

APPLIED VOCATIONAL CERTIFICATE

INTERNAL QUALITY ASSURANCE POLICY DOCUMENT



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GOVERNMENT OF MALTA
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1. TERMINOLOGY

Term	Definition
Academic Board	A board that is constituted of at least three members: Director General (DCLE), Director (DSVP), VET Subject Education Officer/VET Subject Coordinator, and two other members if needed. The Academic Board has the power and the responsibility to take decisions in accordance with any particular or given situation, either in relation to the candidate or the school managing any of the Applied Vocational Certificate subjects. It shall meet regularly for the purpose of regulating and monitoring the academic affairs related to the AVC programme.
Accredited Programme	A programme which has been recognised and reviewed as correct and in line to a defined educational standard of quality as per the Malta Qualification Framework Report.
Applied Vocational Certificate Programme (AVC)	A programme that emphasises the applied aspect of vocational subjects. The final certificate is equivalent to MQF Level 3, with exit points at MQF Level 2 and MQF Level 1. A final certificate at MQF Level 3 can only be obtained upon completion of all the three units across the secondary cycle, and upon submitting the required amount of coursework and controlled work as indicated in each subject syllabus.
Assessment Criteria	A description of what a candidate is expected to do to demonstrate that a learning outcome has been achieved.
Assessor	The person responsible to grade the candidate's work and issue a mark.
Competences	Each competence is defined as a combination of knowledge and skills, and is associated with the level of autonomy and responsibility that the person is expected to have at that level.
Controlled Assessment	An assessment, set by the Directorate for STEM & VET Programmes, which may include written and practical tasks as specified in the syllabus.
Coursework	Assignments/tasks set by teachers and given to the candidate during the course as specified in the respective syllabi.

Term	Definition
Department for Curriculum, Lifelong learning and Employability (DCLE)	The Department responsible for setting curriculum within all compulsory school cycles, enforcing lifelong learning initiatives and strategies as well as linking with possible post-secondary entities for better employability prospects.
Department for Educational Services (DES)	The Department responsible for the effective and efficient operation and delivery of services to state colleges and schools, through a decentralisation and autonomous process.
Directorate for STEM and VET Programmes (DSVP)	The Directorate responsible for providing quality STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics) education for every learner. The Directorate is also responsible to enhance VET (Vocational Education and Training) as another possible route for skills attainment and overall learning.
Directorate for Quality Standards in Education (DQSE)	The Directorate acts as a regulatory body with the intention to address the areas of structure, process, and outcomes quality in systematic and integrated ways. The Directorate ensures a streamlined and comprehensive evaluation of quality and standards for the benefit of the educational institutions and the quality of the learning experience for all learners.
Education Officer (EO)	The Education Officer serves as the programme administrator for the respective vocational subject. Responsibilities include managing the syllabus, overseeing controlled assessments, evaluating the programme, coordinating the moderation process, and reviewing moderation reports.
Educational Assessment Unit (EAU)	The Educational Assessment Unit is responsible for designing and implementing standardised assessments, ensuring quality and consistency while analysing data to inform educational policies and practices. Additionally, the unit provides training for educators, supports innovative assessment methodologies, and contributes to the development of national policies to enhance educational outcomes.
Head of College Network (HoCN)	Each College is led by a Head of College Network who facilitates the whole network and can take decisions concerning the schools within the College Network.
Internal Verification	Internal Verification is the process of ensuring that assignment/task briefs are appropriate and aligned with the respective syllabi. It also ensures that assessment decisions are fair, consistent and accurate.

Term	Definition
Internal Verifier	<p>An Internal Verifier is another teacher (or educator possibly within the same school or college) who is knowledgeable about the subject area and the processes related to the respective applied subject. The selection of Internal Verifiers depends on the teachers' capacity and workload, as determined by the Head of School.</p> <p>The role of the Internal Verifier is to promote good practices among teachers by ensuring that assignments/tasks are designed to support effective learning and that marking schemes and rubrics are consistent and reliable according to the given assessment criteria.</p>
Knowledge	<p>Knowledge refers to the understanding of basic, factual and theoretical information, which is traditionally associated with formal learning but can also be acquired from informal and non-formal learning.</p>
Learning Outcome	<p>Learning Outcomes (LOs) are statements which describe what a qualification represents in terms of knowledge, skills and competences. The Malta Qualifications Framework (MQF) defines a learning outcome as what the candidate understands and is capable of doing at the end of the learning process.</p>
Malta Qualification Framework (MQF)	<p>The Malta Qualifications Framework (MQF) provides an indication of the level of difficulty as a benchmark for a qualification, which needs to be assigned a level and mapped to the framework. The MQF has level descriptors from Level 1 to 8. Each level descriptor typically focuses on three key aspects: Knowledge, Skills and Competence. These descriptors guide educational institutions and training providers in developing curricula, and ensure consistency across the educational system.</p>
Moderation	<p>Moderation is the process to ensure further standardization and quality assurance led by a Moderator.</p>
Moderator	<p>Moderators are appointed for their subject expertise and knowledge of the respective applied vocational programme. Their role is to ensure that the assessment and marking are accurate, consistent, and fair across schools, and align with the institution's awarding criteria.</p>
Subject Coordinator	<p>The Subject Coordinator assumes the responsibilities of the Education Officer in the absence of the latter, as defined above.</p>

