Quality Assurance Manual

for the Accounting Technician Apprenticeship

Professional, Practical, Proven

www.AccountingTechniciansIreland.ie

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Overview

Accounting Technicians Ireland's Quality Assurance Manual (QAM) is designed to support (ATI) in delivering the Accounting Technician Apprenticeship programme.

The QAM is based on the eleven Core QA Areas defined in the QQI *"Core Statutory Quality Assurance Guidelines"* (CSQAG) in conjunction with the *"Statutory Quality Assurance Guidelines for Apprenticeship Programmes"* (SQAGAP).

Each section is outlined below with supplementary Policies and Procedures, Terms of Reference, Reports and other related documents in place.

Sections
1.   Governance and Management Quality
2.   Documented Approach and Quality Assurance
3.   Programme of Education and Training
4.   Staff, Recruitment, Management and Development
5.   Teaching and Learning
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Provider Profile

ATI is a registered charity; a not-for-profit organisation. Its primary goal is to serve its community of members and learners. Over the past 33 years, ATI has developed a system of governance which embodies rigorous oversight of the quality assurance of its training and education programmes. Its academic decision-making reflects the interests of learners, the maintenance of standards and is independent of commercial considerations (within the practical constraints of our resources). There are clearly defined responsibilities for those who develop and deliver its programmes and those who approve and monitor the quality of those programmes.

Provider Mission and Vision

Mission, Vision and Core Values

ATI exists for the development, guidance and representation of our students and members as professional specialists in the arena of accounting, business and finance.

ATI achieves this through training and education, its advocacy of the Accounting Technician qualification, the building of tactical relationships and the continuing support of its members throughout their careers. In doing so, ATI empowers its members to reach the highest levels of excellence and professionalism.

From this ATI has developed a number of core values which imbue the culture of the organisation and influence how Accounting Technicians Ireland pursues its mission and how it determines its strategic priorities. These are implemented and monitored through key performance indicators developed for each area.

Core Values

- ATI gives priority to upholding and promoting the standing and recognition of its qualification by:
  - Its international association with the International Federation of Accountants (IFAC) and its partner body Chartered Accountants Ireland.
  - Providing a qualification that is deemed to be the qualification of choice over the last 33 years for its 10,000 members and students.

- ATI acts at all times in the best interests of its members and students by:
  - Providing a qualification that promotes the highest educational, technical and ethical standards with a practical focus on providing continuous education and lifelong learning opportunities for its members.
  - Instilling in members ethical and professional values.
  - Providing programmes that are both market-led and vocationally relevant.
  - Acting as the primary source of technical and professional information for our members.

- ATI provides its members with opportunities for realising their potential and advancing their careers through continuing education and lifelong learning by:

  – Recognising the symbiotic relationship between education and lifelong learning.

  – Providing continuing professional development programmes for members and regularly reviewing these programmes to ensure they meet the needs of members and the market place.

  – Developing a range of educational initiatives that provide a means for our members to achieve their lifelong learning goals.

- ATI is fully committed to working in partnership with educational institutions to promote the highest standards of teaching, learning and assessment by:

  – Adopting rigorous quality assurance standards for its registered learning providers and monitoring the quality assurance standards deployed by learning providers through student performance, regular college liaison visits, and student evaluation in a spirit of partnership.

  – Developing strategic linkages with its learning providers through the creation and development of College Co-ordinator Groups across the island of Ireland.

- ATI is fully committed to working in partnership with Chartered Accountants Ireland, and to co-operating with other professional accountancy bodies in the interests of its students and members by:

  – Having active representation from its partner body, Chartered Accountants Ireland on its Board of Directors.

  – Negotiating exemptions and progression opportunities for members together with pathways to qualifications from other professional accountancy bodies.

  – Having the Director of Education & Training of Chartered Accountants Ireland on the Assessment Board and the Apprenticeship Consortium Steering Group.

- ATI endeavors to maintain high ethical and professional standards, to work efficiently and effectively, to offer high standards of customer service, to strive for excellence in all areas of activity, and to respect and protect the public interest by:

  – Adopting best practice standards of governance, quality assurance, management and leadership, and operational procedures executed in a customer centric environment.

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Organisational Structure

Figure 1 below outlines the organisational structure of ATI and depicts the governance relationship between the various departments.
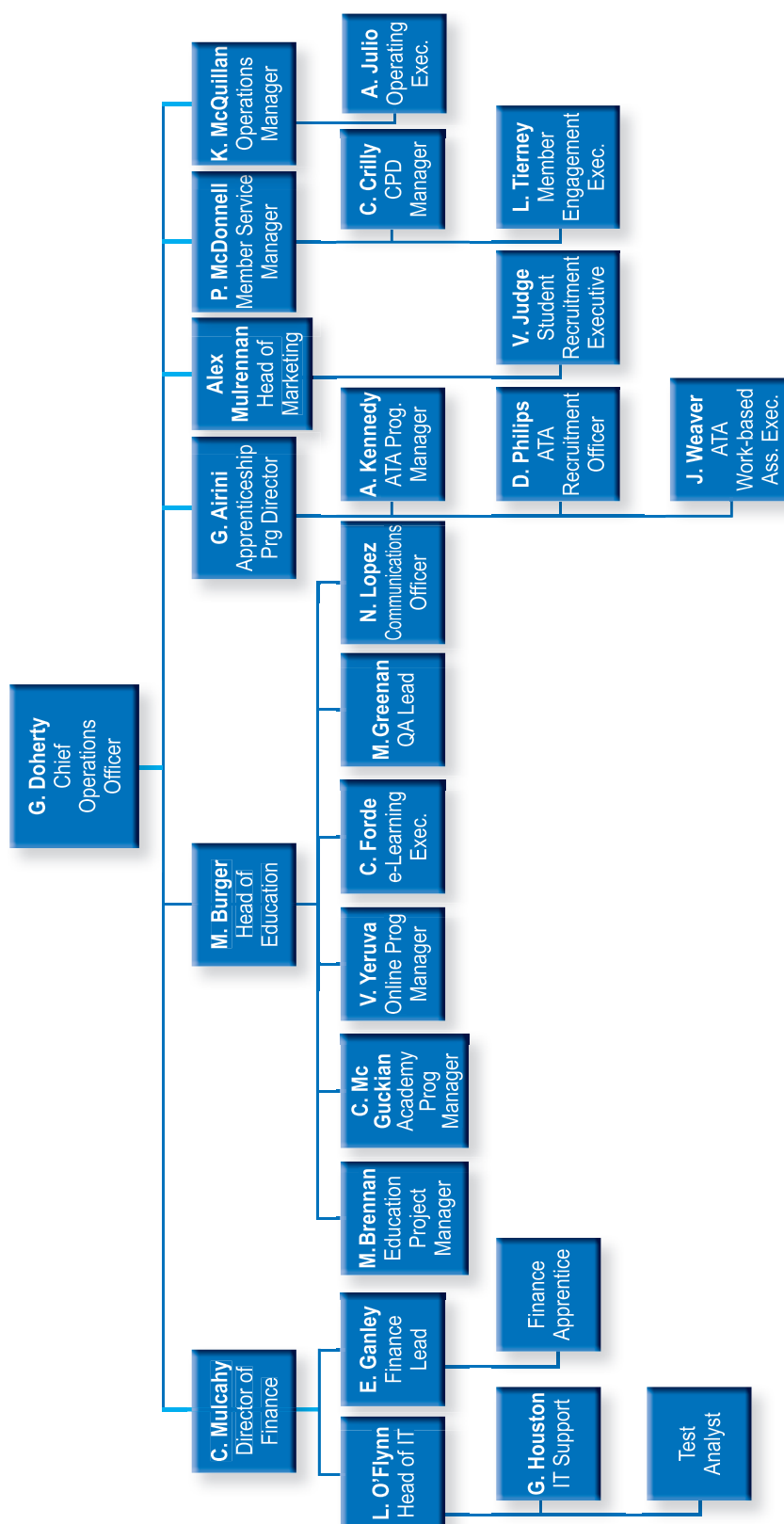
Human Resources

ATI's HR function falls under the remit of the Finance Director. The recruitment and management of staff, operates under ATI's Human Resources policy and procedures. The Finance Director issues a manual on the full policies and procedures to all units within the organisation and all staff are issued with an individual staff handbook detailing the key policies and procedures.

Finance

The Finance Director manages the ATI Finance Department. The current auditors for the organisation are PKF O'Connor, Leddy & Holmes.

ATI is registered:

• Company Registration No.: 100175

• PAYE No.: Same as RSI Number: 4738153C

• RSI No.: 4738153C

• Charity Registration No.: CHY6846

• Current Tax Clearance Cert No.: *Cert no longer issued by Revenue. The following login details will give access to ATI Tax Clearance details:*

    Applicant Name: Institute of Accounting Tech In Ire Ltd

    Applicant PPSN/Tax Reference Number: 4738153C

    Access Number: 836693

• Vat Registration No.: VAT Exempt

The training and education function works in conjunction with the Finance Department in the management of all aspects of ATI's finances including the cost of quality assurance which is an integral part of the annual budget.

Budget Planning and Monitoring

The apprenticeship budget is reviewed, adjusted and agreed on an annual basis in line with the budget planning procedures in all other parts of the organisation. This review and agreement process takes place in the autumn of each year in preparation for the following financial year. Monthly expenditure reviews with each Department Head and full Management Accounts are presented by the Finance Director for consideration and where necessary adjustments are made.

Health and Safety

Each manager is responsible for the implementation and management of health and safety policies, procedures and practices within his/her area of responsibility. ATI fully complies with all health and safety legislation.

The following health and safety procedures are in operation in the building which ATI occupies:

• Safety statement (dated)

• Hazard risks and assessments

• Fire drills

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- Regular inspection of equipment; lift, fire alarm system etc.

- Regular inspections by a Health and safety consultant

Health and Safety issues pertaining to the use of off-site training venues are managed through the quality evaluation procedures relating to external training venues (collaborating partners and employers).

Insurance

Public Liability, Employers' Liability and Professional Indemnity cover are in place.

Information Technology Support

The ATI Education Department provides all direct support to apprentices; particularly all eLearning supports.

Marketing and Communications

ATI's Marketing & Digital Media Manager provides support to ATI's training and education programmes in relation to production of marketing materials for programme/s and the marketing of programme/s. This is done via the ATI website and at educational events and dissemination of news and updates from ATI and the collaborating providers to potential applicants and other interested stakeholders through social media channels including Twitter, Facebook, and LinkedIn. Support relating to formatting and layout of materials for publication and website maintenance is provided by independent contractors.

Stakeholders and External Partnerships

ATI defines stakeholders as any person or body who has an actual or potential connection with, or makes a contribution to its programmes and/or services.

ATI is committed to ensuring that its programmes meet the needs and expectations of its stakeholders. ATI is committed to engaging in a systematic way with these stakeholders to maximise the potential benefit to programmes and learner outcomes and to input into our cycle of continuous quality improvement. We adapt a strategic approach to stakeholder engagement and review its effectiveness as part of our programmatic reviews.

Key programme stakeholders

- Directors of ATI

- Employers - collaborating providers/partners in delivery of the ATA programme

- Approved Partner Colleges - recognised colleges and training centres throughout Ireland who are approved by ATI and partner with ATI in the delivery of training and education programmes

- Education & Training Boards

- Members of the Consortium Steering Group and the Programme Board

- Higher Education Institutes

- Accreditation / Regulatory Bodies

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- Funding and Referral Agencies

- SOLAS

- Awarding bodies including QQI

Other stakeholders include

- Mentors

- Practitioners

- Occupational associations

- Occupational regulators

- Apprenticeship Council

- Department of Education & Skills

- Other state organisations responsible for funding and regulating apprenticeships

- Members

- Graduates/alumni

- Other training/apprentice programme providers

- Sectoral Bodies

- Chartered Accountants Ireland

- Other professional bodies e.g. CPA, ACCA, CIMA, ITI

- Potential applicants

- Government agencies

- External Experts/External Members of Boards and Committees

- External Authenticators and External Evaluators

- Subject Matter Experts (SMEs)

External Quality Assurance

The following organisations provide external oversight of ATI as a training provider in general and the Accounting Technician programme specifically.

Council for Curriculum, Examination & Assessment (CCEA)

ATI is recognised as a UK Awarding Organisation and its educational activities are regulated by the Council for Curriculum, Examination & Assessment (CCEA) in Northern Ireland (prior to May 2016, regulation was carried out by Ofqual). As an Awarding Organisation, ATI must comply with the Conditions of Recognition set by the Regulator. ATI submits an annual statement to the Regulator confirming its compliance with these conditions following an internal review of processes and procedures measured against the Conditions of Recognition. It also engages an external consultant to carry out a separate external audit. It is also subject to audit by the Regulator under any (or all) of the Conditions of Recognition. Ofqual carried out an audit and site visit as part of its regulatory oversight in November 2019. The Regulator confirmed that ATI was compliant in all respects.

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International Federation of Accountants (IFAC)

ATI is an associate member of the International Federation of Accountants (IFAC). IFAC is the global organisation for the accountancy profession dedicated to serving the public interest by strengthening the profession. IFAC has members in 130 countries, representing almost 3 million accountants in public practice, education, government service, industry, and commerce. ATI submits a Statement of Membership Obligations (SMOs) to IFAC on an annual basis. These statements are published on the IFAC website.

ISO 9001-2008

ATI is certified under ISO 9001-2015 and subject to external ISO audit on a periodic basis. The most recent external audit with NSAI was conducted in September 2020. ATI conducts annual internal ISO reviews and audits in order to ensure and maintain compliance with ISO requirements. Achieving and maintaining ISO compliance requires ATI to have a rigorous Quality Management System in place. The ISO system encompasses the organisation as a whole.

Overall responsibility for establishment and maintenance of the internal audit rests with the COO. Details of the internal audit process are contained in the Internal Audit Procedure.

Links with External Bodies

Approved Partners in Delivery - ATI's Approved Partner Programme

ATI operates an Approved Partner Programme with recognised colleges and training centres throughout Ireland for the delivery of ATI's programmes of education and training. To achieve recognition as an ATI Approved Partner, applicant colleges and training centres must meet ATI's Conditions of Recognition and submit an annual Statement of Compliance (with these conditions). As part of its quality assurance procedures, ATI conducts at least one onsite quality assurance audit per year with each approved partner. ATI's Approved Partners include Institutes of Technology (such as Cork Institute of Technology and Technological University Dublin - Tallaght), Education & Training Boards (ETBs) and well-recognised private colleges e.g. Griffith College Dublin.

Professional Bodies

- There is 50% representation from CAI on the ATI Board of Directors which links ATI with the broader community of practice. ATI also communicates directly with CAI corporate members via CAI's District Society network.

- ATI is a corporate member of the Dublin Chamber of Commerce and Ibec.

Links with Employers

There are several forums through which ATI engages with employers who are in a position to provide input into the apprenticeship programme. These include the Consortium Steering Group, Programme Board, the Member Services Committee, the ATI membership and District Society network. The ATA Team liaises directly with employers of accounting/accountancy staff. The ATI Employer Survey, which is undertaken at regular intervals, provides an opportunity for direct ATI-employer engagement.

Legislative Responsibilities

ATI complies with all relevant legislative responsibilities and policies in relation to the following:

- Health & Safety

- Employment

- Data Protection

- Disciplinary and Grievance

- Communications

- Equality and Diversity

Risk Management

The Audit & Risk Committee, which reports to the Board of Directors, is responsible for ensuring that risks are identified and monitored appropriately. This Committee oversees the maintenance of a Risk Register for each operational department and monitors an over-arching organisational Risk Register. Risks are categorised as strategic, operational, regulatory, and people and culture and rated in terms of their likely impact. All Department Risk Registers are updated on a monthly basis by the manager of the department.

Supporting Documents

- Audit & Risk Committee Charter

- Audit & Risk Guidance & Reporting Document

- Audit & Risk Committee Terms of Reference

- Risk Register

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Corporate Governance Structure

The ATI Corporate Governance Structure is outlined below in Figure 2:
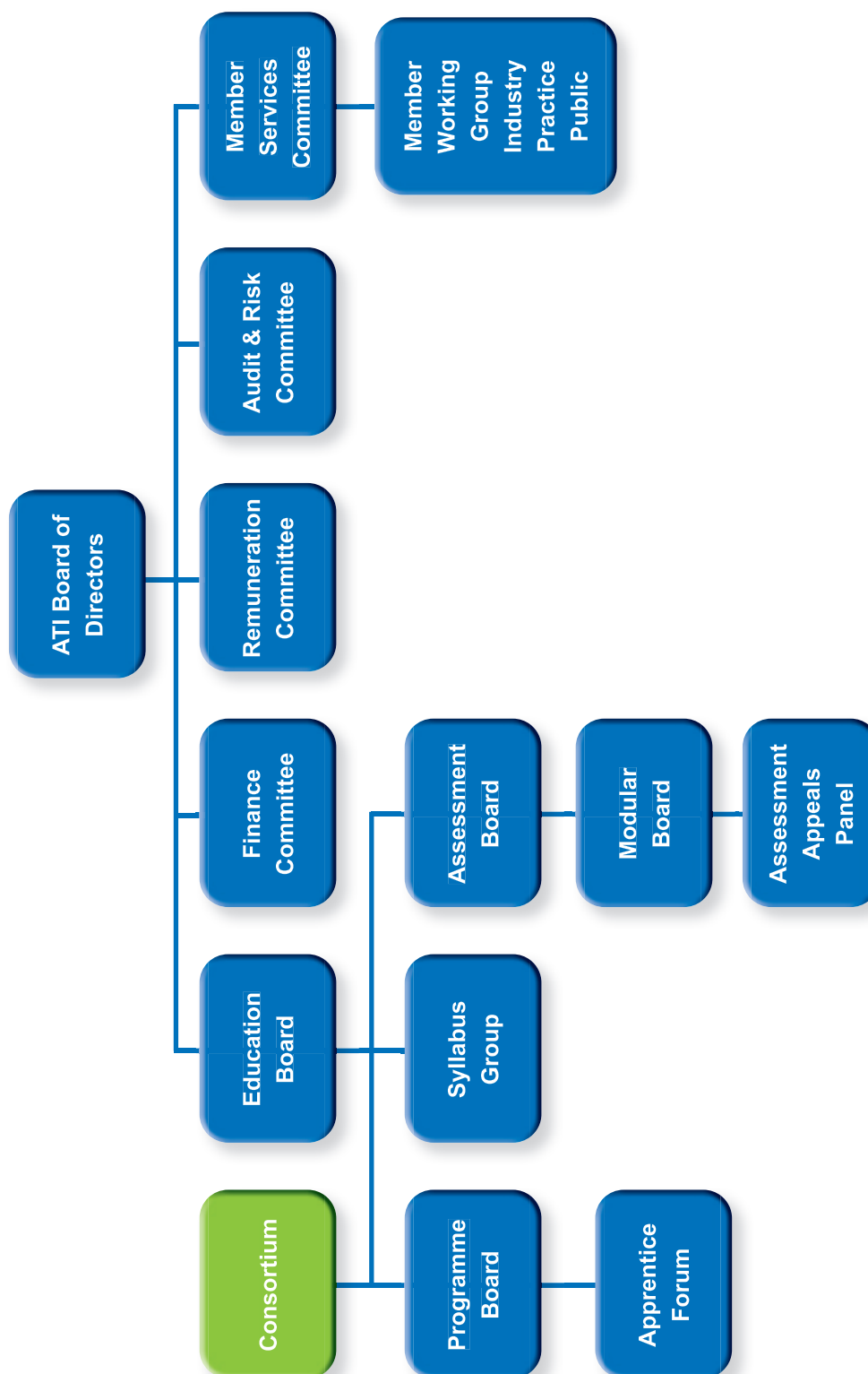
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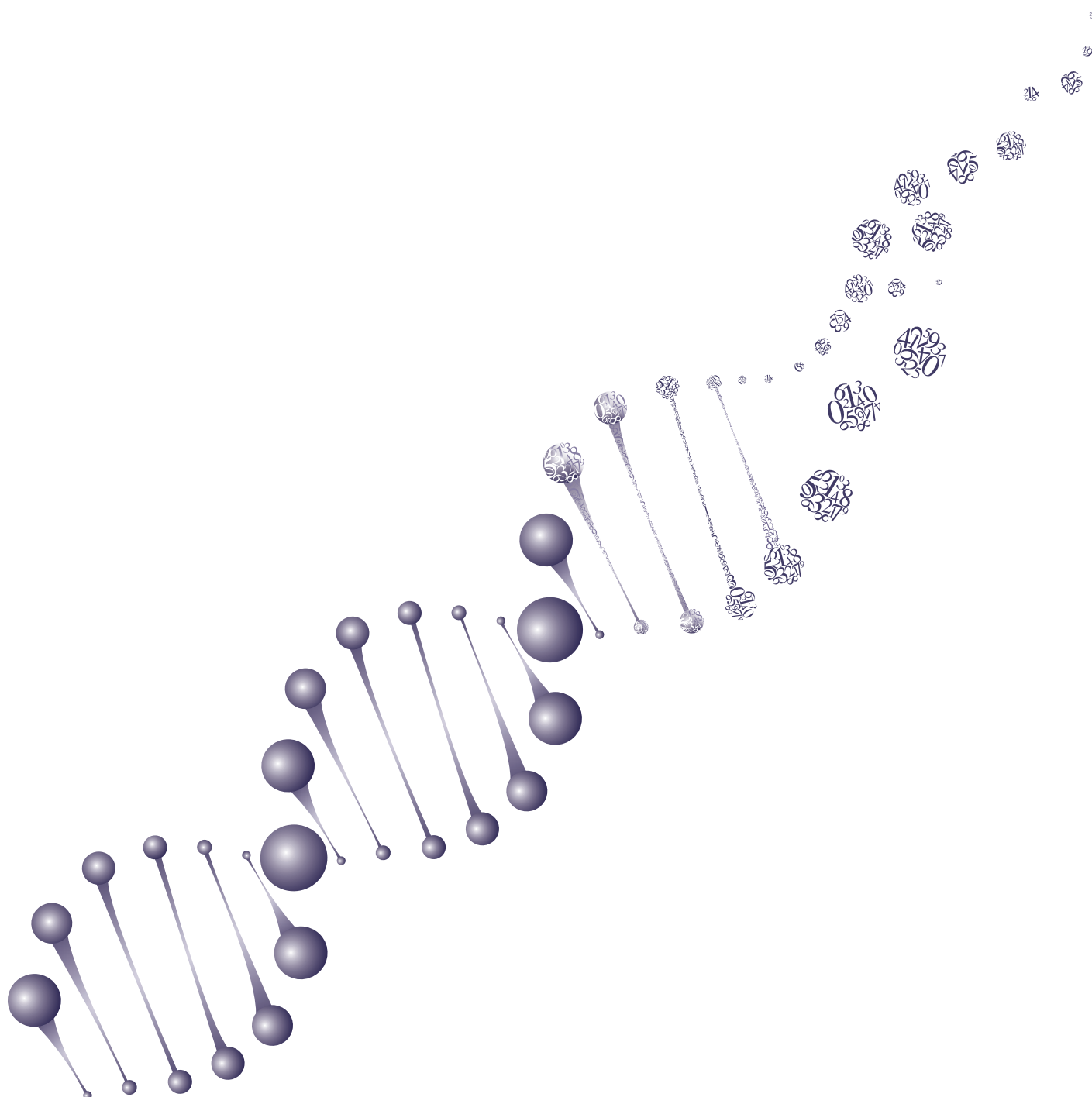
Governance and Management of Quality

Quality Policy Statement

Definition of Quality

"Quality is the level of satisfaction with the effectiveness of awarding bodies and providers of education and training, their products and services, established through conformity with standards and the achievement of excellence demanded and contributed to by learners and other stakeholders". (National Qualifications Authority of Ireland)

ATI has developed a holistic approach to quality assurance in the organisation. The Board of Directors ensures that quality assurance is driven from the top down. The Board has helped shape the policies and objectives which have been established and implemented to meet the requirements of ATI, in line with CCEA and ISO 9001 quality assurance guidelines. The committees, panels and boards which sit under the Board of Directors play an integral role in the development and implementation of policies and procedures and endeavour to maintain high ethical and professional standards by adopting best practice standards of governance, quality assurance, management and leadership, and operational procedures.

ATI is committed to providing all stakeholders with service of the highest possible level of quality. In order to achieve this, it is continually improving processes, programmes and services, striving to achieve stakeholder satisfaction at all times. The implementation of the quality assurance system is the responsibility of all staff members, with overall responsibility for the management of the system residing with the Education Board. It is critical that all staff recognise and commit to the philosophy of quality service delivery, accepting accountability for their own output.

ATI is strongly committed to the provision of adequate resources to enable and facilitate the implementation of the quality assurance procedures, the consistent application of these and the development of quality improvement procedures.

This Quality Policy statement is reviewed annually by the Board of Directors. Responsibility for compliance to this policy rests with the Board, which monitors the effectiveness of the policy and its associated initiatives.

