QBS for Certification. The results approval process (RAP) applies to all assessments leading to a QQI award to learners.

All learner results are provisional until approved by the Results Approval Panel. It is prohibited to process learner's work for certification until the RAP process has been completed and the appropriate administrative paperwork has been completed.

2. Membership

The membership of the Results Approval Panel includes:

- Independent Further Education Professional – who also Chairs the Committee.
- One of the relevant FE Programme Leaders.
- Quality Assurance Coordinator.

3. Duration of Office

The term of office for Independent FE Professional is typically 3 years duration. The term of office for the Learner Representative is 12 months. The independent members are eligible to serve two terms of office.

4. Terms of Reference

4.1 Decision Making

1. Minutes of the results approval panel will be produced outlining the issues discussed and decisions reached.
2. These minutes will form part of the assessment record and must be retained by the centre and be made available for auditing and monitoring purposes.
3. The contents of the minutes are confidential and must not be circulated to unauthorised personnel.
4. The results approval form is completed for all the relevant learners and signed off by assessment personnel and the chair of the results approval panel.
5. Only the fixed members of the panel are asked to approve results. The fixed members of the panel should make every reasonable attempt to reach consensus on all results approved at the RAP meeting.
6. In the event that fixed panel members are unable to reach agreement opposing views will be noted and recorded at the request of those in disagreement.
7. In situations where the approval of results decision is evenly split, the Chair of the panel will have the casting vote.

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8. Instances of malpractice or irregularities must be brought to the attention of the Quality Committee through the chair of the RAP panel.

4.2 Approval of Results

1. Results Approval Panel meeting as required but typically bi-monthly. Meetings are arranged to tie in with the approved twice yearly assessment process and certification planning.
2. The Panel will review the following information:
 - a. Internal Verification Report.
 - b. External Authentication Report.
 - c. Learner Attendance Records.
 - d. Learner Course Evaluation Forms.
3. The Panel will discuss each set of results and will focus on areas of concerns and make suggestions for appropriate corrective measures if required.
4. Other personnel may be invited to attend for a particular section of the results approval meeting as appropriate.
5. The panel will consider the reports and approve the final results.
6. The Chair will arrange for the relevant personnel and learners to be informed of the approved results. In the event that there has been a change to provisional results the chair will ensure that the learner is informed of the amended result and is made aware of the Appeals Process.
7. The Chair will ensure that any non-conformances identified are recorded in the minutes and notified to the Quality Committee for the assignment of appropriate actions.

APPENDIX 5 – PROGRAMME DEVELOPMENT TEAM TERMS OF REFERENCE

1. Introduction

The Programme Development Team is appointed by the Training Coordinator following a decision of the Quality Committee and Operations Department to recommend that a proposed new programme (or existing programme) be developed or updated.

2. Membership

The membership of the Programme Development Team includes (but is not limited to):

- Programme Lead.
- Subject Matter Expert(s).
- Programme Designer.

In addition to the normal membership, the Programme Development Team has the discretion to invite any person to attend who it believes may assist with the carrying out of its functions – including tutors and other staff from within Holland Safety who deal with specific subject matters or functions.

3. Duration of Office

The Programme Development Team members are in place for the duration of the development project which may range over a short or extended period.

4. Terms of Reference

8. The Programme Development Team obtains the programme rationale which has been approved separately by the Quality Committee and the Operations Department.
9. Based on the subject matter of the proposed programme, the specific members of the Programme Development Team are appointed, including subject matter expert(s).
10. The Team obtains the relevant QQI Component Specification for Awards linked to the National Framework of Qualifications/Common Awards System.
11. The Team prepare an outline of the programme based on the QQI Form for Programme Validation (2016) to outline, inter alia, the minimum intended programme learning outcomes, the resources anticipated for delivery, further identification of proposed learner profile, any necessary learner supports, and the assessment process.
12. The Programme Team assemble the course materials including but not limited to:
 - a. Presentation / eLearning SCORM Content.
 - b. Course Timetable / Module Structure / Lesson Plan.
 - c. Course Handouts / Notes.
 - d. Learning Aids including audio-visual elements, equipment, etc.
 - e. Assessment Materials including Assessment Brief, Assessment Paper (where required), and proposed Marking Scheme.
 - f. Tutor Notes to support the effective delivery of the programme and the conduct of specific assessment activities.

