Guide to Remote External Authentication

External authentication provides independent authoritative confirmation of fair and consistent assessment of learners in accordance with national standards. Traditionally, this process comprised of a visit by the designated External Authenticator to the Centre/College to examine the relevant assessment documentation. Contingency plans related to the Covid-19 crisis have resulted in the possibility of opting for a fully online process for the internal verification and external authentication of assessment material. The decision to opt for a remote external authentication option should be made early in the assessment process to allow tutors to deliver and record assessment activity appropriately. This document serves as a guide to preparing for and conducting a remote external authentication process.

> ## The Key Principles of a Remote External Authentication Process:
>
> » Efficient
>
> » Straight-forward and well-defined
>
> » Complete
>
> » Consistent

Preparing for a Remote External Authentication Process

Choosing a traditional or online version of the submission for assessment process is a decision for centre management and should be made based on what suits the course structure and stakeholders. The decision to opt for a remote external process should occur as early as possible in the delivery of the course. Furthermore, it should be planned and communicated to the practitioner/assessor team early in the course as it will enable practitioners to be suitably efficient in the way assessment evidence might be formatted or organised. There should be a support plan in place for practitioners/assessors to ensure a consistent approach to the process.

The Quality Assurance team recommends the use of Microsoft Office Teams * (can be used in conjunction with OneNote/e-portfolio submission) as the programme by which assessment material will be stored and viewed by External Authenticators as Microsoft Office has been through been procured via the central procurement process and all WWETB employees are set up with a Microsoft Office account upon taking up position. In addition to this, there is support

from the WWETB I.T. Department and Digital Learning (Fiona Dee) for this suite of programmes in the event of any difficulties.

> * The use of Microsoft Teams/OneNote is not obligatory but from a Quality Assurance perspective it provides the following:
>
> » appropriate functionality
> » appropriate security required for the process
> » the option of support and training from within the organisation
> » The option to create a special MS account for external users EAs and control login and profile settings for this account.

Presentation of Assessment Material for Internal Verification

It is preferable that one or two people carry the designated responsibility to control the administrative functions required for the creation of the MS Teams designated space ahead of the verification and authentication process. These administrative functions should include:

» The establishment of the designated MS Teams space (contact ithelpdesk@wwetb.ie or use WWETB Teams Form)

» The setting up of a designated WWETB MS account for EAs to use when accessing assessment files. (contact ithelpdesk@wwetb.ie)

» The adding of all practitioners/assessors submitting for a designated certification period*

» The adding of internal verifiers (if not already in the practitioner group)

» The adding of all external authenticators associated with a designated certification period

» Act as support to the External Authenticator during the designated authentication days.

» Removal of Team participants as appropriate after the completion of the external authentication process.

> * QA department recommends that there be a designated submission window for practitioners/assessors and that they are added to the Team just prior to this and removed before the IV process commences.

As per the standard process, practitioners/assessor should ensure that all assessment activity comprises of an appropriate assessment brief (see QA Sharepoint site⟶ F.E. Assessment Process Documents ⟶ WWETB Assessment Brief Template). There should also be evidence of formal feedback received by the learner.

Electronic Signatures

There will be elements of assessment documentations that here will be elements of assessment documentations that may require either the Learner, Assessor or Internal Verifier's signature. The following is a method by which this can be done:

Option 1

1. They can sign the PDF's on a device that uses a digital pen.

Or

2. They allow students to sign their signature on a device that uses a digital pen in the Whiteboard or OneNote app. Crop that image and send to a student as a jpg for their own use with briefs.

Option 2

3. The Student signs their signature on paper

4. Take a photo of the signature using the **Office Lens** app or the phone camera.

   1. Crop the image in the photo Gallery if needed > **Confirm**

   2. **Swipe up for filters** – *this may vary from phone to phone*

   3. Use the **BW1**, **Greyscale or Clear** filter to get a crisp white background > Select the **back** arrow in the top left of the screen > **Done**

5. In the Save screen do the following:

   1. **Title – Edit** the default image name to **Signature**

   2. **Save to** - Using Office Lens gives options when saving the file – use one or both of the following.

      • Save to Gallery

      • Save to OneDrive (here it will be stored in an **Office Lens folder** which is automatically created. You will get a message indicating the file is being transferred.