ATI is committed to:

- Identifying the needs of its learners, members and stakeholders.

- Monitoring and reviewing its service and programme provision and processes, identifying potential errors and implementing the necessary actions to eliminate them.

- Training and developing all members of staff promoting a 'do it right first time' attitude towards quality.

- Developing relationships with collaborating providers and approved partners to ensure optimum performance.

- Achieving and maintaining a standard of excellence in the operation of its business and in the provision of its education and training programmes.

- Maintaining its reputation for honesty and integrity and ensuring that this is reflected throughout the organisation.

- Providing sufficient resources to maintain, develop and implement a documented quality management system.

- Ensuring that all company policies and procedures have the full support of senior management.

- Continually monitoring and reviewing its quality policies, procedures and processes to ensure that they remain relevant and effective to the changing needs of all relevant parties.

- Continuous evaluation of its operations to ensure that the quality of service it provides fully and consistently meets its stakeholders' expectations.

- Complying with all current legislative requirements and preparing to comply with impending requirements.

- Continuously monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness of its quality system by planned audits, management reviews and learner/member satisfaction surveys.

Implementation

Responsibility for the Implementation of ATI's QAS

The following are integral to the implementation of the ATI Quality Assurance System:

- The Board of Directors is responsible for quality and excellence in the organisation as a whole, for promoting and embedding a culture of continuous quality improvement throughout the organisation and for providing for the cost of quality assurance.

- The Chief Operations Officer (COO) is responsible for planning, coordinating, developing and overseeing the educational and assessment work of ATI; protecting, maintaining and developing the academic standards and activities of ATI.

- The Education Board has oversight of educational and quality assurance standards for all programmes. It reports directly to the Board of Directors on quality and advises on educational strategy.

- The Head of Education ensures that the educational and quality assurance standards are maintained at all times in the organisation.

- Members of Senior Management are responsible for ensuring that their own department's quality assurance standards are developed, maintained and continually improved.

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- The Programme Director is responsible for the design, development and delivery of the apprenticeship programme. The PD oversees in conjunction with the QA Lead the development and implementation of all quality assurance processes in relation to the programme engaging with the relevant stakeholder and regulatory and awarding bodies.

- The ATA Team supports the development and delivery of the apprenticeship programme. Members review the weekly summary reports presented by the APM.

- All members of staff appreciate the value of having a culture of quality embedded across the organisation and are aware of their role and responsibility for maintaining quality standards and implementing ATI's QAS.

A copy of ATI's Quality Policy Statement is displayed prominently, and access to the Quality Assurance Manual (QAM) is available for reference by all staff members and other stakeholders.

Committees and Sub-committees

The Board of Directors has established a number of committees with responsibility for ensuring excellence and quality in all areas. The conduct of each committee is governed by an agreed and documented Terms of Reference. Each committee is chaired by a member of the Board of Directors and membership includes external experts where appropriate. Sub-committees may be chaired by experts who may not be members of the Board of Directors.

The complete committee structure is described in Figure 2 (page 11).

Quality Assurance Corporate Governance Structure

As noted above the Board of Directors is responsible for quality and excellence in the organisation as a whole, for promoting and embedding a culture of continuous quality improvement throughout the organisation and for providing for the cost of quality assurance. The Board does have overall commercial responsibility for the organisation. Therefore, to ensure that academic decisions are made independently of commercial considerations, academic decisions are the responsibility of the Education Board and Assessment Board respectively.

In relation to the apprenticeship programme, the CSG and Programme Board are the key 'guardians' of the programme, ensuring that the apprenticeship programme conforms to, and evolves with the requirements of the occupation and oversight of delivery and assessment of the programme, responding to inputs from apprentices, mentors, external evaluators, internal verifier, external authenticators, the Assessment Board, approved partner providers and from the industry.

The Roles and Responsibilities document sets out the role of respective stakeholders and committees.

Maintaining the Quality Assurance System

ATI is committed to maintaining a quality assurance system which accurately reflects the current context of ATI training and education and which complies with all relevant and most recent accrediting body requirements. In order to ensure this, ATI reviews its Quality Assurance policies and procedures as demands arise, to be not less than once per calendar year. Any changes in policy will be ratified by the Board of Directors and a document control system and revision history will be maintained to allow changes and updates to the quality system to be tracked and monitored. ATI is guided by the principle

of externality in the implementation of the QAS; making appropriate use of external persons to ensure meaningful national comparisons can be made and independent oversight is maintained.

Activities Subject to Quality Assurance Policy and Procedures

The following activities are subject to the QAS. This includes but is not limited to:

- The identification and development of new programmes

- All elements of the collaborative provision to include the apprenticeship programme

- Learning materials and supports

- Teaching and learning

- Learner supports

- Assessment procedures

- Equipment and facilities

- Management and administration

- Partnership work with agencies and representative bodies and other providers

- Stakeholder involvement

- Staff development and support

In the development and implementation of its QAS ATI is committed to:

- The involvement of stakeholders and external experts

- Publication of the outcomes of quality monitoring and evaluation

- Regular review of the effectiveness of the system

- Ongoing resourcing of the quality assurance function

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Documented Approach to Quality Assurance

ATI has developed a holistic system of checks and balances to define, communicate, operate and enhance a coherent quality assurance system. Its QAS is made up of policies, procedures and processes, and supporting documents including Guidelines, Terms of Reference, and Memoranda of Understanding. Its QAS is integrated across the organisation and includes: corporate governance, finance, human resources, academic standards, administration, and assessment. Many of these policies and procedures are reflected in the Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) required by ISO.

The documentation which details its quality assurance policies, procedures and systems is housed in a Quality Assurance Manual (QAM). The QAM acts as a repository for robust, documented policies and associated procedures. The documented system sets out ATI's commitment to quality in terms of programme provision, support and related activities as appropriate. It also refers to arrangements for the internal evaluation and review and continuous improvement of the effectiveness of the policies and procedures.

ATI records details of any amendments made to the QAS where policies or procedures are found to be ineffective, out-of-date or superfluous to its needs.

Documented Approach to Continuous Quality Improvement

Quality assurance is embedded in ATI's training and education activities at all levels and spans both the corporate and academic domains. ATI is committed to continually improving its processes, programmes and services and to maintaining and continually enhancing its Quality Assurance System (QAS) in line with awarding body requirements, relevant legislation and the changing needs and expectations of members and learners.

Responsibility

The Board of Directors is responsible for the promotion and embedding a culture of continuous quality improvement throughout the organisation.

Supporting Documents

- Quality Assurance Manual (QAM)
- Board of Directors Terms of Reference

Evidence

- QAM Revision History
- Published Quality Statement and Policies

Key Steps

- ATI views quality assurance as an organic process and its QAS is continually developing and evolving to meet its changing circumstances and needs.

- ATI's QAS applies to all activities associated with education and training and to all staff, collaborating providers and other stakeholders involved in education and training for or on behalf of ATI.

- The cost and resource requirements of quality assurance are investigated and provided for by the Board of Directors.

- The Education Board reviews the Quality Assurance policies and procedures to ensure they are fit for purpose.

- ATI has designed the system with built-in flexibility which allows it to adapt to the changing needs of ATI, our learners and the training and education context in which it operates.

- ATI's QAS is designed to be context-specific, provider-owned and evidence-based.

- ATI has designed a Quality Assurance Manual which acts as a repository for the documentation which makes up its quality assurance system. The manual includes a system of document version control and ATI maintains an ongoing revision history as it makes changes.

- Copies of the manual are available to all relevant members of staff on ATI's shared drive and it publishes its QA policies on the ATI website and makes them available to stakeholders as appropriate.

- ATI monitors the effectiveness of its QA policies and procedures on an ongoing basis and undertakes an overall review of the suitability, effectiveness and continuing relevance of its system in line with its annual programme review.

- Following the annual review ATI makes the necessary changes to its Quality Assurance Manual detailing significant changes in the QAM revision history.

- ATI's QAS is reviewed by a suitably qualified independent expert in line with its five-year programmatic review.

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Programmes of Education and Training

Programme Development and Approval

Policy

ATI is committed to a systematic approach to the development of programmes and services. ATI considers all aspects of the programme at the design stage to include teaching and learning strategies and methodologies, delivery mode, assessment, access, transfer and progression, supports and resources, programme review and the integration of the on-and off-the-job modules of the programme. ATI monitors the programme on an ongoing basis to ensure an optimal learning environment. It allocates sufficient time and resources to undertake internal and external consultations with stakeholders and utilise feedback from learners, staff, mentors, tutors and other stakeholders to help identify opportunities to improve the quality and effectiveness of its programmes and services.

Responsibilities

• Board of Directors

Staff

• COO

• Programme Director

• Head of Education

• Members of the Programme Design Team

Supporting Documents

• Programme Director - Role Description

• Programme Descriptor Outline

• Terms of Reference for the Board of Directors

• Programme Design Process

• QQI published award specification/s

Evidence

- Record of meetings of the Programme Design Team

- Approval of applications for validation by the Head of Centre (COO) on behalf of the Board of Directors

- Programme Descriptors

- Applications for validation

Programme Development and Approval

ATI's programmes are designed:

- To match the intended learning outcomes for the programme.

- To match the Occupational Profile and to meet industry needs.

- To ensure alignment with the Professional Award-type descriptors.

- To meet the demands of multi-site nationwide delivery of the programme.

Key Steps

- The Board of Directors appoints a Programme Director and a Programme Design and Development Team to lead the development of the programme. The Team includes the Programme Director, subject matter experts and a quality assurance expert.

- The Board of Directors allocates a budget and agrees a timeframe for development of the programme.

- The Programme Design and Development Team develop the programme and engage with outside expertise, stakeholders, members, learners etc. as appropriate.

- If the programme being developed leads to a QQI award, the programme design will be based on the published award specification.

- The teaching and skills expertise required for the programme, the strategies for teaching and learning appropriate to the programme context and objectives and resource and staffing requirements are considered and addressed at the programme design stage.

- In designing programmes, ATI considers the transfer and progression options open to graduates of the programme and ensures, where possible, that graduates have the opportunity to transfer or progress, should they wish to do so, either immediately or at a later date.

- The design includes lesson plans/schemes of work for those delivering the programme to ensure consistency in delivery.

- ATI sets out a timetable and a schedule for delivery and assessment at programme design stage.

- The delivery and assessment methods are designed to meet the needs of the defined learner profile.

- When the Programme Design and Development Team have completed its work, the resulting Programme Descriptor/Validation Manual is presented to the Education Board by the Programme Director for consideration.

- If amendments/edits are agreed by the Education Board, these are incorporated by the Programme Director.

- The Programme Director prepares an application for validation to the awarding body.

- The Head of Centre (COO) reviews and signs-off on applications for validation prior to submission to the awarding body.

- ATI processes validation applications in line with the relevant bodies programme approval requirements.

Programme Approval Flow Chart

Figure 3 outlines the programme design and approval process.
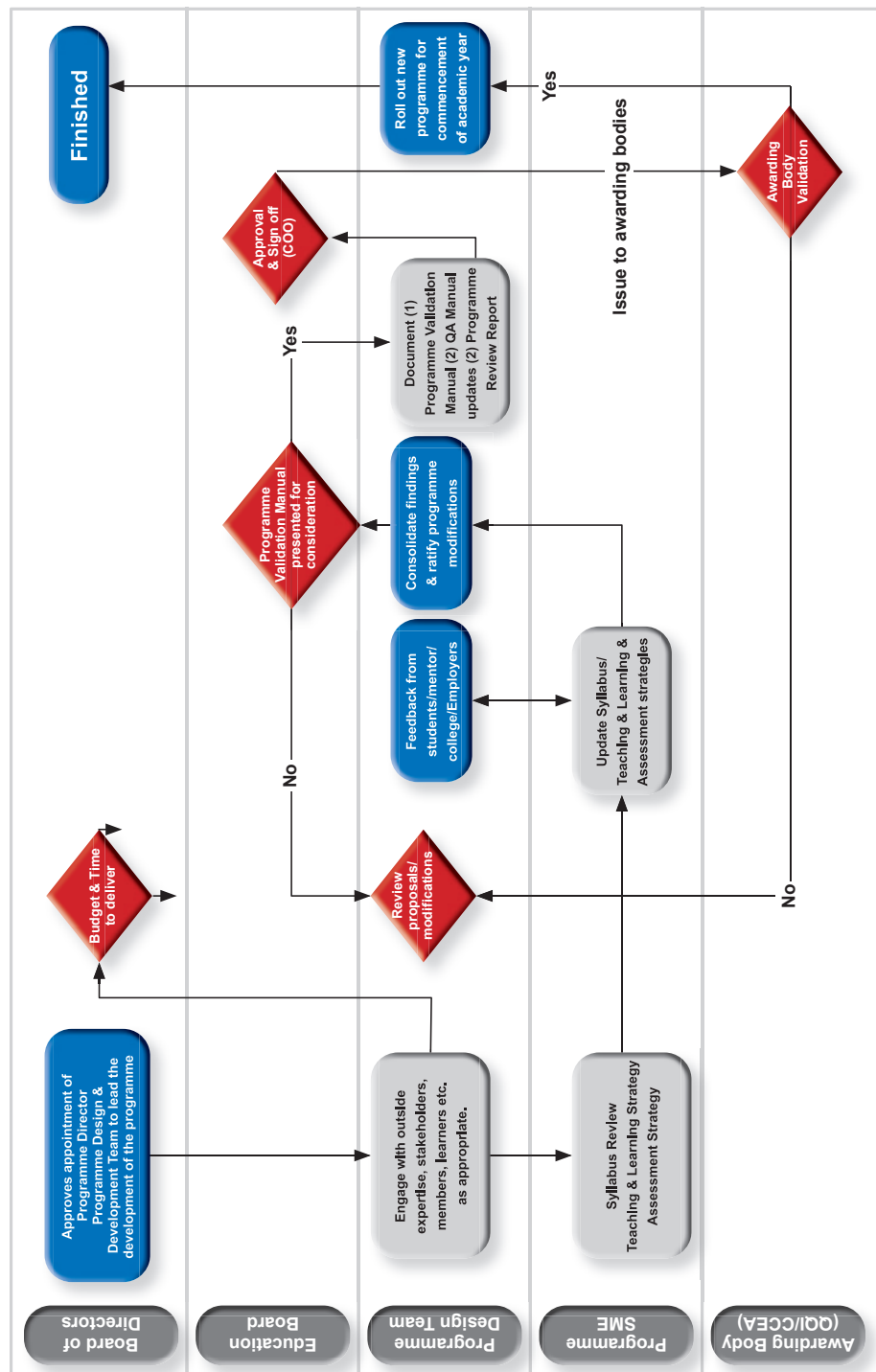
Learner admission, progression and recognition

Policy

ATI is committed to the provision of training that meets the needs of all current and prospective learners and promotes and facilitates access, transfer and progression. ATI will ensure that learners have access to information in relation to the apprenticeship programme, entry requirements for the programme, arrangements for recognition of prior learning, transfer and progression opportunities, programme adaptations and learner supports. ATI will ensure the mechanisms it has in place, and the information and arrangements provided for learners in relation to access, transfer and progression, are accurate and effective.

ATI is committed to implementing Section 56, Part 4 of the Qualifications and Quality Assurance (Education and Training) Act 2012.

It is ATI's policy to do all it can to facilitate learners gain access to its programmes, and, on successful completion of the programme, to transfer and/or progress to programmes leading to awards at the same or higher levels of the NFQ. To ensure this ATI provides applicants and apprentices with current and relevant data regarding Access, Transfer and Progression (ATP) in an accessible format to help them make informed choices.

The policy extends to:

- Entry Arrangements (access to ATI's programme) – ensuring that ATI has fair, consistent entry arrangements in place.

- Transfer and Progression – ensuring that ATI has a network of transfer and progression routes open to graduates of its programmes.

- Information Provision – ensuring that ATI makes accurate, up-to-date and reliable information relating to the ATP available to applicants, apprentices and graduates.

Responsibility

- Education Board

Staff Involved

- APM

- Programme Director

- Head of Education

- Recruitment Team

Supporting Documents

- Eligibility Criteria

- Applicant Appeals Process

- Copies of QQI Award Specifications

- Application Form

- Guide to Further Study

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- Exemption Application Form

- SOLAS Code of Practice

Evidence

- Apprentice Handbook

- Induction Programme

- Programme brochures and promotional materials

- Information on social media

- Record of applicant appeals

- Application for exemptions

- ATP Online Resource file

Entry to Programmes

- ATI makes pre-enrolment information available widely at information sessions and in promotional materials. This information includes details on entry requirements, advice on transfer and progression routes and exemptions.

- ATI makes information on ATP available to both current and prospective apprentices in its Apprentice Handbook, programme brochures, its prospectus and on its website.

- The specific requirements for entry to ATI's programme are clearly stated in its programme brochures and other promotional materials and ATI allocates places on programmes based on objective criteria in a fair, transparent and consistent manner.

- ATI recognises prior learning for entry to its programmes and offers places on programmes on the basis of prior learning. However, ATI does not recognise prior learning for the making of awards. It has a question on the Application Form re prior awards/learning.

- ATI's entry requirements are designed to ensure that applicants who possess the required competences, even if not formally certified, may achieve entry.

- Learners must be able to demonstrate that they have the capacity to participate successfully on ATI's programmes. Evidence may include Leaving Certificate results/CAO points, CV, references, and records of courses attended or samples of work. ATI's decision to offer a learner a place on a programme is usually made on the basis of information obtained through application form and an interview/meeting (telephone or face-to-face).

- All applications for places on the programme are considered based on them meeting the stated entry requirements. A member of the ATA team reviews all applications and either:

  – Accepts the application, where the entry requirements are met. The applicant will then be put forward for interview with an approved Employer and must subsequently be employed through a contract of employment and registered as an apprentice or

  – Rejects the application, where the entry requirements are not met, and advises the applicant of the grounds upon which the decision was made.

ATI has an Applicant Appeals Process in place which applicants can invoke if they are not offered a place on a programme and they consider ATI's decision to be unfair or unjustified.

Eligibility Criteria - ATA Programme

- The main entry criteria are 300 CAO (or equivalent) points with a pass in Leaving Certificate English and either Leaving Certificate Mathematics or Accounting (within the last 5 years). A *pass in Accounting is not a requirement.* For those who sat the Leaving Certificate in the past five years, the main entry criteria are 300 CAO (or equivalent) points with a D3 in Ordinary Level English and Maths or Accountancy.

- PLC students or other previous qualification holders are also eligible if the qualification is in a different discipline and is a NFQ Level 5 or above. Alternatively the CAO points and subjects requirements noted above will apply.

- Candidates with an 'Accounting-Related' qualification are also eligible. An 'Accounting-Related' qualification will be deemed to be any major award which either (a) contains the word accounting or accountancy in the title, or (b) is a recognised professional award in accounting/accountancy. *(see Eligibly Grid on Pg 27)*

- Employers have the discretion to enhance the entrance criteria beyond the minimum academic standards.

- Applicants must be Irish or European Economic Area (EEA) citizens or have resided within these regions for the past three consecutive years.

- A person from outside the EEA is eligible to apply for the Programme if he/she has Stamp 4 Visa. Evidence of this will be required on the application.

- If an applicant does not have a pass in Leaving Certificate English or equivalent they must have evidence of competency in written and spoken English.

- Existing employees of participating companies are also eligible to apply but must be changing to a new position in an accounting function. Evidence of this will be required.

- Mature candidates (23 years of age or older) are eligible to apply if they meet the academic or alternative qualification requirements noted. Evidence of this will be required.

    – **Accounting Technician Pre-apprenticeship Graduates – Eligibility**

    Applicants who have completed the Accounting Technician Pre-apprenticeship programme in Colaiste Ide or other similar pre-apprenticeship programmes developed under the PLC Pathways to Apprenticeship are entitled to direct entry into the apprenticeship provided they receive an offer of employment from a registered Employer.

    – **Applicants with NO Previous Qualification – Eligibility**

    Where an applicant has no (formal) qualification, eligibility will be determined through a series of questions. Generally, these will be carried out by phone, but it can be done in person where appropriate.

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Questions will be asked under four (4) sections and at least two (2) questions will be asked within each section. The sections and the intention of the questions that will be asked is set out below:

Applicants with NO Previous Qualification – Eligibility Questions		
Section	**Questions**	**Score (out of 25)**
Section 1: Knowledge of Course	1. How familiar is the applicant with the programme, requirements and commitment involved? 2. Are they engaged/motived to do this programme rather than another?	
Section 2: Work Experience	1. What sort of work has the applicant carried out to date? 2. When? 3. Can they provide a reference?	
Section 3: Direction	1. Has the applicant thought about their future career? 2. What do they hope to achieve with this qualification?	
Section 4: Other Learning (information/ semi-formal)	1. Has the applicant undertaken other courses of study (that did not result in a QQI-type award)? 2. When were they last in a structured learning environment? 3. If they have undertaken a course, how did they perform?	

Each applicant will be scored out of 25 under section. Applicants must achieve a total score of 50 (max score = 100) in order to be eligible. This is subject to a minimum score of 10 under each heading.

Eligibility Grid

Eligibility is determined based on previous qualifications attained by the applicant.

The Levels listed below refer to the National Framework of Qualifications (NFQ) in the Republic of Ireland.

Level of Qualifications	Non-Accounting Related Qualifications	Accounting Related Qualification
Level 4 or lower	Not Eligible	Not Eligible
Level 5	Eligible	Eligible
Level 6	Eligible	Not Eligible
Level 7 or higher	Eligible	Not Eligible

Exemptions

Supporting Documents

• Exemption Application Form

Applying for Exemptions

Exemptions are only granted to those who have never previously registered with ATI.

Applicants must complete and submit an Exemption Application Form *prior to registration* before the advised deadline.

The Exemption Application Form and copies of transcripts/mark sheets for all years must be provided; applicants may also be requested to provide syllabus information from their previous qualification. They must provide all documentation necessary so that the application can be processed in a timely manner.

Assessment of Eligibility for Exemption

• Exemptions are granted to applicants who have completed the named programme or exams within the last 6 years.

• All qualifications must be comparable to at least a Level 6 on the NQF (ROI) and Level 4 on the QCF (NI) to be considered for exemptions.

• Exemptions are offered for two first year subjects only. ATI does not award exemptions from any second-year subjects or subjects comprising Work Based Assessments.

• Exemptions are granted at the discretion of ATI: there is no automatic entitlement. Where submitted awards do not adequately encompass the relevant modular learning outcomes, no exemption will be granted.

• Applicants must have achieved a mark of at least 50% in each relevant exam to qualify for an exemption.

• Exemptions are not granted on the basis of professional/work experience.

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- ATI does not grant exemptions based on exemptions awarded by other bodies; if an applicant has been given credit for prior learning (i.e. received an exemption), he/she must also submit copies of the educational documents relating to that exemption.

- ATI reserves the right to contact the awarding institution to verify applicants' qualifications.

Exemption Offer

- ATI assesses each application on an individual basis and respond, via email, with details of exemption(s) granted (if any).

- ATI forwards an email offer which includes a unique nine-digit exemption code. Applicants will be prompted to input this code during online registration in order to accept the exemptions.

- If an exemption/s offer is given to the applicant, a fee of €50/£45 per exemption must be paid in order to formally accept the offer.

- The applicant confirms in writing acceptance of the exemption/s.

- Exemptions are not valid until the applicant formally accepts the offer as part of the registration process.

- If an applicant subsequently decides to sit an examination in a subject where they have accepted an exemption, this exemption is considered void and the examination result will stand.

Important Note

Second Year subject(s) assume prior knowledge of First Year subjects. By accepting an exemption, applicants are stating that they have this knowledge and are up-to-date with the subject(s) material. To prevent a student falling behind their peers in Second Year, ATI recommends that students revise the subject before they commence study.

It is not possible to obtain an overall 'Merit Pass' or 'Distinction' if first year exemptions have been accepted.

International Qualifications

Certified translations of all documents are required along with copies of the original language documents if the original documents were not issued in English.

Documents which have been translated into English are required to be certified as an 'accurate translation of the original language documents' by a certified translator.

If ATI is not familiar with an international qualification or the awarding institution, the level of the qualification must be verified by QQI. It is the applicant's responsibility to obtain this verification and submit it with the application for exemption.

Recruitment of Apprentices

Responsibility

Education Board

Staff

- ATA Team

- APM

- Programme Director

Supporting Documents

- Recruitment Flow Chart for Apprentices

- Applicant Application Form

- Mature Student Questionnaire

- Applicants Appeals Process

- Contract of Employment guidelines (supplied by ATA Team to Employers)

- Telephone Screening Form (Applicant Apprentices)

Evidence

- Completed Application Forms with supporting documents (birth certificate/passport, educational certificates, applicant CV)

- Completed Telephone screening forms

- Written confirmation from Employer that a Contract of Employment is in place

Process

1. Queries to collaborating providers – provide general information and application form and pass on details to the ATA Team.

