



Health & Safety Consultants, Auditors and Trainers

Learner Handbook

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Section One

Welcome and Introduction

EMS & Associates welcome you on this learning journey and we aim to ensure that you have an enjoyable, worthwhile learning experience. Learner satisfaction is critical to us and that is why we provide today's busy Learners with the opportunity and flexibility to learn at a pace that is right for them. We commit to providing the best learner experience possible from the moment you contact us until you complete your training and achieve certification. We believe that learning is a life-long journey and we want you to enjoy the travelling experience.

This Handbook is to be used by all Learners as a reference handbook and describes arrangements around its training provision.

Profile of EMS & Associates

EMS & Associates were established in 1995 to meet the growing demand for professional, health and safety advisory, auditing & training services. Our pro-active, proven track record and dynamic approach ensure a high level of legal compliance, best practice, and employee protection. Our approach to training is learner-focused on ensuring the best outcomes for anyone who attends our courses.

In 2007, EMS & Associates signed our Quality Assurance Agreement with FETAC¹. On the 6th of November 2012, the functions of FETAC were transferred to Quality & Qualifications Ireland (QQI). Our QAA allows us to provide a range of approved training courses accredited under the National Framework of Qualifications.

We specialise in health and safety-related training across all industries delivering both accredited and non-accredited (job-specific) courses.

EMS & Associates currently delivers a number of QQI (Quality and Qualifications Ireland) Minor Awards: - Manual Handling Instruction (Level 6), Safety & Health at Work (Level 5) and Workplace Safety (Level 4).

¹ FETAC – Further Education & Training Awards Council

We are a PHECC (Pre-Hospital Emergency Care Council) Recognised Institution delivering First Aid Responder and Cardiac First Responder courses and an Irish Heart Foundation Training Site delivering Heartsaver AED and BLS courses.

We are also a Solas Safe Pass Approved Training Organisation delivering Safe Pass training to those in the construction industry.

To find out more about QQI, go to www.ggi.ie

To find out more about PHECC, go to www.phecc.ie

To find out more about Irish Heart Foundation, go to www.irishheart.ie

To find out more about Solas Safe Pass, go to www.solas.ie

Our organisation is dedicated to providing the best training solutions within the Health and Safety sector, creating opportunity for personal development, career progression and essentially, enhancing health and safety provision within workplaces.

There are also a range of legislation and regulatory standards that EMS & Associates adhere to, which include:

- Data Protection Act and the General Data Protection Regulation (EU) 2016/679
- Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Acts 2005
- Equal Status Acts 2000 and 2004.
- Qualifications and Quality Assurance (education and Training) Act 2012

Mission Statement

Our mission is to foster a culture of workplace safety, health, and welfare that will benefit every working person and organisation we interact with. We will do this by working in partnership with employees, clients, contractors, and others interacting with us. We commit to providing appropriate and effective safety advice, support, guidance, training, and application relating to all workplace safety, health, and welfare matters. Our role as educators is fundamental to our existence and is based on the concept of “Educere” – to lead out. This creates a positive learning experience.

Our Mission Statement is based on the **6 Core Values of EMS & Associates**.

1. **Safety:** We believe that safety is a critical part of any decision-making process.
2. **Integrity:** We believe that uncompromising integrity, learner focus, and ethical conduct will help our business perform and grow.
3. **Service Leadership:** We believe that continually improving our service and training programmes quality improves our professionalism and responsiveness.
4. **Innovation:** we believe that innovation of our services and training provision supports continuous growth and improvement.
5. **Pride & Respect:** We believe that pride in our company will be based on mutual respect and our stakeholders – management, staff, clients, learners, and any person interacting with us.
6. **Teamwork:** We believe that teamwork empowers our individual strengths.



We are committed to providing Learners with:

- Good quality training programmes
- A learning environment where Learners feel supported and are stimulated to realise their full potential.
- Accurate information about programmes and expectations.
- Assessment of learning that is fair, valid, and timely.
- Supportive staff who are skilled and qualified and who treat all Learners with dignity and respect.
- A fair and consistent application of all rules and regulations.
- A healthy and safe environment that promotes a positive learning experience.