Term	Definition
Quality Assurance	A continuous process that ensures the standards and quality of the learning and assessment programme.
Sample of Work	A sample of work is a selection of the candidates' submissions, collected to provide a representative overview for the Internal Verifier or Moderator.
Senior Leadership Team (SLT)	This team is officially appointed by the Ministry for Education, Sport, Youth, Research and Innovation and exists in every school. The team consists of a Head of School and Deputy Head/s, depending on the school's population. The role of the SLT is to distribute leadership duties, ensure accountability among team members, implement the school's vision and establish internal policies and procedures. The goal is to ensure the best educational experience for all students attending school. The team is also led by the Head of College Network, who reports to the Department of Educational Resources.
Skills	Skills imply the application of acquired knowledge and understanding in different contexts. A skill may be the result of formal learning or of repetitive work in an informal setting.
Syllabus	A syllabus is an outline of what will be covered and taught throughout the three-year AVC programme for a particular applied subject. Each AVC syllabus is split over three units, each having a number of relevant learning outcomes that candidates must cover by the end of the programme.
Unit Content	The unit content comprises the information that must be communicated to the candidate for each learning outcome. Each learning outcome should have corresponding content delivered to equip the candidate with the necessary tools to achieve that outcome.

2. PREAMBLE

2.1 Introduction

The aim of this policy is to have standard procedures to be followed by schools, teachers and candidates who intend to teach, assess or learn one or more of the following applied vocational subjects:

- Applied Vocational Certificate in Agribusiness (MQF 3)
- Applied Vocational Certificate in Creative Media (MQF 3)
- Applied Vocational Certificate in Engineering Technology (MQF 3)
- Applied Vocational Certificate in Fashion and Textiles (MQF 3)
- Applied Vocational Certificate in Hairdressing and Beauty (MQF 3)
- Applied Vocational Certificate in Health and Social Care (MQF 3)
- Applied Vocational Certificate in Hospitality (MQF 3)
- Applied Vocational Certificate in Information Technology (MQF 3)
- Applied Vocational Certificate in Retail (MQF 3)

Applied vocational subjects are directly related to the workplace. Candidates will be assessed on the theory and practical skills indicated in the respective programme syllabi, providing candidates with the opportunity to qualify with level 3, yet also with exit points at level 2 and level 1. Nonetheless, these programmes are designed with a focus on the specific industry's needs, preparing candidates with employability skills that can be actively applied in the workplace or further education.

An Applied Vocational Certificate (AVC) in any of the 9 subjects is equivalent to 10 credits. These are distributed over three years. This structure ensures the development of technical and vocational skills according to this policy and the relevant subject syllabi.

The concept of applied and vocational learning is intended to provide practical hands-on experiences. This approach equips candidates with the technical skills and knowledge relevant to their qualification stream, providing them with essential employability skills for the workforce. It also allows for progression to post-compulsory educational institutions.

Continuous progression is supported by various post-secondary institutions, such as Giovanni Curmi Higher Secondary School, Malta College of Arts, Science and Technology (MCAST) and Institute of Tourism Studies (ITS). The level attained through this accredited programme is recognised, as indicated in this policy.

2.2 Syllabi Structure

The syllabi for AVC subjects have a modular format. Each syllabus consists of a number of units which are delivered and assessed across three scholastic years.

Each syllabus has a minimum of three broad learning outcomes (BLOs) stemming from the competencies indicated in the approved accredited programme. BLOs are brief, general statements that describe what the candidates are expected to achieve as a result of instruction. Accordingly, the focus is on candidates' learning.

Each syllabus is assessed through various assessment forms, including Coursework and Controlled assessment ($\geq 15\%$). There is also a self-reflective component in all 9 subjects.

3. ADMINISTRATION OF APPLIED VOCATIONAL SUBJECTS WITHIN SCHOOLS

3.1 Aim

This section is intended to aid Senior Leadership Teams (SLTs) in ensuring that the required administrative structure for applied subjects is in place within the school.