2. Enquiries are directed to the ATA Team, which sends out online materials – brochure, application form.

3. Applicants complete the online application attaching proof of identification and proof of relevant qualifications/copies award certificates, a copy of the birth cert or EU passport / EU travel document and a copy of curriculum vitae If from outside of the EEA a copy of their Stamp 4 visa or naturalisation document of an EU country.

4. If the applicant is a mature student with no formal qualifications they are asked to complete the Mature Student Questionnaire.

5. ATA Team maintains an applicant recruitment tracker which monitors the application review process.

6. ATA Team conducts initial review of application and supporting documents, and categorises them into progress/reject/on hold need more information.

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7.   ATA Recruitment Officer conducts telephone interview with suitable applicants to assess their commitment/interest/knowledge and categorises them to progress or not. ATI Recruitment Team completes and signs off on the Telephone Screening Form (Applicant Apprentices) having selected the applicants to progress.

8.   ATA Recruitment Officer contacts unsuccessful candidates, suggests alternative options and gives them information about the standard programme or if the contact has been received by the collaborating provider, the contact details will be returned for the collaborating provider to give information about their course offerings.

9.   ATA Programme Director and Programme Manager then conducts a full review of all the progressed applicants' documentation and outcome of the telephone screening to confirm applicant's suitability for the programme to progress to Employers.

10. ATA Recruitment Officer contacts all unsuccessful applicants explaining the reasons and suggesting alternative options at partner colleges (if appropriate).

11. ATA Team forward the documentation relating to successful applicants in batches to registered Employers (when SOLAS have confirmed their suitability to train).

12. Employers select applicants for interview.

13. Employers interview selected applicants and inform the ATA Recruitment offices of the outcomes of the interviews giving details of the applicants that they will extend an offer of employment to and those who were unsuccessful and reasons why (Apprentice recruitment has a double purpose. The apprentice is employed to work for the enterprise. They are also being selected for a programme of training which may define their occupational status and career paths. Recruitment processes must ensure that the apprentice is likely to remain with the Employer for the duration of the training, to fit in with the organisation and to have the capacity and temperament required for the occupation).

14. Employers make a provisional offer to the successful applicant/s.

15. The applicant accepts the offer, the Employer issues a provisional offer of contract of employment for Leaving Cert students pending their results and a full contract of employment for applicants that already meet the educational standards.

16. Employers inform ATI and SOLAS of applicant's acceptance of offer.

17. The APM forwards details of the successful applicants to the relevant colleges.

18. The college will make contact with apprentices in advance of the college course commencement and college orientation.

19. The APM invites the successful applicants to attend Induction.

Employer Recruitment of Applicant Apprentices

Employers:

- Review ATI-screened applications on a monthly basis from February to September.

- Select the applicants they wish to interview and contact the applicants directly to arrange an interview.

- Interview selected applicants.

- Inform the ATA Team of the outcome of each batch.

- Make a decision regarding extending an offer/s of employment.

- Contact unsuccessful applicants setting out the reasons why they were unsuccessful.

- Extend a provisional offer to successful applicants and the Employer forwards a letter of appointment when the applicant accepts the offer in writing.

- Furnish successful applicants with a contract of employment.

Transfer and Progression

Supporting Documents

- Guide to Further Study

Key Steps

- Include information on transfer and progression in the Apprentice Handbook and make information available to apprentices via the ATI website and the Apprentice Forum.

- Offer one-to-one advisory sessions on transfer and progression options to apprentices if requested – face-to-face, telephone or online.

- Towards the end of the 2-year programme, the APM organises an information session for apprentices to explain transfer and progression routes, outline the links forward to higher levels within the framework of the NFQ and explain the Higher Education Links Scheme (HELS) *.

- Network with other training providers and professional bodies, public and private, with a view to opening up transfer/progression routes for graduates.

- Maintain an online resource file with information on transfer and progression opportunities and include the Guide to Further Study which details the progression routes available to apprentices who complete the programme.

* *The Higher Education Links Scheme (HELS) systematically links named Further Education and Training (FET) awards at levels 5 and 6 of the National Framework of Qualifications (NFQ) to a variety of 3rd level courses in participating higher education institutions.*

Transfer

Any apprentice who commences the apprenticeship programme and wishes to transfer to an alternate ATI programme (e.g. the Diploma or Certificate for Accounting Technicians) may do so. Exemptions will be granted for modules successfully completed.

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In relation to the Accounting Technician Apprenticeship Programme, completion of Stage 1 of the apprenticeship programme attracts 90 FET credits, and completion of Stage 2 of the apprenticeship programme attracts 90 FET credits. ATI is currently engaged in discussion with other providers to identify alternative, but similar programmes available in Ireland.

Progression

Apprentices who successfully complete the apprenticeship programme can progress to any of the major Professional Accountancy programmes as outlined in the table below:

Programme name, Provider Professional Bodies	Details
Chartered Accountants Ireland (CAI)	Graduates will receive the following exemptions from the CA Proficiency 1 examinations: • Financial Accounting • Taxation • Law for Accountants
Institute of Certified Public Accountants in Ireland (CPA)	Graduates will receive the following exemptions: • Formation 1 – All Subjects • Formation 2 – Financial Accounting • Formation 2 – Taxation • Formation 2 – Management Accounting
Association of Chartered Certified Accountants (ACCA)	Graduates will receive the following exemptions: • Paper F1 – Accountant in Business • Paper F2 – Management Accounting • Paper F3 – Financial Accounting • Paper F4 – Corporate and Business Law
Chartered Institute of Management Accountants (CIMA)	Graduates will receive the following exemptions: • Paper C1 – Fundamentals of Management Accounting • Paper C2 – Fundamentals of Financial Accounting • Paper C3 – Fundamentals of Business Mathematics • Paper C4 – Fundamentals of Business Economics • Paper C5 – Fundamentals of Ethics, Corporate Governance and Business Law • Paper F1 – Financial Reporting & Taxation

ATI also has formal arrangements in place to allow apprentices to progress to Business and Accountancy degree programmes at several Institutes of Technology. Full details of the progression routes are

documented in the Guide to Further Study which is made available to all apprentices. This Guide is updated by the Head of Education on an annual basis, or more frequently if needed.

Transfer destinations	
Programme name, Provider **Third Level Colleges**	**Details**
Technological University Dublin – Tallaght	**Ordinary Business Degree in Accounting – Bachelor of Business in Accounting (Add-on) – NFQ Level 7** **Code:** TA_BACCT_D Graduates will be accepted into **the Third Year** of this qualification https://www.it-tallaght.ie/contentfiles//Documents//life_long_learning/2019/Accounting/BBS_in_Accounting_and_Finance_Add_on.pdf **Bachelor of Business (Honours) in Accounting and Finance** **Code:** TA121 Graduates will be accepted into **the Third Year** of this qualification https://www.it-tallaght.ie/index.cfm/page/course?code=TA_BAACC_B
Galway Institute of Technology	**Bachelor of Business (Honours) in Accounting** **Code:** GA181 Graduates will be accepted into **the Second Year** of this qualification https://www.gmit.ie/accounting/bachelor-business-hons-accounting
Limerick Institute of Technology	**Bachelor of Business (Honours) in Accounting and Finance** **Code:** LC224 Graduates will be accepted into **the Second Year** of this qualification https://lit.ie/courses/LC224
Letterkenny Institute of Technology	**Bachelor of Business (Honours) in Accounting** **Code:** LY108 Graduates will be accepted into **the Second Year** of this qualification https://www.lyit.ie/CourseDetails/D401/LY_ACCT_B/Accounting
Athlone Institute of Technology	**Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Accounting** **Code:** AL852 Graduates will be accepted into **the Second Year** of this qualification https://www.ait.ie/courses/AL852
Waterford Institute of Technology	**Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Accounting** **Code:** WD084 Graduates will be accepted into **the Second Year** of this qualification https://www.wit.ie/courses/bahons_in_accounting#tab=outline

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Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL)

The recognition of prior learning (RPL) is a method of assessment which may allow learners to gain formal recognition (certification) for knowledge, skills and competence that they already have, howsoever acquired.

What is prior learning?

Learning is the acquisition of knowledge, skills and competence. Prior learning is the knowledge, skills and competence that an individual learner already has. This may have been acquired in any of the following ways:

- **Formal learning:** takes place through programmes of study or training that are delivered by education or training providers, for example in schools, colleges or adult education centres. This learning is usually accredited, i.e. it is recognised through formal certification, for example Leaving Certificate or ECDL.

- **Non-formal learning:** takes place alongside the mainstream systems of education and training, for example in work-based training, in voluntary sector activities or in community-based learning. Where this learning is assessed and leads to formal certification, it is accredited. Where it is not assessed and does not lead to formal certification, it is non-accredited.

- **Informal learning:** takes place through life experience and work experience. This learning is often unintentional and the learner may not recognise at the time that it has contributed to his or her knowledge, skills and competence; for example the learning acquired through running a family business or through caring for an elderly relative. Informal learning does not lead to formal certification, so it is non-accredited.

Entry to a programme on the basis of RPL

ATI allows applicants to gain entry to a programme on the basis of RPL: that is, an applicant may gain a place on a programme, without having the certificate required for entry onto that programme (where such an entry requirement exists). Apprentices who gain entry to the programme on the basis of RPL complete the programme and the assessment in the normal way.

- ATI offers places to mature applicants (aged 23 and over) on the basis of RPL.

- ATI makes available a list of the competences needed to succeed on the programme. Our entry requirements are stated in such a way that applicants who possess the competences, even if not formally certified, may achieve entry.

- Applicants must be able to demonstrate to ATI that they have the capacity to participate successfully on the programme. Evidence of this capacity may include a CV, references, and records of courses attended or samples of work.

- ATI maintains evidence and monitors its process to ensure consistency of implementation.

- ATI's decision to offer an applicant a place on a programme is made on the basis of information obtained through application form, interview and checklist.

  Or

  To gain exemptions within a programme: for example, a learner may be granted exemptions from elements of programme requirements on the basis of learning that they already have achieved.

Exemptions

Applicants who have successfully completed a recognised qualification or programme of study (academic or professional) at the same or higher level may be eligible for exemption(s) from one or more examinations, subject to the following:

- Exemptions will only be granted for 1st year (class-based) modules. Applications for exemptions for 2nd year (class-based) modules and work-based learning modules will not be considered.

- Exemptions will be offered based only on appropriate documented evidence supplied by the applicant. For example: official transcripts; award certificates, etc.

- Exemptions are considered on a case-by-case basis.

- Applications for exemption will be considered for individual modules in 1st year. Exemptions from the full 1st year programme will not be considered.

- Apprentices must complete the work based assessment for all modules but may be exempt from attending class and undertaking the examination.

ATI maintains records of exemptions awarded in perpetuity on the apprentice's academic record.

Withdrawing from the Apprenticeship Programme

If an apprentice decides to withdraw from the apprenticeship programme, they must notify the APM in the first instance and then formally in writing. A Withdrawal Request form is available from www. AccountingTechniciansIreland.ie or from Student Services directly. Respective programme partners will be informed; Employer, college and SOLAS.

Supporting Document

- Withdrawal Request Form

Expulsion of Apprentices

ATI has mechanisms in place to ensure the continued suitability of the apprentice to the training programme and the employment regime and it retains the right to expel an apprentice from the programme on the basis of a proven incident of professional misconduct or academic malpractice.

Expulsion of Apprentices – Professional Misconduct/Academic Malpractice

Professional Misconduct

ATI expects apprentices to conduct themselves in a professional manner at all times throughout the programme. This applies to on-the-job and includes interactions with mentors, members of the CoP, colleagues, managers and clients in the workplace. Examples of professional misconduct include aggressive or threatening behaviour, use of inappropriate language, inappropriate behaviour, bullying or discrimination. It can also include poor timekeeping and/or attendance, breach of confidentiality, or any other behaviours deemed inappropriate or unsuitable for the working environment. If an incident of professional misconduct is proven, ATI will evoke its disciplinary procedure with the ultimate sanction being removal from the programme. If an apprentice is found guilty of professional misconduct, they may be removed from the programme. The apprentice will have the right to appeal.

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Academic Malpractice

ATI expects apprentices to conduct their studies honestly, ethically and in accordance with accepted standards of academic conduct. Examples of academic malpractice include cheating in exams, plagiarism, presenting falsified or improperly obtained data or being assisted in the presentation of assessment tasks. If an incident of academic malpractice is proven, ATI will evoke its disciplinary procedure with the ultimate sanction being removal from the programme. If an apprentice is found guilty of academic malpractice, they may be removed from the programme. The apprentice will have the right to appeal.

Programme monitoring and review

ATI monitors and reviews programmes on an ongoing basis to confirm their continued relevance and ensure that recommendations for improvements, when approved, are implemented.

Responsibility

Programme Board

Staff

- ATA Team

Supporting Documents

- KPIs

- Apprentice Survey Forms

- Minutes ATA Team Meeting Report Template

Evidence

- ATA Team Meeting Reports

- Survey Analysis

- Records of programme modifications

- Quality Improvement Plans

Key Steps

- ATI surveys apprentices biannually. The APM reviews, summarises, analyses and reports on the completed survey forms to the Programme Board and CSG.

- The apprentices' e-Portfolios (which documents the development of the apprentice's knowledge, skills and competence) are actively monitored by the APM and the mentors on an ongoing basis.

- Members of the ATA Team meet weekly to monitor and evaluate the progress of the apprenticeship programme. Feedback from the mentors is considered at these meetings.

- ATI conducts a series of site visits in the colleges and workplace throughout the year to monitor the delivery of the programme and experiences of the apprentice, Employer, college and workplace mentor tutors and college programme manager.

- ATI consults and meets with stakeholders on a regular basis particularly members of the Programme Board and the Consortium Steering Group.

- ATI carries out an annual programme review under the direction of the Programme Board.

- The outcome of this review is a detailed report and an action plan for programme improvements. Modifications identified as being necessary during the review cycle are classified as being either minor or major changes. The implementation of any changes, minor or major, to the programme must be approved in advance by the Programme Board. The Programme Board will notify the appropriate awarding body of any major changes before offering the modified programme.

Staff Recruitment, Management and Development

Policy

ATI ensures that all members of staff have the required qualifications and expertise to provide programmes and services to apprentices to a high standard and that they are fully informed with regard to all aspects of the apprenticeship programme. It provides appropriate support and further training to assist its staff to continually develop their skills to ensure they are capable and competent to fulfil their roles to a high standard. ATI recognises that the competencies of its staff play an integral role in the provision of the quality of its training programmes and related services. ATI is committed to a systematic approach to employee satisfaction, training & further professional development.

ATI is an equal opportunities Employer and is guided at all times by equality legislation and best practice and expects its collaborating providers to do the same.

ATI's quality assurance procedures for the recruitment, management and development of staff have been developed in the context of all ATI's education and training activities and related services to ensure that it is taking the overall commitments of staff into account. This includes those education and training activities leading to awards of awarding bodies other than QQI.

ATI's staffing policy, procedures and processes are underpinned by the current relevant legislation.

This section outlines ATI's staff recruitment, selection and development. The full spectrum of HR policies and procedures operated by ATI is detailed in the ATI Staff Handbook.

Scope

This policy and procedures applies to all ATI staff.

Responsibility

The recruitment of staff is the responsibility of the COO who evaluates the need for staffing in relation to the apprenticeship programme.

Staff Involved

- COO
- Finance Director (has HR responsibility)
- Line managers recruit directly for their sections

Monitoring

ATI's processes and procedures on Staff Recruitment, Management, and Communication & Development are monitored on an annual basis as part of annual audit of the operation of the organisation.

Procedures

- Staff Recruitment
- Staff Management and Communication
- Staff Development

Supporting Documents

- Selection Criteria
- Job Specification Template
- Performance Appraisal Template
- KPIs

Evidence

- Role Descriptions
- Job Specifications
- Staff Training Files
- Agenda and minutes of monthly staff and management meetings
- Minutes of Board of Directors' meetings
- Personal Development Plans
- Strategic Review Report
- Employee performance appraisals

Staff Recruitment

ATI has procedures in place to ensure that it attracts and employs the best possible candidates for the designated roles. It seeks to ensure fair and equitable opportunities for potential and existing employees at all times.

What we do

- ATI has rigorous procedures in place for recruitment of staff and has job specifications and person profiles for each position.

- The relevant Manager identifies the required knowledge, skills, qualifications, competencies and experience levels of staff and draws up transparent and equitable staff recruitment and allocation criteria.

- All vacancies are advertised internally, on the ATI website and appropriate recruitment websites.

- All applicants for a post are assessed based on their abilities and experience against key criteria for the post as outlined in a job specification and person profile.

- Suitable candidates are interviewed by senior staff trained in recruitment and selection techniques.

- All appointments made are subject to a minimum six-month probationary period. During this probationary period job progress is closely monitored through appraisal meetings between the line manager and new staff member.

- Prior to commencing in the position all new staff members are subject to an identity check by Human Resources.

- The qualifications of new staff members are validated independently by ATI. In all cases candidates are required to provide an original or notarised copy of their award certificates and/or transcript.

- Candidates who present with qualifications obtained outside of Ireland are required to provide evidence of their equivalence and recognition by application to NARIC Ireland which offers advice on the academic recognition of foreign qualifications in Ireland.

- The COO and Finance Director monitor the selection criteria for effectiveness.

Staff Induction

Induction training for new staff is completed during their probationary period, during which the newly recruited staff member is briefed on:

- ATI's background, aims, ethos and values, structure and organisation

- Administrative procedures and regulations, including introductory training on information systems

- Specific roles, responsibilities and requirements of the role

- General terms and conditions of employment

- HR and staff development policies, procedures and regulations

- Introduction to other members of staff

- Performance Standards

- Culture of the Work area

- Office Systems

- Job Specific Training and Development

- Health and Safety

- Data Protection

- Monitoring and Evaluation

- Probation

- Quality Assurance

- Terms and Conditions

Staff Management and Communication

ATI has systems in place to communicate with and manage staff performance to ensure that all members of staff are in a position to perform their duties to a high standard, and that ATI is able to identify areas needing improvement and highlight and share examples of best practice. As part of its internal communications strategy, ATI operates an open door policy with regard to staff communication.

Key Steps

- The Senior Management have weekly meetings with reporting staff.

- ATI has weekly management meetings to assess the previous week's activities; minutes are taken and reviewed on a meeting-to-meeting basis.

- Members of ATI's Senior Management team meet on a fortnightly basis. Staff performance is monitored and measured against KPIs at these meetings and corrective action is agreed as needed.

- Departmental team meetings take place on a weekly basis. All staff members are invited to give an update on the current state of play of the department at these meetings.

- ATI has monthly staff meetings where each staff member is invited to feedback on his/her duties/issues. All staff members are invited to submit items for the agenda. ATI's business strategy is addressed and staff are encouraged to participate and to give feedback.

- There are agendas, minutes for all meetings and action plans drawn up following each meeting.

Reporting mechanisms are in place whereby staff report to line managers who in turn reports to the COO.

Performance Appraisal

ATI appraises staff performance and sets goals in relation to personal development annually at one-to-one meetings between each individual employee and their Manager, the Finance Director or the COO. KPIs for each employee are linked to operational duties consistent with ATI's strategic plan. We provide structured feedback to staff members on their strengths and areas requiring improvement. We monitor the areas identified as needing improvement. The degree to which the goals are being met is reviewed on a monthly basis by their line manager.

ATI discusses strategy for the coming year relevant to the individual employee and his/her department, KPIs and Personal Development Plans at these meetings. ATI reviews performance over the past year and how it related to the strategic focus. KPIs for the upcoming year are discussed in order to focus the employee on key areas within his/her duties and ascertain the continuing training and development needs of the individual employee.

The current appraisal system was enhanced further by way of managers conducting appraisals on all reporting staff. Following on from these appraisals further meetings with Manager, staff member, Director and COO take place to review KPIs on a quarterly basis.

Each employee has a copy of his/her personal KPIs printed out.

Staff Development and Training

ATI has an internal policy of supporting staff with a variety of training, educational and development opportunities. Staff development is any measure undertaken by individuals to improve their skills, knowledge and abilities, particularly as they relate to the workplace and from which added value can be ascertained. These include:

- Pursuing formal qualifications

- Attendance and participation in conferences and seminars both national and international

- Participation in short courses relevant to their subject area/discipline or area of responsibility

- In-service training opportunities within ATI

- Representing ATI on relevant special interest and working groups

ATI retains a record of staff training and development which is maintained by the relevant line managers, who in conjunction with the COO, approve staff training and development activities in advance and ensure such activity does not interfere with the core duties of any staff member or does not conflict with ATI's core business.

Supporting Documents

- Training Needs Analysis Template

- CPD Log

ATI provides a supportive environment that encourages and rewards high performance and continuous learning. It provides feedback to staff members on their strengths and areas requiring improvement and plans for and allocates resources to address staff training, development and support needs.

- ATI regards Continuous Professional Development (CPD) as an ongoing process of learning and development that continues for the duration of a person's working life. The activities which lead to professional development may be formal or informal.

- CPD is linked to each individual's job specification which in turn plays a part in the long-term business strategy of ATI. ATI supports individuals to pursue self-defined CPD goals.

- ATI identifies CPD requirements and provides training for the staff team as a whole in response to programme and service developments and the changing needs of members and learners.

- ATI has annual budget for staff CPD and encourages all members of staff to engage in CPD.

- ATI refunds employees college fees on successful completion of approved courses.

- ATI encourages innovation in training methods and the use of new technologies.

- ATI is a member of relevant professional bodies and online social media groups at an organisational level and encourages staff members to take out memberships also.

- ATI carries out an annual training needs analysis to identify staff training and development needs.

- ATI discusses personal development plans and asks for feedback on completed training and development events.

- Staff attend external development training, conferences and seminars etc. and they are asked to evaluate the value of these events and provide feedback.

- ATI determines, as accurately as possible, how or whether the CPD activity has impacted on organisational goals. To ensure there is a transfer of learning which enhances job performance, ATI measures the skills and knowledge employees have gained from their course against the employee's Key Performance Indicators.

- Before taking part in a learning activity, staff members with their Manager, Director and/or COO discuss the purpose and intended outcomes of the learning activity. Afterwards there is discussion on outcomes achieved and how best to transfer the learning to the workplace.

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Teaching and Learning

Policy

ATI's vision is to create a learning environment that values critical reflection and fosters personal and professional development for apprentices, staff and all those who make an input into its programmes. It aims to provide a positive, empowering, inclusive and mutually respectful learning environment that enables learners to reach their maximum potential and prepares them for active membership of their Community of Practice. This policy outlines ATI's approach to teaching and learning and the systems it has in place to ensure high quality training and learning practices. It is committed to monitoring and improving the quality of training and learning on its programmes on an on-going basis. This is achieved through the following mechanism:

- **Teaching and Learning Strategy**

- **Maintaining the Curriculum**

- **Ensuring Equivalence of Provision**

- **Establishing and Maintaining a Community of Practice (CoP)**

- **Facilitating Diversity**

Responsibility

Programme Board

Staff

- Programme Director

- Head of Education

- APM

- COO

Teaching and Learning Strategy

Supporting Documents

• Individual Training Plan template

Evidence

• Individual Training Plans

• Teaching & Learning Strategy Document

• Sample Teaching, & Learning Strategies for Individual Modules

• Module Descriptors/ programme validation documentation

Key Steps

ATI decides on the delivery methodologies based on the needs and profile of the learners together with the themes and content of the various modules that make up the programme. The methodologies it uses will be inclusive of the range of learning styles of the learners.

ATI adopts a learner-centred approach to teaching and learning and the focus of the programme content and assessment strategies is to empower the apprentices to take responsibility for their own learning. ATI encourages learners to focus on developing independent and self-directed learning skills as well as working as part of teams. It encourages a sense of autonomy in the learner, while ensuring that adequate guidance and support systems are in place. The strategies and mechanisms also reflect the different learning environments both on- and off-the-job. ATI invites, promotes and expects active participation by the apprentices at all stages of the programme.

The teaching and learning strategies for each module and for the programme as a whole are set out clearly in the programme validation documentation and samples of teaching and learning activities are provided for each module. The teaching and learning context of workplace modules will vary, depending on the nature of the Employer operation and the apprentice's allocated role. Therefore, teaching methods used to address the workplace module content will also vary.

Using Technology and Multimedia Sources – a Blended Learning Approach to Teaching and Learning

ATI uses a blended learning *(the term blended learning is generally applied to the practice of using both online and in-person face-to-face learning experiences when teaching and learning)* approach to teaching and learning and are committed to investing in effective technology and multimedia resources to support classroom delivery. A blended learning approach, allowing the apprentices to learn through multiple channels, helps to keep the apprentices engaged and to take responsibility for driving parts of his or her individual learning experience. This way, in-class time is supplemented by online learning and the online and in-person learning experiences parallel and complement each other.

The following are the delivery methodologies to be employed in delivering the apprenticeship programme, as appropriate:

• Directed learning experiences in the classroom setting supported by a Virtual Learning Environment.

• Group discussions and interactions to tease out programme content.

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- Practical sessions using appropriate equipment, resources and facilities.

- One-to-one delivery.

