Quality Assurance Manual
Markwatch Security Training Services Ltd

Document Control Section

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Aug 2022	Ver 3C	Adopted as the final version
Oct 2022	Ver 3D	Amended pages 44, 46, 50

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FOREWORD BY MD

We adopted QAM Ver3C as the final version as advised by the QQI Reengagement Panel in Aug 2022. We will implement and reassess the efficacy of all documented QA procedures contained in this QAM over the coming period and carry out appropriate changes to ensure that it develops into a living document of value to our FET programmes.

We will ensure a high standard of Quality Assurance to continue to contribute effectively to our niche-FET sector and retain the trust and confidence of our learners and also the QQI.

The current version is Ver3D after incorporating amendments on pages 44, 46 & 50 as advised by QQI.
Elaine O'Toole
MD
Blanchardstown, Dublin
28 Oct 2022

MARKWATCH SECURITY TRAINING SERVICES LTD
QA Manual- Oct 2022

References:

1. QQI Core Statutory QA Guidelines- 2016

2. QQI Sector-Specific Statutory QA Guidelines for Independent Providers- 2016

3. QQI Publication Sep 2021- Interpretation and Practical Application of the QQI Core Statutory Quality Assurance Guidelines Section 2.1: 'Governance and Management of Quality' - A Practical Resource for Providers and Panel Members

1. Preface

The Markwatch (wherever 'Markwatch' appears in this Manual it refers to 'Markwatch Security Training Services Ltd') has been a pioneer in providing security training and have had an enviable record of provision of Security related Courses in Ireland over the past over two decade with exemplary QA practices. It was duly acknowledged by FETAC when the existing QA agreement was signed between both the entities in 1993 and was carried forward by the QQI later.

This revised QA Manual (V3C) is a complete revision of the previous QA Manual and has been simplified to incorporate the QQI/PSA guidelines. It has been developed based on the on-going internal review of quality systems within Markwatch coupled with recommendations arising from the QQI Sector-Specific and Statutory QA Guidelines issued in 2016/17. The guiding principle in formulating the new QA Manual has been to provide relevant information for Learners and other stakeholders in an easy to understand and comprehensible format. The key issues that have been amplified in this QA Manual are as listed below:

- ➢ Governance & Administrative Set-Up
- ➢ QA Management
- ➢ Academic Management

- ➢ Tutoring and Learner Supports
- ➢ Information, Communication & Data Protection
- ➢ Other important FET issues/areas impacting all stakeholders

2. Introduction

Founded in Feb 1993, Markwatch (wherever it appears in this Manual it refers to 'Markwatch Security Training Services Ltd') is an independent training company owned equally by two shareholders, one of which assumes the Managing Director position within the organisation. Markwatch offers a limited range of QQI accredited security related programmes. We have been a Leading provider of FETAC/QQI accredited Security related Courses in Ireland since 1993. We deliver minor Awards in the field of FET, in an enjoyable and supportive adult learning environment with highly passionate tutors who share their knowledge and experience with their learners and provide them intimate support in completing the programmes of their choice.

Markwatch was incorporated as an educational institution under the Companies Act in Sep 2002 with the Trading Name of Markwatch Security Training Services Limited (Company No. 203187). It has been a fully accredited FETAC/QQI Centre (Registration No. 38488V) since 2003, after having obtained a QA Agreement from FETAC in the same year. Markwatch Security Training Services Limited does not receive or rely on Government sources for funding of its operations. Markwatch is located within the Blanchardstown Corporate Park-2 in Dublin, with all training, administration and management functions being located on site. We are also geared to deliver relevant on-site training at the various companies' own sites, if required.

Following are the current QQI Certified Programmes being delivered leading to qualifications on the National Framework of Qualifications (NFQ):

Programme	NFQ Level	Award Class
Retail Security	5	Minor
Guarding Skills	4	Minor
Door Security	4	Minor

Markwatch Security Training Services Ltd Learner Profile:

Predominately our learner profile is from adults seeking training for employment purposes within the security industry. Some of our learners are already in part/full-time employment and do these courses to refresh or update their knowledge base.

Markwatch Security Training Services' Mission Statement, Values Statement & Regulatory Provisions

Mission-Statement

The Markwatch Security Training Services Ltd strives for excellence in meeting adult learners' educational needs through the provision of the most inclusive, innovative and supportive training methods. Our aim is to equip our graduates with the necessary knowledge and skills to deliver professional output in their chosen disciplines to the highest standard.

Values-Statement:

Following values underpin Markwatch delivery of further education and training courses:

❖ Strong organisational commitment to the policies and procedures prescribed by certification body.

❖ Committed to provide opportunities for the personal/professional development of all learners, tutors and staff to enable them to achieve their maximum potential

❖ Commitment to equality of opportunity regardless of age, colour, ethnic origin, sexual orientation, socio-economic status or special needs

❖ Provision of educational and training support/opportunities for all those groups in the community that are traditionally more prone to being under-employed or unemployed

❖ Continual development and introduction of new and appropriate training programmes that are relevant to the topical vocational needs of the community

Regulatory Provisions that Apply:

Markwatch operates within the provisions of the following regulatory & legislative Rules/Acts:

-Qualifications And Quality Assurance (Education And Training) Act 2012 Revised Updated to 18 November 2014 .

-QQI Core Statutory Quality Assurance Guidelines April 2016

-QQI Quality Assurance Guidelines for Independent/Private Providers April 2016

-Terms of Employment (Information) Act, 1994-2014

-General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) 2018

-Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Act 2005

-Company law (2014 Act) and other Workplace Relations acts

Organisational Structures & Governance Chart:

Figures below show Markwatch Security Training Services Ltd organisational structures, indicating the critical functional areas of both academic and operational responsibilities in order to achieve maximum separation of both areas of responsibility. Detailed roles/responsibilities have been explained in the Governance Chart on the next page:
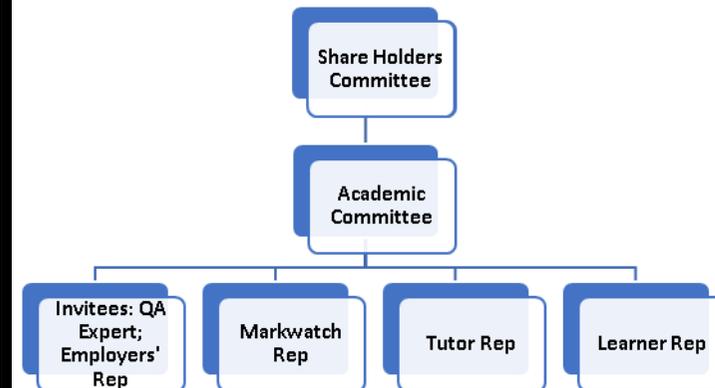
Operational Organisational Structure

```
                    Share Holders
                     Committee
                    /          \
                  MD          Chief Manager
              /   |   \          /      \
   IT Manager  Contract  QA Consultant  Office Manager  Accountant
   (Outsourced) Tutors   (External)     & QQI           (outsouced)
                                        Coordinator
```
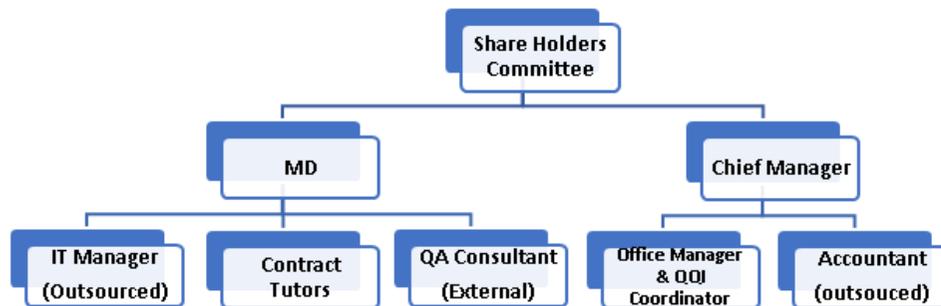
Academic Organisational Structure

```
              Share Holders
               Committee
                   |
               Academic
               Committee
          /      |      |      \
   Invitees: QA  Markwatch  Tutor Rep  Learner Rep
   Expert;       Rep
   Employers'
   Rep
```