3.2 Definition

Administration is a process that includes Planning, Organisation and Management, and Roles and Responsibilities.

3.2.1 Planning

Schools should set up an initial meeting with the senior management within the DCLE to discuss this policy document and clarify any issues before offering applied subjects for the first time.

Heads of Schools should:

- Be familiar with the relevant applied syllabi.
- Be familiar with the contents of this Internal Quality Assurance (IQA) policy document, including all relevant documentation and templates, and make them available to teachers, Internal Verifiers and candidates.
- Ensure that the school has the physical resources to deliver and assess the applied subject/s. A list of minimum required teaching resources is found within the respective syllabi and can be communicated through the respective EO or Subject Coordinator.
- Ensure that the school has the necessary human resources to deliver the applied subject/s.
- Be responsible for the quality assurance of the applied subject/s delivered in the school unless another member from the SLT is nominated on their behalf.

3.2.2 Organisation and Management

The involvement and collaboration of the Head of School is of utmost importance. Heads of Schools are responsible for the organisation and the management of the programme within their schools. The main responsibilities entail:

- Keeping regular contact with the DCLE or the DSVP to discuss any difficulties encountered by the school.
- Ensuring that candidates, and their guardians, are made aware of the content and assessment requirements of each applied subject. Any potential difficulties which could be encountered during the programme, and which may hinder the full learning process should be communicated in writing to candidates and their guardians prior to choosing the subject. A copy of this communication should be kept by the school. Should the candidate still wish to pursue studies in the applied subject/s, s/he should not be stopped from doing so, provided that the assessment tool is still objectively designed by the teacher to reflect the content found in the syllabus. The aim is to ensure that candidates have understood the knowledge required and are able to apply it. Assessment should not be designed or carried out in a way that facilitates a particular candidate or group of candidates.
- Informing the EAU and the DSVP, in case of a candidate requiring access arrangements. The EAU will provide guidance according to the regular procedures for access arrangements.
- Informing the DSVP when a candidate transfers to another school, and complete the AVC Student Movement Form.
- Informing the DSVP when a candidate terminates his/her course of study.
- Informing the DSVP of any candidates who will repeat a scholastic year. In such cases the Head of School should inform the candidate and his/her legal guardian/s that the best unit mark obtained in either of the academic years will be accounted for.
- Informing the DSVP when a candidate does not follow a three-year programme. Such cases need to be limited to special circumstances for example, when a student starts attending a particular school in Year 10. Head of School should seek approval of the Director (DSVP) in such circumstances.
- Keeping regular contact with the teachers and Internal Verifiers to make sure that the standard expected by the DSVP is adhered to. It is suggested that meetings are held during the scholastic year, especially during the planning stage to compile the Unit Distribution Plan, and prior to the moderation process to ensure that all documentation and material is in place. Similarly, the school must keep in contact with the DSVP, through regular collaboration with the Education Officer

(EO) of the respective subject to ensure quality and standardisation.

- Making sure that assignment/task deadlines are being respected by the candidates and an extension of the assignment deadline is given only in extenuating circumstances.
- Discussing any other concerning issues with the Academic Board purposely set up for this matter.
- Addressing reports by teacher/s about candidates falling behind in their coursework and commitments. In such cases all actions taken, including communication with legal guardian/s, is to be recorded.
- Making sure that a copy of the Subject File for each applied subject offered by the school is kept up to date.
- A Subject File is to be kept for each cohort, hence covering Years 9, 10 and 11. This file should include the following information:
 - a. List of candidates studying the subject per cohort
 - b. Unit Distribution Plan
 - c. Scheme of work
 - d. Record of work
 - e. Assignments/Tasks: Assessment front sheets, assignment briefs and marking schemes/rubrics
 - f. Internal Verification: Records of the internal verification of assignment briefs and assessment decision records (indicated in the Assessment Front Sheet)
 - g. Minutes taken during meetings with candidates, legal guardian/s and educators
 - h. Moderation Report/s
 - i. Other relevant documentation
- Ensuring that the Controlled assessment is brought to the attention of all teachers delivering and assessing each applied unit in due time.
- Keeping records about candidates such as, the total number of candidates enrolled for each applied subject, gender and marks. All information needs to be equally shared with the DSVP in due time and/or when the DSVP asks about such data. Such data management and information should be handy and kept in a similar manner like all other data that the school gathers about its candidates.

3.2.3 Roles and Responsibilities

Role of the Academic Board

- A board will be constituted of at least three members: Director General (DCLE), Director (DSVP), VET Subject EO/VET Programme Coordinator, and two other members if needed.
- The Academic Board has the power and the responsibility to take decisions in relation to the candidate or the school providing any of the Applied Vocational Certificate subjects.
- It shall meet regularly for the purpose of regulating and monitoring the academic affairs related to the AVC programmes.