- Self-directed learning which may include practice time, preparation, study time and reflection time.

- Online activities to support formative and summative assessment.

The following teaching methods are used in the delivery of the apprenticeship programme. This list is not intended to be exhaustive, but reflect the main teaching methods used. ATI also encourages tutors and mentors to be flexible with regard to their use of different modes of delivery and to use a variety of pedagogical methods, where appropriate.

- Presentation/lecture of theory and procedure, illustrated by examples.

- Practical whole-group activity - text, self-test questions with answers, practice questions plus answers.

- Practical small group activity - text, self-test questions with answers, practice questions plus answers.

- Individual reading, reflection and revision.

Workplace strategies include

- Task planning and goal-setting

- Mind-mapping

- Discussion with Workplace Mentor and exchange of feedback

- Coaching

- Demonstrations

- Performance of practical tasks

- Guided use of company templates/procedures

- Record learning, experiences and reflections using supplied templates

- Staff Presentations

- Staff Meetings

- Small-group discussions/team meeting with colleagues.

Teaching Strategy

At the outset of the programme ATI works with apprentices to help them define their learning style(s) and works closely with them to design learning strategies appropriate to their particular style. This will help them to decide on their approach to self-directed and workplace learning. Apprentices are provided with an Individual Training Plan (ILP) Template. ATI encourage a sense of autonomy in the learner, while providing adequate guidance and support.

During the Induction Phase of the programme, apprentices, mentors and tutors together draw up a set of long-term goals and short terms objectives, related to the

- Programme content

- To their own personal and professional development

- Their progress towards becoming a fully-fledged member of the CoP.

The progress of each apprentice in achieving the agreed goals as set out in the ILP is monitored by the ATA team and recorded in the individual learner record on an ongoing basis.

Tutors and mentors use a wide variety of teaching methods; discussion, case studies and practical tasks which contribute to the development of soft skills. These methods are complemented by presentations, lectures and step-by-step demonstrations. Formative assessment of learners' progress towards their learning goals forms part of the teaching and learning approach.

All apprentices have the support of a workplace mentor while they are completing the on-the-job modules. The WPM is responsible for structuring and guiding the apprentices during their time in the workplace, and assists the apprentice in gathering material for an e-Portfolio (see below) which acts as both a teaching and learning and an assessment tool.

ATI ensures that staff are appropriately qualified and experienced and the appointment of all members of its programme team, tutors, mentors and support staff, is quality assured.

It has an assigned budget in place to cover the cost of purchase of the required resources to ensure quality training and learning environment.

It encourages apprentices to form study groups (both traditional and virtual) and provide online resources which can be used by the apprentices to help them study and learn more effectively and efficiently.

Maintaining the Curriculum

An apprenticeship programme is, by its nature, delivered within the context of the occupation and we recognise that changes may occur in the occupation more rapidly than within academic institutions. ATI's aim is to design and maintain the curriculum so as to ensure that the qualified apprentice is immediately capable of performing all of the activities required by the occupation on graduation without the necessity of further learning.

Responsibility

- Programme Board
- Consortium Steering Group

Staff

- ATA team

Supporting Documents

- Programme Board Terms of Reference
- Consortium Steering Group Terms of Reference
- Staff Development Procedure
- APM Role Description

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- Validation Manual

Evidence

- Programme validation documentation

- Annual Occupational Profile Reviews

- Programme Board and Consortium Steering Group meeting minutes/reports

To ensure that ATI's programme is responsive to changes and that the apprentices are properly prepared on graduation:

- Design programme validation documentation so it is not overly detailed and prescriptive, emphasising outcomes and strategies rather than detailed elaboration of learning materials.

- As the Coordinating Provider, ATI, on behalf of the Programme Board, monitors changes in the occupation with input from the Consortium Steering Group and its Programme Board actively reviews and engages in research and development to ensure the Occupational Profile is fit-for-purpose (ref Role of Programme Board and Consortium Steering Group).

- Review the content of each module on an annual basis as part of our annual programme review to ensure that the content and teaching and learning strategies reflect advances in the relevant disciplines and that the pedagogic style incorporates best practice.

- The APM is responsible for disseminating information on innovations in the curriculum to the ATA team, tutors, college programme coordinators and mentors.

- Programme materials (text books and online resources) are updated annually by SMEs to reflect legal and regulatory requirements. Any changes are highlighted to tutors and assessors.

- Review assessment techniques and examinations annually and makes changes as needed to reflect updated work practices and content (Ref Assessment Planning and Design).

- The Programme Board meets quarterly to help prevent too wide a disparity in experience arising.

Ensuring Equivalence of Provision

Apprentice programmes will be spread over a minimum of two locations, the place of employment and the collaborating provider college. In some cases, it may involve more than two. ATI recognises the challenges that multi-site delivery and the variable capabilities of providers can present. Challenges can also arise as a result of changing resources or opportunities available to the apprentices and varying levels of competence or commitment within the peer group which may affect the on-the-job experience of apprentices.

Responsibility

ATI as the Coordinating Provider

Staff

- Programme Director

- APM

Supporting Documents

- Application for Transfer of Apprentice Form

- Employer Suitability-to-train

- Mentor Credential Form

Evidence

- Feedback from Apprentices

- Feedback from Workplace Mentors and Employers

- Assessment Results

- Annual Quality Report

- Annual Programme Review

Key Steps

- Review the suitability of facilities in Employer sites and colleges and confirm that they meet the required standard. This is done initially when ATI assesses the suitability-to-train of Employers and colleges and annually thereafter as part of our annual review of collaborating provider facilities.

- The progress of each individual apprentice is continuously monitored by the APM primarily through the updates submitted by mentors and through direct contact with the apprentices. Details of progress are recorded on each apprentices' learner record.

- Facilitate the transfer of apprentices if it is necessary and would enhance the learner experience. If an apprentice wants to apply to transfer to another college or Employer for any reason they must contact the APM in the first instance to discuss the reasons and justification for the request. If the APM considers that there are sound reasons for the transfer and that such a transfer would benefit the apprentice and enhance the learner experience, the apprentice is asked to complete and submit an Application for Transfer of Apprentice Form. The application is then discussed at an ATA team meeting at the earliest possible opportunity and the APM informs the applicant of the outcome of the application in writing and makes the necessary arrangements if the application is successful.

- Provide ongoing support and training for WPM's with a view to ensuring the required levels of competence and commitment and to help ensure equivalence of provision across all sites.

- Ensure that diagnostic assessment is available before the end of each work-based module and, if an apprentice has failed to achieve the outcomes within the workplace, appraise them of the fact and give them the opportunity to achieve the specified outcome.

- Facilitate the networking of tutors and mentors to allow them exchange experiences and develop and share best practice. This is done primarily through online fora, a virtual networking and at training and CPD events.

- Agreed and signed formal MOUs with our collaborating providers.

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Establishing and Maintaining a Community of Practice (CoP)

ATI recognises the CoP as a critical element in the success of its apprenticeship programme and active participation in the CoP will help with the successful formation of the apprentices as autonomous professional practitioners. It is the expectation that members of the CoP will act as unofficial or designated mentors for the apprentice. ATI recognises that the CoP exists both within the Employer organisation and also extends beyond it to the recognised occupational community.

What the CoP will do

- Pass on technical know-how and values and culture associated with the occupation to the apprentice.

- Help with the successful formation of the apprentices as autonomous professional practitioners.

- Facilitate informal learning and socialisation between community members.

- Open access to broader community and occupational learning resources for the apprentices.

Responsibility

Consortium Steering Group

Staff

- Programme Director

- APM

Supporting Document

- Apprentice Handbook

Establishing the Apprentice in the CoP

- The apprentices are introduced to the CoP at Induction at the earliest possible opportunity by the WPM. The WPM is an experienced practitioner and an existing member of the CoP.

- The WPM introduces the apprentice to other members of the community of their peers in the workplace (if any). ATI recommends a brief informal meeting at the beginning of the programme (lunch/coffee). This will help to establish the status of the apprentice within the enterprise among their peers in the CoP and help to ensure that the apprentice is recognised as a participating and active member of the CoP.

- Apprentices will be invited to attend social, charity and educational events/functions organised and hosted by ATI's District Societies. These are networking groups which are run by ATI members for members.

- The WPM checks-in with the apprentices on a regular basis with regard to their participation in the CoP and to confirm if the apprentice has sufficient access to his/her peers and other members of the community of practice in the enterprise.

Facilitating Diversity

ATI is committed to equality of access and attainment and we actively seek to implement policies and procedures which promote equality and avoid discrimination. It aims to provide training and support which is suitable to all including those individuals or groups with additional or diverse needs to enable them to successfully participate in the programme insofar as this is possible.

Responsibility

Programme Board

Staff

APM

Supporting Documents

• Apprentice Application Form

• Apprentice Induction Checklist

• Apprentice Handbook

• Application for Reasonable Accommodation

• Equality and Diversity Policy

Evidence

• Completed Apprentice Application Forms

• Records of Correspondence

• Record of one-to-one meetings

• Notes for External Authentication re provision of reasonable accommodate for assessment

What ATI does

• ATI is a member of AHEAD, the Association for Higher Education Access and Disability, an independent non-profit organisation which works to promote full access to and participation in further and higher education for individuals with disabilities and to enhance their employment prospects on graduation.

• Have an Equality and Diversity Policy setting out its commitment to facilitating diversity and difference.

• Review the collaborating providers' Equality and Diversity Policy and procedures at the approval stage.

• Adapt the programmes and assessments methodologies to facilitate specific learner needs.

• Address equality and diversity in the Mentor and Apprentice Handbooks and at Induction and provide information on the range of supports available and how to access these supports.

• Ask applicants on the Apprentice Application Form if they have any additional support needs.

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- Expect tutors and mentors, when designing training sessions and training materials, to bear in mind the varying needs of all participants.

- Provide pre-entry information about the content, assessment and demands of the programme to enable applicants to make an informed choice about participation.

- Deal with requests for reasonable/special accommodation on a case-by-case basis. Each applicant is responsible for requesting reasonable accommodation and for providing documentation that verifies and confirms their need.

- The APM reviews requests and identifies needs at the beginning of the academic year (or as they arise) and appropriate resources and/or strategies provided to respond to those needs effectively.

- The appropriate accommodation to be made is agreed with the apprentice and his/her mentors and is formally confirmed in writing by the APM.

- The APM monitors applications and discusses any requests for additional supports with the relevant tutor and mentors and makes and records details of any agreed arrangements.

- The APM contacts apprentices with additional support and agree the necessary arrangements.

- ATI identifies apprentices who encounter any difficulties at any stage during their programme to talk to their tutor, mentors or the APM immediately.

- The APM has one-to-one meetings with learners (on request) to discuss their specific needs.

- If ATI identify, during a programme, that an individual learner needs specific or special attention we will facilitate them within as much individual assistance as possible working within the constraints of programme delivery.

- Examples of supports that are made available (This list is not exhaustive and any learner presenting with any other support needs will be accommodated within reason to the best of our ability)

  – Physical modifications to the training location e.g. seating arrangements etc.

  – Learning materials provided in accessible format where possible.

  – Additional time allocated to complete assessments.

  – Alternative assessment formats.

  – Support from a scribe or a reader to complete examinations/assessments.

Assessment of Apprentice Achievement

Assessment Policy and Procedures

Policy

Assessment is one of the most important elements of apprentice training and the outcomes have a profound effect on an apprentice's employment opportunities and career options. The right of an institution or an individual to assess an apprentice carries with it very serious responsibilities. This responsibility extends to preserving the value of previous assessments for previous cohorts of apprentices.

ATI is committed to carrying out the assessment that:

• Meets the needs of apprentices

• Meets the needs of a changing training environment

• Is clearly understood by tutors, Employers, mentors, apprentices and all members of the programme team

• Is fair in terms of access and process

• Consistent across assessors and settings

• Fit-for-purpose in offering recognised certification to our apprentices

• Consistent with our mission

ATI's assessment framework incorporates procedures and systems for the security and integrity of the assessment process, to include:

• Assessment materials (assessment briefs, examination papers etc.)

• Assessment processes (supervision of examinations etc.)

• Learner evidence/work (reflective learning assignments, competence tasks, exam scripts etc.)

• Records of assessment and apprentice achievement

Responsibilities

- ATI is responsible for the setting of all assessments.

- The Assessment Board is responsible for results approval and for recommending the final approved results for submission to the awarding body.

- The Assessment Appeals Panel manages complaints and appeals of assessment results.

- The workplace mentors are responsible for ensuring all assessment activities are carried out in the workplace as per our assessment briefs and timetables.

- The internal verifiers and external authenticator are responsible for carrying out their tasks as per agreed guidelines.

Staff

Programme Director

Head of Education

APM

Assessment Team /Internal Verifiers

Compliance Officer

Reference

QQI Quality Assuring Assessment Guidelines for Providers Revised 2013

Delivery and Assessment Team

The Delivery and Assessment Team is made up as follows:

Delivery	Assessment
Tutor	
College mentor	
Workplace mentor	Chief moderator
College programme co-ordinator	Examiner
	External examiner
	Assistant Examiner
	External authenticator

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Coordinated Planning of Assessment

ATI plans and coordinates assessment prior to programme commencement and schedule the assessments to ensure that the assessment workload is spread across the year and to avoid assessment overload.

Staff

- Programme Director
- Head of Education
- APM
- Assessment Team

Supporting Document

- Programme Timetable Template
- Apprentice application forms

Evidence

- Programme Assessment Plans
- Programme Timetable/Schedules
- Minutes of ATA team assessment planning meeting
- Review of apprentice application forms

Key Steps

- The Programme Director, Head of Education and Assessment Team clearly identify the stages in the programme when assessment should occur. This ensures that assessment is integrated into the programme and addresses the needs of apprentices.

- ATI will apply two 'windows' in each Academic year where deadlines will apply for the submission of completed work-based assignments and in order to spread the assessment throughout the year.

- This ensures that the results will be incorporated in to the Modular and Assessment Boards in January / February and June / July respectively. These Boards are already in place as part of the Governance process for written examinations.

- The ATA and Assessment teams have an assessment planning meeting a minimum of 12 months in advance of the next academic year to coordinate assessment and plan for the integration of assessment where appropriate.

- The Assessment Officer reviews any requests for reasonable accommodation (RA) for assessment detailed on the Apprentice application forms and makes the necessary arrangement/adjustments, if possible, without compromising the integrity of the assessment process. As per ATI's RA procedures.

- Submission and examination dates are scheduled to provide for an even spread of assessment throughout the year.

Assessment Planning and Design

ATI ensures that the design of assessment is in accordance with best practice, the national standards and programme objectives. To support this, ATI has an assessment design process, as part of our programme design process, in place which reflects awarding body requirements and ensures technical and pedagogical validity and compliance with ATI's quality assured policies and procedures. ATI plans and reviews assessment on an annual basis and updates its assessment instruments, strategies and processes accordingly.

Responsibility

Assessment Board

Staff involved

- Programme Director

- Head of Education

- APM

- Assessment Team

Supporting Documents

- Procedure for Online Submission and Review of Examination Papers

- Assessment Criteria

- Annual Programme Review Checklist

- Assessment Brief Template

- Marking Scheme Template

- Programme Assessment Timetable Template

Evidence

- Minutes ATA team meetings

- All assessment instruments dated/ version controlled

- Records of programme design

- Programme Assessment Timetables

- Completed Apprentice application forms

Key Steps

- It is the role of the Programme Design and Development Team to design appropriate assessment instruments at the programme design stage.

- ATI will consult with industry specific employers in order to assist in the development of a range of work-based assignments.

- These assignments will be taken to our Consortium Steering Group (CSG) in order to be approved.

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- Use the QQI Quality Assuring Assessment Guidelines for Providers Revised 2013 as a guide when designing assessment instruments and assessors and examiners and all involved in assessment have a copy of these Guidelines for reference.

- Design our assessment instruments at the programme design stage based on the assessment requirements set out in the QQI award specifications.

- Review assessment instruments and examinations annually and make changes as needed to reflect updated work practices and content.

- Examination papers and corresponding solutions are drawn up by the relevant Examiner and checked by an External Examiner and Chief Moderator. Papers are approved by the Assessment Board. The approval process ensures that all examination papers are:

  – Appropriate to the level of the programme

  – In-line with the published syllabus

  – Correct and can be completed within the time allowed.

- Provide training in designing assessment instruments as part of ATI's CPD programme if deemed necessary or on request.

- Review apprentice application forms to ascertain if there are additional support needs required and make adjustments to our assessment processes, if possible, without compromising the integrity of the process.

- Schedule assessment deadlines and submission dates with a view to providing an even spread of assessment throughout the year and avoid assessment overload for the apprentices. Examinations take place every May and August. Work-based assessment submission dates are spread throughout the year.

- When designing and planning assessment ATI considers:

  – The range of specific learning outcomes to be assessed by each assessment technique.

  – The assessment techniques and instruments.

  – The timing of assessment activities.

  – Any deadlines and due dates; in particular the QQI certification cut-off dates.

  – How marks are to be allocated and assessment criteria is to be applied.

- Review assessment instruments, processes, briefs, exam papers/outline solutions, marking schemes as part of our annual programme review and update as required.

- Review mentor, apprentice and internal verifiers and external authenticators feedback.

Skills Demonstrations

ATI uses skills demonstrations to assess a wide range of practical based learning outcomes including practical skills and knowledge and interpersonal skills. The apprentice performs identified, practical tasks for each module and produces specified evidence of achievement, according to a defined standard, a set of criteria and a marking scheme. All requirements for the successful application of skill and knowledge are set out in the Assessment Briefs. The assessment with supporting evidence is uploaded to the e-Portfolio.

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The Subject Matter Expert (SME) devises an Assessment Brief which includes a set of instructions and a transparent marking scheme including assessment criteria which sets out clearly how the learner evidence is to be graded. This brief is given to the apprentices. When devising the brief, that SME ensures that apprentices are required to produce sufficient evidence from the assessment for internal verification and external authentication.

This may include one or more of the following:

- Product/outcome of the task e.g. a computer printout.

- Photographic or video evidence of the apprentice completing the task.

- Apprentice account of the task including a reflection on the challenges encountered in performing the task.

Devising Assessment Criteria

Assessment criteria are used by the assessor when marking and judging apprentice evidence and making assessment decisions for specific assessment activities. These criteria state in qualitative terms what the apprentice must achieve in that assessment activity.

The assessor devises assessment criteria that are consistent with the learning outcomes in the Award Specifications and an appropriate marking scheme for each assessment activity. The assessor ensures that the link between the assessment criteria and the learning outcomes is clear and transparent.

Assessment Criteria – Useful Words and Phrases

The following are words/phrases that may be used by assessors when devising assessment criteria.

(This list is provided as examples only and is not intended to be exhaustive)	
• Appropriate use of survey on…	• Inclusion of full details in…
• Appropriate conclusions drawn...	• Ideas clearly developed…
• Appropriate procedures followed...	• Independent actions demonstrated…
• Appropriate recommendations made...	• Key issues identified…
• Careful maintenance of… tools/equipment/ documentation	• Responsibility for activities taken…
• Careful planning of…	• Relevant information collected…
• Clear identification of…	• Safe use of equipment…
• Comprehensive conclusions drawn on...	• Tasks planned and executed efficiently…
• Comprehensive evaluation of…	• Thorough understanding of…
• Comprehensive summary of…	• Thorough analysis of…
• Correct description of…	• Understanding of…clearly demonstrated
• Critical evaluation of…	• Use of effective teamwork…
• Correct completion of…	• Use of equipment correctly…
• Detailed explanation of…	• Appropriate methodology used…
• Detailed presentation of…	• Use of resources efficiently…
• Detailed description of problem presented…	• Accurate calculations used...
• Effective use of…	• Coherent format used…
• Effective participation in…	

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Work-based Assessment

ATI recognises that work-based assessment poses particular challenges for both the apprentices and for the WPM.

These challenges include:

- Apprentices having to engage in periods of self-directed and individual learning outside a formal learning environment.
- The variations in individual work experiences of apprentices.
- The challenge of measuring assessment outcomes in the workplace.
- Difficulties in ensuring meaningful observations of the apprentice in the workplace.
- The variance in the level of expertise in terms of assessing available in the workplace.

Responsibility
Assessment Board

Staff Involved
- Programme Director
- APM
- Assessment Team

Supporting Documents
- Employer's Suitability to Train Apprentices
- Credentials Form
- Workplace Mentor Training Presentation
- Work-based assessment schedule
- Apprenticeship Training Plan Template
- Work-based Assessment Tasks
- WPM Role Description

Evidence
- Attendance record for Mentor Training workshops
- Assessment Planning meeting minutes
- Evidence generated by the Work-based Assessment Tasks

How is work-based learning assessed?
- Work-based assessment involves the assessment of apprentices through a series of assessment events. The competence of the apprentice is assessed in performing specified work-based assessment tasks and assignments against pre-set criteria. The criteria are set out in work-based assessment documentation.
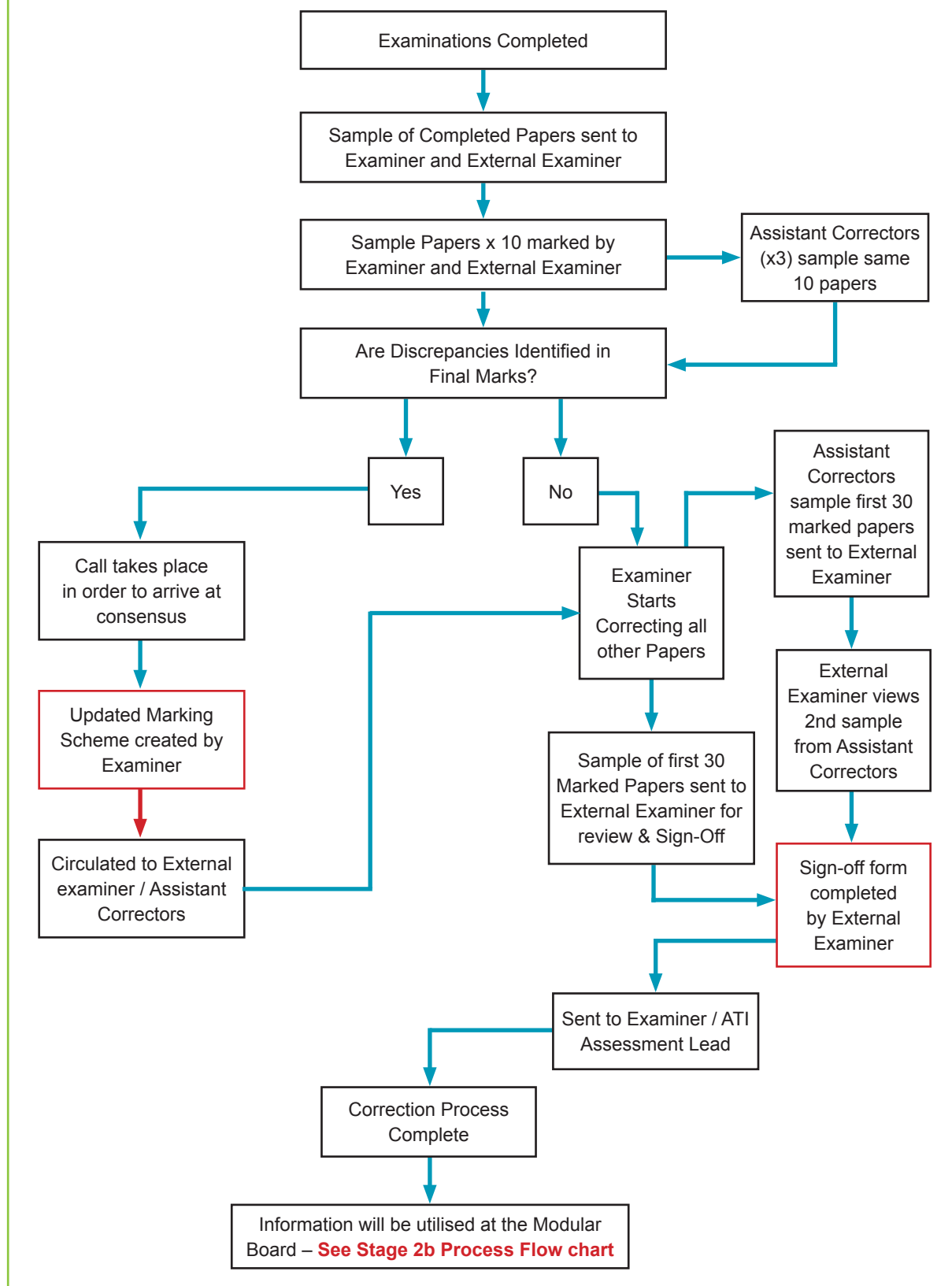- Moodle is used to record evidence of the assessment.

- At the beginning of the academic year the apprentice and the Workplace Mentor plan the work-based assessment deliverables via a Training plan.

- The apprentice and the WPM meet formally on a regular basis to review the apprentice's progress with learning and the stage of completion of the assessments.