NOTE: For details of the autonomous Academic Committee roles and operational roles of the MD & Chief Manager please see Governance Chart on the next page

Markwatch Security Training Services Ltd

Governance Chart

Committee/ Panel	Functions/TORs	Membership	Meeting Schedule
Shareholders Committee	Maintain strategic oversight of the following: -Strategic planning and development -Quality assurance management - Legal obligations -Corporate and academic governance best practices - Budgetary & financial governance	1.Elaine O'Toole (MD) - Chair 2.Mark O'Toole (Chief Manager)- Member	Four times per year
QA Committee	▪ Planning, review and implementation of QA systems in the organisation through a published QA Manual. ▪ Ensure inclusion/review of all Academic QA policy and practices in the QA Manual,after these are ratified by the Academic Committee. ▪ To ensure adequacy of resources for current programmes in conjunction with the Chief Manager ▪ To continually assess and manage risk within the organisation, in conjunction with the Academic Committee.* ▪ Engagement and management of the External QA Consultant ▪ Analyse and record effect of decisions related to the conduct of programmes and services and communicate to all staff and tutors **NOTES**: *Markwatch Security Training Services Risk Register has been formulated to include all major commercial & academic risks as identified	MD- Chair *Members:* *Tutor Rep* *QQI coordinator* *External QA Expert & External Authenticator to be invited when required*	Four times a Year
Academic Committee	▪ Responsible for the academic regulation of Markwatch Security Training Services Ltd & ensure adequate financial resources for the same ▪ Approve new programme proposals & assess programme review reports ▪ Exercise oversight and sole authority related to Academic QA policy and practices & ratify proposed amendments to related QA policies before their inclusion in the QA Manual, in conjunction with the QA Committee. ▪ Exercise oversight over all academic risks, including the assessment process, as identified in the Risk Register. ▪ Review reports and recommendations received from sub-committees and various panels and form ad-hoc sub-committees if required ▪ Review cases of academic misconduct and plagiarism when appropriate (when escalated from disciplinary committee) ▪ Review appeals of assessment grades and penalties associated with instances of plagiarism	Chair: External FET Expert[@] *Members:* *- Markwatch Rep* *-Tutor Rep* *-Learner Rep*** *Invitees when required:* *QA/Subject Matter Expert*	Four times a Year

	NOTES: @ <u>The Chair</u> of the Academic Committee would be an external FET Expert who would be an independent appointee with extensive experience in FET and good knowledge & understanding of the QQI policies and practices. To ensure independence, the selected person would have no previous relationship with Markwatch Training Services. This appointment will initially be for a period of three years with provision for extension. ** <u>Learner Reps</u>: In our case, due to very short programmes, learners are only registered with us for a period of a few days only. In this scenario, to obtain meaningful inputs from our learners, two recent willing graduates (who have graduated during the past 12 months) will be nominated during the June Certification Cycle every year for a period of 12 months at a time, at mutually agreed terms & conditions. This approach is expected to enable the learner reps over 12 months to gain a sound understanding of our operations, provision and support services, which in turn will enable them to contribute in the Academic Committee in a meaningful way. <u>Secretarial Support</u>: All secretarial support in terms of organisation of meetings, issuance of agendas and recording of minutes etc for the Academic Committee would be provided by Markwatch so that the chair is not encumbered with these duties. <u>Escalation Process</u>: Issues that need escalation from the Academic Committee would be brought to the Shareholders Committee for resolution. Any academic issues that are not resolved within Markwatch would be referred to the QQI, if required.	*Security Employers' Rep*	

Complaints, Disciplinary & Appeals Committee	Discipline:
	   - Handle administrative matters relating to learners' discipline/complaints which
	     are otherwise not resolved at the operational level
	   - Handle administrative matters relating to discipline amongst staff and tutors
	   - Adjudicate on all non-academic disciplinary issues
	   - Hand over all learner academic disciplinary issues to the Academic Committee for
	     Adjudication
	Appeals:
	   - Dispose of all non-academic appeals from learners or staff
	   - Hand over all learner academic appeals to the Academic Committee for disposal
	NOTES:
	Issues that need escalation from this Committee would be processed through the MD to the Shareholders Committee for operational/non-academic issues and through the Academic Committee to the Shareholders Committee for all academic issues.
		Chair: Chief Manager
		
		Members:
		-Office Manager
		-Tutor Rep
		- HR Expert to be invited when required:
			On as required basis

Results Approval Panel	- Review outcomes of External Authenticator & Internal Verifier moderation of assessments - Ratify assessment results for all Learners of programme(s) under consideration - Analyse and record effect of decisions related to the conduct of programmes and services and communicate to the QA Committee for further dissemination or action - Decide on the disagreements between external authenticators and tutors if any	Chair: Chief Manager *Members: Senior Trainer*	Once every certification cycle

		Invitees: EA & Tutors as required	

3. Overview of Markwatch QA Framework

Markwatch promotes a culture of all-round quality in its FET provision supported by a documented quality framework and a published procedural manual, which allows for the continuous review and enhancement of quality procedures. The Quality Framework enables us to best meet QQI national guidelines/standards.   All academic and operational activities within Markwatch Training are subject to the QA procedures as laid down in this Manual.

The QA System at Markwatch Security Training Services Ltd

This QA document has been developed by Markwatch for the purpose of clearly defining the mechanisms and procedures adopted by the organisation to achieve and maintain a quality service and product in accordance with the Qualifications (Education and Training) Act 2012 and the QQI Guidelines published thereafter.

QA is a fundamental part of all aspects of Markwatch, and covers both the corporate aspects (human resources, finance, health and safety etc.) as well as the academic facets (teaching, assessment, curriculum, learning environment, Learner supports etc.). We try to ensure that adequate separation is maintained between both aspects of our operations. All staff, tutors, external QA/Subject Matter experts/ consultants and chair of the Academic Committee are mandated to undertake specified roles and responsibilities in the implementation of QA procedures. The overall responsibility for publishing and managing the QA is that of the MD, in conjunction with the Academic Committee which exercises sole authority over the academic QA aspects. The MD is responsible for ensuring that all aspects of the organisation function effectively as a quality FET organisation for both Learners and staff. The MD's role is to encourage, motivate and support all teaching and administration staff as also to assist the external QA & FET experts, who are associated with Markwatch, to achieve the strategic objectives and goals of the organisation, within the bounds of its QA Framework.

In order to ensure that the policy and procedures remain relevant, fit for purpose and compliant with changes to statutory, legal and QQI/PSA requirements, the QA framework is continually monitored and reviewed. The QA Committee and the Academic Committee carry out internal quality audits and periodically review all aspects of the academic and operational QA system to ensure that all procedures are continually updated.

QA Committee: Roles and Responsibilities

A brief description of the roles and responsibilities of personnel forming part of the QA Committee is given below:

MD:

The MD is responsible for ensuring that all QA aspects of Markwatch function effectively to ensure all laid down quality standards are maintained (however, the Academic Committee execrcises overall control in the organisation for formulating/monitoring /reviewing all academic QA aspects). The other key responsibilities of the MD include:

- Maintain close interaction with the Academic Committee for formulation/monitoring/review of all academic QA aspects.

- Ensuring that all staff, tutors and external consultants/authenticators are aware of the Markwatch QA System.

- Continual liaison with certification bodies like the QQI to ensure a responsive QA set up.

- Planning, review and implementation of QA systems in the organisation

- To continually assess and manage the following within the organisation in conjunction with the Academic Committee:

    o All academic risks associated with the FET programmes.

    o All non-academic risks associated with the adequacy of premises, facilities, and resources for current & proposed FET programmes to ensure adherence to QA processes.

- Engagement and management of the External QA/FET Experts/ Consultant/ Authenticators with relevant expertise.

Tutor Rep:

- Delivery of programmes in line with the QA framework.
- To compile and provide formal/informal learner feedback and tutor feedback after completion of each programme. (tutors are required to obtain formal feedback from each learner on completion of the programme. A gist of the formal learner feedback is provided to the QA Committee while the physical feedback-forms are retained by the QQI Coordinator)
- Participate in QA Committee meetings as required.

