

**PROCEDURES FOR EVALUATING PREMISES, EQUIPMENT AND
FACILITIES**

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1. INTRODUCTION

In delivering its programmes NCGE is committed to ensuring that learning environments and equipment hired and provided by the Centre are to a high standard and meet health and safety standards as set out by the Health and Safety Authority (HSA). In addition the Centre endeavours to ensure that all venues are accessible and convenient to learners. The aim of these procedures is to ensure that learning environments and equipment hired for the purposes of delivering continuing professional development are of a high standard. A learning environment can include premises such as Education Centres or the NCGE Virtual Learning Environment (VLE) which is an e-learning platform developed by the Centre to deliver continuing professional development (CPD) to guidance counsellors.

2. LEARNING ENVIRONMENTS AND EQUIPMENT

NCGE endeavours to use Education Centres as venues for face to face delivery of its programmes i.e. workshops and seminars where possible as the centres are based in 29 locations around the country and thus are convenient to most learners. In addition Education Centres are venues that are of a high standard and in the main are accessible. Education Centres also include catering facilities and a range of audio visual and IT equipment.

The VLE developed by NCGE is also considered to be a learning environment. To ensure that the VLE was user friendly, accessible, interactive and attractive the Centre convened a group to assist it with the development of the VLE. This group consisted of guidance counsellors and members of the learning and teaching and IT communities. The design and functionalities included in the VLE were based on the deliberations and feedback obtained from this group. The VLE developed by the Centre is not considered to be a final product but rather a learning environment that is continuously developing and being refined in light of feedback obtained from learners and staff.

3. EVALUATION PROCEDURES

Learning environments are evaluated by learners on an ongoing basis. Learners are asked for feedback on the learning environment employed to deliver a programme on an evaluation form which is distributed to learners throughout the programme. In addition learners are asked for feedback on the final day of a programme.

The Programme Board meets after a programme is completed to review a programme in its entirety including the learning environment employed to deliver the programme. At the meeting learners' evaluations and staff feedback on the learning environment are discussed. The following headings can be used by the Programme Board to assist it in its review of a learning environment:

- Is the learning environment convenient to and suitable for learners and staff?
- Is the learning environment accessible?
- Is the learning environment appropriate to the learning and teaching methodologies employed by the programme?
- Does the learning environment promote successful learning?
- Does the learning environment provide appropriate catering facilities (if appropriate)?
- Is the learning environment learner friendly?
- Does the learning environment promote the interaction of learners?
- Does the learning environment conform to HSA health and safety standards?
- How user friendly was the equipment hired by the Centre to deliver CPD?
- What support was available to staff and learners through the learning environment?

In addition the Programme Board should conduct a SCOT (strengths, challenges, opportunities and threats) analysis of the learning environment. The deliberations of the Programme Board are recorded in the form of minutes and recommendations are implemented by the Coordinator of the Programme as appropriate.