Role of the EO and Subject Coordinator

The EO plays a pivotal role in the effective administration and assessment of the programme. Responsibilities include:

- **Syllabus Ownership (for respective subject):** The EO or Subject Coordinator is entrusted with the ownership and maintenance of the syllabus, ensuring its accuracy, relevance, and alignment with the referencing report published by the National Commission for Further and Higher Education.
- **Issuing of the Controlled Assessment:** The EO or Subject Coordinator oversees and manages controlled assessments, maintaining the integrity of the assessment.
- **Evaluation of Programme:** The EO or Subject Coordinator is actively involved in the ongoing evaluation of the AVC programme, contributing to the enhancement of its quality, relevance, and effectiveness.
- **Preparation of Documentation:** The EO or Subject Coordinator is responsible for the preparation of necessary documentation which provides educators with relevant information to interpret and implement the syllabus, and to assess effectively.
- **Receiving Reports from Moderators:** The EO or Subject Coordinator receives, reviews and evaluates Moderators' reports to ensure compliance with assessment standards and facilitate continuous improvement.

Role of the Head of School

In addition to the responsibilities listed in section 3.2.1 and 3.2.2., the Head of School is responsible for:

- Providing feedback to the DSVP regarding any issues encountered during the delivery cycle.
- Ensuring that any recommendations made by either the Moderator, EO or Subject Coordinator are duly implemented.
- Ensuring that assignments are returned to candidates, and the signed Assessment Front Sheets are filed in the respective Subject File.
- Making sure that all documentation is kept in the Subject File and that the latter is safely stored for two years after the completion of studies by each cohort.
- Communicating any further queries or concerns with the DCLE or otherwise present such queries or concerns in front of the Academic Board.

4. ASSESSMENT POLICY

4.1 Aim

This section is intended to provide a consistent approach to assessment across applied subjects and schools.

4.2 Underlying Principles

All assessment should be fair, reliable, valid and manageable based on the published syllabi. It is essential that all of the applied subjects are assessed through coursework, controlled assessments and include an element of self-reflection.

4.3 Scheme of Assessment: Coursework and Controlled

During the programme, candidates are assessed through coursework, controlled assessment, and self-reflections. Marks (100 per module) are accumulated over 3 years through the different components. Further information about the distribution of marks for each applied subject can be found in the respective syllabi.

4.4 Assignment Preparation

Throughout the three-year programme, coursework must be developed by the teacher according to the unit criteria found in the respective syllabus. It is important that the coursework is aligned to the following criteria before being issued to candidates:

- Each grading criterion should be assessed only once.
- The language used in writing all assessments should be the same as the one used throughout the syllabus. Candidates can answer questions in English and/or Maltese unless the assignment brief specifies otherwise due to the nature of the criterion being assessed.
- Measures should be taken to ensure that repetition of assignment briefs and plagiarism are avoided. This includes, for example, the changing of the context, scenario, and/or mode of assessment for any assignment.
- Each assignment brief shall be accompanied by an Assessment Front Sheet and a rubric or a detailed marking scheme.
- Candidates shall be given adequate time to complete an assignment.
- All coursework assignment briefs, Assessment Front Sheets and rubrics and/or marking schemes shall be internally verified before the assignment is distributed to candidates.

- Copies of coursework assignment briefs are to be kept for the duration of accreditation and accessible for reviewers and verifiers (DQSE and Moderators).

4.5 Practical Tasks

- All Application criteria should be assessed through a practical task held at school, unless otherwise stated by the grading criteria in the respective syllabi.
- Practical tasks that are held in class should be documented by teachers by filling in structured observation sheets or rubrics for each individual candidate's work.
- Evidence of candidates' practical work is to be kept to support any observations.

4.6 Controlled Assessment

- The criteria that is assessed through the Controlled assessment shall be indicated in the respective subject syllabus.
- The Controlled assessment is issued by the Educational Assessment Unit (EAU) specifying the deadline by which candidates need to submit their work.
- The Controlled assessment is marked by the teacher and internally verified.

4.7 Submission of Assignments

- Candidates are to be informed of the submission date as written on the Assessment Front Sheet.
- The teacher is to ensure that candidates are to submit their work by the deadline/s specified in the assignment brief.
- Work submitted after the set deadline/s without a justifiable reason must not be accepted and/or assessed. Teachers are to keep an appropriate record of all assignments received.
- Teachers should support candidates in accessing and understanding the assignment task and mode of presentation.
- Candidates may seek feedback and support from their teachers as long as:
 - a. Deadline date has not yet passed.
 - b. The teacher does not provide detailed indications of errors or omissions. Instead, verbal feedback is given, and the candidate may take notes. Specific suggestions for meeting the assessment criteria are not identified.
 - c. A draft version of an assignment is not collected for marking.
 - d. Parts are neither added nor removed from an assignment following submission.