QQI Coordinator:

The QQI Coordinator supports the QA Committee through:

- Effective management of QBS system for QQI certifications and documentation
- Be the point of contact for the awarding body, tutors and learners
- Development of programme timetables & scheduling of examinations
- Collection and management of Learner assessments and their secure transfer to assessors
- Maintaining relevant records and documents
- Providing administrative support for Internal Verifiers and External Authenticators

- *Keep track of latest QQI guidelines and keep the QA Committee informed.*

External QA Expert/Consultant: (when invited)

- QA advice and preparation of QA Documentation.

- Assist with the QQI monitoring processes, when required.

- Engagement with QA/Academic and other relevant committees.

- Conduct of periodic self-evaluations, mock desk monitoring and preparation of improvement plans- when required.

- Form part of various other committees/panels when required.

External Authenticator: (when invited)

The functions of the External Authenticator in relation to the QA are as follows:

- Review and report the implementation of QA guidelines in programmes' content/delivery and the assessment process

- From a QA perspective, compare and contrast both the minimum intended programme learning outcomes and the actual attainment of Learners with the relevant awards standards, the National Framework of Qualifications, and corresponding data from other programmes in the same discipline in other FET institutions in Ireland

- Determine whether or not the applied procedures for assessment are valid, reliable, fair and consistent in terms of QA guidelines
- Review the implementation of QA guidelines in terms of Learners' engagement and performance

- Provide a written report with findings and recommendations for continuous improvements

Academic Committee -Roles and Responsibilities

The system of academic governance within Markwatch is central to the successful implementation of its Academic QA System. For the purpose of maintaining effective separation between the commercial and academic governance an autonomous Academic Committee has been constituted, with an independent chair, as outlined in the Governance Chart above. Both the Academic Committee and the QA Committee will work in a complimentary manner. A brief description of the roles and responsibilities of personnel forming part of the Academic Committee is given below:

Chair (external FET expert):

The Chair is responsible for ensuring that all academic QA aspects of Markwatch function effectively, in line with the QQI & PSA guidelines, for both Learners and staff. Key responsibilities have been enumerated in the Governance Chart.

Markwatch Rep:

The Markwatch Rep, nominated by the MD, provides the Management perspective to the Academic Committee and reports the outcome and decisions arrived at during its deliberations back to the Management. The Markwatch Rep also provides management feedback on the queries raised by the Academic Committee.

Tutor Rep:

The tutors are the primary point of contact for communications between the Learners, the Markwatch Management and the Academic Committee. Key responsibilities include providing the following information to the Committee :

- Issues highlighted by current learners in their formal/informal feedback
- Tutors' feedback on issues related to delivery/ assessment and the usage of learning technology
- Recommendations on the development, planning and implementation of a high quality curriculum to maintain topicality and effectiveness through integration of real-life scenarios in the curriculum
- To provide necessary time-slots to the Learner-Rep to interact with current learners during the delivery schedule

Learner Rep:

The aim of the learner rep on the Academic Committee is primarily to always have the learner perspective available first-hand while discussing or deciding on any academic issues. It is intended to promote initiatives aimed at soliciting learner views to actively improve the student learning experience. Key responsibilities will include the following:

- To represent the views and interests of the current & past learner body at the Academic Committee
- Maintain close interaction with the current learners and as many past learners as possible
- Maintain close interaction/liaison with the tutors
- To interact with learners from other security FET providers, where possible, to develop a comparative perspective
- To provide the security-employers' perspective (if the learner rep is/has been employed with any security company) and feed-in to the tutors with details of topical real-life experiences of private security officers, for inclusion in their teaching strategies.
- To provide ongoing feedback to learners as appropriate

QA/Subject Matter Expert: (when invited)

The aim of inviting the QA/Subject Matter Expert on the Academic Committee is primarily to maintain the quality, topicality and effectiveness of the curriculum being delivered for the current programmes. The following would be the other expectations from both the QA/Subject Matter Expert:

- To carry out a critical examination of academic QA aspects and report shortcomings, if any
- To provide a comparison of current programmes with industry/national standards and suggest changes if any
- To analyse current programme content against latest developments, including new legislation/rules if any, and suggest modifications
- Provide an impartial view of the tutors' effectiveness related to the programme content and subject matter knowledge
- To review programme content for the development and planning for new programmes when proposed for QQI validation

Security Employers' Rep: (when invited)

The aim of inviting the Security Employers' Rep on the Academic Committee is primarily to obtain a first-hand view of the security-industry requirements and expectations from the new graduates, from the perspective of the prevailing private security environment and legislation. This interaction is expected to provide inputs for the Academic Committee for necessary modifications that may be required in the content and delivery of our programmes. Security Employers' Reps would also provide details of topical real-life experiences of private security officers, which can then be incorporated in our delivery **strategy**.

Ensuring Effectiveness of Markwatch QA System

The adoption and effectiveness of the QA system is ensured during the entire life-cycle of our programmes in a number of different ways that include: adoption of QA compliant procedures from the inception stage while developing & implementing new programmes which are based on QQI guidelines & PSA stipulations. This is followed by ongoing monitoring, as these programmes get delivered, including annual QA audits. To further strengthen and continually improve this system of adherence to QA requirements, we also carry out extensive & detailed periodic programme reviews of all programmes generally at intervals of five years. All the above methodologies of ensuring effectiveness of our QA system are explained individually below in more detail:

QA compliant Procedure for Development & Implementation of New Programmes

The process of developing/designing new QQI programmes, culminating in their effective delivery, is tabulated below in three Phases:

Phase 1 **Internal Assessment, PSA review &**	•**ACTION 1: Identification of potential new programme(s), after agreement with the Academic Committee** •**ACTION 2: Setting up of the Programme Development Committee** which consider all aspects including: - Resources/costs in terms of admin facilities and human resources & any requirements of Blended/Remote Learning in addition to face-to-face learning - Discussions with stakeholders & other peer providers •ACTION 3: Completion of validation documents in line with QQI policies and submission to QQI after review by and agreement of the PSA (in case of security related courses)
Phase 2	**ACTION 1: QQI's initial screening review & provider clarifications if any** **ACTION 2: Interim Validation Panel report/RFIs after their review & assessment followed by provider response** **ACTION 3: Issuance of Final Validation Panel Report followed by QQI (PAEC) agreement conveyed to provider**
Phase 3 **Programme**	-**Commence programme delivery in line with the Validation Document and PSA stipulations, if any (in case of security related programmes)** -**Carry out ongoing programme monitoring (see details below)** - **Carry out Periodic programme reviews (see details below)**

Ongoing Monitoring of Operational & Academic QA

Table below outlines the methods which are used to ensure that programmes and related facilities are monitored for improvements on an on-going basis:

Evaluation Method	Stakehol-der(s) Involved	Frequency	Programme Elements Reviewed
Assessment Forms/ Formal Feedback	Learners & Tutor/s	on completion of each programme delivery	- Course objectives - Tutor delivery methods - Course materials provided - Training facilities - Provision of course information - Programme Administration - Assessment Methods
Results Approval Panel Meeting	Tutor/s & internal staff	Each certification Cycle	- Learner performance - IV & EA reports - Learner feedback - Tutor feedback - Completion rates & grades - Statistics and trends with respect to assessment
Internal Verification & External Authent-icator Reports	IV Panel & EA	Each certification Cycle	The IV & EA Report to include: Programmes authenticated and Evidence considered, including Programme Learning Outcomes, Actual Attainment of Learners and evidence of the same, Appropriateness of Assessment procedures, National standards/Trends
Ongoing QA reviews/ Programme evaluations	Academic Committee	Four times a year	-All aspects of programme content and delivery -Administration, planning & organisation -Appropriateness of support materials provided

Annual Quality Audits:

An QA Audit schedule is developed at the beginning of the year which ensures that all procedures are evaluated at least once in a twelve month period. Membership of the audit team and schedules are decided by the MD in consultation with the Academic Committee. The QA Audit is carried out by reviewing documentation, legislation, QQI & PSA regulations and consulting with relevant staff/tutors/Academic Committee/external experts to identify

any shortfalls in the programme's QA procedures. A detailed report is then prepared which outlines the findings & recommendations of improvement actions where required, overseen by the QA/ Academic Committee.