QQI, EMS & Associates and Quality Assurance

Quality and Qualifications Ireland (QQI), is responsible for the external quality assurance of further and higher education and training (including English language provision) in Ireland, validates programmes and makes awards for certain providers in these sectors. It is responsible for:

- Registering providers whose quality assurance systems have been agreed
- Validating programmes submitted by providers
- Monitoring providers quality assurance systems and programmes
- Making awards

QQI awards are designed to provide access to employment and to further and higher education and training.

Quality assurance is a system of policies and procedures which a provider undertakes to implement in order to maintain and improve the quality of its programmes. The system required by QQI covers:

- Governance
- Quality Management
- Staff Recruitment and Development
- Teaching and Learning
- Access, Transfer and Progression
- Programme, Development Delivery and Review
- Fair and Consistent Assessment of Learners
- Collaborative Provision
- Self-Evaluation and Improvement of Programmes and Services

National Framework of Qualifications

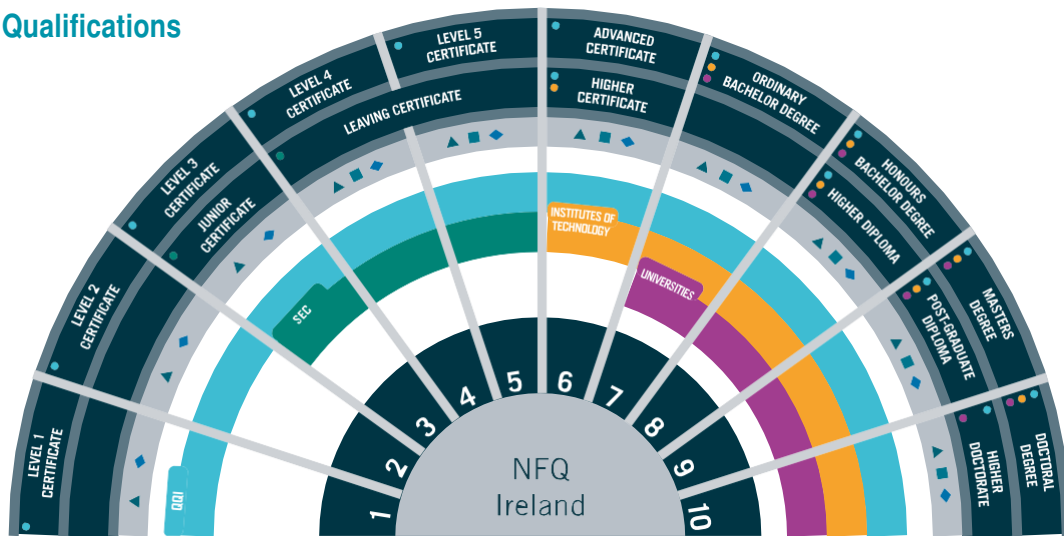
This diagram illustrates the national framework of qualifications which allows qualifications to be compared both nationally and internationally.

The framework will, in time, include all awards available in the state from the most basic (Level 1) to the most advanced (Level 10) levels of learning. It will include awards gained in schools, the workplace, the community, training centres, colleges, and universities.

The award-types are listed in the outer rings of the diagram and on the NQAI website www.nqai.ie. Awarding bodies whose awards are included in the framework are shown as coloured bands extending across the levels of the framework as appropriate.



National Framework of Qualifications



AWARDING BODIES

- Quality and Qualifications Ireland (QQI) makes awards in further and higher education and training
- SEC- State Examinations Commission (Department of Education and Skills)
- Institutes of Technology
- Universities

AWARDS IN THE FRAMEWORK

There are four classes of award in the National Framework of Qualifications:

- ⤵ **Major Awards:** named in the outer rings, are the principal class of awards made at a level
- ⬆ **Minor Awards:** are for partial completion of the outcomes for a Major Award
- ⬇ **Supplemental Awards:** are for learning that is additional to a Major Award
- ⬅ **Special Purpose Awards:** are for relatively narrow or purpose-specific achievement



For further Information consult: www.nfq.ie www.QQI.ie

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For further information refer to www.qqi.ie

Learner Charter

EMS & Associates recognises that Learners' needs are at the heart of what we do.