4.8 Extenuating Circumstances

- Candidates who do not meet the deadline for the submission of an assignment due to extenuating circumstances may be allowed to present the assignment after the deadline provided that the circumstances incurred by the candidate are accepted by the Academic Board.
- The Head of School is to record all requests for extensions, whether approved or not, and these should be inserted in the Subject File.
- Examples of reasons which may be considered as justifiable include the following:
 - a. Candidate taking part in international events, such as sport events in which s/he represents the country;
 - b. Justified medical reasons;
 - c. Death or hospitalisation of a close family member;
 - d. Candidate injury and/or hospitalisation which affects his/her ability to complete the assignment in the given timeframe;
 - e. Personal or psychological problems for which the candidate has been referred to, or is already receiving aid from a qualified practitioner/s.

4.9 Marking and Feedback

- All candidates' works are to be marked by the subject teachers.
- Marking should follow standard procedures to ensure a fair process, avoiding any bias in awarding marks.
- It is essential that the active verb of each assessment criterion should be respected throughout the marking process.
- Individual feedback shall be given to candidates by the teacher.
- The teacher's feedback shall state the mark awarded for each grading criterion and possible areas for improvement.
- General feedback should be included in the Assessment Front sheet along with the awarded marks.
- Candidates should be made aware that marks can change as a result of the moderation process.

4.10 Programme Certification

A certificate and a certificate supplement showing the MQF Level achieved by the candidate is awarded at the end of the secondary school cycle.

Certification criteria are as follows:

- Each vocational subject can be qualified at MQF Level 3, with exit points at MQF Level 2 and MQF Level 1, depending on the mark that the candidate obtained when all marks are collated together.
- An MQF Level 3 can only be obtained on completion of the three units. Candidates who missed out on one whole year of the programme can achieve a maximum of MQF level 2. Those absent for two whole years of the programme can achieve a maximum of MQF level 1.
- Each year carries a total of 100 marks. The marks obtained by the end of the programme will be collated to a maximum of 300 marks.
- The AVC programme does not include any synoptic assessment (resit).
- The MQF Level and grade that candidates can achieve at the end of the programme are classified as per below:

Award	Marks obtained for the respective subject	Grade
MQF Level 3	270– 300	1
	240 – 269	2
	210 – 239	3
	180 – 209	4
	150 – 179	5
MQF Level 2	120 – 149	6
	90 – 119	7
MQF Level 1	60 – 89	8
N.A.	0 – 59	Fail

5. VERIFICATION AND MODERATION POLICY

5.1 Aim

The aim of this section is to establish an internal and external quality assurance system to make sure that the standard required is being achieved.

5.2 Internal Verification

To maintain standardisation and quality assurance, all assignment/task briefs and assessment decisions are to undergo internal verification. This process ensures that assignment briefs are appropriate and align with the respective syllabi, while assessment decisions are fair, consistent and accurate.

5.2.1 Selection of Internal Verifiers

Schools should select Internal Verifiers from within the same school. If this is not possible, the SLT (with the support of the DSVP) should liaise with other schools for the process to be carried out effectively.

5.2.2 Internal Verification of Assignment Briefs

- Assignment briefs must be internally verified before being issued to candidates. If any issues are identified by the Internal Verifier, these should be addressed by the teacher prior to the distribution of the assignment brief to candidates. This internal verification should ensure that:
 - a. All information present on the Assessment Front Sheet is correct, including accurate unit details, accurate programme details, clear deadlines, and shows all relevant unit assessment criteria covered in the assignment. A copy of the Assessment Front Sheet can be found in Appendix I.
 - b. The assignment brief is fit for purpose and candidates are given an opportunity to demonstrate their knowledge, skills and competences according to the assessment criteria and content specifications as per the respective syllabi.
 - c. Each task clearly states which criteria is being assessed.
 - d. The assignment brief is written in a clear and accessible language.
 - e. Marks allocated are fairly distributed and based on the guidelines provided in the respective syllabi.

- f. The candidates' role and tasks are vocationally relevant and appropriate to the level of the qualification.
- g. Enough information is present in the marking scheme or rubric ensuring a consistent and reliable assessment.
- The outcome of the internal verification should be recorded, and all data is to be stored within the Subject File.
- If the Internal Verifier suggests amendments to the assignment brief, the teacher should carry out these amendments and return the brief to the Internal Verifier until final approval is achieved.
- Final approval of the Internal Verifier must be recorded on the Assessment Front Sheet prior to distributing the assignment to candidates. A copy of the Assessment Front Sheet along with any other documentation reflecting the internal verification process is to be filed in the Subject File.
- Internal Verifiers cannot internally verify assignment briefs which they have written themselves.