Periodic Programme Reviews:

Markwatch Academic Committee is mandated to undertake a major review of each QQI Programme, usually at five-yearly intervals. Programme review is a formal evaluation of QQI accredited programmes, coordinated by the Academic Committee. The specific objectives of a programme review are to:

- Review and improve the content, delivery and learning outcomes of the programmes in line with the QQI and the PSA guidelines, with due regard for security-employers'/industry requirements
- Evaluate feedback from Learners, tutors and the security industry, and also evaluate the processes for obtaining & acting on this feedback
- Evaluate the physical facilities and resources available for delivery of the programme
- Review learner workload and evaluate effectiveness and integrity of their assessment
- Collate projections/suggested modifications for the following five years to improve/reorient the programme(s) under review and identify necessary updates of related QA policies

The Periodic Programme Reviews will follow a set methodology and sequence to ensure consideration of all relevant materials/information related to the concerned programme. The process and details of the Periodic Programme Reviews are depicted in the flowchart below (next page):

Periodic Programme Review - Process Flowchart

Process	Explanatory Details

Academic Committee, in consultation with the MD, **constitutes the Programme Review Team**

Programme Review Team may include one or more members including an external QA/FET expert if required- they will complete their Review Report generally within 20 working days, overseen by the Academic Committee

Analysis of all relevant documentary data & physical facilities to establish the extent to which the programme/s continue to meet the QQI/PSA guidelines

This analysis to include Validation documents, any QQI/PSA guidelines/ monitoring reports, RAP/IV/EA/QA reports, web-site content, learner feedbacks, tutor feedbacks, completion rates/grades, statistics and trends with respect to assessment, learner supports available, adequacy of physical infrastructure, H &S requirements, any learner complaints/appeals, any new regulatory and legislative requirements etc

Conduct of wider **stakeholder consultations** to gather more contemporary programme related data/opinions

Stakeholder Consulta- tions/ discussions/ questionnaires to include current/past Learners; tutors/staff; security-employers/industry reps; other relevant external organisations like the PSA

Compilation & presentation of the **Programme Review Report** with recommendations

The Programme Review Report will be finalised after the Interim Report is discussed with the Academic Committee and the MD. Sending of a formal response to the QQI/PSA would be considered, if the Programme Review was carried out on either's recommendations

1.Preparation of the **Improvement Plan** based on recommendations, with timelines & responsibilities, by the Academic Committee, in consultation with MD.

2.Complete **implementation within 45 days**.

The Improvement Plan would be overseen by the Academic Committee and would include changes where required in delivery methodologies; learner documentation/manuals; tutor documentation; web site content etc

4. Access, Transfer & Progression Policy/Procedures

Overall Policy

The NQAI published 'Policies, Actions and Procedures for Access, Transfer and Progression for Learners' in 2003. The policy states that Providers must inform learners of the knowledge, skill and competence needed as a basis for successful participation in every programme offered. In this regard the following is relevant:

• QQI provides overall information about all awards and programmes leading to awards.

• In this regard, Markwatch as a conscientious provider keeps the learners informed about the Name of the awarding body, Title of award associated with the programme, Level of the award, Arrangements to assess a learner's eligibility to enter and Details of learning supports available, including for learners with disabilities and for those whose first language is not English. It is achieved through all relevant print materials as also the web site.

Purposes of this Markwatch policy

• Facilitate lifelong learning.

• Promote opportunities for:

- access to the labour market in the security sector (subject to PSA guidelines on Garda vetting)

- access to education and training

- progression to higher levels of programmes and awards.

Broad meaning of the terms Access, Transfer and Progression:

• Access and transfer refer to entering or starting a programme of education or training based on learners' skills, knowledge or competence as entry requirements.

• Progression refers to the ways learners can move on to higher-level programmes and also to enter the labour market.

Markwatch Access Procedures

Markwatch always seeks to ensure that there is a fair and consistent approach to how learners are selected and entered onto any programme and is committed to making the following available to prospective learners:

• Statement of the entry requirements for every programme

• Programme details

• Advice / Guidance for learners to assist them to make informed choices in programme selection, based on a fair and consistent approach

• Details of learning supports available

• An appeals mechanism for learners refused access to a programme

• Formative Assessment to enable smooth progression through a programme

• Transcripts of performance to facilitate transfer to other programmes or institutions and to enable learners to demonstrate performance to employers

• Advice / Guidance for learners to assist them to make informed choices in relation to PSA mandated licensing/ career implications in the security sector for any learner who receives an adverse report from the national vetting bureau (details/PSA Links in this regard are available in the learner handbook as also on Markwatch website under the Heading "PSA Assessment – with a link to their *'fit and proper guidelines'* ".

5. Teaching and Learning Overview

Teaching and Learning Policy Statement

Markwatch is committed to deploy the best resources for delivery of programmes and providing adequate supports for learners to achieve effective learning. As laid out in earlier chapters in this QA Manual, Markwatch will continuously monitor and improve the quality of teaching and learning on its programmes and will have associated procedures which clarify how the policies will be implemented.

The following methods would be adopted to ensure that the high standards of quality of teaching and learning is maintained throughout:

-Teaching & Learning Resources: The adequacy of available resources required for effective learning would be regularly monitored and maintained.

-Periodic Self-Evaluations & Programme Reviews: Self-evaluation is used by

Markwatch as the Process which provides analyses of our functions, resources, services and administration (including adherence to legal provisions) as they impact on any given FET programme provision.

-Regular Feedback from Learners, Staff members and external stakeholders:

Views of all stakeholders would be facilitated and obtained regularly to reflect constructively on their individual experiences and recommendations for all round improvements.

Special Teaching & Learning Strategies of Markwatch for Security Courses

Use of 'Real-Life Examples' and 'Security Incident Scenarios'

Use of real-life examples, mock-drills and security incident scenarios in our Teaching & Learning Strategies for Security Courses has been our USP for the past two decades. Our experience in this regard has been very positive and **9**0% of our learners who have received training through these methods have been successful in securing long term jobs and have consistently progressed in their careers due to this life-long learning. To build further on these positive aspects of our training methodologies, all tutors are encouraged to maintain close and regular liaison within the security sector with the practicing security personnel and other security training professionals as part of their CPD and to pick up and incorporate real-life scenarios in the regular training sessions. In addition, Tutors are also encouraged to seek out such real life incidents from our past learners who are performing well in this sector. This is done as part of their follow-up interactions with past learners. These scenarios are documented and learners are given practice to develop appropriate responses to these incidents and learn the pitfalls of inappropriate responses during mock drills.

Usage of a Dynamic Tutor Handbook to Maintain Consistency of Teaching

A customised Tutor Handbook has been prepared to maintain consistency and uniformity in our teaching standards and methodologies, without affecting the specific style and strengths of individual tutors. This Tutor-Handbook contains practices for teaching, learning, remote learning supports, Continuing Professional Development (CPD), assessment processes and organisational processes to support tutors' engagement with learners. It is treated as a dynamic and live document which is periodically updated with new content based on inputs received from the tutors and the Academic and other committees. Learner feedback also forms an important source of inputs for this handbook.

Fair & Consistent Assessment Of Learners

In the context of Teaching & Learning, the fair & consistent assessment of learners forms one of the most important elements and hence is discussed in detail below.

The following is the Mark watch's policy statement in regard to the assessment of learners:

> *Markwatch is committed to carrying out assessment processes in a fair and transparent manner through ongoing monitoring and oversight by the Academic Committee. To achieve this, Markwatch will develop and adhere to procedures for the fair and consistent assessment of Learners in line with relevant and prescribed standards and guidelines set out by the QQI. Assessment tools will be fit-for-purpose*

and Learners will receive on-going support and feedback in a timely manner. Criteria and regulations governing Learner assessment will be made available in a manner which is easily understood and accessible by all. Areas of potential vulnerability in our quality assurance of assessments, as identified by the QA Committee/Academic Committee/Results Approval Panels will be regularly relayed to the tutors and others concerned for improvement.