13. The Programme Team then notify the Quality Committee and Operations Department that a Final Review Meeting is required (separately) at which the Programme Team will present a detailed overview.
14. If either the Quality Committee or Operations Department identify an issue or opportunity for improvement, the draft programme will revert to the Programme Team to incorporate any required changes, and these will be presented at the following meeting of the Quality Committee and Operations Department.
15. Once approved internally by both the Quality Committee and Operations Department, the programme will advance into the formal validation process with QQI.
16. Pending the initial feedback from the QQI validation process, the programme will revert to the Programme Development Team to take account of any recommended changes, these will again be reviewed by both the Quality Committee and Operations Department.
17. Following successful completion of the QQI validation process, the approved programme will be added to the list of Holland Safety's QQI accredited programmes and may be marketed to prospective learners.

APPENDIX 6 – APPEALS COMMITTEE TERMS OF REFERENCE

1. Introduction

The handling of learner appeals is the responsibility of the Quality Committee which is to review all information relating to any learner appeal, academic or otherwise, and to reach a decision on the outcome of any such appeal.

When evaluating an appeal, the Quality Committee excludes any person or member who has previously been involved in the assessment (i.e., course tutor and internal verifier), and excludes any person with a commercial decision-making function i.e., Training Coordinator.

2. Membership

The membership of the includes (but is not limited to):

- Quality Assurance Coordinator.
- A FE Programme Lead.
- Independent FE Professional (Chair).

In addition to the normal membership, the Committee has the discretion to invite any person to attend who it believes may assist with the carrying out of its functions – including tutors and other staff from within Holland Safety who deal with specific subject matters or functions.

3. Duration of Office

The term of office for Independent FE Professional is typically 3 years duration. The term of office for the Learner Representative is 12 months. The independent members are eligible to serve two terms of office.

4. Terms of Reference

1. When handling appeals, the Quality Committee comprises four people independent of the issue being appealed.
2. The Committee meets to agree the findings and to determine a fair resolution.
3. The Committee may invite any person to attend, who may have evidence or information to support the Committee in reaching a decision.
4. The Committee will consider any application from the learner to make representation in person, where the learner wishes to provide clarification rather than present new evidence.
5. The decision reached by the Committee should be unanimous, however, where contentious the Chair may exercise a casting vote.
6. The outcome of the Committee is that the appeal may either be upheld or denied.
7. An account of the decision, including a clear rationale for the decision and copies of the evidence provided, will be maintained by the Quality Committee.

APPENDIX 7 – PROFILE OF APPOINTED INDEPENDENT FURTHER EDUCATION PROFESSIONAL AS CHAIR OF THE QUALITY COMMITTEE

1. Introduction

The Quality Committee acts as an independent overseer of quality assurance practices within Holland Safety and functions to provide the primary source of internal guidance on quality and academic matters.

The Chair of this Committee must be an appointed Independent Further Education Professional.

2. Duration of office

As per our terms of reference for the Quality Committee, the term of office for the Independent FE Professional Chair of the Committee will be 3 years in duration.

3. Role of the Independent Further Education Professional

The core role of the Independent FE Professional is to provide an expert, independent and external voice on academic matters within the organisation, including:

- Chairing the Quality Committee during its regular, periodic meetings and exercising the casting vote in any contentious matter.
- Ensuring that all programmes of education and training are delivered in line with the external accreditation requirements including internal verification and validation.
- Advising the company on the protection of all existing and future learners throughout the training lifecycle.
- Participating in the review of each course as part of the Quality Committee's scheduled reviews of existing courses.
- Contributing to the development of new programmes of education and training including their academic integrity and effectiveness.
- Ensuring the company implements its strategies in relation to the enhancement of quality on an ongoing basis and assisting in embedding a quality culture.

4. Selection process and criteria

The selection criteria adopted for the appointment of the Independent FE Professional was developed in with the QQI Statutory Quality Assurance Guidelines (April 2016). The selection criteria adopted for this process is to appoint a strong, experienced, and knowledgeable professional who fulfilled the criteria of the Role as set out in our Quality Assurance Procedures and who would provide a strong independent voice and steady hand to our Quality Committee.

5. Qualifications, Experience and Suitability for the Role

The required qualifications, experience and characteristics would be as follows:

- The chair must be a Further Education Professional who is external to the business.
- They must have a qualification of level 8 or higher on the National Framework of Qualifications and at least 10 years' experience in further education, training, and development or relevant sectoral/ industry experience.
- They should have further education and training quality assurance experience.
- Previous involvement in quality committees or boards would be desirable.
- They should have tutoring experience.
- They should have experience in the development and marking of assessments in the further education field.
- They should have experience in external authentication and examination.
- It would be advantageous if they had experience in the design, development, and evaluation of QQI awards.
- It would be advantageous if they had a track record of involvement in voluntary boards and in advocacy.
- They should have a keen interest in lifelong learning.
- They should possess strong organisational and interpersonal skills.
- They should have a passion for further education learning and development and have the capacity to provide a strong independent voice to the quality committee.