

PROCEDURES FOR EVALUATING SERVICES

TABLE OF CONTENTS

1. Introduction	119
2. Support Service Areas	119
3. Procedures for Evaluating Services	121
a) Monitoring of Services throughout Programmes	121

1. INTRODUCTION

NCGE is committed to providing a quality assurance system that covers all aspects of support that is provided to learners enrolled on NCGE programmes.

The procedures outlined below represent an important part of the ongoing monitoring and review of service provision.

2. SUPPORT SERVICE AREAS

For the purposes of this procedure, service areas are as follows:

- Learner support services
 - Support provided by programme staff (including meeting learners individually or as part of a group and/or support provided through the telephone and information provided to learners).
 - Information outlined in the Learner Handbook and other resource materials.
 - Support provided through the VLE (if appropriate) through the discussion board, instant chat and email facility and through resource materials.
 - Support provided by NCGE through a telephone helpline facility.
 - Support provided through programme documentation sent to learners prior to and throughout the duration of a programme e.g. learners on the Whole School Guidance Programme receive a number of letters and documentation inducting them to the VLE prior to the commencement of the programme.
 - Peer support (as appropriate) – learners on the Whole School Guidance Planning Programme are encouraged to choose a critical friend from the group who will provide support to them during the programme.
- Library, information and computing services

As NCGE is a part time provider of continuing professional development opportunities for guidance counsellors (NCGE will provide special purpose/supplemental and minor type awards only) it develops and delivers specialised programmes that respond to policy/practice developments e.g. the

Whole School Guidance Planning Programme was developed in response to the Education Act (1998) requirement that all schools prepare and develop a school plan, and as result it does not have a dedicated library. Guidance counsellors who participate on programmes organised and delivered by the Centre receive hard and electronic copies of all essential reading. As guidance counsellors are highly qualified and are in the main graduates of Universities in Ireland they have access to the library of the University they graduated from (reader privileges) and are thus encouraged to pursue further reading through this facility. While further reading is encouraged it is not compulsory as NCGE provides learners with all essential reading either in hard copy or in electronic format. The library holdings of the Centre include:

- Materials provided and developed by NCGE, the Department of Education and Science and other relevant organisations/initiatives e.g. the SDPI (School Development Planning Initiative).
- Materials available on the library of the VLE (if appropriate).

NCGE does not provide computing services to learners as learners enrolled on NCGE programmes are working full time as guidance counsellors and have access to computing services in their place of employment.

- Technical services
 - NCGE provides support to learners who are enrolled on programmes that are delivered through the VLE through a technical support helpline.
 - An IT consultant is on hand to assist staff and learners with difficulties they are experiencing with the VLE.
 - IT support is provided at venues to assist programme staff with audio visual equipment.
- Communication facilities
 - Support provided through the NCGE helpline/telephone.
 - Support provided through email.
 - Support provided through the VLE discussion board, instant chat and email facilities (if appropriate).

- Administrative services
 - Staff delivering a programme on behalf of NCGE receive administrative support through an administrative officer employed by the Centre to support the programme.
 - NCGE coordinates all aspects of programme development and delivery through an administrative officer and the coordinator of a programme.

3. PROCEDURES FOR EVALUATING SERVICES

Support services provided to learners should be monitored on a continuous basis throughout a programme to ensure that they are of a high standard.

a) Monitoring of Services throughout Programmes

Monitoring occurs throughout the delivery of a programme through meetings of staff and is informed by learners' evaluations of a programme through a learner feedback form distributed throughout a programme. After a programme is completed the Programme Board meets to review all evaluations received by learners and to discuss and review all aspects of programme delivery including the evaluation of services that are provided to learners as indicated above. The Programme Board includes all members of a programme who have been involved in the coordination and delivery of that programme. During the meeting the Board will examine the support provided to learners during a programme by considering the following questions:

- What support services were provided to learners?
- How were these support services delivered?
- How were these support services used by learners?
- What feedback was received by learners in relation to the support provided?
- What demands were placed on the staff providing the support?
- How may staff be supported in providing support to learners?
- How effective is a support service area that is provided to learners?
- How can a support service area be improved to make it more effective?
- What changes if any should be made to support structures?
- What future support should be provided to learners?

Recommendations for the future development of a programme are formulated on the basis of feedback received from learners, staff of the programme and responses to the above questions. These recommendations are implemented by the coordinator responsible for the programme prior to the commencement of the next phase of delivery of the programme.

Support services areas are evaluated through a self and external evaluation conducted by the Centre on a five yearly basis and are subject to the procedures and guidelines for obtaining learner feedback, ongoing monitoring and the evaluation of programmes.