5.2.3 Internal Verification of Assessment Decisions

- Corrected assignments shall be reviewed by the Internal Verifier before marks and feedback are communicated to candidates.
- Internal verification must be documented and carried out in a timely way throughout the year based on the Unit Distribution Plan (Appendix II) established at the beginning of the academic year.
- The Internal Verifier must review the teacher's judgements, to verify that the:
 - a. Candidates' work has been assessed according to the marking scheme or rubric.
 - b. Coverage of the unit content through the assessment is in line with the syllabus specifications.
 - c. Feedback provided to candidates is accurate and linked to the assessment criteria.
- If any inaccuracies are identified by the Internal Verifier, these must be corrected by the teacher before results are made known to candidates. These should also be checked and revised across the whole cohort as necessary.
- Following re-marking, the assignments should be checked again, signed, and dated by the Internal Verifier. On completion of this process, the Internal Verifier must sign the Assessment Front Sheet (Appendix I).

- In cases where candidates do not provide enough evidence to meet the grading criteria because of an error by the teacher (e.g. the teacher explained the assignment brief incorrectly) the candidates may be requested to re-do or upgrade that part of the assignment following consultation with the Head of School.
- The minimum sample of corrected candidates' assignments that should be verified for each class is six.
- Where there are two or more parallel classes in the same school, with two or more teachers delivering the same unit to different classes, they may internally verify each other's assessment decisions.

If there are any disagreements between the teacher and the Internal Verifier, the Head of School should be involved, and the issue should be resolved prior to the moderation process, following consultation with the Academic Board (if necessary).

5.3 Moderation

This process ensures that assignment/task briefs and assessment decisions are accurate, consistent and fair across different schools. Moderation is conducted by Moderators, who have expertise in the subject area and are knowledgeable about the respective AVC programme. Moderators are expected to abide to GDPR regulations and confidentiality.

5.3.1 Role of the Moderator

The main duties of the Moderator are to check that:

- a. Internally verified assignment briefs provide the possibility for candidates to meet the assessment criteria and achieve the learning outcomes.
- b. Teachers assess and grade the work fairly, accurately, and consistently according to the marking scheme or rubric agreed upon.
- c. An internal verification system exists and is being properly implemented as specified in this document.
- d. There are enough good quality resources to support the assessment of each unit.
- e. Any arising needs or concerns are discussed and communicated with the respective EO or Subject Coordinator for that vocational subject. Reports and conclusions of deliberations should be filed for future reference.
- f. The delivery and assessment of the subject are in line with the approved accredited programme.

5.3.2 Moderation Process

- The moderation process will be conducted at least once a year.
- This process will be divided into two parts: (1) Moderation of assignment briefs, and (2) Moderation of candidates' work.

5.3.2.1 *Moderation of Assignment Briefs*

- All assignment briefs will be subject to moderation.
- The DSVP will liaise with schools with regards to the process of collection of assignment briefs.
- For this process, the following documents are to be made available for each unit:
 - Assessment Front Sheet
 - Assignment brief
 - Marking scheme and/or observation sheets and/or rubric
- Feedback will be provided by the Moderator and any necessary changes should be conducted accordingly.
- The Moderator may ask the school to issue another assignment brief, or part-of, to candidates if the initial assignment brief was designed in a way that does not meet the assessment criteria set out in the respective subject syllabus.

5.3.2.2 *Moderation of Candidates' Work*

- The moderation process of candidates' work is to be held in June.
- As part of the moderation process, schools are to prepare for collection the following items:
 - Subject File
 - All candidates' work
 - Observation sheets and/or rubrics
 - Artefacts and/or any other supporting evidence
- The moderation process is held at a location established by the DSVP.
- During the moderation process, the Moderator will review a sample of the candidates' work.
- The Moderator may decide to upgrade or lower the candidate's mark. It is the responsibility of the Head of School to ensure that changes are effected on the

school portal before the final marks are issued.

- A written report is issued by the Moderator, endorsed by the DSVP Director and forwarded to the school by the beginning of July of the same academic year. This report should be disseminated and discussed with all the staff involved in the delivery and assessment of applied vocational subjects at the school and stored in the Subject File for future reference.
- All recommendations and/or action points highlighted in the moderation report should be acted upon by the suggested dates.
- In case of non-compliance, the Academic Board may be alerted to take the necessary actions which may lead to non-issuing of students' certificates until the issue is resolved.
- Before the beginning of the following scholastic year, a general report with good practices, and areas of improvement on the moderation process will be issued by the DSVP.
- All coursework will be returned to candidates at the beginning of the following scholastic year.