Markwatch Terms of Reference for Assessment

The principles that underpin the assessment of Learners enrolled on QQI programmes at Markwatch are derived from the generally accepted assessment standards as follows:

- ❖ Credibility of the assessment process is always ensured through ongoing monitoring and oversight by the Academic Committee
- ❖ Assessment tools used are as prescribed in the QQI Award Specifications
- ❖ Learners are responsible for demonstrating their learning achievement
- ❖ Assessment is largely based on learning outcomes of a particular award
- ❖ Assessment promotes and supports effective teaching and learning
- ❖ Learners are well informed about how and why they are assessed

Assessment Techniques

Currently, the technique(s) to be used by the Markwatch Assessors to assess Learners, are as stipulated in the QQI Award Specifications or Component Specification.

Formative assessment and Summative assessment techniques used by Markwatch:

Formative assessment: informing learning

Formative assessment is part of that ongoing dialogue between Learners and Tutors about the quality of work; it is the part of the learning process where a cycle of feedback results in Learners coming to understand when a piece of work is fit for purpose. It informs learning and teaching and is sometimes called assessment for learning. Formative assessment feedback is frequently oral. As delivered by the tutor, and is a natural part of ongoing coursework/classwork.

Summative assessment- summing up learning

Summative assessment judges evidence of learning against the standards for an award; it is carried out at a juncture during the course delivery where Learners have had sufficient opportunity to learn what is to be assessed. For each piece of summative assessment evidence, there are set briefs and criteria. It results in production of evidence by the learners that may be judged for the purposes of their achieving an award. Markwatch currently employs the following summative assessment tools for the three minor security related awards being offered, which are explained in succeeding paragraphs:

-Assignment

-Theory-Based Exam

-Skills Demonstration

Assignment

An assignment is an exercise carried out in response to a brief with specific guidelines as to what should be included, usually of short duration and/or may be carried out over a specified period. Assignments may also take the form of a practical activity, i.e. practical assignment or a research activity/evaluation following investigation of a particular topic, for example, a written assignment. An assignment would reflect a range of learning outcomes. A brief would be devised for each assignment. The assignment brief would be clear and unambiguous.

Theory-Based Examination

Theory-based exams are used to assess the Learner's ability to recall, apply, recognise and understand concepts and theory. This will require responses to a range of question types, for example, multiple-choice, short answer, structured or essay. These questions may be answered in different media for example in writing or orally When devising an examination, the Markwatch Assessors would ensure that:

• Questions reflect the learning outcomes as outlined in the component specification/ module descriptor

• Instructions are clear and unambiguous

• Examinations have a cover page outlining details such as date, duration, choice and number of questions

• Confidentiality is maintained during preparation and handling of examination documents

• Groups of Learners being assessed at different times are provided with different examination questions

• The allocation and weighting of marks is clear to the Learner

• The Learner is aware of the weighting of the examination in relation to the award

• Learners are given a quiet environment in which to complete the examination

• A clear marking scheme and outline solutions would also be devised that highlights how specific marks are to be allocated for guidance of the tutors.

Skills Demonstration

A skills demonstration is used to assess a wide range of practical based learning outcomes for which an Assessor must devise a brief or set of instructions or tasks for Learners. The Assessors would also be responsible for providing sufficient Learner evidence from the skills demonstration for internal verification and external authentication. This evidence may include:

• Product/outcome of the tasks where applicable, for example, learner generated written/digital evidence.

• Photographic or video evidence of Learner completing the task

• Learner account of task

• Assessor verification sheets

A skills demonstration may take place in the workplace, in a live environment or in a simulated environment, as appropriate to the requirement of the module descriptor/component specification. In some specific cases, the demonstration must take place in a real/live environment.

Skills Demonstration – in Simulated Environment:

A skills demonstration may be carried out in a simulated environment, using, for example, role play or simulated scenario, where appropriate. The environment should enable the Learner to demonstrate a broad range of learning outcomes. When using simulated environment, the Assessor should ensure that:

• The Learner receives clear instructions and guidelines on how the assessment will proceed and what will be assessed, e.g. duration, inclusion of oral questions as appropriate
• The environment is carefully prepared, and the necessary equipment and/or materials are available to the Learner
• The tasks and conditions should be as realistic and close to the 'actual' environment as far as possible
• Learner evidence to be generated is identified
• A clear marking scheme including assessment criteria should also be devised that highlights how Learner evidence is to be marked.

Marking and Grading

Specific programme assessment strategies are documented for all QQI programmes offered by Markwatch in the relevant validation documents. The programme assessment strategy is developed at programme design stage and follows the relevant award specification guidelines as laid down by the QQI.

Once graded, assessment material is subject to internal moderation in the case of borderline or failed grades, as part of the internal-verification process. Subsequently, all assessed work is also subject to external, independent moderation which is carried out by an External Authenticator, before being uploaded on the QBS System after ratification by the Results Approval Panel.

Provision of Assessment Information to Learners

Assessment information and information pertaining to all policies, procedures and regulations is available to learners in the 'Learner Handbook', which is continually reviewed and updated.

Learners also have access to a programme handbook which supplements the 'learner information booklet' and provides 'programme specific' information, i.e. programme overview, descriptors and learning outcomes, assessment strategies and marking schemes and recommended learning resources. Learners are also provided with assignment briefs and notified of assessment deadlines on programme commencement.

Responsibilities of Learners in the Assessment Process

Learners have a number of responsibilities with respect to their Assessment as outlined below:

- ❖ Learners are expected to attend all attendance days unless otherwise approved by Markwatch
- ❖ Learners are expected to actively engage with the assessment activities provided on their programmes, and to act on feedback provided by their Tutors
- ❖ Learners must ensure that they familiarise themselves and fully understand the marking schemes, assessment criteria and learning outcomes against which their work is assessed and seek advice and guidance if necessary
- ❖ Learners are expected to submit legible work for assessment as required
- ❖ Learners must ensure that all assessment deadlines are met or that approval for an extension has been granted in advance of the original deadline
- ❖ Learners must ensure they understand what constitutes plagiarism and ensure they do not resort to plagiarism during their assessment.

Assuring Quality & Integrity of the Assessment Process

The overall responsibility of oversight and ensuring the QA & integrity of the assessment process rests with the Academic Committee, while the day- to-day operation and management of assessment functions are managed by various personnel/panels as tabulated below:

	Roles and responsibilities with respect to the assessment process:
Academic Committee	- Continually assess vulnerabilities in the assessment process and take action to rectify and modify related QA policies to ensure integrity of assessment processes at all stages, in conjunction with the QA Committee - Review & decide on penalties in cases of academic misconduct and plagiarism escalated by the Complaints, Disciplinary & Appeals Committee - Further escalate cases of academic misconduct and plagiarism to the Shareholders Committee, if they remain unresolved
MD in conjunct-ion with QA Committee	- Manage the operation of the overall assessment process including management of investigative process of possible cases of plagiarism or misconduct through the Complaints, Disciplinary & Appeals Committee - Appoint External Authenticators in consultation with Academic Committee - Manage Results Approval Panel meetings and associated activities and reports - Review the output of internal quality audits related to assessment
Complaints, Disciplinary & Appeals Committee	- Deal with complaints and conduct disciplinary process including appeals in cases of inappropriate learner-behavious, if any - Escalate unresolved academic/operational appeals respectively to the Academic Committee/MD
Results Approval Panel	- Review the EA Reports & ratify assessment results for all learners under consideration - Analyse and record any adverse quality issues/trends in the assessment process for action by the Quality/Academic Committee - Resolve and decide on the disagreements between external authenticators and tutors if any

Internal Verifier & External Authenticator	- Check on the fair and consistent assessment of learners including the assessment instruments being employed and note anomalies if any - Analyse and record any good or adverse quality issues/trends in the assessment process & include in their IV/EA Reports - Attend Results Approval Panel meetings/Academic Committee meetings if required
Tutor	- Communicate assessment requirements to Learners as per programme booklet - Grade Learner assessment in accordance with agreed marking schemes and QQI regulations - Note and report possible cases of plagiarism or breach of assessment regulations - Participate in Results Approval Panel meetings/Academic Committee meetings if required

Additional Actions to Maintain Integrity of the Assessment Process

Following actions would be taken by Markwatch to maintain the integrity of the assessment process:

-Ensure safe handling of all assessment materials including the exam question papers, learner answer scripts and any video evidence of skills demonstrations

- Confidentiality is maintained during preparation and handling of examination documents

- Groups of Learners being assessed at different times are provided with different examination questions

- Ensure confidentiality of all assessment material whilst in in the possession of Internal Verifiers and External Authenticators

- Special care would be taken by the assessor to ensure that for each separate group of learners a separate/new set of questions is used for theory based exams as also for the skills demonstrations to maintain integrity of the assessment process.