- When designing the work-based assessment strategy and schedule ATI ensure that there is a built-in flexibility which allows assessment to be adapted to changing circumstances/needs of differing workplace situations.

- Collaborating Employers must assign a suitably qualified WPM who will support the apprentice in the workplace and sign off on the evidence the apprentice submits as part of their work based tasks.

- ATI provides initial and ongoing training for WPM's which includes training in work-based mentoring.

- All work based tasks must be signed off by the workplace mentor prior to submission. The WPM confirms that any evidence provided by the apprentice is genuine and reflects the work done.

- The WPM and apprentice review the Training Plan on an ongoing basis.

- The college mentor and the APM monitor the apprentice progress and provide appropriate support.

- The apprentice receives ongoing feedback on work-based assessment from the WPM and recommendations on how they might improve their practice and address shortcomings.

- The completed work-based assignments are submitted by the student to the module specific Examiner and an Assistant Corrector.

- Corrected work-based assignments are forwarded on to module specific External Examiners to review consistency.

How is work-based assessment (WBA) quality assured?

- Continuously evaluate Employer's suitability to train apprentices.

- Assess the knowledge, skills and competence of WPM's nominated by the Employers.

- Provide ongoing training in assessment and support for WPMs.

- Work Based Assessments are graded by a reference to a single set of grade categories consistent with Level 6 qualifications.

- The results of work-based assessment are internally verified and externally authenticated.

- The APM is in regular contact with the WPMs with regard to the Training Plan and Work based tasks and is available to guide and direct WPMs with respect to both.

How is it monitored?

- Assessment results

- Chaired by the Chief Moderator, the Modular Board will be attended by Examiners and External Examiners for each Subject, as well as ATI's Head of Education and members of the ATI Assessment team, in order to review the results of work-based assignments by subject.

- All collated Marks will be brought to a Modular Board

- Feedback from Employers and apprentices

- Feedback from External Authenticators

- Feedback on training events

- Comparisons of work-based assessment results with that of other apprenticeship providers

- Findings of External Evaluations/programme reviews

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External Examiner Process Flow