Note: *If the signature is stored in the phone gallery you will need to share or upload to OneDrive for availability on the PC or laptop. (See Student Handbook)*

6. On your **PC** or **laptop - Open** the Assignment brief

   1. Place your cursor where the signature should be placed.

   2. From the **Insert** tab **> Picture**

   3. Navigate to the **Office Lens** folder in your OneDrive and select the signature image– resize or crop again as needed.

7. Save the document

Folder and File Structure

It is important that the folder and file structure is clear and consistent. The following images show the suggested format for folder and file naming and saving.

1. It should be clear to the internal verifier where the documentation for the relevant certification period is saved. See image below. Files will be stored in the 'Files' tab in MS Teams
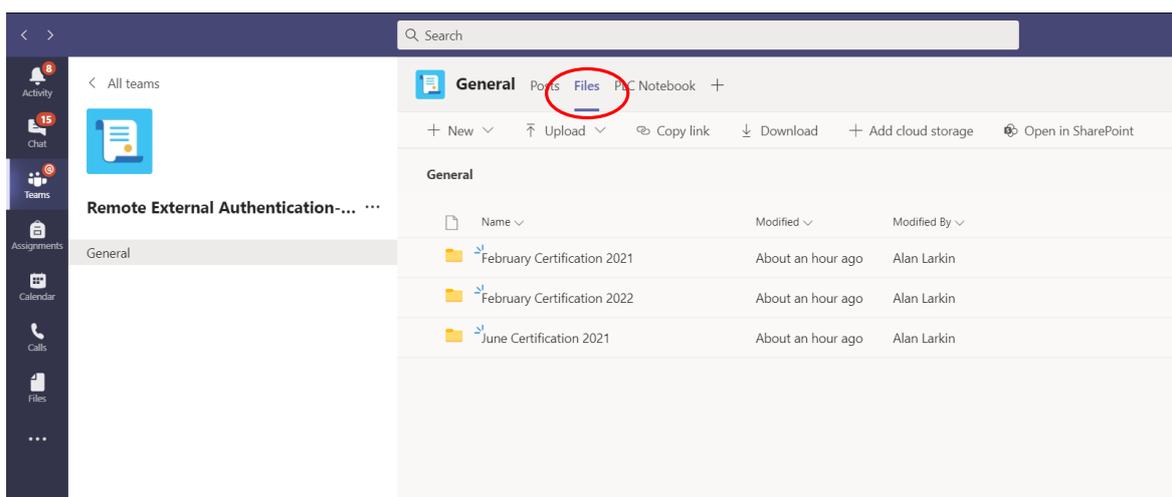
2. It is advisable to breakdown the subsequent documentation, firstly into a folder structure most suited to the External Authentication visit. Generally, this will be as per Major Award. Major awards should be listed with their Major award code and their QQI award name. Local names can be inserted after in brackets.
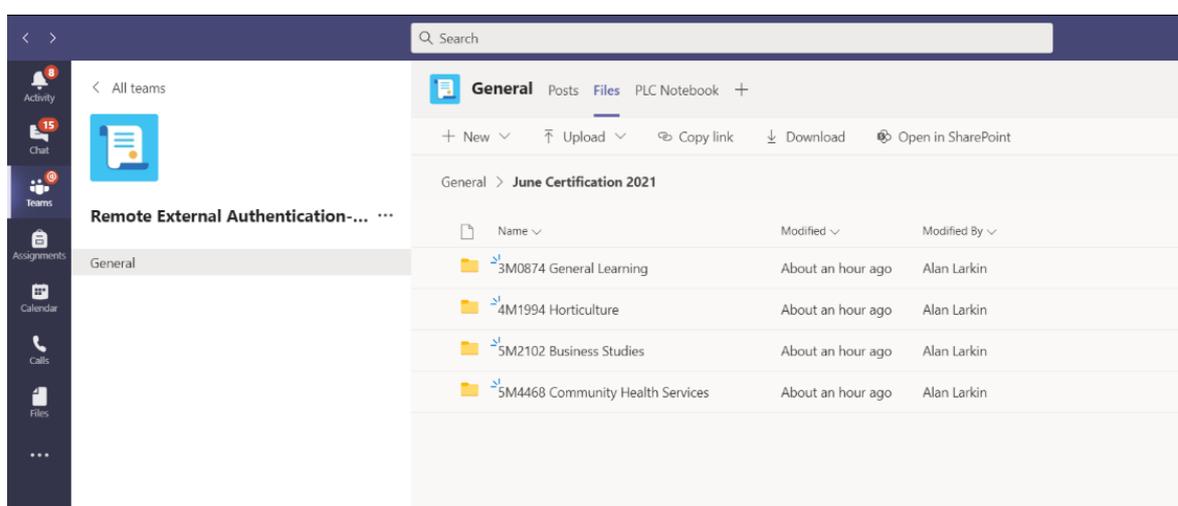
3. The major awards should be broken down into their constituent components (in this instance 5M2102 Business Studies has been selected) These components should be clearly identified by the Module code and by the component name. The Authentication Report by Learner Group by Minor Award should also feature here along with the relevant signed IV report and the previous EA report for the award.