We therefore ensure that we provide a quality learning environment and experience for all. In order to achieve this, we will make every effort to:

1. Provide a high standard of training from appropriately qualified Trainers.
2. Ensure programmes run as per the schedule and in a safe learning environment including virtual classes.
3. Assess your learning needs to plan a programme to meet your learning goals, considering your learning style or any special needs you may have.
4. Use a variety of teaching methods to accommodate different learning styles including group discussion, professional discussion.
5. Publish and make available up to date accurate information on all our programmes
6. Offer appropriate information and advice on your work and progress.

7. Promote a culture where everyone feels a personal responsibility to ensure that the dignity of Learners is upheld.
8. Deal with enquiries whether by letter, email, phone or in person, promptly courteously and accurately
9. Offer a prompt response to any problem that you bring to our attention.
10. Treat any information you provide in a confidential manner.
11. Ensure you have an opportunity to share your views on the quality and content of the programme you participate in.

We expect you to:

1. Take responsibility for your own learning.
2. Treat everyone with respect regardless of differences in culture, disability, learning difficulties, medical conditions, race, ethnicity, gender, age, sexual orientation, religion, or social class.
3. Comply with health & safety regulations.
4. Be punctual for classes and be prepared.
5. Keep us informed of any changes in your personal details e.g. address especially telephone number.
6. Help us improve by giving us feedback.

Section Two – General Information

Learner Responsibilities

All Learners must promote good behavior at all times. Any Learner who displays inappropriate behavior may be asked to leave the programme.

If you are aware of any issues regarding other Learner practices which give you cause for concern you must report these to your Trainer immediately

Learner must not impose personal cultural, religious, philosophical, or other beliefs or values on others.

Do not put yourself or other people at unnecessary risk. Learners must not act, whether intentionally or in jest, in such a way that could put another person in danger or offend their feelings.

Learners must not bully or do anything which exerts mental or emotional pressure on another person.

Mobile Phones

Mobile phones should be turned off and put them away during all training sessions.

Personal Belongings

When attending class, Learners should be careful with their personal belongings. Money or items of value should not be left lying around. EMS & Associates cannot accept responsibility for any items lost or stolen.

Change of Contact Details

It is important that Learners notify the Trainer of any change of personal details as soon as possible.

Scheme of Work

A scheme of work with units and dates is provided to all Learners at the commencement of the programme.

Attendance

In order to succeed – commitment is vital and we expect that commitment from all Learners. A class register will be kept by the Trainer for each session.

If at any time during the programme individual circumstances change and they are unable to attend for one or more sessions, the Learner must contact the Trainer and provide an explanation. Based on the number of absences, and individual circumstances, a decision will then be made as to the availability of the Learner to continue at this time.

If applicable, long term sickness or absenteeism may also lead to removal from the programme for this term but re-registration may be permitted if Learner returns from sick leave and has a medical / doctors, certificate to state that they are fit to undertake required duties.

Information and Learner Support

EMS & Associates prioritises the individual needs of the Learner and takes great effort to ensure there are a range of supports and resources in place to maximise the Learner experience.

Supports are reviewed on a case by case, basis and Learners who require any support are encouraged to discuss this with the Trainers at time of pre-enrolment, initial assessment or at any point throughout the duration of the programme.

A range of measures are in place to ensure clear communication between Learners and Trainers in order to enable support to be provided, Information is provided pre- enrolment, as part of induction, and opportunities are available on an ongoing basis for disclosure of any concerns or requirements to the Trainer so that support can be provided.

It is the responsibility of the Learner to disclose additional support required.

When a **course enquiry** is received, we provide a course profile with the following details:

- course syllabus,
- duration and times
- assessment
- access, transfer and progression
- certification

Upon **enrolment**, further course-specific details are provided (depending on the awarding body) on:

- grading
- plagiarism
- QQI Major Award code requirement
- personal details required
- course participation
- appeals procedure
- repeats

Our **Administration Team** are available during normal office hours to answer any queries in relation to:

- Suitability of course to meet the needs of the learner
- Cost of course
- Acceptance of Funding from state agencies
- Course materials supplied
- Special requirements for learners

Our **instructors/tutors** are contracted by EMS & Associates to deliver training in their specific field of expertise. All instructors/tutors will be required to:

- Carry the appropriate qualifications required to deliver the subject matter
- Be committed to supporting learners to meet the learning outcomes of each course
- Where specific learner needs have been notified prior to the course, ensure that the necessary support is given to the learner (if practicable)
- Ensure there is a fair and consistent assessment of learners
- Treat every learner with dignity and respect
- Be subject to monitoring to ensure training is being delivered to meet standards of awarding bodies.