Stage 2a – Post Examinations

```
Examinations Completed
        │
        ▼
Sample of Completed Papers sent to
Examiner and External Examiner
        │
        ▼
Sample Papers x 10 marked by ──────▶ Assistant Correctors
Examiner and External Examiner        (x3) sample same
        │                              10 papers
        ▼                                  │
Are Discrepancies Identified in ◀──────────┘
Final Marks?
   │           │
   ▼           ▼
  Yes          No ─────────────▶ Assistant
   │           │                 Correctors
   │           ▼                 sample first 30
Call takes   Examiner            marked papers
place        Starts              sent to External
in order to  Correcting all      Examiner
arrive at    other Papers            │
consensus       │                    ▼
   │            ▼                 External
Updated      Sample of first 30  Examiner views
Marking      Marked Papers sent  2nd sample
Scheme       to External         from Assistant
created by   Examiner for        Correctors
Examiner     review & Sign-Off       │
   │            │                    ▼
Circulated to External           Sign-off form
examiner / Assistant             completed
Correctors                       by External
                                 Examiner
                                     │
              Sent to Examiner / ATI
              Assessment Lead
                     │
              Correction Process
              Complete
                     │
                     ▼
Information will be utilised at the Modular
Board – **See Stage 2b Process Flow chart**
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Workplace learning deficiencies

If it is found that the Employer/WPM is not providing sufficient training, the college mentor actively works with the Programme Director and APM to:

- Provide the missing elements of training; and/or
- Arrange for the apprentice to gain the experience with another suitable Employer/WPM.

Information on Assessment

ATI provides apprentices with the information they need to help ensure a successful outcome to assessment. In addition to the information provided by ATI directly, it ensures that appropriate relevant and accurate assessment information is available to collaborating providers for dissemination to apprentices.

This includes:

- Pre-registration information regarding assessment
- Apprentice and provider responsibilities regarding assessment (including repeat assessment criteria)
- Assessment Rules and Regulations including appeals mechanisms
- Assessment methods matched to relevant stages and setting

Supporting Documents

- Apprentice Handbook
- Programme brochures
- Apprentice Induction Checklist
- Programme Timetable
- Feedback Form Template
- Notice of Examination
- Assessment Brief
- Application For Assessment Extension/Deferral Form Template

Evidence

- Website
- Programme Brochures
- Apprentice Handbook
- Copies of Programme Assessment Plans
- Assessment Rules & Regulations
- Records of reasonable accommodation provided

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What ATI does

- Provides information on assessment in the Apprentice Handbook, on the website and in programme brochures.

- Discusses details of assessment at Induction and give each apprentice a copy of the Programme Assessment timetable as part of the programme timetable.

- The CM and the WPM talks through the Programme Assessment timetable with the apprentices at the beginning of the academic year and confirm that they are clear with regards to what is required.

- Gives copies of assessment briefs to apprentices at appropriate stages of the programme and a notice of examination approximately four weeks in advance of an exam.

- Mentors and tutors emphasise policy with regard to dealing with incidents of academic misconduct and timely submission of assessment evidence (also addressed in the Apprentice Handbook and Assessment Rules & Regulations).

- Let apprentices know about ATI's policy for dealing with late submission of assessments and on what basis they may apply for an extension to the original submission date (maximum of one per academic year).

- Let apprentices know that ATI makes reasonable accommodation available for assessment if they need it.

- The APM and mentors 'check-in' with apprentices regularly to confirm that they are on track and are clear with regards to what they need to do for assessment.

- The mentors provide feedback to apprentices on their progress at various stages throughout the programme and mark draft copies of assignments if apprentices wish to submit them (dates for submission are listed on our Programme Timetables).

Security and Integrity of Assessment Related Processes and Materials

ATI ensures that there are adequate and fit-for-purpose systems in place to secure and protect the integrity of our assessment processes, materials, instruments and records. Records include paper documentation, electronic records / files, databases, photographs and/ or digital footage.

ATI ensures that resources and monitoring are in place to:

- Protect the security and integrity of assessment documentation and assessment materials

- Maintain and secure assessment results and records

- Supervise examinations and assessments

- Address intentional or unintentional acts by apprentices, assessors or staff which may impact on the validity of the assessment process

- Monitor assessment delivery

- Regularly review assessment security.

Staff

- Programme Director

- Programme Manager

- Head of Education

- Assessment Team

- Compliance Officer

Supporting Documents

- Apprentice and Mentor Handbooks
- Work-based Learning Handbook
- Attendance sheet template
- Invigilator Report template
- Assessment Rules and Regulations

Evidence

- Learner record database
- Assessment Records
- Registered-mail receipts
- Record of destruction
- Invigilators Reports
- Exam Attendance Records
- Apprentice Declarations
- Examination Material Receipt
- Corrective Action Plans

Key Steps

- Maintain a secure electronic learner record database where we record, store and access apprentices' assessment records and results. This serves as a record of all assessment completed by the apprentice.
- Retain all completed assessment evidence; examination scripts and Moodle submissions for a minimum period of one year from completion of the programme. At this stage the appeals period has elapsed and the appeals process is exhausted. All evidence is then securely destroyed.
- All examinations are held in an invigilated environment in a suitable hall or computer lab organised and supervised by ATI.
- Signed attendance sheet for all exams and match this against the number of scripts handed up by candidates.
- Appoint a Senior Invigilator for each exam and they are required to submit a signed Senior Invigilators report after each examination sitting.
- Apprentices are required to confirm in writing that all assessment work submitted is their own.
- Procedures in place for dealing with incidents of academic misconduct.
- Mentors must be able to confirm that assessment evidence is reliable and genuine and deal with issues of suspected malpractice particularly plagiarism.
- Password protected secure access to assessment records.
- All our examination papers are sight unseen.

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- All assessment evidence collected is held securely in hard and/ or electronic format appropriate and is the responsibility of the COO.

- All assessment materials are transported using a secure courier service.

- All data for certification purposes is thoroughly checked for accuracy and reliability through the internal verification, external authentication and results approval process before the results are approved by the Assessment Board.

- If there are concerns regarding the results or if any irregularities are identified, ATI puts in place corrective action plans to deal with errors, omissions and/or deliberate acts by apprentices or staff which could impact on the validity of the assessment process.

Dealing with Plagiarism and Other Types of Academic Malpractice

Policy

ATI ensures that there is a robust system in place to address plagiarism and other types of academic malpractice. Examples of academic malpractice include cheating in exams, plagiarism, presenting falsified or improperly obtained data or being assisted in the presentation of assessment tasks.

Responsibility

Assessment Board

Staff

- Head of Education

- Assessment Team

Supporting Documents

- Risk Register

- Assessment Board meeting agenda

- Induction Checklist

- Incident Report Form

- Malpractice Form

- Malpractice Hearing Report

Evidence

- Apprentice Handbook

- Assessment Rules & Regulations

- Assessment Board Minutes

- Malpractice Hearing Minutes

Key Steps

- Promote a culture which values and supports good academic practice at all times and have effective policies and procedures in place to investigate and deal with any form of assessment malpractice which could impact on the validity of the assessment process.

- Make apprentices aware of the consequences of plagiarism and other forms of academic malpractice in ATI Assessment Rules and Regulations, Induction and in the Apprentice Handbook.

- Give guidance to apprentices and assessors in what constitutes plagiarism and the degrees of plagiarism and on the distinction between acceptable collaboration with others and collusion in plagiarism.

- Make assessors aware of the protocols ATI has in place for investigating cases where plagiarism is suspected and the level of evidence required before an accusation can be considered.

- Design assessment strategies (including methods etc.) to minimise the possibility of plagiarism and give training, guidance and support to assessors in the design of assessments instruments.

- Procedures for monitoring and detecting plagiarism, including appropriate warnings, sanctions and penalties.

Examples of assessment malpractice activities include:

- Plagiarism i.e. passing off someone else's work as the Apprentice's own with or without their permission. This may involve direct plagiarism of another apprentice's work or getting another individual to complete the assessment activity.

- Accepting unwarranted support from others (e.g. mentor, work colleagues, other members of the CoP) in preparing continuous assessment elements which are submitted as one's own work is a form of plagiarism.

- Impersonation of another apprentice.

- Fabrication of evidence.

- Alteration of results.

- Wrongly obtaining secure assessment material e.g. examinations.

- Behaving in any way such as to undermine the integrity of the assessment process.

All allegations of misconduct or malpractice are investigated by the Head of Education. When investigating an allegation of misconduct or malpractice, the Head of Education ensures that the investigation is completed in a sufficient timescale to ensure that an apprentice against whom an unproven allegation is made is not disadvantaged.

The outcomes of assessment misconduct or malpractice investigations are discussed with the External Authenticator and at the Assessment Board and outcomes are included in the Results Approval Report.

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Consistency of Marking and Grading

ATI has procedures in place to ensure that examiners and mentors mark and grade assessments consistently and fairly.

External Examiner Process Flow

Stage 2b – Modular and Assessment Boards

All Scripts are 'called' by ATI Assessment team to ensure correct input of Marks by Examiner

↓

Collate and adjudicate all Marks – ATI Assessment team

↓

Modular Boards take place by Subject to review results – Chaired by Chief Moderator, attended by Examiners and External Examiners from each Subject and ATI Assessment team

No issues raised from Modular Board in relation to Marks

↓

Summary of Results agreed and taken to Assessment Board

Irregularities identified with specific questions with 1 or more modules?

↓

Proposed Plan to rectify is agreed and signed off by Chief Moderator

↓

Summary of Plan agreed and taken to Assessment Board

↓

Appropriate Adjustments applied through IT system – **IT Team**

Assessment Board Chaired by Education Board Chair (Ed Board should be represented on this Board). Assessment Board also attended by: Chief Moderator, Subject Specific External Examiners, Examiners and Internal ATI Assessment team

↓

All Reports and Statistics Reviewed and Approved

End of Academic Cycle – External Examiners to Produce Subject Evaluation Reports on 2/3 Annual Exam Sittings

→

ATI Assessment Lead Collates all External Examiner Evaluation Reports

↓

Reports feed in to Annual Programme Evaluation Report

Responsibility

Assessment Board

Staff

• Programme Director

• Head of Education

• Assessment Team

Examiners

• External Examiners

• Chief Moderator

Supporting Documents

• Internal Verification report template

Evidence

• Internal Verification reports

• Mentor Induction Checklist

• Results Approval Reports

• Record of corrective action

• Marking schemes/sample answers

Key Steps

• Detailed marking schemes/sample answers for all examinations which are used by examiners when marking and grading.

• Assessment Team reviews and compares all marks and grades and highlights any inconsistences/deviations from the norm in the Internal Verification report. Where any irregularities are identified a proposed plan to rectify is agreed and signed off by the Chief Moderator.

• If deemed necessary, undertake blind second marking of a sample of assessments by other assessors.

• Consistency of marking and grading is carried out by the Modular Board and will be handled on a subject specific basis. The Modular Boards are attended by ATI Head of Education, ATI Assessment Team, Examiners, External Examiners and Chief Moderator.

Reasonable Accommodation*

ATI makes every effort to ensure that all apprentices can successfully participate in assessment. To achieve this, ATI adapts assessment methodologies to accommodate apprentices who might otherwise be excluded from assessment (insofar as requests are reasonable and the adaptations are practicable and resources permit). ATI is a member of AHEAD for the purposes of promoting equity of access in education.

Responsibility

Education Board

Assessment Board

Staff

- APM

- Assessment Team

Supporting Documents

- Apprentice Application Form

- Application for Reasonable Accommodation

- Disclosure information

- Apprentice Induction Checklist

* *Definition: the adaptation of assessment as necessary to cater for the needs of learners whose personal situation means that the assessment would otherwise be unfair e.g. learners with a disability, and/or other learners covered by equality legislation (Ref QQI Quality Assuring Assessment Guidelines for Providers Revised 2013).*

Evidence

- Apprentice and Mentor Handbooks

- Record of adaptions

- Internal Verification Reports

- Record of meetings with apprentices

- Completed application forms

- Reasonable Accommodation forms

Key Steps

- Budget in place to provide support for apprentices who need reasonable accommodation for assessment.

- Discuss the provision of reasonable accommodation at the assessment team meetings.

- Outline clearly what is meant by 'reasonable accommodation' and 'special consideration' in the Apprentice Handbook and at Induction.

- Advise applicants to let the Assessment Team know if they need/think they may need additional supports when they are applying for a place (or at the earliest possible opportunity). Have a question on the Apprentice application form asking learners need any additional help with assessment.

- Mentors are guided by the Programme Director with regard to adapting assessment and providing accommodation during assessment (while still ensuring the integrity of the assessment process).

- The WPM meets apprentices on a one-to-one basis if such a meeting is requested by the apprentice to discuss and assess additional support needs and agree appropriate intervention.

- The Assessment Team reviews all requests for reasonable accommodation and signs-off on a request only if it is reasonable and practicable to provide reasonable accommodation and that it does not affect the standards of the given award. Examples of adaptions include: -

  – Rest periods during exams

  – Use of a sign-language interpreter

  – Use of a scribe or reader

  – Use of assistive technology

  – Extended time to complete assignments or in an examination.

- Make tutors and mentors aware of any adaptations to programme assessment that they need to consider.

- Inform the External Authenticator about any adaptations/reasonable accommodation made by noting it on the Internal Verification report (while ensuring that the data relating to the Apprentice/s is protected).

Internal Verification

ATI has procedures in place to confirm that its assessment procedures have been applied consistently across all assessment activities and that our assessment results are recorded accurately. ATI internally verifies learner evidence for each certification period to:

- Ensure consistency in marking and grading.

- Ensure fair, accurate and consistent assessment judgements.

- Allow quality concerns to be captured and addressed prior to External Authentication.

- Prepare for successful External Authentication.

Responsibility

Assessment Board

Staff

- Programme Director

- Assessment Team

Supporting Documents

- Sampling Strategy

- Internal Verifier Role Description

- Internal Verification Report Template

- Internal Verification (IV) process

- Internal Verification (IV) Checklist

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Evidence

- Completed Internal Verification report signed and dated for each certification period
- Record of training for Internal Verifier
- Communication with External Authenticator

Key Steps

- The Assessment Board is responsible for reviewing all subject specific Modular Board reports and work-based assignment statistics for approval.
- Use an appropriate sampling strategy.
- ATI's Internal Verifier carries out verification using our Internal Verification process.
  - Data omission, transcription / calculation errors
  - Inaccurate data entry – results etc.
  - Provisional outcomes

External Authentication

ATI selects and appoints suitably qualified External Authenticators who can provide independent, authoritative confirmation that the assessment evidence has been fairly and consistently assessed, that its assessment processes are fair, consistent and valid and that its results meet the national standards for the awards.

We specifically ask our External Authenticators to check that:

- The overall standard is maintained.
- There are no systematic differences arising between locations.
- Assessment material remains relevant.
- The impact of apprenticeship disruption on assessment has been evaluated.

Responsibility

Assessment Board

Staff

- Programme Director
- Assessment Team
- Chief Moderator

Supporting Documents

- External Authenticator– Selection Criteria

- Sampling strategy

- External Authentication Checklist

- External Authenticator Contract and Guidelines

Evidence

- Panel of External Authenticators

- External Authentication Reports signed and dated

- Copies of CVs and award certificates

- References

Key Steps

- The COO signs-off on the selection and appointment of suitably qualified External Authenticators.

- Select External Authenticators based on the selection criteria in place.

- Maintain a panel of External Authenticators, selected for their subject matter expertise, knowledge and experience of the apprenticeship model of programme delivery and assessment and their capacity to make recommendations for improvement to programme content and assessment practice and to confirm consistency with national standards.

- Complete a detailed Checklist for External Authentication.

- Contract and Guidelines for External Authenticators setting out in detail what is involved and what ATIs expectations are.

- Do not contract the services of the same External Authenticator for more than three successive certification periods.

- Quality assure all External Authenticators and retain evidence of this for monitoring.

- Ensure that relevant staff is available if the External Authenticator needs to refer to them during the process of external authentication.

- Record any issues identified and improvements recommended by the External Authenticators and structure them in the form of a Quality Improvement plan which is monitored on an ongoing basis.

- The External Authenticator completes the External Authentication Report which is presented to the Assessment Board meeting for comment on the outcomes of results moderation against national standards and to help identify areas of strength, gaps and areas for improvement.

- External Authentication is carried out in line with the sampling strategy.

Results Approval Process

ATI's Assessment Board acts as the Results Approval Panel. ATI has a results approval process in place to formally review and approve results data and to confirm that assessment results are fully quality assured and signed-off prior to submission for certification. The Assessment Board must be satisfied

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that final results indicate that the apprentices are immediately capable of performing the activities and carrying out the responsibilities normal to the occupation of an accounting technician and are entitled to an award.

Responsibility

Assessment Board

Staff Involved

- Programme Director
- Head of Education
- Assessment Team/Internal Verifiers

Supporting Documents

- Agenda for RAP meeting
- Terms of reference Assessment Board

Evidence

- Results Approval Reports
- Final Approved Results signed by the Chair of the Assessment Board
- Results Summary Sheets signed by the Chair of the Assessment Board

Key Steps

- The Assessment Board convenes a meeting for each certification period for the purpose of formally approving assessment results which have been authenticated.
- Invite the External Authenticator to attend the meeting to present his/her report.
- Review apprentice results /outcomes, input from the ATA team, programme staff, internal verification reports and External Authenticator reports at the meeting.
- Report of the meeting is prepared and signed by the Chair and retained for auditing and monitoring purposes.
- Record any issues identified and improvements recommended at the meeting and structure them in the form of a Quality Improvement Plan which we monitor on an ongoing basis and sign-off before the next results approval meeting and discuss at ATA team meetings.
- The Programme Director records examples of best practice identified during the assessment process with a view to sharing these with relevant tutors and mentors at CPD events.
- The Assessment team submits the results to QQI asap after sign-off by Chair of the Assessment Board.
- Notify learners of the closing date for receipt of appeals and approximate date of issue of award certificates (at the end of Stage 2).

Feedback to Apprentices on Assessment

ATI provide apprentices with appropriate, timely and constructive feedback on their assessments which informs their participation on the programme and helps to ensure a successful outcome to assessment.

Responsibility

Assessment Board

Staff Involved

• Assessment Team

Supporting Documents

• Apprentice Survey Form

• Mentor/Apprentice meeting schedules

• Assessment Feedback Form Template

Evidence

• Apprentice Feedback

• Record of feedback

Key Steps

• Mentors are available at defined stages throughout the programme to provide formative feedback on a one-to-one basis (WPM) and/or group basis (CM) to apprentices. This includes areas for development, gaps in their learning or direct feedback on draft assignments.

• Assessment results are published online. Examination and year end overall results are forwarded directly in hardcopy to each apprentice by post to their home address.

• If an apprentice has not passed an examination, they are provided with additional feedback comprising a question-by-question analysis of their marks.

• Publish past examination papers and accompanying solutions/marking schemes and Examiners' reports. This is an additional source of feedback for those who sat the examination.

• While marking assessments WPM's are required to provide commentary which serves as feedback for the apprentices.

• If an apprentice has not passed a Work-based assessment, they are provided with additional feedback by the workplace mentor.

• Based on the sampling strategy applied to all Work-based assessments feedback is provided to the workplace mentor and apprentice.

• Internal Verifier checks for evidence of feedback provided by mentors.

• Retain records of apprentice feedback.

• Ask apprentices for their views of the adequacy of feedback provided on the apprentice surveys.

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Apprentice Appeals and Complaints (Assessment)

ATI has a process and procedures in place to facilitate apprentices who wish to appeal an assessment result which they consider to be invalid or unfair for any reason or who wish to make a complaint about any aspect of assessment.

Responsibility

Assessment Appeals Panel

Staff

- Head of Education
- Assessment Team
- Programme Director
- APM
- Compliance Officer

Supporting Documents

- Assessment Appeals Panel Report Template
- Appeals Process
- Complaints Process
- Appeals Application Form
- Complaint Form
- Apprentice Handbook

Evidence:

- Apprentice Handbook
- Record of appeals lodged
- Record of complaints lodged
- Correspondence with appellants
- Assessment Appeals Panel Reports

Key Steps

- An Appeals Process in place which is fair, consistent, fit-for-purpose and transparent and ensures that apprentices can appeal aspects of assessment process or result which they consider to be unfair or incorrect.
- Inform apprentices about the process at Induction, on the website in the Apprentice Handbook and with their statement of results.

- Detailed Apprentice Complaints Procedure which may be used by apprentices if they wish to make a formal or informal complaint regarding any aspect of assessment. This is highlighted at Apprentice Induction and in the Apprentice Handbook.

- Apprentice appeals are assigned to an independent reviewer (the original assessor will have no part in the review).

- Clear distinction between appeals and requests for re-marking in the Apprentice Handbook and in the Appeals Process.

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Support for Learners

ATI regard the design, supply, maintenance and enhancement of suitable and appropriate learning resources and supports as being critical to the success of the apprenticeship programme. ATI monitor the supports on an ongoing basis and update and expand them as necessary to reflect developments in approaches and the changing and developing needs of apprentices. At the programme development stage, ATI design a coherent and integrated system of resources and supports to address the specific needs of the programme and we evaluate them on a continuous basis and benchmark them against sectoral standards.

Definitions

Learning Resources

Learning resources are defined as the collection of materials used to conduct a programme to include, but are not limited to, manuals, a programme handbook, presentation graphics, Knowledgepoint tutorials, MyRevision (bank of questions) virtual classes, software, past exam papers, sample papers and other materials.

Apprentice Supports

Apprentice supports focus on what ATI do to help apprentices beyond the formal delivery of programme content. The provision of appropriate provision of appropriate apprentice supports is a critical component of an effective learning environment in the context of an apprenticeship programme.

Responsibility

Programme Board

Staff

• Programme Director

• All members of the ATA programme team

Apprentice Supports

- Induction and Orientation in the workplace and in the College

- Support for the individual learner

- Community of Practice (CoP)

- Dedicated College and Workplace Mentor support

- Dedicated ATI contact – the APM

- Apprentice Handbook

- Learning Materials and Resources Provided

- Feedback on Assessment and Progress

- Apprentice Forum

- Apprentice Networking

- Complaints Process

- Apprentice Surveys/Feedback

- Supports for Assessment

- Reasonable accommodation

- Special consideration

- Career guidance

- Access to appropriate IT equipment with appropriate software applications

- College Services available to apprentices; counselling service

- Information regarding transfer and progression opportunities

- Training provided in the use of eLearning resources

Induction and Orientation

All registered apprentices are required to participate in an Induction hosted by the provider college at the start of the programme to orientate them into off-the-job training. They are also inducted into the programme by ATI as part of this structured Induction programme which includes college subject and workplace learning orientation. The Employer organises an onsite workplace Induction and orientation in line with normal best practice for new employees. Induction provides details on planning, learning and assessment with guidance on how to use all ATI's online supports including; KnowledgePoint, MyRevision and Moodle.

Support for the Individual Learner

We recognise that, unlike other modes of delivery, apprentices will have to progress through the programme for much of the time without the company or support of their peers and this type of individualised learning can be challenging for apprentices and demands a high level of self-motivation and self-discipline. This can be particularly challenging for the cohort of apprentices who have very recently completed their secondary education (many of the apprentices will belong to this cohort). In recognition of this ATI;

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- Provide detailed information to the apprentices on the sequence of learning actions (Training Plan)

- Ensure that a high level of individualised support is provided for the apprentice especially in the early stages of the programme

- Give detailed instruction to the apprentice on how they can demonstrate learning achievement

- Monitor closely any individual apprentice that we have reason to suspect may not be settling well into the programme or into the workplace and respond accordingly.

Community of Practice (CoP)

ATI recognise the CoP as a critical element in the success of the apprenticeship programme and active participation in the CoP will help with the successful formation of the apprentices as autonomous professional practitioners. Members of the CoP will act as unofficial or designated mentors for the apprentice. The CoP exists both within the Employer organisation and also extends beyond it to the recognised occupational community. The WPM is responsible for the introduction and integration of the apprentice to the Community of Practice at the earliest possible opportunity at the beginning of the programme.

Dedicated College and Workplace Mentor Support

Each apprentice is assigned a dedicated workplace mentor and a dedicated college mentor who provide individualised support to the apprentice at all stages but especially in the early stages of the programme. These mentors provide pastoral care and support as well as training and assessment. If they do not have sufficient expertise or training to deal with a specific issue raised by an apprentice, they will refer the apprentice to the appropriate adviser e.g. the student counselling service in the college or will refer on the matter/get advice from the APM.

The WPM's role is to help ensure that the apprentice settles in, is introduced to his/her colleagues and peers and is familiar with the workplace surroundings and to help to ease the change in life status of the new apprentice. This is done as part of the on-the-job Induction. Induction supports the orientation of the apprentice into the apprenticeship programme and introduces the apprentice and WPM to the overarching programme. The efficacy of the socialisation procedures in place in the workplace which help to establish the apprentice are discussed and reviewed at the first QA visit by the college mentor/ APM. WPM's are also required to provide pastoral care for the apprentice in the workplace on an ongoing basis and bring any issues of concern to the attention of the APM.

One of the CM primary roles is to ensure that the apprentice is fully integrated into the social, sporting and support systems, as well as the academic systems, of the college as soon as possible and that this is maintained during the off-the-job phases by making access to services such as the College library, IT system, Careers Guidance service and sports and recreational facilities available on an ongoing basis. The services and support offered by the Careers Guidance Office in the college in particular is highlighted for the apprentice. This service can provide information and guidance in relation to potential career pathways and personal and career support and development for the apprentice. The CM ensures that the apprentice stays on track with learning and with the programme through regular review meetings with the apprentices and the WPM. As part of the mentoring role, the CM meets the apprentice in college regularly for pastoral care and formally at least twice a year to review progress. The CM is available to the apprentice throughout the full academic year. Part of the mentoring role is to help empower the apprentice to take responsibility for their own learning and career development.

The CM brings any issues of concern to the attention of the APM.

Dedicated ATI contact – the APM

The APM is responsible for the management of the apprenticeship programme and the effective and efficient co-ordination, development and delivery of the programme. A crucial part of their role is to act as the main point of contact for the apprentices at all stages of the programme and to coordinate the various supports and resources available to apprentices. Apprentices are encouraged to contact the APM at any stage of the programme, especially in the early stages, if they have a particular concern or if they have an issue they wish to raise in confidence. The APM records details of these communications and they are reported in the weekly ATA meeting and actioned accordingly. Apprentices can contact the APM by email, phone or can arrange a one-to-one meeting if the situation warrants it. The APM is also responsible for providing guidance and information to apprentices in relation to transfer and progression opportunities. This is done on a class basis when the APM addresses each class at the end of the academic year. ATI has a Guide to Further Study which is accessible on the ATI website and details the progression routes available to apprentices who complete the programme.

Apprentice Handbook

Each apprentice is given a hard copy of the Apprentice Handbook at Induction and an online copy is also available to the apprentices, tutors, mentors and all members of the programme team for reference. The Handbook contains all the information the apprentice needs in relation to all aspects of the apprenticeship programme – both on- and off-the job. Details of resources and supports available to apprentices are contained in the Handbook. The availability of this information in one document helps to highlight an integrated approach from the perspective of the learner. The Apprentice Handbook is used on an ongoing basis throughout the programme for information, guidance and reference. The Handbook is updated annually as part of programme review and apprentices are asked for feedback on the Handbook in the end-of-year survey.

Learning Materials and Resources Provided

The programme materials package for each subject include:

- Subject Textbook

- Syllabus for each module is contained in the textbook

- Solutions booklet (available online) and a limitless bank of self-generating questions and solutions covering various topics of each of the subjects

- Access to the full range of Online Tutorials through KnowledgePoint

- Past papers and sample papers

TouchPoint – Student Portal

When an apprentice registers with ATI, they receive an email confirming their details and information on how to login into the TouchPoint portal; a platform that allows apprentices to access resources like a bank of questions and solutions contained in the 'MyRevision' section of the website, tutorials that complement the textbooks and information about the programme. The portal also allows apprentices to update personal details, view their academic history and provides notification on exam bookings and latest ATI announcements.

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My Revision

Apprentices are issued with the subject textbooks at Induction and also are given access to 'MyRevision' which is available through the TouchPoint portal. 'MyRevision' allows an apprentice to generate and answer a limitless number of questions on programme topics. It also provides feedback on the responses and consequently it is a very useful study aid for apprentices preparing for the exams.

Knowledgepoint

Apprentices and tutors also have access to tutorials on the Knowledgepoint section of TouchPoint. This allows apprentices/tutors to access tutorials covering various topics of the programme and again is an additional study aid in helping students prepare for exams.

Knowledgepoint covers two areas:

Online Tutorials

Online Tutorials covering a variety of topics are available for each subject. The duration of the tutorials can last anywhere from twenty (20) minutes to over an hour and each subject has up to six (6) Online Tutorials. Apprentices can maintain pace easily as they can control the video and see the slides in real-time, side by side, as the tutor speaks.

Workshops

Workshops are additional revision sessions delivered annually by subject experts, who use practical examples and hands on learning activities. These interactive sessions are focused on helping apprentices prepare for the exams. They are classroom-style sessions recorded for apprentices, designed to provide apprentices with an in-depth understanding of key aspects of the programme. Apprentices who attend Workshops are also given the recorded version which can be viewed online in the same way as the Online Tutorials.

Moodle

TouchPoint has a link for apprentices to bring them to their work-based-assessment e-Portfolio which is hosted on a Moodle platform. Moodle provides the facility for apprentices to upload assessment materials, engage with tutors, access apprenticeship programme information such as Apprenticeship Handbook, rules and regulations, guides for using systems and access links to webinar recordings.

Student Newsletter

Student Matters is an online newsletter that is issued three times a year by email and provides useful tips and information on ATI programmes. The Newsletter also highlights relevant news and events that apprentices need to be aware of throughout the academic year.

Website

Apprentices and tutors have access to past examination papers, examiner reports, sample papers and general information about the apprenticeship programme, through the study material section of the website.

Feedback to learners

Mentors provide timely formative and summative feedback on assessment to apprentices throughout the programme and support for dealing with deficiencies.

Facilitating Diversity

ATI is committed to equality of access and attainment among apprentices and actively seeks to implement policies and procedures which promote equality and avoid discrimination. ATI aim to provide training and support which is suitable to all. This includes those individuals or groups with additional or diverse needs to enable them to successfully participate in programmes insofar as this is possible. Applicants are asked on the application form if they have any special requirements or additional needs and plan accordingly. ATI also provide reasonable accommodation for assessment.

Apprentice Forum

The Apprentice Forum is in place to facilitate the apprentice networking across the programme, to contribute to the support structure and to provide a feedback mechanism whereby apprentices can make their views on the programme known to the Programme Board and Consortium Steering Group via a nominated apprentice who sits on the Programme Board. The Forum allows apprentices to make representations about matters of general concern. Each class group has a representative on the Forum and the Forum meets three times per year (face-to-face or virtual). The APM provides administrative support to the Forum and reports back the Apprentice Forum in the form of action plans.

Apprentice Feedback

ATI regard apprentice feedback on their progress and their level of satisfaction with all aspects of the programme as one of the primary ways to identify areas of best practice and ways to improve the quality and effectiveness of the programme. In view of this, we are committed to having systems in place which allow for and require apprentice feedback which supports our monitoring and evaluation of the learner and learning experience.

Supports for Assessment

The following supports are in place to help ensure that the apprentices succeed in assessment:

- Sample examination papers and exam revision video tutorials (on the TouchPoint platform)
- MyRevision online assessments on the TouchPoint platform
- The course texts for each module include sample exam-related questions and solutions
- Assessment Brief for each module's Work-Based Assessment which describes the range of content required, standard, specific criteria and a marking scheme
- An Individual Training Plan which helps the apprentice to structure and track progress in workplace learning and maintenance of evidence

College Services Available To Apprentices

Apprentices are encouraged to make full use of the social, sporting and support systems, such as the college library, IT system, careers guidance service, counselling service, sports and recreational facilities,

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college clubs and societies of the college they are attending throughout the duration of the programme - while they are both on-and off-the-job. Details of these are outlined at the college Induction. The college mentor introduces the apprentice to the college services at the earliest possible opportunity at the outset of the programme. Making optimal use of college services may present a particular challenge for apprentices as many activities of institutions are based on full-time attendance. Collaborating providers, and specifically CMs, keep this in mind with a view to ensuring that access and communication are maintained during the on-the-job phases.