- Seating arrangements for theory exams will conform to and ensure integrity of individual work by learners to prevent chances of dishonest practices

Ratification of Assessment Results

On completion of the Results Approval Panel meeting all signed result sheets are finalised and results are forwarded to QQI on the QBS system.

Failed and Repeat Assessment

Learners who fail to submit work in respect of an assessment element of a module (and have not sought or been granted a deferral/extension) are not to be given an opportunity to be reassessed if the overall grade achieved in that module is greater than a pass result. Any Learner who fails an element of coursework and subsequently fails the module is normally permitted a further attempt at the unsuccessful assessment(s) within a specified period. In cases where it is not possible to set a repeat assessment, Learners may be required to re-attend all or part of the training, complete new assessments and pay relevant fees. Special care would be taken by the assessor to ensure that a separate/new set of questions is used for theory based exams as also for the skills demonstrations to maintain integrity of the assessment process.

Communication of Results

Results are formally communicated to Learners within one week of the relevant results approval meetings. Certificates from QQI will be issued to the postal address provided by the Learner.

Appeals

A request for an appeal must be submitted to the Complaints, Disciplinary & Appeals Committee within 5 working days of results having been communicated by Markwatch. There may be a small fee which will be refunded if the result is changed. Learners may only appeal results on the following grounds:

- The Learner believes that there was a non-academic irregularity in the conduct of their assessments
- The Learner wishes to appeal against a decision to penalise him/her on the grounds of academic misconduct/plagiarism
- The Learner wishes to present information of relevant mitigating circumstances which were not known to Markwatch. In this case the Learner must also show good reason why such circumstances could not have been made known prior to the Results Approval Panel meeting

The Committee will consider Learner appeals and communicate outcomes of the appeal to Learners within 5 working days of the meeting, along with details of the escalatory process for their information. In cases where the learner is not satisfied with the decision of their initial appeal, they can escalate the appeal to the Academic Committee/MD for a final decision for academic or operational appeals respectively. The Learner will be notified of the final decision within 10 working days after this. In

case of learner disaffection with the Markwatch's final decision, they will be advised to approach the QQI.

Plagiarism

Markwatch expects Learners to follow acceptable standards of academic honesty. Plagiarism constitutes an act of academic dishonesty and is not accepted or tolerated by Markwatch. Plagiarism is the act of taking or copying someone else's work, including another Learner's, and presenting it as their own. Typical plagiarists use ideas, texts, theories, data, created artistic artefacts or other material without acknowledgement so that the person considering this work is given the impression that what they have before them is the Learner's own original work when it is not. Plagiarism is a form of cheating and is dishonest.

Categories of Plagiarism

Plagiarism can take a variety of forms and can be categorised as follows:

- copying a whole or substantial parts of a paper from a source text (e.g. a web site, journal article, book or encyclopedia), without proper acknowledgement
- piecing together sections of the work of others into a new whole
- procuring a paper from a company or essay bank (including Internet sites)
- submitting another Learner's work, with or without that Learner's knowledge

Procedure for Dealing with Plagiarism

Action 1: Where a Tutor/Internal Verifier suspects that a piece of coursework contains plagiarised material, a short report, including a marked up copy of the assessment material, should be forwarded to the Complaints, Disciplinary & Appeals Committee within 5 working days of the suspected case being identified.

Action 2: The Complaints, Disciplinary & Appeals Committee carries out an initial investigation based on the information provided. If a case is not proven, the Committee will inform the relevant Tutor/Internal Verifier of the reasons for his/her decision. If a case is proven, relevant programme tutoring staff will examine the candidate orally on the content of the coursework or ask the Learner to attend an interview to discuss the piece of work within 10 working days. The aim of the interview is to determine whether the allegation is well founded and if so, what is the appropriate penalty. Best practice recommends that more than one person should be present when interviewing a Learner.

Action 3: If plagiarism cannot be confirmed as a result of the interview process, the Learner will be notified in writing. If plagiarism has been confirmed, the

Learner will be penalised taking into account whether it is a 1ˢᵗ/2ⁿᵈ time offence, %age of document plagiarised, level of the award, credit weighting and value of the assignment. The Learner should be informed of the penalty accordingly by the Academic Committee within 5 working days of the interview.

Right to Appeal

The Learner has the right to appeal the decision which must be done within 5 working days of the correspondence from Complaints, Disciplinary & Appeals Committee. Such appeals will be managed as outlined on the previous page under 'Appeals'.

Remote Learning

Currently, Markwatch does not provide Blended Learning to its learners. However, we have been making extensive use of remote learning platforms like the 'Zoom'. This policy has been included in the QAM as a response to Covid Pandemic during 2020-21. Markwatch has commenced using basic VLE using the platforms like Zoom, after basic agreement with PSA & QQI. This platform is currently (May 2022) proving adequate for learner needs.

This policy covers all courses offered by Markwatch, with respect to teaching & learning of our courses with a remote delivery component and is designed to safeguard the academic standards associated with Markwatch courses.

Definitions

It is important to understand the definitions of some key terms used in this policy. To address the question, it's important that we first distinguish between synchronous and asynchronous learning. Please check the definitions below:

Synchronous Learning

Markwatch current deliver all courses using Synchronous Learning. It is defined as. 'live' teaching, available to learners on a voluntary basis, using Zoom and Teams or similar means. It now constitutes standard technology for any provider in the same way as white boards and smart projectors were in the past few years. Our current programmes that have been validated for classroom/ in-person delivery would not require any substantial change if these are to be delivered synchronously online/remotely. However, issues that need regular review and management for online/remote delivery will include:

- Staff Development and Supports for teaching online
- Staff and Learner feedback mechanisms for monitoring effectiveness
- Technology – h/w and s/w dependability and effectiveness

- Learner information and supports
- Data Security and GDPR
- Summative assessments continue to be classroom based

Asynchronous Learning

Markwatch current do not deliver any courses using Asynchronous Learning/Blended Learning. As and when our programmes are modified for asynchronous delivery, these will have significant implications for upgradation of resources (human, financial and technological) and appropriate upscaling of quality assurance methods (learner supports, learner engagement, data security, assessment integrity etc). Most of all, it will require pedagogical and technological expertise to ensure that the online content is designed in such a way as to facilitate effective learning and engagement where learners progress through the programme is more self-directed.

Staff Professional Development for Remote Teaching and Learning

We fully understand that as an FET provider we need a set of digital competencies specific to the design and delivery of relevant courses in order to be able to seize the potential of digital technologies for enhancing and innovating FET. In this quest, Markwatch will ensure that staff involved in remote teaching are appropriately qualified and supported.

QA of Tutors

Markwatch's policy statement in regard to its policy and procedures for the QA of Tutors is given below:

> *Markwatch is fully committed to ensuring that sufficient and appropriately qualified staff are employed to meet the academic and administrative requirements to deliver all programmes to the highest standard. The organisation will engage in an open and constructive feedback process with staff to promote continuous programme improvement and on-going personal and professional development.*

Tutor/Staff Selection and Recruitment

Recruitment and Selection Procedure

Once a vacancy arises, Markwatch develops a job specification and associated selection criteria for the particular role, both of which are approved by Markwatch's Managing Director, in consultation with the Academic Committee, prior to advertising. All vacancies are advertised externally using all possible media. Candidates are shortlisted and approved by the MD prior to interviews taking place. All interview candidates are required to provide copies of relevant qualifications, which are kept on individual folders together with their CVs and other relevant supporting documentation. When signing up the successful candidate, their roles and responsibilities with respect to the delivery of QQI programmes will form an integral part of the induction process so as to

ensure that the new staff fulfil the needs of all current programmes. The new tutors' familiarity with the Markwatch Tutor Handbook forms an essential part of the induction process.