If EMS & Associates have to **cancel a course**, due to unforeseen circumstances, we will:

- Give you the option of being transferred to the next available course
- Or, get a full refund of your money (if you have already paid).
- The money will be refunded within 7 days.

If a learner **cancels a course** or fails to turn up for a course, our Terms and Conditions for Training Programmes will apply:

- 50% of the fee will apply if the cancellation is up to 48 hours before the course.
- After 48 hours, the full fee of 100% will apply.

Health and Safety

Management recognises and accepts its responsibility, so far as is reasonably practicable, the health and safety of its Learners.

EMS & Associates aims to promote, set and maintain the highest standards for health and safety and welfare matters through regular review and continuous improvement.

This will be achieved by

- Providing adequate control of the health and safety risks arising.
- Consulting with Learners on matters affecting health and safety.
- Providing and maintaining safe plant and equipment (where appropriate).
- Ensuring safe handling and use of substances.
- Providing information, instruction and supervision for Learners.
- Preventing accidents and cases of work-related ill health.
- Maintaining safe and healthy working conditions.
- Reviewing and revising this policy as necessary and at regular intervals

EMS & Associates will endeavor to eliminate any hazards which may result in personal injury, industrial illness, fire, security losses, property damage or harm to the environment.

Facilitating Diversity

EMS & Associates recognises the range of diverse individuals and cultures that make up the society we live in. We aim to enable learners to successfully participate in training, learning, assessment practices, transfer, and progression.

Learning and programmes of learning need to be flexible and fit for purpose so that they can be tailored to suit individuals who need additional support in a range of ways. Equality and diversity are to be upheld and supported in line with legislation and awarding body requirements.

We are committed to equality of opportunity for all staff and learners irrespective of gender, civil status, family status, sexual orientation, religious belief, age, disability, nationality or ethnic or national origin, or membership of the travelling community. In doing so we hope to create an inclusive, supportive, and encouraging learning and working environments for all.

EMS & Associates will seek to ensure that all Learners are treated fairly and are afforded equal opportunities to develop their potential for learning. It will promote an environment where Trainers and Learners recognise the rights of others, and which is free from harassment or bullying.

Complaints

EMS & Associates will seek to give the best quality service possible in all aspects of its work. However, there may be times when a learner may feel that they have not been treated or dealt with the way they wished. If this is the case, we would like to know and have the opportunity to put things right.

By listening and responding to the views of our Learners we can improve the quality of our services to them.

We try to ensure that:

- Making a complaint is easy and straightforward,
- We treat all complaints seriously and sensitively
 - Complaints are dealt with promptly and politely,
- We respond to complaints proportionately, i.e. ranging from an immediate informal apology through to a formal written response.

It is expected that any minor problems, which may arise from time to time during the course of training/assessment will be discussed with the Trainer / Assessor and hopefully resolved on an informal basis. Where informal discussion fails to produce a solution the formal complaints procedure will then apply.

Formal Process

Stage 1

Your complaint should be out in writing to the Training Manager / coordinator setting out the issues; please provide as much information as possible e.g.

- About yourself
- Nature of the problem
- What happened
- What you have done so far to try to address the issue
- Why you are complaining
- What you would like us to do

On receipt of your letter we will consider the action to be taken depending on the nature of your complaint. You will receive an acknowledgement within seven working days, and we may need to meet with you to gather further information.

We would aim to give a response within 28 working days and will write to you to explain what we have done, the conclusion we have come to and why.

Stage 2

If you are not satisfied with our response you can appeal this by writing to our Directors. This should be by letter and addressed to EMS & Associates, Unit 8, East Coast Business Park, Matthews Lane South, Drogheda, Co. Louth A92P9EF

Your letter should set out your complaint and the reason/s for your dissatisfaction with our response.

You can expect this appeal to be acknowledged within 3 working days of receipt. The Directors will appoint a member to review your complaint and our response. You may be invited to a meeting as part of this review process.

You can expect to receive the response to your appeal within 20 working days.

EMS & Associates monitors all complaints received to ensure that we are fully aware of all issues as we seek to maintain high standards of training and assessment provision and we keep full records of all formal complaints.