Additional Supports for Apprentices

- Ensure that apprentices attend the same off-the-job provider for all releases if possible, to help maintain continuity. If, for any reason, an apprentice has to change colleges, ATI put additional supports in place if necessary and monitor their progress carefully.

- For the purposes of continuity, require each apprentice to have the same mentors throughout the programme if possible.

ATI provide additional supports if necessary if apprentices are required to relocate as part of the on-the-job phase or have to access alternative employment.

Information and Data Management

Policy

ATI appreciate the need for and the value of having current, accessible and reliable information and data, which reflects the context and mission. ATI use the data collected to help make informed decisions and identify the areas of the operation that are working well and the areas that need attention and/or enhancement. Appropriate controls and structures are in place to maintain and manage records and to generate a range of reports. ATI communicate the findings contained in these reports to staff, management and collaborating providers as appropriate for monitoring and planning purposes.

ATI complies with all relevant Data Protection legislation and has a dedicated Data Protection Officer to ensure compliance.

Scope

This policy applies to all employees, contractors, agents and representatives and temporary staff working for or on behalf of ATI including the apprenticeship programme collaborating providers who have access to records in any formats; paper, electronic*, **multimedia or audio-visual. It also includes records managed on behalf of the organisation by an external body, such as an IT company.

This policy applies to:

• All information created within ATI

• All information received by ATI

• *Electronic format includes; word documents, spreadsheets, web pages, emails

• **Multimedia format includes video recordings, podcasts etc.

Responsibilities

The Board of Directors is responsible for the safe management of information. All staff, contractors, consultants and agents are responsible for documenting their actions and decisions accurately in the organisation's records and for managing information in accordance with procedures and related policies. When leaving the organisation all those mentioned above must ensure that key records for which they are responsible remain accessible.

Evidence

- Learner Records

- CPD Records

- Retention and destruction records

- Retention and destruction schedule

- Internal Audit Reports

Supporting Documents

- Document Record Retention Schedule Template

- Data Protection Policy and Procedures

Management Information and Data

ATI has comprehensive management information systems which can be divided into three groups: learner & Employer information, programme information and organisational information.

- Learner information is recorded in TouchPoint, a student records system, and Arithon, which is a CRM system, used during the placement cycle, that tracks both companies and apprentices from initial contact to placement. These systems provide ATI with all of the statistical data relating to apprentices and their Employers.

- Programme management information is available to ATI management through a range of reports including: the Examiner's Reports, Chief Moderator's Report, the Syllabus Review, Member Surveys and Learner Surveys.

- Organisational performance information is monitored through further reports including Financial Audit Reports, Audit & Risk Committee Reports as well as audit reports from regulators such as CCEA, professional body reports from IFAC, and QA reports from the ISO.

ATI stores two kinds of information, electronic and hardcopy. Backups of all electronic data is managed by SupportIT and learner scripts are stored offsite for ATI by Restore Document Management (formerly Wincanton) for a period of one (1) year. A Crisis Management Recovery Strategy (CMRS) is in place to deal with any situation in which normal access to information by ATI is interrupted or learner scripts need to be retrieved.

Records Management

We have controls and structures in place to generate named reports which are communicated to management for monitoring, benchmarking and planning purposes and to ensure that programmes and services are delivered effectively and efficiently.

Training and Awareness – Training is provided to ensure that all staff and associated stakeholders are made aware of their obligations regarding data protection and information and records' management.

We ensure that all staff are made aware of the records' retention schedule so that they know what records and data we need to retain and their personal responsibility to follow the retention schedules.

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Retention and Destruction

ATI maintain a retention and destruction schedule – a list of common types of information showing how they should be classed and the duration of their retention period.

ATI review records in accordance with the retention and destruction schedule annually and arrange for the secure destruction of records at the end of their retention period or transfer to storage or given a further review date.

Information and Data Controls

All information created and used by ATI is subject to effective internal controls and systems in place to ensure that records are authentic, reliable, have integrity and remain usable.

Records are managed through their lifecycle from creation, through storage and use, to disposal.

Records the organisation's need for business, regulatory, legal and accountability purposes are maintained.

A record filing system which facilitates the quick and efficient retrieval of records is used.

Appropriate backup arrangements are in place for electronic records (including restoration of backups and disaster recovery if electronic records are damaged).

Storage

As noted above ATI stores two kinds of information, electronic and hardcopy. Backups of all electronic data is managed by SupportIT and learner scripts are stored offsite for ATI by Restore Document Management (formerly Wincanton) for a period of one (1) year. A Crisis Management Recovery Strategy (CMRS) is in place to deal with any situation in which normal access to information by ATI is interrupted or learner scripts need to be retrieved.

To maximise efficiency, reduce costs, enable sharing and minimise risks, ATI;

• Store key business information in shared filing systems.

• Store information securely, appropriate to its classification.

• Avoid storing duplicates (e.g. avoid paper/electronic duplication and store a single copy of electronic information to be shared through use of links).

• Use the organisation's records' centre for storing and managing paper records not required on a regular basis.

• Do not store information permanently on removable media.

• Ensure that all records are subject to appropriate security measures.

• Document decisions regarding access so that they are consistent, and can be explained and referred to.

Learner Records

Maintain secure learner records for current use and historical review. The ATI student record system is capable of

• Providing reports required for internal quality management and improvement

- Generating data required for, and compatible with, external regulatory, professional or national systems as appropriate

- Generating statistical and other reports to meet internal and external information requirements

The key system for information collection and storage for learners within ATI is the TouchPoint system, a robust and comprehensive learner record system used to maintain learner reports which has been specifically designed and tailored to meet the needs of ATI. When a learner registers with ATI, they are assigned a unique learner number and a learner record is created on TouchPoint.

- Access to the system is strictly limited to internal staff, with varying levels of access, the system is password protected and is not accessible outside of our offices.

- ATI maintain all information and data pertaining to each apprentice on their learner record including a learner profile, their assessment results and academic history. The learner record is maintained throughout the lifetime of the programme and for a year following completion of the programme. The learner record is then transferred to the ATI alumni database.

- Amendments to information held on the system may only be made by authorised staff members following receipt of written confirmation of the required changes.

- TouchPoint is capable of generating reports based on assessment results, enrolment, progression and completion, attrition and graduation/certification rates, grade analysis, satisfaction rates. Data can be analysed and reports generated on an Employer-by-Employer basis and on a college-by-college basis allowing us to compare progress across collaborating providers.

- Programme completion records are collected and maintained on TouchPoint and are made available to external quality reviewers on request and as required.

- The Qlikview* reporting tool is used to generate statistical reports from TouchPoint data. This tool can only be accessed from within the ATI network. Qlikview is also used to generate the statistical information required by awarding bodies.

* *QlikView is a business intelligence software platform which we use to consolidate, search, and visually analyse learner and other data.*

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Public Information*
and Communication

Policy

ATI are committed to providing information, in hardcopy or electronic format, related to its programmes and associated services that is accurate, up-to-date, accessible and comprehensive and makes no unsubstantiated or potentially misleading claims. ATI are also committed to facilitating ongoing two–way communications with apprentices, staff, stakeholders, awarding bodies and the general public.

Responsibility

As the Coordinating Provider, ATI is responsible for ensuring that new apprentices are fully aware of the programme. The Programme Director is responsible for ensuring all information is managed as per this policy and associated procedures, and that the accuracy of such information is maintained.

Staff

- Programme Director
- APM
- The Marketing and Digital Media Manager
- Recruitment Team

Supporting Documents

- QQI Information Note
- Prospectus
- Apprentice Handbook
- Applicant Information Pack
- Role and Responsibilities of the Workplace Mentor
- Role and Responsibilities of the College Mentor

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*   *Public information refers to the information that we communicate and publish about programmes and programme-related activities.*

Evidence

- Copies of prospectus

- ATI website

- TouchPoint

Provision of Information to Apprentices

- Provide applicants with sufficient and relevant information to make an informed choice about participation on our programmes. Review all documents to confirm that the information contained in them complies with the spirit and the requirements of the 2012 Act in relation to the publishing of programme information.

- The APM is the main point of contact and the main source of information for the apprentice throughout the programmes. Apprentices can contact the APM by email and telephone or can arrange a face-to-face or virtual meeting. The APM will deal with the communication or direct it to the relevant staff member. In the case of a matter which is considered to be of serious concern or may involve risk, the APM will bring the communication to the attention of the Programme Director and/or the COO.

- The point of contact for apprentices in relation to the programme in the workplace is the workplace mentor and the college mentor in relation to college matters. While the APM is the main point of contact and is responsible for ensuring that the information provided to new apprentices is complete, both college and workplace mentors have a key role in this regard and work collaboratively with the APM to ensure that the apprentices are fully informed at all times and, if not, to provide any outstanding information.

- ATI is cognisant of the need, and responsibility as a coordinating provider, to promote the brand image of apprenticeship as a mode of learning when designing information and promotional materials. To do this, ATI highlight the benefits of this mode of learning, the progression opportunities it offers and the benefits of work-based learning.

The main sources of public information about the apprentice programme for the learner are;

- ATI Prospectus/ Programme Brochures

- Apprentice Handbook

- The Apprenticeship Microsite (http://www.accountingtechniciansireland.ie/study-ati/accounting-technician-apprenticeship/apprenticeship-applications

Prospectus/Programme Brochures

ATI publish Prospectus and Programme Brochures annually. The information contained in these and related documents/promotional materials is reviewed and updated annually by the ATA team during the summer period prior to start of the academic year.

- The team members update their respective sections.

- These updated sections are discussed at ATA team meetings and signed off.

- The APM submits the final drafts to the Marketing and Digital Media Manager to develop in appropriate format.

The ATI Prospectus is made available in hard and electronic copy with copies downloadable from the ATI website. It contains information about the programme, the title of the award, the level, the academic calendar and information about the programme in general.

http://www.accountingtechniciansireland.ie/study-ati/prospectus-form

Apprenticeship Handbook

The Apprentice Handbook is designed to provide advice and information on all aspects of the programme to help apprentices to get the most from their apprenticeship. It is important that the apprentices familiarise themselves with this Handbook and reference it throughout the programme and this is emphasised to the apprentices at Induction. ATI make hard copies available at Induction and electronic copies are available for reference and/or download from ATI Moodle website. The Handbook is updated annually in line with the updating of other programme materials and promotional materials.

Public Information

Website

The website is the primary vehicle for providing information about programmes and services to potential applicants and other interested stakeholders. Visitors to the website can access details of programmes and services, career progression and be guided through the steps to apply to a programme, with appropriate direction, support and guidance from staff as necessary.

Information Provision by Collaborating Providers

ATI supply copies of all programme-related promotional materials to collaborating providers who also market and promote the programme to potential applicants. The Conditions of Recognition requires that they ensure that any information/promotional materials they use to promote the programme, in hardcopy or electronic format, is accurate, up-to-date, accessible and comprehensive and makes no unsubstantiated or potentially misleading claims. ATI provides updated copies (on an annual basis or as required) of the prospectus and promotional materials to the collaborating providers for distribution to potential applicants.

Communication through CSG and PB

ATI encourage members of the CSG and the PB, which include representatives from all the apprenticeship programme's key stakeholders and Community of Practice, comprising practice, industry, public sector Employers and off-the-job providers, to promote the apprenticeship model of learning and the ATA programme and to disseminate information about the programme to potential applicants and apprentice Employers.

The Member Services Committee

One of the responsibilities of this Committee is to promote the ATI brand and the advantages of its qualifications across business, public sector and practice. We invite members of the Committee to support ATI in promoting the apprenticeship programme and brand awareness of apprenticeship generally.

Social Networking Sites/Social Media

ATI disseminate information and updates about the programme, services and events through a dedicated Facebook page and Twitter feed. The social networking platforms we use are moderated by the Head of Marketing.

Mailchimp

The Mailchimp email marketing service is used to send bulk email messages to various stakeholders. The use of this software results in email content that is more personalised, relevant, interactive and visually impactful.

TouchPoint

The News page on TouchPoint portal allows ATI to highlight contemporary, topical items of interest to apprentices, tutors, and college and workplace mentors.

ATI District Societies

ATI members, through ATI's district society (branch) structure, host regular briefings and member events around the country. ATI promote the apprenticeship programme at these events and make programme brochures and other promotional materials available.

Open Days and Information Sessions

ATI organises a nationwide series of briefing/information sessions to promote the ATA programme and the apprenticeship brand generally. At these sessions, potential Employers and applicants are fully briefed on all aspects of the apprenticeship and the programme. The role and responsibility of the Employer as a collaborating provider is outlined in detail to potential Employers including the requirement for them to have a suitably qualified WPM to mentor, train and support the apprentice/s.

ATI also participates in relevant promotional/information events/briefings hosted jointly with collaborating providers and provides information to potential applicants and other interested parties about programmes and services at these events.

Publication of Reports and Results of Reviews

- A copy of the ATI QA policies and validation reports will be published on the website.

- Awarding body reports will be published in a timely fashion to meet awarding body requirements.

- An annual Quality Assurance report will be made available to QQI and to relevant ATI stakeholders. These reports detail the activities of the programme in the preceding year, this includes details relating to the delivery of the programme; staff and apprentice feedback on all aspects of the programme; recruitment and retention statistics; assessment results; external examiners' feedback; and quality improvement recommendations.

- Self-Evaluation Reports and Quality Improvement Plans will be published. These reports include programme reviews.

- The Chief Moderator's report is published on the website annually in October and reviews the previous academic year's examination process and results. The report details a modular view of

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the summer and autumn examination sessions and reflections on these sessions. The report also reviews the exam moderation process.

- ATI will check the information relating to its centre and programmes on the QQI register of providers and the database of awards and programmes annually and alert QQI to any amendments/updates which need to be made.

Alumni

ATI plan to continue and develop its relationship with alumni of the apprenticeship programme following their graduation or exit from the programme (if they exit before graduation). ATI will begin this at graduation/exit and follow-up with an Alumni Destination Survey six months following completion /exit from the programme.

The purpose of this survey is:

- To maintain communication and develop relationships with alumni

- To evaluate the impact of the apprenticeship programmes on alumni' careers

- To identify additional training needs

- To assess the continued relevance of the apprenticeship programmes in the workplace

- To monitor progression routes, with regard to career and educational progression

- To inform alumni of opportunities arising for further study

- To inform ATIs quality assurance review processes including revalidation and programme planning

- To promote the continued involvement of alumni in the Community of Practice

- To help to identify future potential workplace mentors and ambassadors for the apprenticeship programme

ATI will collate and analyse findings from these surveys and present the analysis to the PB and CSG for comment and consideration. The findings from these surveys will be considered in annual programme reviews.

Freedom of Information

ATI recognises its responsibility under the Freedom of Information Acts 1997 and 2003, and the right of apprentices to gain access to information held on them and will comply with any reasonable requests made under the Acts.

QQI Information Note (February 2017)

Information to Learners – Section 67 Qualifications Act 2012

Under the terms of the 2012 Act all provider institutions are requested to specify

- Details of the award

- Name of the awarding body

- Title of the award

• Whether the award is recognised within the NFQ

• Level of that recognition

• Whether the award is a Major, Minor, Special Purpose or Supplemental

• Where the programme does not entitle the learner to an award

Details of Access, Transfer and Progression

• A statement of the procedures for access, transfer and progression under Section 56 which apply to the programme.

Protection for Learners (if applicable)

• Arrangements in place under Section 65 (4) including notification to the learner within 14 days of any changes.

Providers must

• Ensure referencing to the NFQ is clear and accurate and display the current version of the NFQ graphic.

• Display the QQI award brand if appropriate noting that the QQI corporate logo may not be used at any time.

Providers who fail to comply with these requirements and provide enrolled learners with information which is false or misleading in a material respect, commit an offence. QQI will take appropriate steps to ensure that providers address any issues arising in this context.

ATI publish programme information under the following headings:

• Programme and Award Title and Code

• Accrediting/Awarding Body

• Level of the award on NFQ, and associated credits

• Programme content

• Programme duration

• Programme fee and any other applicable fees

• Details of Protection of Enrolled Learner arrangements (if applicable)

• Learner profile

• Application process and learner entry requirements

• Teaching, learning and assessment procedures

• Access, transfer and progression arrangements

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Other Parties Involved In Education & Training/ Collaborative Provision

Policy

ATI view the establishment of collaborative provision arrangements as being central to its mission to make its programmes as widely available as possible and to open routes to accreditation for learners which may not otherwise be available to them.

As the coordinating provider with a quality assurance agreement with QQI, ATI understand it is its responsibility to ensure the quality of all programmes and services it delivers in collaboration with others. ATI have the same responsibilities to all learners; whether it delivers programmes directly or in collaboration with another provider. It is ATI's policy to monitor the achievement of programme objectives and learner satisfaction on programmes or parts of programmes delivered in collaboration with other providers.

ATI will have a written statement of agreed arrangements detailing respective responsibilities signed by both parties in place before it embarks on any collaborative provision of programmes and these agreements will be reviewed annually. In the event of any party to the agreement failing to meet the responsibilities detailed, the agreed arrangements will be immediately rendered void.

As the coordinating provider, ATI understand that it must demonstrate how it will monitor achievement of programme objectives and learner satisfaction on programmes or parts of the programme delivered by a collaborative provider.

Peer relationships with the broader education and training community

ATI is committed to ensuring that any accreditations, collaborations arrangements and partnerships it engages with are organised with reputable bodies and are subject to appropriate internal and external quality assurance procedures.

ATI identify the arrangements it has in place with the broader national and international education and training community on the website.

External Agencies (from Governance Section)

The following organisations provide external oversight of ATI as a training provider in general and the Accounting Technician programme specifically.

Council for Curriculum, Examination & Assessment (CCEA)

ATI is recognised as a UK Awarding Organisation and its educational activities are regulated by the Council for Curriculum, Examination & Assessment (CCEA) in Northern Ireland (prior to May 2016, regulation was carried out by Ofqual). As an Awarding Organisation, ATI must comply with the Conditions of Recognition set by the Regulator. ATI submit an annual statement to the Regulator confirming its compliance with these conditions following an internal review of processes and procedures measured against the Conditions of Recognition. ATI also engages an external consultant to carry out a separate compliance review. ATI are also subject to audit by the Regulator under any (or all) of the Conditions of Recognition. Ofqual carried out an audit and site visit as part of their regulatory oversight in November 2015. The Regulator confirmed that ATI was compliant in all respects.

International Federation of Accountants (IFAC)

ATI is an associate member of the International Federation of Accountants (IFAC). IFAC is the global organisation for the accountancy profession dedicated to serving the public interest by strengthening the profession. IFAC has members in 130 countries, representing almost 3 million accountants in public practice, education, government service, industry, and commerce. ATI submits a Statement of Membership Obligations (SMOs) to IFAC on an annual basis. These statements are published on the IFAC website.

Chartered Accountants Ireland CAI

ATI is a partner body of CAI and maintains close links with the wider professional accountancy community of practice. CAI is represented on the Board of Directors and the CAI Director of Education is a member of the Assessment Board. ATI work in partnership with CAI, and cooperate with other professional accountancy bodies in the interests of members.

ATI programmes are recognised by all major accountancy bodies, including CAI, ACCA, CPA, CIMA, and IIPA. This facilitates the negotiation and arrangement of exemptions, progression opportunities and pathways to qualifications for members via other professional accountancy bodies.

The ATI Approved Partner Programme (APP)

ATI operates an APP with recognised colleges and training centres throughout Ireland and offers its programme through a network of approximately 70 partner colleges. The Approved Partner Programme requires Colleges to comply with a set of Conditions of Recognition. These conditions ensure that learners are provided with a suitable environment and receive appropriate tuition and administrative supports. As Approved Partners include colleges in Northern Ireland, this may be viewed as a transnational arrangement. ATI Approved Partners are listed in the published prospectus and on our website (http://www.numbersindna.ie/).

To achieve recognition as an ATI Approved Partner, applicant colleges and training centres must meet ATI's Conditions of Recognition and submit an annual Statement of Compliance.

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As part of the quality assurance procedures ATI conduct at least one onsite quality assurance audit per year with each approved partner. Approved Partners include Institutes of Technology (such as Cork Institute of Technology and Institute of Technology Tallaght), Education & Training Boards (ETBs) and well recognised private colleges e.g. Griffith College Dublin.

Arrangements for Collaborative Provision

The quality assurance procedures in place with the collaborating providers ATI work with in the provision of the apprenticeship programme are governed by Memorandum of Understandings (MOU's). The MOU's are written statements detailing respective responsibilities agreed between the collaborators and underpin the relationship between ATI, the collaborating providers (colleges), the collaborating providers (Employers) and workplace mentors and set out the agreement between collaborating parties as to respective roles and obligations. ATI appreciate the value and importance of MOU's in a multi-party collaboration such as apprenticeship programmes. The MOU's are detailed in the supporting documentation.

ATI will apply due diligence and consider any reputational risk to it as a provider, the FET sector and/ or the national qualifications system associated with prospective providers, awarding bodies and other third parties with whom it considers entering into collaboration arrangements.

Collaborative Arrangement Checklist

The following is a summary of indicative areas that ATI would consider before deciding to enter into a collaborative arrangement with another provider:

Collaborative Arrangement Checklist	
Areas for consideration	**Checklist**
Legal, reputation and compliance requirements	• Is the provider a legal entity, with education and training as a principal function? • Is the legal entity a clearly identified legal person, having rights and responsibilities under law? • Has the provider clearly specified its dependencies, collaborations, obligations, parent organisations, and subsidiaries? • Has the provider declared any third-party relationships and partnerships? • Does the provider comply with applicable regulations and legislation in all jurisdictions in which it operates? • Is the provider in good standing in the qualifications systems and education and training systems in any jurisdictions in which it operates (or in which its parents or subsidiaries operate) or enrols learners, or in which it has arrangements with awarding bodies, quality assurance agencies, qualifications authorities, ministries of education and training, professional bodies and regulators?

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Collaborative Arrangement Checklist	
Resource, governance and structural requirements	• Is the provider stable and in good financial standing? • Does the provider have a reasonable business case for sustainable provision? • Does the provider have fit-for-purpose governance, management and decision-making structures? • Does the provider have arrangements for providing required information to ATI? • Does the provider have capacity to deliver education and training as demonstrated through experience and track record in providing education and training programmes? • Does the provider have sufficient resources, as well as corporate, structural and internal quality assurance systems in place, to sustainably provide education and training programmes?
Programme development and provision requirements	• Does the provider have a fit-for-purpose and stable complement of education and training staff? • Does the provider have fit-for-purpose premises, facilities and resources? • Does the provider have structures and resources to underpin fair and consistent assessment of learner achievement? • Does the provider have arrangements for the protection of enrolled learners (if applicable)?

Expert panellists, Evaluators, Authenticators/Examiners and other Experts

Responsibility

Education Board

Staff

• Programme Director

Supporting Documents

• Criteria for recruitment, selection and engagement of external, independent experts

• Ethical guidelines

• Contract for Services Template

Evidence

• Signed Contract for Services

• Expert Contractors Register

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Key Steps

- Quality assurance procedures include explicit criteria and procedures for the recruitment, selection and engagement of external, independent experts.

- All independent experts engaged are subject to contractual agreements.

- Ethical guidelines relating to the selection and participation of the experts (appended to the Contract for Services) are provided.

- External experts are required to declare, as part of the Contract for Services, that they have no interests that could conflict, or might appear to conflict, with their proposed role with ATI.

- The suitability of the expert in terms of their independence and expertise is reviewed each time a person is engaged.

- ATI retain the names, details of qualification and expertise and affiliations of expert panellists, evaluators, authenticators and others contracted on an Expert Contractors Register. This register is reviewed annually by the COO and the Programme Manager as part of our annual programme review.

- All Examiners, External Examiners and Assistant Examiners are contracted to ATI and operate to documented Terms of Reference and contractual agreements. These contracts include a clause regarding conflicts of interest. ATI retain details of the credentials for all those involved in the assessment process and ensure that they are suitably qualified in the relevant subject area. All contracts clearly outline the responsibilities of the person filling the role. Examiners and External Examiners are not permitted to tutor in the subject(s) they are examining and Assistant Examiners are not permitted to correct scripts from subject(s) they are tutoring.

Collaborating Provider College - Approval Process

Responsibility

ATI as the Coordinating Provider

Staff

- Programme Director
- APM
- Compliance Officer

Supporting Documents

- Application Form
- Credentials Form – Tutors, Mentors
- College Mentor Role and Responsibility
- College Programme Coordinator Role and Responsibility
- Conditions of Recognition
- Annual Statement of Suitability
- Certificate of Suitability (updated annually)

- Collaborating Provider College Suitability Checklist
- Collaborating Provider Onsite Audit Report Template
- Onsite QA Visit Review and Sign-off

Key Steps

- Applicant providers complete application form and Credentials Form and returns to the ATI Compliance Officer.
- The applicant completes the ATI Conditions of Recognition Checklist.
- The Compliance Officer reviews the application and supporting documentation and confirms suitability (or not) and signs off on the review with the COO.
- Sites deemed suitable by the COO are visited by the APM. This onsite audit includes a meeting with the provider representative who will act as College Programme Co-ordinator if the application is successful and the Principal (or equivalent).
- Following the onsite audit, the APM completes the Collaborating Providers Onsite Audit Report and makes a recommendation to the COO for approval (or not).
- The COO presents details of recommended Collaborating Providers to the CSG for agreement of recognition.
- Collaborating Providers are presented with a Certificate of Suitability which is updated annually following ATI's annual review of continuing suitability.
- Following initial recognition, there is an annual review of Collaborating Provider suitability by ATI and Collaborating Providers must complete and submit an annual Statement of Suitability.
- Collaborating Providers must facilitate at least one QA visit during the academic year from an ATI representative. These visits are an opportunity for the ATI representative to meet the apprentice/s, the College Apprenticeship Programme Co-ordinator and tutors and review the facilities and programme delivery in general. Feedback is collected from apprentices and the Collaborating Partner's staff and any issues of concern are highlighted and a resolution/s is agreed and details recorded.

Monitoring

The suitability of Collaborating Provider Colleges is monitored as follows:

- QA visit during the academic year from ATI representative
- Programme Director and APM observations
- Review of Annual Statement of Suitability
- Analysis of apprentice Feedback
- Analysis of Mentor Feedback
- Analysis of apprentice retention and attendance rates
- Assessment Results
- External Assessors' Reports
- External Evaluators' Reports
- Complaints Register
- Risk Register
- WPM and Employer feedback

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Collaborating Provider Employer - Approval Process

Responsibility

ATI as the Coordinating Provider

Staff

• Programme Director

• APM

• ATA Team

The SOLAS Authorised Officer (as nominated by the STB Manager from the region in which the Employer is located) is responsible for the statutory "Suitability to Train Apprentices" Employer approval process.

Supporting Documents

• Employer MOU

• Mentors Form

• Employer Suitability to Train Form

• Conditions of Recognition

• Employer Suitability Checklist

• Employer Roles and Responsibilities

• Employer Onsite Review Report Template

• Employer Appeals Process (Suitability to Train)

• Workplace site visit (facilities and resources assessment)

• Telephone Interview Screening (Applicant Employers)

Key Steps

• Apprenticeship rules require Employers who wish to employ apprentices for the ATI apprenticeship programme to demonstrate (to the satisfaction of SOLAS/ATI), that they have the capacity to provide relevant on-the-job training and to comply with the ATI specified training schedule. In order to do this, applicant Employers are required to engage in a process to establish their suitability.

• When an expression of interest is received from an Employer, the ATA Team sends an information pack by email to the Employer containing the following documents;

  – Apprenticeship Programme Overview

  – Academic & Workplace Learning Details

  – Workplace Mentor Roles & Responsibilities

  – Mentor Credentials Form

  – Indicative Timeline & Commitments

- – Suitability to Train Form

- – Data Protection Statement

- – Employer Memorandum of Understanding

- Employers are also invited to an information session where ATI representatives have an opportunity to meet the Employer face-to-face and ensure they have a full understanding of the Programme and their responsibilities.

- A member of the ATA team follows up with those who cannot attend the information session with an on-site meeting or a virtual meeting.

- The Employer completes the application documentation and submits to ATI for review.

- The ATA Team reviews the documents submitted by the Employer and a member of the ATA Team carries out a telephone assessment to evaluate details contained in the Suitability to Train form and makes a recommendation for approval to the Programme Director which is discussed at the weekly ATA meeting.

- Using the ATI Recruitment sampling strategy a member of the ATA Team will carry out workplace site visits to assess eligibility of selected Employers.

- The COO signs off the ATI approved Employers. On approval the Employer's details are forwarded to the relevant SOLAS Authorised Officer to undertake the statutory "Suitability to Train Apprentices" Employer approval process. On SOLAS approval the Employer is registered by ATI as a Collaborating Provider Employer and SOLAS as a statutory Apprenticeship Employer.

- The COO presents details of the recommended Collaborating Provider Employers to the CSG for agreement of recognition.

- If the Employer is assessed as not being suitable to train apprentices, a member of the ATA Programme Team advises the Employer accordingly in writing giving details of the assessment criteria which have not been met and inviting the Employer to re-apply when all the assessment criteria can be met. The Employer has the right to appeal ATI's decision.

- If rejected through the SOLAS approval process, the SOLAS Authorised Advisor will provide feedback and rights to appeal information.

Monitoring

The Employer's continuing suitability is monitored as follows;

- QA visit from an ATI representative

- QA visit from College representative

- Programme Director and APM observations

- Annual Performance Review

- Analysis of apprentice feedback

- Analysis of mentor feedback

- Analysis of apprentice retention and attendance rates

- Assessment Results

- External Assessors Reports

- External Evaluators' Reports
- Apprenticeship Action Register
- Risk Register
- College Programme Coordinator feedback

Workplace Mentor Role and Responsibilities and Quality Assurance

Supporting Documents

- Workplace Credentials Form
- Initial Planning Meeting Agenda Template
- Induction Training Workshop Outline

Appointment of the WPM

- Workplace Mentors (WPM) are appointed on an annual basis subject to acceptance of the MOU between ATI and the Employer.
- The proposed WPM completes a Credentials Form and returns it with copies of award certificates/ proof of qualifications to the ATA Team.
- The Compliance Officer or APM screens the completed Credentials Forms.
- The APM follows up with a telephone call to confirm approval and clarify understanding of the responsibilities and requirements of the role.
- The recommended ratio of apprentice to Workplace Mentor is 4:1.
- Workplace mentors are allocated to apprentices in advance of the Induction.

Knowledge, Skills and Abilities

The WPM must

- Be a qualified accounting technician or a qualified accountant.
- Have a sound understanding of the ATA programme.
- Have a clear understanding of their role and responsibility on the apprenticeship programme.
- Be able to build rapport with the apprentice and create a supportive and comfortable learning environment.
- Be able to communicate information accurately, clearly and as intended.
- Be prepared for a challenge and accept an alternative view.
- Have good listening skills - listen not only to what is being said, but also to what is left unsaid or only partially said.
- Have the skills and experience to develop, review and assess a Training Plan with the apprentice to achieve the work-based learning outcomes.

Role and Responsibilities

- Attend the Induction session and attend assessment training sessions organised by ATI.

- Set and agree a customised Training Plan with the apprentice and review regularly.

- Deliver 'on-the-job' training.

- Conduct work-based assessment and provide feedback to the apprentice*.
- Submit assessments to ATI for moderation in line with the programme timetable.

- Introduce the apprentice into the Accounting CoP.

- Ensure that the apprentice receives an Induction, in line with what other employees receive.

- Provide pastoral care for the apprentice.

- Review the work-based assessment submission feedback with the apprentice and evaluate and modify the Training Plan accordingly.

- Meet the apprentice regularly, (minimum 4 times formally a year) for periodic review meetings to review progress and modify the agreed Training Plan where necessary.

