

## Guidelines for Carrying out a Subject Learning and Assessment Review Meeting

Subject Learning and Assessment Review meetings enable teachers to collaboratively reach consistency in their judgments of student work against common, externally set Features of Quality. Greater understanding of standards and expectations will develop over time as teachers come together in professional discussion to reflect on the quality of their own students' work, informed by the subject specification, assessment guidelines and other support material including annotated examples of students' work provided by the NCCA.

### Overview

The review process is centred on **teachers discussing student work at structured** meetings. It will play an important role in helping teachers to **develop an understanding of standards and expectations** by enabling them to reflect on the evidence of students' work and to share the learning and teaching strategies supporting that work.

The **objectives** of the review process are to achieve:

- greater consistency of teachers' judgement,
- better feedback to students,
- greater alignment of judgements with expected standards,

and to assure parents and others that students are receiving appropriate recognition of their achievements in line with standards and expectations.

The time for review meetings will be provided for in the school calendar from the allocated 22 hours of professional time for each full-time teacher each year. **One teacher (facilitator) of each subject will be allocated two additional hours by school management to prepare for and coordinate each review meeting.** This role will normally be rotated among the relevant teachers.

Each meeting will:

- be subject specific
- be approximately two hours long
- take place at a time as near as possible to the completion of the Classroom-Based Assessment
- involve the review of student work related to a specific Classroom-Based Assessment

Where there is a single teacher of a subject in a school, the teacher can be facilitated to participate in a Subject Learning and Assessment Review meeting in another school. In the case of an Irish-medium school, the single teacher of a subject can participate in a Subject Learning and Assessment Review meeting in another Irish-medium school.

### Facilitator's Guide

Teachers will fulfil the role of facilitator during Subject Learning and Assessment Review meetings on a rotational basis. The facilitator will model effective questioning during the discussion of the samples of student work focusing on how well students' work matches the Features of Quality. During review meetings, where it is not clearly evident which descriptor should apply, the group should look for the evidence in the

student's work that matches **all or nearly all** of the Features of Quality associated with a particular descriptor. This '**best fit**' approach allows teachers at the review meeting to select the descriptor that '**on-balance**' best matches the work being assessed. The facilitator will submit a **short report** of the review meeting to the school principal.

Teachers should not assume that the results of a group of students being assessed will follow any particular distribution plan as the student's work is being judged only against the Features of Quality rather than other students' performance.

### Before the meeting

As a first step, teachers may find it helpful to review some of the relevant **NCCA annotated examples** prior to coming to decisions about their own students' work.

Once students have completed their Classroom-Based Assessment, the teacher will carry out a **provisional assessment** of the students' work based on the Features of Quality. These provisional assessments may be modified in light of the discussions that take place at the Subject Learning and Assessment Review meeting.

The teacher will make a note of the descriptor allocated to each student and any other point they may wish or find useful to refer to during and after the Subject Learning and Assessment Review meeting. This note will be for the teacher's own use.

In preparation for the Subject Learning and Assessment Review meeting, each teacher will **identify one sample of student's work for each descriptor**, where feasible, and will have these available for discussion at the meeting.

### During the meeting

The facilitator leads the meeting and keeps the record of the decisions made in a template, which is used to generate the report of the meeting. It is recommended that the meeting should generally follow this sequence:

- The facilitator explains that the purpose of the meeting is to support consistency of judgement about students' work and to develop a common understanding about the quality of student learning. The value of the meeting in providing feedback to students on how they might improve their work should also be highlighted.
- The facilitator asks one member of staff to introduce a sample of work they have assessed as **Yet to Meet Expectations**.
- Following a **short introduction** by the teacher, the facilitator leads a general discussion on the extent to which the student's work matches the relevant Features of Quality. If the meeting affirms the judgement, this is noted in the meeting record by the facilitator.
- **Where there is a lack of agreement, the facilitator should refer to relevant annotated examples of student work provided by the NCCA and, if appropriate, a couple of examples of student work that other teachers in the group have assessed and awarded that descriptor to.**

- The facilitator should look to establish consensus during the discussion of examples, but the emphasis should be on developing teachers' professional knowledge and skills rather than on seeking unanimous agreement over every Feature of Quality in every example.
- The emphasis in affirming judgements during the review meetings should always be on a 'best fit' approach which allows teachers to agree the descriptor that 'on-balance' is most appropriate for the work being assessed.
- While reasonable time should be allowed for discussion, the facilitator should use his/her professional judgement to decide when it would be appropriate to proceed to the next sample.
- **If possible, there should be discussion of at least two samples for each descriptor and the facilitator should ensure that each teacher has at least one of their samples discussed during the meeting.**
- **The process is repeated, in turn, with samples assessed as *In Line with Expectations*, *Above Expectations* and *Exceptional* being discussed and shared in the group. At the end of the meeting, the facilitator briefly summarises the key points from the discussion.**
- It's important that each teacher **notes the implications of the decisions** made during the meeting for the rest of the student work they have already assessed, particularly in the case of descriptors where their judgement did not align with the view of the majority of teachers at the meeting.

### After the meeting

After the meeting, each teacher considers the assessment of their students' work based on the outcomes of the meeting and, where it is considered necessary, makes the **appropriate adjustments to their provisional assessments**.

Following the Subject Learning and Assessment Review meeting, the **facilitator submits their report** from the meeting focusing on the outcomes of the discussion of student work at the meeting, and submits it to the school principal.

The facilitator may also ask teachers, should they wish, to **contribute some student work to a bank of examples**:

- To support the induction of new teachers
- To support future Subject Learning and Assessment Review meetings
- To use with students and parents in demonstrating the standard of work achieved.