6. PLAGIARISM POLICY

6.1 Aim

The aim of this policy is to emphasise the fact that using other people's work without acknowledging the source is not acceptable. Ways to avoid this misconduct and possible consequences of not adhering to this policy are highlighted.

6.2 Types of plagiarism

The following may be cited as instances of plagiarism:

- a. Copying whole paragraphs without referring to the sources.
- b. Presenting work carried out by someone else, including parents.
- c. Presenting someone else's assignments from different schools or from previous years instead of doing one's own.

Responsibilities

- Schools should actively promote a positive culture that encourages candidates to take individual responsibility for their learning and respect the work of others. Teachers must ensure that plagiarism is prevented in their assessments by modifying the context, scenario, and/or mode of assessment for each cohort of candidates.
- Teachers and Internal Verifiers are responsible to check for plagiarism when marking the candidates' work.

Procedures

When plagiarism is suspected before a task/assignment deadline, the teacher should:

- a. Make the candidate/s fully aware at the earliest opportunity of the suspicion.
- b. Give the candidate/s the opportunity to provide a justification.
- c. Direct the candidate/s to repeat the work with the intent of teaching candidates that such work cannot be accepted.

When plagiarism is suspected after a task/assignment deadline:

- a. The teacher should make the candidate/s fully aware at the earliest opportunity of the suspicion.

- b. The teacher should give the candidate/s the opportunity to answer to the allegations made.
- c. The teacher should inform the Internal Verifier and the Head of School about this incident in writing indicating which part of the assignment was plagiarised, the extent of the plagiarism, potential sources from where the material was copied, and the reasons provided by the candidate/s when informed of the misconduct. A copy of this report should be kept in the Subject File.
- d. The candidate will eventually be called in by the Head of School for an interview in relation to the case. The Head of School, together with the teacher and the Internal Verifier, should be present for the interview.
- e. The teacher should prepare a list of questions and a marking scheme for the interview.
- f. Following the interview, the teacher and the Internal Verifier should agree on a common mark and document the reasons for awarding this mark.
- g. The final interview documentation should be attached to the original assignment.
- h. Where there is enough evidence that confirms plagiarism after a task/assignment deadline, if the answer in attempting one assessment criterion is plagiarised, the marks for plagiarised answers are completely lost. The candidate is issued with a written warning and legal guardians are informed.
- i. In case of multiple plagiarised work within the same task/assignment, the candidate's work will not be marked but will be given a one-week deadline to resubmit original and authentic work.

7. CANDIDATE ASSESSMENT MALPRACTICE POLICY

7.1 Aim

The aim of this policy is to ensure that assessment is fair within and across all schools. It also aims to identify and minimise the risks of malpractice and outline appropriate actions that can be taken if such practices take place.

7.2 Definition

Candidate malpractice is any action by the candidate that has the potential to undermine the integrity and validity of the assessment of his/her or other candidates' work.

The following is a non-exhaustive list of examples of malpractice by candidates:

- a. Plagiarism of any nature (refer to Section 6, Plagiarism Policy, above).
- b. Working with classmates on a piece of work and then presenting it as an individual assignment unless the assigned task is in the form of group work.
- c. Cheating or attempting to cheat during assessment.
- d. Deliberately altering or destroying other candidates' work.
- e. Failing to abide by the instructions relating to the assessment rules, regulations and security.
- f. During assessment, being in possession of and/or using unauthorised tools and materials, software, AI generators and Chatbots.
- g. Behaving in such a way as to undermine the integrity of the assessment.
- h. Breaching assessment security measures.
- i. Making alterations to any results documents, including certificates.

7.3 Procedure for Dealing with Malpractice

All candidates, staff and moderators have the responsibility to promptly report any suspected incidences of candidates' malpractice to the SLT. Any malpractice should be taken seriously and followed accordingly:

- a. The Head of School should ensure that a signed report is provided, including any supporting evidence.
- b. The Head of School should follow up on the report in an adequate manner.
- c. The Head of School is to inform the candidate and the parents or legal guardians immediately of the nature of the alleged malpractice and of the possible consequences should malpractice be proven.

- d. The candidate is given the opportunity to respond to the allegations made.
- e. If malpractice is proven, the Academic Board for the applied vocational subject should be informed.
- f. A record of all the stages of the above process should be kept in the Subject File.

8. STAFF ASSESSMENT MALPRACTICE POLICY

8.1 Aim

The aim of this policy is to ensure the validity and reliability of the candidates' assessment while indicating the rights and responsibilities of staff.