- Ensure that the apprentice is able to adequately record evidence assessment.

- Meet an ATI representative and/or college mentor periodically to discuss the apprentice's progress.

- Advise ATI of any work-place absences or other behaviour of the apprentice that is a matter of concern for the Employer.

- Advise ATI if the Employer is considering invoking disciplinary procedures before commencing these procedures.

- Inform ATI immediately if an apprentice is to be dismissed or made redundant and the date when any such dismissal/redundancy is to become effective.

- Validate any work carried out by an apprentice leaving employment (for any reason, including dismissal) prior to the apprentice leaving.

- Complete an annual self-assessment evaluation form as part of the ATI quality assurance plan.

- Contribute to the programme review process.

How is the performance of the Workplace Mentors monitored and evaluated?

- Applications are screened by the ATA Team.

- ATA Team interviews the applicant WPMs to assess their suitability and understanding of the requirements for the role of WPM.

- Workplace Credentials Form.

- Review of the extent and quality of the feedback given to apprentices by the WPM.

- External Evaluators Review/Report.

- Assessment Results/External Examiners Reports.

- Review of the records of periodic review meetings with apprentices.

*   *The workplace mentor also acts as the workplace assessor and must be experienced and qualified in the occupation.*

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- Number of modifications to the agreed Training Plan.

- Annual self-assessment.

- Attendance at training and feedback provided following training.

- Annual review by the APM/ APM observations.

- Review of Complaints Register.

- Apprentice Forum reports.

- Record of periodic review meetings with apprentices.

Support Systems in Place for WPM

- Apprenticeship Programme Overview

- Academic & Workplace Learning Details

- Workplace Mentor Roles & Responsibilities

- Indicative Timeline & Commitments

- Induction

- Apprenticeship Handbook

- Regular scheduled training information provision/training

- Virtual classroom and webinar e.g. how to use Moodle

- Regular communication with the APM and support from the APM

- Useful resources/links

- Buddy system with experienced WPM's – in development stages

- Regular feedback on performance of the Programme

Monitoring On-the-Job Training, Assessment and Mentoring

- The APM analyses the reports and highlights issues/areas of concern in the form of a *rolling* Quality Improvement Plan.

- The APM is responsible for coordinating and monitoring the implementation of the actions set out in *rolling* Quality Improvement Plan.

- The APM presents an analysis of the monthly reports to Programme Board meetings.

- Feedback from apprentices.

- Feedback via Apprentice Forum.

- Review of the extent, quality and timeliness of the formative feedback given to apprentices by the WPM.

- Review of the records of periodic review meetings with apprentices.

- Annual review by the APM/ APM observations.

- Review of Complaints Register.

- Record of WPM periodic review meetings with apprentices.

How is on-the-job training, mentoring and assessment (externally) evaluated?

- External Evaluators' Review/Reports

- Assessment Results/External Examiners' Reports

Support for Workplace Mentors

- The APM checks-in with WPM's at programme commencement to confirm how they and the apprentices are settling into the workplace and the programme and to identify any areas of concern.

- Each workplace is visited by an ATI representative and/or a College mentor during the year (If other statutory agencies require site visits they are co-ordinated with these core QA visits). The focus of these visits is to monitor apprentice's and Employer's progress and monitor quality assurance and continuing fitness for purpose.

- Following these visits, the ATI and/or the College representative completes an On-the-Job Monitoring Form and records any issues/observations.

- All feedback is analysed and captured in a summary report and presented at the weekly Apprenticeship Team meeting by the APM.

- Outcomes are collated in the Programme Monitoring Report which is presented to the Programme Board and the Consortium Steering Group.

- All issues are detailed on the Apprentice Action register and monitored by the Compliance Officer to ensure that the issues are appropriately captured and resolved.

- If it is found that the Employer is not providing sufficient training the APM and College mentor actively works with the apprentice and workplace mentor to:

  – provide the missing elements of training; and

  – arrange for the apprentice to gain the experience with another suitable Employer.

Induction Training Workshop for Workplace Mentors

Workplace mentors are inducted into the programme at the beginning of each academic year. Attendance is mandatory.

Supporting Documents

- Attendance List

- Feedback Form

- PPT Presentation

- Workshop Outline

- Training Session Outline

The purpose of workshop is to

- Ensure that workplace mentors are clear with regard to their specific roles and responsibilities on the programme.

- Provide guidance on how to effectively meet the programme learning outcomes.

- Provide guidance on how to gather, collate and assess the work-based learning.

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- Providing participants with the relevant documentation and tools to confidently deliver the Apprenticeship programme.

- Provide training in mentoring and assessing skills.

Attendance is compulsory and participants are required to complete feedback forms at the end of the workshop. The APM follows up with non-attendees to establish the reason for non-attendance, sends them a training pack and gives them access to the recorded session.

Following the workshop, the APM analyses the feedback and makes recommendations for enhancements to the workshop based on the feedback.

College Mentor Role, Responsibilities and Quality Assurance

Supporting Documents

- ATI/ETB MOU

- Credentials Form

- Employer site visits timetable

- Apprentice meetings timetable

- Self-assessment evaluation form

- Allocated mentee listing

- College Mentor Meeting Report Template

Terms of Reference

Appointment

College Mentors are appointed subject to

- Acceptance of the MOU between ATI and the ETB

- Nomination by the ETB

- Having satisfactorily completed the College Credentials Form

- Approval to act as a CM by ATI

Role and Responsibilities

- Responsible for 'off-the-job' learning and mentoring of apprentice in support of their assessment submissions.

- Oversees the operational delivery and the implementation of the quality assurance requirements in relation to all programme learning delivered in the college.

- Ensures that a Training Plan is in place for achievement of the work-based learning outcomes.

- Ensure that the apprentice stays on track with learning and with the programme.

- Meets the apprentice in college regularly for pastoral care and formally at least twice a year to review progress.

- Be available to mentor over the full academic year during the hours allocated by the college to deliver the programme mentoring requirements.

- Empower the apprentice to take responsibility for their own learning and career development.

- Meet with the apprentice and the workplace mentor in the workplace to monitor the programme's 'on-the-job' delivery.

- Complete a timetable for the purposes of carrying out apprentice meetings and Employer site visits and submits copies of the timetables to the College Programme Coordinator for review and agreement who signs off on the timetables and forwards a copy to APM for monitoring and quality assurance.

Attendance at Meetings

The College Programme Coordinator ensures that there is college representation at the Consortium Steering Group and the Programme Board meetings.

The College Mentor/College Programme Coordinator/tutors attend the Induction session at the beginning of the academic year and any training sessions hosted by ATI, including but not limited to: Induction, mentor, assessment and systems support.

College Mentor Approval Process

- The CPC nominates a CM to mentor a maximum of five (5) apprentices per year.

- The nominated CM completes and submits a Credentials Form to ATI.

- ATI reviews the Credentials Form and confirms with the CPC if the CM is suitable

Knowledge, Skills and Abilities

The College Mentor must

- Be an experienced ATI programme tutor.

- Be a current member of the Teaching Council of Ireland.

- Have a clear understanding of the programme and, specifically, their role and responsibility on the programme.

- Be able to build rapport with the apprentice and have the ability to create a supportive and comfortable learning environment.

- Have good questioning skills – be prepared for a challenge and accept an alternative view.

- Have good listening skills - listen not only to what is being said, but also to what is left unsaid or only partially said.

How is the performance of College Mentors monitored and evaluated?

- Credentials Form

- Assessment Results

- Feedback from apprentices and workplace mentors

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- Attendance at training and feedback provided

- Annual review by the APM

- APM observations

- Review of Actions Register

- Apprentice Forum reports

- Records of meetings with apprentices

Supports in Place for CM

- Induction

- Mentor Handbook

- Training information provision/training (virtual)

- Regular communication with the APM and support from the APM

- Useful resources/links

- Support of the CPC

- Regular feedback on performance of the programme

Tutor Role, Responsibilities and Quality Assurance

Role and Responsibilities

- Delivers the 'off-the-job' apprenticeship training.

- Monitors apprentice performance on the academic programme and integration with the on-the-job learning and assessment.

- Liaises with CPC and ATI APM to ensure the effective delivery of the programme.

- Empowers the apprentice to take responsibility for their own learning and career development.

- Contributes to programme review.

- Attends programme training provided by ATI.

- Ensures that the Apprentice is on track with learning within the college.

Support Systems in Place for Tutors

Supporting tutors is important both in the interest of our qualification and the apprentices. ATI provides a range of support services to tutors to assist them in the delivery of the programme. These include:

Briefings on Programme Updates/Enhancements

The APM holds regular briefings for tutors to keep them informed of any changes to the programme particularly in relation to legislative changes. For example, tutors are invited to our breakfast Budget briefings. Other topics are outlined below:

- Online Resources

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- Access to programme support materials through the TouchPoint portal on ATI website

- Webinars and Briefings

- Programme Materials

- Module Teaching scheme and sample teachings Strategies

- Modular Powerpoint Presentations

- The support and guidance of the APM

- Support of the College Programme Manager

- Tutor Handbook (under consideration)

- Regular scheduled training information provision/training (virtual)

- Induction

- Feedback on performance

Continuous Professional Development (CPD)

Tutors, as members of the Teaching Council of Ireland, are required to complete Continuous Professional Development (CPD) activities each year, to maintain the currency of their knowledge and skills. Details of CPD activity must be submitted to the CPC who maintains a record and updates the APM on an annual basis.

Tutor Contingency Plan

- The CPC work to ensure that there is minimal disruption to apprentices due to tutor absence.

- If a tutor cannot attend a scheduled lecture, they must contact the college by 9am on the morning of the lecture advising of their absence.

- The college will then assign a replacement tutor (if possible).

- The tutor outlines the content to be covered to the CPC and/or the replacement tutor.

- If it is not possible to assign a replacement tutor, the tutor re-schedules the lecture to take place as soon as possible after the cancellation, on a date which has been mutually agreed with the apprentices.

- The CPC ensures that apprentices are notified of changes by text/email or phone if necessary.

- The CPC informs the CM of the changes and records any cancelled/rescheduled classes, keeping the APM informed.

Tutor Handbook (under consideration)

(Contents)

- Our Commitment to Tutors

- Role and Responsibilities of the Tutor

- Quality and Qualifications Ireland (QQI) and the NFQ

- The ATI Quality Assurance System (QAS)

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Self-Evaluation, Monitoring and Review

This policy and procedures has been developed in line with the *QQI Core Quality Assurance Guidelines* and the *Topic Specific Quality Assurance Guidelines for Statutory Apprenticeship Programmes.*

Policy

ATI regard the continuous review and evaluation of the apprentice programme, related supports, the learner experience and our quality assurance system in a systematic and structured way as a fundamental factor in ensuring quality. The purpose of self-evaluation is to *review, evaluate and report* on training programmes and the quality assurance system which underpin them. Implementing this continuous improvement approach helps identify good practice and areas needing improvement. ATI consult with staff, tutors, apprentices, mentors, Employers, college partners, alumni, members, external experts, professional bodies and other stakeholders as part of the on-going monitoring and evaluation process.

Monitoring, evaluation and review enables us to;

• Establish clear lines of responsibility for the observation and supervision of the apprentice.

• Ensure all participants have the information they need to deliver the programmes to a high standard.

• Ensure that Employers are meeting their responsibilities for apprentice direction, mentoring, training, assessment, observation and supervision while the apprentice is employed by them.

• Ensure that collaborating providers are meeting their responsibilities with regard to the off-the-job parts of the programme while also tracking and guiding the apprentice progress in the workplace.

• Ensure that the experience of each individual apprentice fulfils the requirements of the programme by monitoring and recording work-based activity.

• Provide secure and timely feedback processes for apprentices, Employers and collaborating providers.

• Ensure that the delivery of on-the job and off-the-job elements at multiple sites is equivalent.

Internal Evaluation and Monitoring

The apprenticeship programme is delivered both on- and off–the-job and ATI monitor the delivery and quality of the programme on an on-going basis at all delivery sites to ensure that the learning opportunities allow the apprentice to achieve the objectives of the programme.

To facilitate the continuous monitoring of programmes ATI operate a cycle of evaluations and reviews to seek feedback on all aspects of programmes, review that feedback and make and implement recommendations for continuous improvements. Results and findings from on-going monitoring and evaluation activities feed into the annual programme reviews and the 5-year programmatic review.

Responsibility

As the co-ordinating provider, ATI has overall responsibility for monitoring and evaluating the programme.

Staff Involved

- Programme Director
- APM Apprenticeship Programme Manager
- Compliance Officer
- COO

Supporting Documents

- Complaints Log
- ATA Programme Monitoring Schedule Template (sets out a schedule of all monitoring activities for the year)
- Apprenticeship Action List
- Apprenticeship Risk Register
- Workplace QA Visit Report Template
- College QA Visit Report Template
- Programme Monitoring Report presented to the Programme Board and the Consortium Steering Group.
- Weekly ATA meeting agenda and minutes
- Apprentice Feedback Forms
- Programme Monitoring Report Template

Key monitoring activities

- ATA team meetings consider summary feedback reports on a weekly basis.
- The Compliance Officer monitors the Complaints Log, Apprentice Action List and Apprenticeship Risk Register on a weekly basis to ensure that any issues of concern are appropriately captured and resolved.

- Review of feedback on Induction – apprentice, Employer, mentor and tutor.

- Review of reports following College and Apprentice QA visits.

- Review of reports following WPM and Apprentice QA visits.

- Review of effectiveness of the Employer Follow Up Phone Campaign.

- Feedback on mentoring and assessment training.

- Analysis of apprentice, mentor, tutor and Employer feedback (formally via surveys and focus groups and informally via meetings, emails, phone-calls).

- Analysis of work-based assessment results and feedback.

- Analysis of assessment results, internal verification and external authenticators reports.

- Review of issues raised at quarterly meeting of the Apprentice Forum.

- Annual Self-Evaluation Reports.

Collaborating Provider QA Visit

The QA Lead coordinates Quality Assurance Audit visits of approved collaborating provider colleges once a year at a minimum., at programme commencement and again before the second examination session. Remove first sentence and add this one. An ATI representative undertakes a QA visit of approved collaborating provider colleges once a year at a minimum; at programme commencement and again before the second examination session. The audit examines the facilities and administration supports and includes a face-to-face meeting with apprentices to advise them of relevant processes and regulations (e.g. assessment deadlines), to answer any queries they may have and to get qualitative feedback on the apprentice experience in the college through the use of a focus-group. A Programme Team Meeting forms an important part of the QA visit. This allows for feedback from the teaching team on how the programme is operating. It also allows for an evaluation of the extent to which ATI QA procedures are being followed.

Following the visit, the ATI representative completes a QA Visit Report. These Reports and the Focus Group Reports are analysed by the APM and acted on as needed. A Summary Report is presented at the ATA meeting by the APM.

Workplace QA Support

The APM contacts all workplace mentors within six weeks of programme commencement to establish how the apprentices are settling into the workplace, to see if the mentor or the apprentice/s needs any additional support from ATI and to identify any areas of concern.

An ATI representative and/or a college mentor visits each workplace once a year at a minimum (statutory agencies site visits are co-ordinated with these QA visits if possible). The focus of these visits is to assess apprentices' progress, monitor the quality assurance and continuing fitness for purpose of the workplace and to review progress with the workplace mentor. This also includes garnering feedback from the workplace mentor on their experience to date and to check if any further support is needed. Feedback Forms are completed by the apprentices.

Following the visit, the ATI representative completes a QA Visit Report which is analysed by the APM. Feedback is collated and any corrective actions are implemented by APM. A Summary Report is presented at the ATA team meeting by the APM.

Reporting

All issues are detailed on the Apprentice Action register and monitored by the Compliance Officer to ensure that the issues are appropriately captured and resolved. The Summary Reports are collated into the Programme Monitoring Report which is presented to the Programme Board and the Consortium Steering Group.

Apprenticeship Risk Register

The Register details potential threats to the on-going delivery and quality assurance requirements of the programme. It highlights the mitigation measures in place to minimise the likely occurrence of the listed threats. The Compliance Officer reviews and updates the Risk Register on a weekly basis following ATA team meetings. Each risk is allocated to an ATI staff member to manage and resolve. The COO monitors the Apprenticeship Risk Register regularly to ensure that all risks are appropriately managed.

Apprenticeship Action List (AAL)

The AAL is the responsibility of the Apprentice Programme Manager and is a mechanism for recording operational issues in the delivery of the programme. The maintenance of the AAL helps the APM to identify any trends or problems arising and plan appropriate corrective action. All members of the ATA team identify issues as appropriate and highlights them to the APM for recording on the AAL. The Compliance Officer follows up on any issues that remain unresolved and escalated to the Apprenticeship Risk register if necessary. The ATA team reviews the AAL on a weekly basis to ensure that the issues identified are resolved appropriately. Regular analysis of the AAL helps ATI to identify any trends or recurring problems and put appropriate corrective action in place.

Complaints Log

The Compliance Officer maintains and manages the ATI Complaints Log which details complaints received, summaries of the responses and the status of the complaint. The Compliance Officer normally manages complaints through to completion. However, they may escalate a complaint to the Head of Education if it is considered to be of a serious nature. The COO reviews the Complaints Log on a quarterly basis to ensure that all complaints are properly addressed and closed off.

External Monitoring and Evaluation

External monitoring of the apprenticeship programme is carried out by QQI and addresses the following areas:

- Programme quality and attainment of awards standards
- Follow-up on internal and/or external quality procedures, e.g. Re-validation
- Institutional Review
- Registered QQI provider status
- Tracking the implementation of policy

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To facilitate monitoring by QQI the following documents/information is available to QQI as and when required:

- A copy of our Annual Quality Report which includes data on completion rates and other specified quality indicators

- Copies of Self-Evaluation Reports and Quality Improvement Plans

- Internal Verification, External Authentication and Results Approval Reports on request

- Detail on changes which may affect ATI status as a recognised QQI provider

- Crisis notification (e.g. financial issues and capacity deficits, impending media disclosures relating to academic quality)

- Arrangements for the protection of learners where appropriate (not currently applicable to ATI)

Apprentice Feedback

ATI regard the collection, monitoring and analysis of feedback from learners on their progress and their level of satisfaction with the programme and supports as one of the primary ways to identify areas of best practice and ways to improve the quality and effectiveness of the programmes. In view of this, ATI are committed to having effective systems in place which allows for apprentice feedback which supports monitoring and evaluation of the learner and learning experience.

Supporting Documents

- Apprentice Survey Forms

- Apprentice Induction Checklist

- Apprentice Handbook

- Apprentice Feedback forms

Evidence

- Completed survey forms and resulting analysis

- Programme Quality Improvement Plans

- Completed Apprentice Feedback Forms

- QA Site Visit Reports

- Apprentice Forum Minutes

- Focus Group Meeting Minutes

Key Steps

- ATI emphasise the importance of apprentice feedback at Induction and in the Apprentice Handbook and outline how the feedback data is used to improve programmes and services.

- ATI survey apprentices using an online survey software tool (SurveyMonkey) with regards to their experience on all aspects of the programme twice during the academic year. This helps monitor and evaluate the learner experience on an on-going basis, and to capture recommendations for

improvements which are implemented if agreed at appropriate points. The surveys are issued to all apprentices registered on the programme and the resulting data is analysed and reviewed by the APD. Issues arising are reported internally within ATI, addressed immediately by the APM (if time critical) or, otherwise, are considered and acted on as part of our annual programme review. A Summary Report is provided to Programme Board and the Consortium Steering Group by the APM. If issues arise related to collaborating providers, the APM brings the issue/s to their attention and agrees corrective action. Details of the corrective action agreed and implemented are recorded in our Quality Improvement Plan.

- At the discretion of the Programme Board an evaluation survey may be administered with relevant groups of learners on an ad-hoc basis to meet a specified need and/or in response to a change or development in the delivery of a programme.

- Occasionally focus group meetings of apprentices may be organised to provide feedback (primarily as part of the self-evaluation process or a specific concern with regards to programme delivery).

- ATI operate an 'open door' policy in relation to communication with learners actively encouraging them to approach any member of the ATA programme team, tutors or mentors at any stage of programme delivery to highlight areas of concern and make recommendations for improvements. This informal feedback is monitored and captured in the Quality Improvement Plan.

- ATI provide apprentices with accessible communication channels and tools, both formal and informal, to facilitate them in providing feedback and suggestions for improvements at all stages of the programme.

- If apprentices highlight a particular concern about any aspect of the programme or if a recurring trend emerges from the feedback which causes concern, the Compliance Officer investigates the matter further and corrective action is instigated to resolve any issues that may have arisen.

- If there are any issues highlighted in the survey which require closer investigation, the ATI Compliance Office contacts the CPC who in turn will conduct an investigation into any issues or areas of concern that need to be addressed.

- Learners are invited to give feedback on the following areas;

- Overall experience

- Mentoring support

- Sufficiency, availability and quality of learning resources and learner supports all that are in place both on- and off-the job

- Integration of on- and off-the-job modules

- Programme content

- Programme delivery

- Programme materials and training facilities

- Programme/learning supports and resources

- Assessment and feedback

- Their involvement in the Community of Practice

- Administration

Apprentice Surveys

Year 1 - Survey 1	Year 1 - Survey 2	Year 2 -Survey 1	Year 2 -Survey 2
(Pre-Christmas after the submission of the first work-based assessment)	(At the end of the academic year following the exam session)	(Pre-Christmas after the submission of the first work-based assessment)	(At the end of the academic year following the exam session)
Get feedback on the apprentices' early learning experiences in the college and work-based environments, the first assessment and to identify further supports requirements.	Get feedback on apprentices' overall experience of Year 1 of the Programme and specifically on the integration of college and workplace modules.	Get feedback on continuing progress in meeting the programme learning outcomes and to confirm that the apprentices' have settled into Year 2 of the programme.	Get feedback on apprentices' overall experience of the Programme as the Programme concludes and all workplace submissions and examinations have been completed.

Programme Review Procedure

Supporting Documents

- Template for Annual Quality Report
- List of KPIs

Evidence

- Annual Quality Reports
- Website
- CSG meeting minutes
- Programme Board minutes
- Review Reports and Quality Improvement Plans
- External Reviews by monitoring bodies
- Correspondence with monitoring bodies

Responsibility

Programme Board

CSG

Staff

- Programme Director (manages and coordinates the Annual Programme Review and the 5-year Programmatic Review)
- Compliance Officer

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Key Steps

Frequency

- The programme is reviewed annually.

- A full programmatic review will be carried out after the first rollout of the programme and thereafter every 5 years.

- Additional reviews may be held from time to time if required.

- ATI publish reports in accordance with guidelines set down by the external monitoring body.

- Copies of reviews and monitoring reports are tabled for discussion at Programme Board and Consortium Steering Group meetings.

- ATI produce an Annual Quality Report; listing issues identified, innovations made and actions taken as a result of reviews in the report.

- ATI make the findings of reviews and monitoring available for external reviews by monitoring bodies.

- ATI publish information regarding its review and monitoring exercises on its website and other appropriate media.

Review of the Occupational Profile

The purpose of the ATA programme is to prepare apprentices for careers as accounting technicians. Ultimately, the quality of the apprenticeship programme depends on how well graduates of the programme perform in the workplace. ATI recognise that, as the occupation changes, the knowledge, skills and competences required to perform to a high standard in the workplace may also change. Therefore, it is critical that ATI thoroughly review the requirements of the occupation periodically as part of our on-going review and monitoring processes. Where the outcome of the reviews indicate that changes to the programme are needed ATI will make the necessary changes and ensure that the findings are taken into account in subsequent reviews of the programme.

Responsibility

CSG

Staff Involved

- COO

- Programme Director

- Head of Education

- All members of the ATA team

Support Documents

- Alumni Survey Form

- Employers' Survey Form

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- Members' Surveys

- Occupation Review Report Template

Evidence

- Analysis of graduate feedback (ROI & NI)

- Quality Improvement Plans

- Literature reviews

- Agendas and Minutes of CSG meetings

- Agendas and Minutes of Programme Board meetings

- Occupation Review Reports

- Revised occupational profiles

- Recruitment Sector Market Analysis

- Accountancy Sector Market Analysis

- SOLAS Skills & Labour Market Research

- Department of Jobs, Enterprise & Innovation Publications

- IBEC & ESME Research Publications

Key Steps

- Involve Employers' associations and/or significant Employers of accounting technicians and significant occupational professionals in the review.

- Engage with human resource personnel from across the industry to assess functioning of qualified apprentices.

- Review literature, conference proceedings, or regulatory material pertaining to the occupation, including economic and labour market forecasts and analysis.

- Review technological changes that impact on the occupation.

- Survey alumni after graduating/exiting the programme to identify strengths and weakness of the programme and assess the level of preparedness achieved for career advancement.

- The findings from the occupational profile reviews input into the annual programme review and 5-year programmatic review.

- Circulate copies of the review findings to stakeholders .

- Seek approval for revised occupational profiles by the relevant national apprenticeship body or bodies, prior to the revision and revalidation of a programme.

Stakeholder Involvement and Input to Programme Reviews

- Members of the Consortium Steering Group and the Programme Board are centrally involved in programme review.

- ATI involve all key stakeholders, with a specific focus on apprentices, mentors and tutors and significant external stakeholders, in programme reviews primarily through the use of surveys and focus group meetings.

- Collect and analyse data resulting from apprentice, tutor, mentors and Employer feedback and surveys.

- Invite apprentices to participate in programme reviews through a combination of group discussion/ focus groups and surveys.

- Invite a mentor, tutor, graduate and current apprentice to act as members of the Programmatic Review Group for the 5-year programmatic review.

- An External Evaluator engages with apprentices, mentors, member of the ATA team and other relevant stakeholders as part of the 5-year programmatic review.

- Feedback from staff is collected at staff group and one-to-one meetings.

- Survey Employers of accounting technicians on a regular basis.

- Ask alumni for feedback and collate and analyse the resulting data.

Staff Involved

- COO

- Programme Director

- APM

- Head of Education

Supporting Documents

- Apprentice Survey Forms

- Alumni Survey Forms

- Employer Survey Forms

- Outline for focus group meeting

- Selection Criteria for External Evaluator

Evidence

- Completed surveys forms and analysis

- Minutes of Staff Meetings

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Annual Programme Review

Supporting Documents

- Annual Programme Review Checklist

- Programme Review Meeting Agenda Template

- Quality Assurance Report

- Quality Improvement Plan

ATI undertake an annual review of the programme through a formal review process. As part of the review ATI take into account the following;

- Input from the annual Occupational Profile review to ensure continued relevance of all aspects of the programme

- The annual review of the Partnerships

- Input from mentors, alumni and current apprentices

- Assessment instruments, processes, briefs, exam papers/outline solutions, marking schemes

- Assessment reports

- Input from collaborating partners

- Retention, withdrawal and graduation rates and causes

- Any persistent anomalies at particular sites or with particular modules or other elements of the programme

The findings are compiled in an Annual Quality Report.

Annual Quality Assurance (QA) Report

At the end of each academic year and the associated Quality Assurance cycle and following the annual programme review, the Programme Director produces a Quality Assurance report for the programme. The Report highlights strengths and identifies areas for improvement relating to the apprenticeship programme. The recommendation for enhancements contained in this Report are captured in a Quality Improvement Plan aimed at achieving on-going quality enhancement. The Report and the Quality Improvement Plan are submitted to the Programme Board and the Consortium Steering Group for review, comment, discussion and ratification. The Report is publicly available through the ATI's website and contains information under the following headings:

- Programme Overview

- Quality Assurance Policies and Procedures

- Retention and assessment results

- Results of the QA evaluation procedures

- Report on recommendations implemented

- Recommendations to be implemented

The Report also examines the implementation and effectiveness of each quality assurance policy area and associated procedures, deriving information from

- Apprentice feedback

- Partner college feedback

- Employer feedback

- Programme Monitoring Reports

- College Programme Co-Ordinator feedback

- WPM and CM feedback

- Consultation with staff

- Findings from the annual review of the operation of the CSG

- Other stakeholder feedback

- Examiners reports and assessment results

- Assessment Appeals Panel Annually

- Evolving best practice guidelines from QQI, SOLAS and other relevant bodies

- Apprentice Forum Reports

The Report contains information under the following headings:

- Programme Overview

- Overall review of the programme with particular focus on the achievement of the intended learning outcomes and the continuing suitability of same

- Activities of our programmes in the preceding year

- Feedback on all aspects of the programme

- Outcomes of a review of the implementation of our Quality Assurance Manual (QAS)

- Apprentice recruitment and retention statistics

- Assessment results and appeals

- Apprentice progression and completion rates

- Results of apprentice and tutor evaluations

- Report on recommendations implemented

- Data regarding best practice

- Recommendations for improvement in the programme, or related services

The Quality Improvement Plan sets out a schedule of actions to be undertaken based on recommendations for improvements to be implemented. The implementation of this Plan is monitored on an on-going basis by the Programme Director and monitored by the ATI Compliance Officer and progress is reported to the Programme Board and the Consortium Steering Group at meetings of these bodies.

This report is made available to all collaborating providers, other relevant stakeholders, to QQI, to all members of the ATA team and publicly through the website.

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5-year Programmatic Review

The Programme Review Team will conduct a review of the Quality Assurance data collected from the programme during the 5-year period being addressed by the review. This data will be contained in the annual QA reports. A QA summary report will be compiled from this data, which details the recommendations for improvements made and the current status of each recommendation. This QA summary report will provide an accurate representation of the current state of the programme(s). The 5-year programmatic review is a wide-scale comprehensive review of all aspects of the programme and the syllabus which may lead to major changes in the programme/curriculum. It consists of a self-evaluation process and an external independent review.

As part of the programmatic review process, ATI engage competent external evaluators to contribute to the process to allow for objective and independent feedback on the effectiveness of the quality management processes, programmes and supports.

Key Steps

As part of this review the following are considered

- Findings of the Annual Reviews

- Findings of awarding Body Monitoring Reports

- Findings of reviews of the Occupational Profile

- Findings of the reviews of the operation of the Consortium Steering group

- Findings of the reviews of the operation of the Programme Board

- Legislative changes to be incorporated into the programme

- Feedback from all stakeholders including existing apprentices, members, partner colleges, alumni, tutors, industry, practice and other professional accountancy bodies

- Effectiveness of procedures for the assessment of learners

- Recommended modifications to the existing curriculum, modules and assessment processes

- External authenticators and evaluators reports to ensure suggested changes are implemented

- The levels of mentoring, training and assessment skills available to the programme to ensure they are sufficient and appropriate

- Suitability and appropriateness of the physical facilities and anticipate changing needs in the future

- Current programme entry requirements and confirm their appropriateness for the current context

- Learner progression and completion rates, retention, withdrawal and graduation rates and causes across the period of the review

- Any issues raised about particular sites or with particular modules or other elements of the programme

- Recommendations for modifications to the delivery process and the operational management procedures based on feedback from mentors, trainers, graduates and current apprentices

Review Output

The output from this review is a programme proposal with updated intended programme learning outcomes suitable for the changing occupational profile, changed partnerships, changed module

outcomes and changed content, to reflect updated occupational concerns and a more efficient delivery of the programme. The review is carried out in a way that affirms the positive roles of participants and re-energises the consortium.

Selection of External Evaluator

We appoint an independent External Evaluator to input into our 5-year programmatic review. The Evaluator we appoint must have an understanding of evaluation procedures and methodologies, and has the knowledge, skills and experience to contribute to the development and enhancement of the programme(s) under review.

Responsibility

The COO is responsible for the appointment of the External Evaluator.

Supporting Document

Criteria for the Recruitment, Selection and Engagement of External Evaluators

Evidence

- References from other providers
- CV's of External Evaluators

Key Steps

- Set out selection criteria to assess and choose the most qualified evaluator.
- External evaluations will be carried out by individuals who are:
  – Competent in the activity of evaluation.
  – Independent of the activity or programme under evaluation to allow for objectivity and impartiality.
  – Professional and systematic in their approach.
- Compile and maintain a list of professional qualifications and relevant experiences of evaluators.
- Ask for recommendations from other providers.
- Contract a suitable evaluator based on their match to the stated selection criteria and assessment of their ability to make a positive contribution to the programmatic review process.

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References

- Core Statutory Quality Assurance (QA) Guidelines Statutory QA Guidelines developed by QQI for use by all Providers April 2016, QQI.

- Topic Specific Quality Assurance Guidelines for Statutory Apprenticeship Programmes.

- Apprenticeship Code of Practice for Employers and Apprentices (SOLAS).

- Qualifications and Quality Assurance (Education and Training) Act 2012.

- Study on quality assurance systems in work based learning and assessment in European VET; Selected cases on quality assurance in apprenticeship programmes - Final report (ENQA – FET).

- A European Quality Framework for Apprenticeships; A European Trade Union Proposal.

- QQI Policy for Collaborative Programmes, Transnational Provision and Joint Awards 2012.

- Apprenticeship Council Report on New Apprenticeship Programme Proposals June 2015.

- Apprenticeship Implementation Plan (Department of Education and Skills).

- Policy and Criteria for Access, Transfer and Progression in relation to learners for Providers of Further and Higher Education and Training (QQI).

- Access Transfer and Progression - QQI Policy Restatement 2015.

- The New Common Points Scale 2017.

- Progression Opportunities into Higher Education HELS (QQI Version and date).

- Guidelines for Preparing Programme Descriptors for FET Programmes leading to CAS awards (QQI).

- QQI Quality Assuring Assessment Guidelines for Providers (2013).

- QQI award specifications.

- QQI 2017 Key Dates.

Websites

- www.accountingtechnicianireland.ie

- www.apprenticeship.ie

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