The MD has the ultimate responsibility at each stage in the process to induct, train and manage CPD processes for the staff and Tutors. In addition to the tutors that are permanently employed, a list of external self-employed tutors is also maintained for those who can be inducted temporarily when required for relevant programmes.

Induction

As the very first step, all tutors are required to familiarise themselves with the Markwatch Tutor Handbook. Apart from providing ongoing mentoring and support to all staff involved in the delivery of the specified programmes, Markwatch provide a comprehensive induction to new Tutors. This includes a review of official programme documents together with all associated material such as Learner hand-outs and assessment briefs. To ensure that the Tutor has a clear understanding of the assessment standards required, he or she is asked to assess a complete assessment element using specific grading criteria. The grade and associated marking scheme is reviewed by the MD, in consultation with the Academic Committee, and feedback is provided. Further, as an ongoing process, assessment material is cross moderated regularly and feedback is provided, as necessary, until such time that the required grading standard is met by the Tutor. Training is also provided, if required, in the use of relevant IT and software systems used to fulfil the Tutor role. The Tutor will also be briefed on the following:

- Markwatch background, aims, ethos and organisation structure
- Specific responsibilities associated with the Tutor role
- Lines of communication within Markwatch staff and the roles of relevant internal Markwatch personnel
- Academic and administrative procedures and regulations, including relevant documentation

Training and CPD

The responsibility for on-going training and staff development is taken seriously at Markwatch. When necessary, specific training to support programme or organisational developments is organised by Markwatch as required. All Tutors are also afforded the opportunity to attend any training programme at a minimal fee. Key responsibilities in this regard are outlined below:

Tutors

Key responsibilities of Tutors include:

- Ensure a thorough understanding of and familiarity with the Markwatch Tutor Handbook on induction.
- Delivery of teaching and assessment of Learners

- Integrating relevant published research into course delivery and assessment processes
- Contributing to the development, planning and implementation of a high quality curriculum
- Grading of assessments where relevant as well as providing feedback and mentoring to Learners within the agreed timescale of the assessment activity
- Providing support to Learners when appropriate
- Liaising with administration and management staff as necessary on an on-going basis
- New programme identification
- Participating in various panels and other meetings and committees as assigned by Markwatch
- Regularly interact with other tutors in their field of learning and practicing security personnel to discuss and analyse current and new practices which can be adopted/updated in our training delivery.
- Ensure regular inclusion of **real-life examples** and scenarios during the delivery of security related programmes to ensure better and lasting learning by our candidates. (also refer 'Special Teaching & Learning Strategies' above)

Effectiveness of Tutors

The purpose of procedures in this area is to ensure that tutors receive constructive feedback on their teaching performance in order to allow them to identify key strengths and areas for improvement and agree action plans where necessary.

Monitoring Effectiveness of Tutors

The effectiveness of Tutors is monitored using a number of feedback mechanisms as given below:

- Learner course assessment forms (interim and end of course delivery)
- Learner verbal feedback at end-of-course meetings
- Tutor course review report (self-evaluation)
- External Authenticator reports
- Client feedback (in the case of group-programmes delivered off- site)
- Inputs provided by the Learner Rep on the Academic Committee

Consistency of Marking Between Assessors

The policy to ensure fairness and consistency of marking is managed by the Academic Committee, supported by Tutors and the QQI coordinator, and is based on the Module Marking Criteria guidelines which are included in Programme Briefs.

Supports for Poorly Performing Tutors

When Tutors are not performing to the standard required for the role, it is the responsibility of Markwatch to discuss such shortcomings with the Tutor in question. Managing Director of Markwatch discusses the shortcomings with the Tutor, an action plan is put in place to address such issues and subsequent feedback from all concerned is noted to evaluate whether improvements have been made.

Removal of Poorly Performing Tutors

Following discussions with Markwatch any Tutor who fails to meet the required standards, even after application of formal and informal interventions, will be subject to dismissal by Markwatch. In the event that a Tutor needs to be disciplined, Complaints, Disciplinary & Appeals Committee will do so in a fair and consistent manner. Markwatch's disciplinary process operates in 4 Stages as outlined below.

> **Stage 1: Informal Meeting** – The Disciplinary & Appeals Committee (after consultation with the Academic Committee) will speak with the tutor and point out clearly the desired improvement required in behaviour/work practice. Every effort will be made to support the tutor in making the desired improvements.

> **Stage 2: Verbal Warning** – If the desired improvement does not occur, the Disciplinary & Appeals Committee will again meet with the tutor and a verbal recorded warning will be issued.

> **Stage 3: Written Warnings -** If after one month, the verbal warning does not result in the desired improvement, a first written warning will be issued. If after one month the first written warning does not result in improvement, a second written warning will be issued.

> **Stage 4: Dismissal –** If after one month of the issuing of second written warning, it does not result in improvement, dismissal will be recommended to the MD as the final part of the process. If the MD certifies the dismissal, the concerned tutor would be afforded the opportunity to appeal to Shareholders Committee, if desired.

Learning Resources And Learner Supports

Markwatch Model of Learner Support

Markwatch is committed to delivering relevant and flexible programmes which are facilitated through an integrated support system that promotes effective learning with equal emphasis on 'learning-to-learn'. Details of the model of delivery and learner resources/supports provided by Markwatch for its QQI programmes are discussed below.

Delivery Mechanisms and Learning Resources

Markwatch utilises the following delivery mechanisms and learning resources, each of which are customised for individual programmes depending on specific Learner profiles and client requirements:

- **Face-to-Face Teaching:** In keeping with the ethos of adult learning and the integration of work based assessment, programme content is facilitated through appropriate delivery mechanisms such as group discussion, tutorials and workshops. Tutors are specially encouraged to ensure regular inclusion of **real-life examples** and scenarios during the delivery of security related programmes to ensure better and lasting learning by our candidates.
- **Remote Learning:** Please refer to details discussed above.
- **Markwatch Training Materials:** Markwatch provides all Learners with both hard and soft copies of programme specific notes, which also include excercises for self-directed assessment for learners to continually gauge their learning progress. Programme material is updated as necessary to ensure currency whilst ensuring that minimum programme and module specific learning outcomes are delivered. Case samples and self-directed group work and quizzes are reviewed on a programme basis, and where necessary are updated to reflect the profile of the specific Learner group.
- **Practical Assignments / Group Quizzes / Self-Tests / Informal Assessments:** A key component of all QQI programmes provided by Markwatch is the practical application of the Learners' learning in the workplace. This process is assessed through practical assignments such as case studies based on real-life experiences. Tutors also use individual and group quizzes and regular tests to reinforce learning.
- **Access to Support Library:** Markwatch is in the process of creating a physical and a virtual support library containing relevant publications in addition to real life case studies to support the tutors as also learners' research efforts.

On-going Support Mechanisms

Markwatch utilises the following support mechanisms for learners over the duration of the programme, particularly during the assessment period.

- **Email/Telephone Support:** Markwatch Tutors provide individualised Learner support such as email and/or telephone throughout the duration of the programme.
- **Workplace Support:** In case of already employed learners, support within the Learner's workplace is usually provided by the Learner's line manager, or other supporting professionals, who are also encouraged to keep in touch with the tutor/s.
- **On-going Mentoring and Feedback:** Markwatch Tutors provide on-going mentoring and learner feedback for the duration of learners' practical

assignments. Learners are encouraged to provide honest written feedback on conclusion of each programme which is channeled through the tutor to the QA Committee/Academic Committee for analyses and implementation if approved. The feedback forms contain questions related to adequacy of resources/course-content for learners and are periodically revised based on learner inputs.