8.2 Definition

Assessment validity and reliability can be put at risk through maladministration and malpractice. Whilst malpractice is a deliberate act, maladministration may be accidental, or a simple mistake. For the purpose of this policy, the term malpractice will be taken to include both malpractice and maladministration.

Malpractice consists of acts which undermine the integrity and validity of the assessment and certification of a qualification.

8.3 Responsibilities

Members of staff have a professional duty to ensure good practice in their assessment procedures. In order to implement this policy:

- a. New members of staff should be introduced to this policy by the school's SLT.
- b. Familiarity to quality assurance procedures as detailed in this document should be adopted.
- c. Members of staff are to actively understand this policy, disseminate it and ensure its correct application as part of their respective duties.

Teachers' responsibilities include the following:

- a. Careful interpretation of the assessment criteria, and that assignment/task briefs are in line with the assessment criteria.
- b. Awarding marks ethically and correctly according to the candidate's achievement.
- c. Ascertaining that marks awarded reflect the level of assistance provided (including prompting) during the production of work.
- d. Ensuring that candidates do not plagiarise.
- e. Securely keep candidates' coursework and other assessment evidence.
- f. Respecting ethically the provision of candidates' access arrangements.
- g. Following rubrics and/or marking schemes as indicated by DCLE.
- h. Keeping candidates' coursework and documentation secure.

8.4 Procedure for Dealing with Malpractice

All candidates, staff and moderators have the responsibility to report any suspected incidences of staff malpractice to the SLT.

Once such claim is made the following procedure shall be followed:

- a. A report should be written and addressed to the Head of School. This should include all details with reference to the malpractice incident, including any available supporting evidence.
- b. The staff member is made aware at the earliest opportunity of the nature of the alleged malpractice and of the possible consequences should malpractice be proven.
- c. The staff member is given the opportunity to respond to the allegations made.
- d. A record of all stages of this process should be kept.

9. REVIEW OF PROGRAMME

9.1 Aim

The aim of this review is to evaluate the effectiveness, relevance, and quality of the programme through a comprehensive process.

9.2 Definition

The Review of Programme is a process required to evaluate the effectiveness of the programme, and hence ensuring continuous programme improvement. This evaluation process will take various forms and includes:

1. **Formal Yearly Review**

An annual assessment of the programme involving third-party experts to ensure a thorough and unbiased analysis.

2. **Additional Feedback Meetings**

In addition to formal reviews, provisions for regular feedback meetings might take place to gather insights and perspectives.

3. **Statistical Analysis of Marks**

Statistical analysis is conducted by third parties on candidates' marks. This data-driven approach provides valuable insights into the performance of candidates over time and the validity of assessment criteria.

4. **Tracer Study**

A tracer study or equivalent tools are employed by third-party experts to verify the suitability and effectiveness of the programme. This involves tracking candidates to assess their career paths.

Appendix I

Assessment Front Sheet



APPLIED VOCATIONAL CERTIFICATE ASSESSMENT FRONT SHEET

Subject		Cohort	
Unit Number		Assessment Number	
Assessment Title			
Date Set		Date Due	
Class/Group		Student ID	
Student Name		Student Surname	
School			

Criteria										TOTAL
Maximum Mark										
Mark Achieved										

Assessor's feedback

	Name and Surname	Signature	Date
Internal Verifier Assignment Brief Approval			
Teacher / Assessor Confirmation of Mark			
Internal Verifier Assessment Decision Approval (<i>if sampled</i>)			
Student's Signature Upon receiving marks and feedback on corrected work			

Appendix II

Unit Distribution Plan



Unit Distribution Plan for Scholastic Year _____

School:

Teachers:

Internal Verifier:

Period	Activity	Person/s involved
	Writing Assignment Brief 1	
	Handing over of Assignment Brief 1 to IV	
	Internal Verification of Assignment Brief 1	
	Assignment Brief 1 issued	
	Assignment Brief 1 deadline	
	Correction of Assignment 1	
	Handing over of Students Work for Assignment 1 to IV	
	Internal Verification of Students Work for Assignment 1	
	Writing Assignment Brief 2	
	Handing over of Assignment Brief 2 to IV	
	Internal Verification of Assignment Brief 2	
	Assignment Brief 2 issued	
	Assignment Brief 2 deadline	
	Correction of Assignment 2	
	Handing over of Students Work for Assignment 2 to IV	
	Internal Verification of Students Work for Assignment 2	
	Controlled Assessment is held	
	Correction of Controlled Assessment	
	Handing over of Students Controlled Assessment to IV	
	Internal Verification of Students Controlled Assessment	
	Moderation	