Learning Strategies

Learning strategies will focus on the development of interpersonal, communication, social and practical skills. Learners are encouraged to take responsibility for their own learning, and to engage in the learning process with appropriate Trainer support. A variety of Learning methods such as group discussion, professional discussion, questions and answers are used to facilitate learning styles.

Section Three – Assessment

Assessment Techniques

It is the policy of EMS & Associates that all Learners should receive fair, transparent and consistent assessment. We are committed to carrying out assessments that are consistent across all assessors and in line with awarding body guidelines.

We have developed guidelines and procedures describing in detail the approach to be taken when assessing Learners on approved programmes. Learners will be made aware of the methods of assessment and their responsibilities for achieving and demonstrating the required knowledge and skills.

Assessors will ensure throughout the process that evidence provided is valid, authentic, sufficient, current, and reliable.

The circumstances of each Learner will be taken into consideration and our procedure will detail guidelines for those with additional support needs.

We are committed to all aspects of the assessment process and will ensure that it is:

- Understood by staff and Learners.
- Valid for the purpose of awarding body requirements.
- Include both formative and summative assessment practices, where appropriate
- Fair to Learners, in terms of access and process.
- Internally verified to ensure the process is fair and consistent.
- Carry out additional quality assurance procedures to ensure teaching and training practice is consistent across all Trainers / assessors
- Externally authenticated to ensure it is consistent with national standards.

- Consistent with awarding body assessment policy and guidelines.

Evidence of assessment will be maintained to allow verification and validation of the assessment process by both internal and external agencies and for review in the case of a Learner appeal.

Examination

An examination provides a means of assessing a Learner's ability to recall and apply knowledge, skills and understanding within a set period of time and under clearly specified conditions. A theory-based examination assesses the ability to recall, apply and understand specific theory and knowledge.

Project

A Project is usually carried out over an extended period of time. Projects may involve research, require investigation of a topic, issue, or problem, or may involve a process, such as a design task, a performance or practical activity or production of an artefact or event.

Skills Demonstration

A skills demonstration is used to assess a wide range of practical based learning outcomes including practical skills and knowledge.

Assessment Briefs

An Assessment Brief is the set of instructions given to you by your Trainer telling you:

- What you are required to do for the assessment of the module (technique)
- How the assessment will be marked
- When it must be submitted
- Assessment details

Reasonable Accommodation

EMS & Associates will put reasonable accommodation measures into place, where possible and appropriate, for learners.

All learners will be made aware of the supports available and given opportunity to share any grounds where additional support or reasonable accommodation would be required.

This would be as part of the application process as well as learners having the opportunity to advise Trainers / Assessors on an ongoing basis.

To consider exceptional circumstances including compassionate reasons where appropriate to support learners to complete programmes of learning

All potential learners will be made aware prior to commencing the course what the requirements are and what expectations are from a learners, so enrolment onto a programme is an informed decision.

All potential learners will be informed that additional support is available and encouraged to communicate any additional needs that may affect their progression and assessment process.

Learners have the opportunity to alert staff of any additional support needs when applying for a programme.

As part of initial induction into the qualification additional supports will be referred to and all learners informed of the importance of sharing any additional needs to support them to progress.

Reasonable accommodation will be included as part of the learner handbook to share clear information to all learners.

Individual meetings with Learners to assess additional support needs and agree appropriate plan.

Trainers / assessors will have the authority to adjust assessment methods if they are informed of needs during programme delivery. These can include: e.g. verbal questions being asked, professional discussion, enlargement of print, facilitating the use of a scribe, reader or interpreter, practical assistance, rest periods, provision of adaptive equipment and software if available.

Compassionate grounds must also be considered and EMS & Associates will ensure to support a learner in a time of stress or additional personal pressures through placing the learner on Hold for a period of time, adjusting the pace of assessment temporarily or put measures in place to support the learner, where possible, without disadvantaging other learners.

All staff will be trained in the provision of adaptations and accommodations during assessment to ensure the integrity of the assessment process.

Assessment Feedback

We are committed to providing you with timely and constructive feedback throughout your programme. The purpose of this feedback is to ensure you acquire the best possible learning from your assessments etc.