4. 5N1400 Marketing Practice has been selected at this point. In this folder, the Tutor should present the Portfolio Cover Sheet and Tutor Pack (could be incorporated). Also included should be the WWETB Module Descriptor, the completed Module Results sheet, the Learner Evidence and the Examination attendance records if applicable.

5. Learner Evidence Folder has been selected. Learner Evidence should be separated by learner in alphabetical order as shown. (Files and folders can be copied from OneDrive and Sharepoint. Digital Learning can provide guidance for this process is required).

6. Learner 'Alan Smith' has been selected. Folder should contain a logical and easy to follow organisation of assessment material. In addition, the Learner Mark Sheet should be evident. The Mark Sheet should be signed by the assessor. Files can be scanned hard-copy files if preferable (use Microsoft Lens on your smartphone for ease of upload).

7. 'Assignment 1' has been selected which is a collection of work. This folder should contain; A copy of the Assessment Brief signed by the learner, the Learner's work in relation to this Brief and the feedback to the learner. The Learner feedback should be signed although, it is accepted that feedback may be incorporated/embedded into the marking of the Learner's assignment or could be audio feedback via OneNote etc. In these instances, it will be enough to clearly show the feedback in as much detail as possible, dates etc.
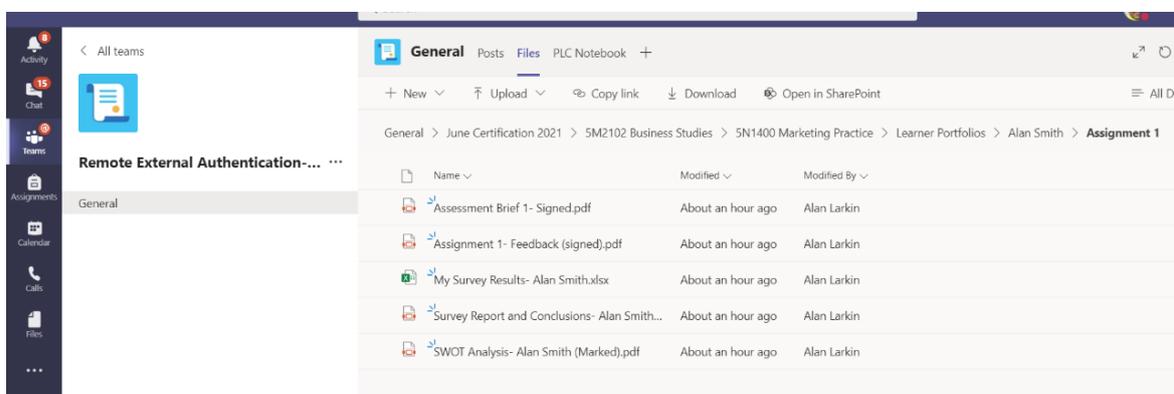
Internal Verification

Internal verification will in turn be a remote process although will ostensibly happen in largely the same way as would be the norm for a centre based, hard-copy format. Totting errors should be either communicated to Tutors for amendment where possible. If Tutor amendment is not possible, changes to marking/grading should be noted on the IV report and the EA should be made aware. Similarly, any deficiencies in the way documentation is presented should be addressed if possible prior to the EA visit. Audio/visual evidence should be checked to ensure that the quality is satisfactory. The IV report might contain other modules that are not being externally authenticated, for instance in line WWETB's contingency plane for IV and EA, and this is fine. The IV report should be signed by the Internal Verifier.

External Authentication

Not all modules associated with an award may be going forward for external authentication. Any modules that are not being presented for external authentication should not form part of the set of folders that the EA should be viewing in the interest of clarity for the EA. The EA should be contacted prior to their visit and given all the necessary information they will need in order to carry out the authentication process. (for example; login information etc.). All material should be available on the agreed dates and real-time support should be available to the EA during the process.