Reliability of Learner Evidence

1. Learners will be asked to sign an individual learner declaration testifying that their work is original.
2. All Learners will be expected to correctly reference quotes and ideas from other people/resources where appropriate.

Assessment Malpractice

Acts of malpractice undermine the integrity of the assessment process and will not be tolerated in any instance

1. Allegations of Assessment Malpractice may be made by a Learner, Assessor, Internal Verifier or External Authenticator
2. Where an allegation of malpractice has been made against a Learner, he/she will be afforded the opportunity of an informal interview with the Tutor or the programme administrator to ascertain if there is evidence to proceed.
3. Learners will be afforded the opportunity to have representation.
4. A decision will be made, documented, and shared with the Learner.
5. If the incident is proven this will be recorded in the Learners file
6. Disciplinary procedures will be taken where necessary.
7. The external authenticator will be made aware of the outcome of any assessment malpractice investigations. This information will be recorded in the External Authenticators Report.

Examples of Assessment Malpractice are:

- Learner plagiarism i.e. passing off someone else's work as the Learners own. This may involve direct plagiarism of another learner's work or getting another individual to do the assessment activity
- Impersonation of another learner
- Fabrication of evidence
- Alteration of results
- Wrongly obtaining secure assessment material e.g. examinations
- Academic dishonesty-behaving in such a way as to undermine the integrity of the assessment process Post Assessment

After assessment Learners may request provisional results. After external authentication and results approval, Learners will be informed of their final results and the internal appeals process.

Appeals Procedure

The aim of detailing this appeals process, is to enable the resolution of issues of concern which Learners, assessors or internal verifiers may have in relation to the management of EMS & Associates and the administering of assessment and quality assurance processes.

The learner may wish to appeal part of the assessment process or appeal the assessment result.

The cause of concern or disagreement should be raised verbally with the nominated Trainer / Assessor. Endeavors will be made to resolve issues. The Trainer / Assessor will keep the Learners assigned Internal Verifier (IV) informed of any such appeal being raised with him/her.

1. If the learner remains dissatisfied with the conclusion of discussions with the Trainer / Assessor, he/she must make the appeal in writing to his/her assigned Internal Verifier and state clearly:
 - Learner's name
 - Award title and level
 - Assessor/Trainer name
 - Nature of and reason for the Appeal
2. The Appeal should be addressed to the Internal Verifier within 21 days of the Learner being notified of the assessment decision, unless the appeal is in relation to the assigned Internal Verifier practice. If this is the case, the appeal is made direct to one of the centre's other IV'S who will be known as the 'Lead Investigating Internal Verifier'.
3. The assigned Internal Verifier will investigate the Appeal with the Trainer / Assessor. A decision will be made as to whether or not there is sufficient evidence provided to warrant further investigations. The Internal Verifier will advise the other Directors within EMS & Associates that an appeal is being addressed.
4. Once the assigned IVs investigation is complete, the lead investigating Internal Verifier will review the investigation details. Access to all relevant materials connected with the learner's case will be available.
5. Detailed records of all investigations and meetings will be collated and kept by the lead investigating IV.

6. Throughout the entire Appeals process, the assigned and the lead investigating Internal Verifier can seek advice and support from the External Authenticator.
7. The learner may be invited to attend in person to discuss his/her case, if this is considered appropriate. The learner has the right to acquire advocacy throughout the appeal process and during any interview meetings. The Trainer / Assessor or other persons who work with or are responsible for the learner within his/her work setting may also be invited to contribute evidence.
8. The following decisions are possible:
 - The Appeal is not upheld.
 - The Appeal is upheld – a recommendation is made to the Assessor to reconsider his/her decision as a result of the evidence presented.
 - The Appeal is upheld – another Assessor is assigned to repeat the assessment process.
9. The Appeal will be made within 10 days of lodging the complaint and will be conveyed to the learner in writing by the lead investigating Internal Verifier.
10. If the learner is not satisfied with this decision, the learner must advise the Lead Investigating IV in writing within 7 days. The learner will be supplied with the External Authenticators details to enable direct contact to be made.

The External Authenticator will follow Awarding Body Guidelines, keeping detailed records throughout. The learner will be advised of the decision in writing, as before, and if the learner still remains dissatisfied with the outcome of the Appeal, then the matter will be passed onto the Directors.

Referencing Guidelines

Learners will be required to cite where they have obtained their information.