- **Administration and Examination Support:** Markwatch tutors and administrative staff are available to provide necessary administrative support and endeavour to respond to all learner queries within 24 hours, especially during the assessment periods.
- **Support provided by the Learner Rep:** The Academic Committee maintains a constant watch over the duration of the programmes through the Learner Rep (who is part of the Academic Committee) for instituting immediate and long term improvements where required.

The Learning Environment

Programmes are delivered at Blanchardstown onsite training facilities in the case of in-house programmes and also at public locations (nationwide, subject to demand), in addition to the remote online learning programmes for which internet resources are used.

Physical Learning Environment – Face-to-Face Delivery

The following set of quality guidelines (training room specifications) applies to the physical learning environment for all programmes. Although this cannot always be fully adhered to at onsite training facilities at client-locations, tutors are nevertheless made aware of the requirements and informed of their importance and the need to adhere to these requirements:

Health & Safety:

The Health and Safety of Markwatch premises is governed by its Safety Statement. Management personnel and Tutors at the training venue are responsible for the Health & Safety of the Learners. Any issues that arise are intimated to the Chief Manager at Markwatch for efficient resolution.

Training Room Layout and Equipment:

- Rooms should be set up in a style that ensures maximum space per learner (min 4 ft).
- A top table is required for the Tutor(s) and their notes
- A table is required for the projector with a suitable screen and flip-chart with markers
- The chairs should be comfortable and suited to 6-8 hours of sitting and facilitate note-taking by the learners

- The room should have natural light, air-conditioning and not be susceptible to any external noise/disturbance
- An extension lead for projector with lead secured to the floor for safety
- Access to power sockets for Learners' electronic devices
- Internet access should be available

Special Requirements:

The venue (including the training room and other facilities) should have accessibility for wheelchair users and others of limited mobility

Security:

- The room set-up should be maintained and locked overnight. If this is not possible, the Tutor should be prepared to arrange secure storage of all materials and timely set-up every morning.
- Where possible, the Tutor should have a facility to lock the room during breaks

Programme-Information Display:

- The programme location (specific training-room) must be clearly displayed at the hotel/company reception area from 8am on the morning of each programme
- Programmes generally run from 9am to 5pm. Should this vary, the venue will be notified
- Learners are asked to provide feedback regarding the physical environment on course evaluation forms and Tutors are formally advised that any deviation from the standard must be reported to the Chief Manager immediately

Reasonable Accommodation for Learners with Disabilities/Specific Learning Difficulties

Markwatch is fully committed to complying with relevant policies and legislation with respect to equality and disability. Learners with disabilities or specific learning difficulties will be given special consideration and reasonable accommodation to enable them to successfully complete their programme. A reasonable accommodation is any action that helps to alleviate a substantial disadvantage due to an impairment or medical condition or English language difficulties. Such accommodations are put in place to help reduce these barriers in order to provide equality of access and opportunity for all learners. While assuring reasonable accommodation related to English language difficulties, the PSA guidelines in this regard are fully implemented. The detailed policy in this regard is included in the Section on Access/Transfer/Progression.

The Actions below are followed when processing requests from applicants with disabilities and/or specific learning difficulties:

> **Step 1: Learner advises Markwatch** that he/she has a disability and/or any specific learning difficulty at the initial application stage, including difficulty with the English Language.
>
> **Step 2: Verification by MD/health professional**
>
> **Step 3: Documentation reviewed** and where possible appropriate **supports are agreed and implemented**

Learner Complaints

Markwatch is committed to providing a high quality service for all its Learners. Complaints are taken seriously and are considered an important source of information for continuous improvements in our learning and administrative infrastructure.

Informal Complaints

Markwatch endeavours to firstly deal with all complaints on an informal basis using appropriate mechanisms such as meetings or telephone calls with the complainant and other relevant personnel such as Tutors, other staff and may escalate to the MD. Informal complaints are duly documented and monitored. If the complainant wishes to make a formal written complaint, the procedure below is followed.

Formal Complaints

The following procedure is adhered to when dealing with formal written complaints. All complaints are treated promptly, fairly, impartially and in confidence. Markwatch will always ensure that no complaint made in good faith will be used to disadvantage any person.

i. Formal complaints must be documented and sent to the Complaints, Disciplinary & Appeals Committee within 2 working days of the complaint arising.
ii. All complaints will be acknowledged within 3 working days
iii. Formal complaints will be investigated and a response will be issued to the complainant within 15 working days or, where this is not possible, an interim response will explain the position with suitable advise as to when a substantive response will be made
iv. On receipt of the substantive response, if the complainant is dissatisfied with the findings, they may, within 5 working days, escalate the matter/appeal to the MD and further to the Shareholders Committee if desired, in the manner outlined below.

Appeal Against Decision of a Formal Complaint

    i.   The complainant must outline in writing why they wish to appeal the decision of the formal complaint, this should be sent to the Managing Director, who will acknowledge within 3 working days

    ii.   A meeting will be convened by the Complaints, Disciplinary & Appeals Committee within 10 working days of receipt of the appeal, to provide a detailed response/recommendations to the MD.

    iii.   The MDs final decision will be issued to the complainant within 5 working days thereafter.

    iv.   The complainant will have a final recourse to escalate the matter internally to the Shareholders Committee and/or to the QQI externally, if so desired.

6. Information Systems & Data Protection

Markwatch's policy statement in regard to its policy and procedures for its Information Systems is given below:

Markwatch is committed to reviewing, maintaining and continuously enhancing its knowledge based information system to allow for the collection, analysis and use of relevant information to ensure effective management support and development of its programmes and other activities. In this process Markwatch is committed to follow the guidelines related to data-protection as promulgated by the Irish GDPR from time to time.

Management Information System (MIS)

Markwatch have implemented a customised management information system (MIS) which has been built using Microsoft Office software and is accessible to all management and administration staff. The system is updated on a regular basis and provides an excellent data repository and reporting function for all organisational activity. The system is monitored through day-to-day use and various other forums, such as IT meetings with external IT Consultant and staff communication meetings as well as a systematic QA audit process. Identified improvements and necessary updates are carried out in a timely manner by an external IT support company, who are contracted to support and maintain the system.

Data Collection and Sources

Markwatch collect only the very essential range of data, within the purview of the Irish GDPR Guidelines. The data is captured within the MIS and consequently used for reporting within all functional areas. The data which is captured can be organised into the following four categories:

    i.   Personal data (Tutors, Learners and Staff IDs, Learner admission forms with PPS Nos/addresses/telephone Nos etc)

ii.   Individual Learner Assessments
iii.   Financial and operational data
iv.   Learner, Tutor and stakeholder feedbacks

Data is collected through various methods such as learner registration forms, telephone conversations, financial payments/documents, Learner and tutor interactions/communications, programme assessment sheets and other appropriate means including employer/industry feedback. This aspect is continually evaluated by the QA Committee for adoption of relevant improvements.

Specific purpose and uses of the learner information by Markwatch

Markwatch prepares a portfolio for each learner, essentially consisting of their registration forms, contact details and their personal IDs. This information is used only for the following purposes:

- To assess their eligibility for the selected programmes

- To share this information with the awarding body (QQI) and the regulating body (PSA) for processing of assessments, certifications and licensing.

- To maintain contact with them and provide them access to the online platforms when required

- To carry out follow-up contact and advice-service after they complete their programmes with Markwatch

- To use it for any other purposes, if agreed with the learner

- To retain it for a maximum of 3 years as currently required by the awarding body (QQI) and the regulating body (PSA).

Backups and Disaster Recovery

Markwatch's backup system is managed by a local external IT support company. Backups are carried out on a remote on-line server on a daily basis. Regular notifications of successful/failed backups are received by both Markwatch and the external company and are dealt with as necessary.

In the case of an emergency, where it is not possible to gain access to Markwatch's physical office, a disaster recovery system is maintained to ensure that the company can operate on a temporary basis, away from the main offices, till restoration of the main system.

Data Protection

Data protection is the safeguarding of the privacy rights of individuals/learners in relation to the processing of their personal data. The Data Protection Acts and

guidelines issued by the Irish GDPR provide rights to individuals relating to this personal information and impose obligations on organisations who collect and use personal data. Markwatch is fully compliant with the GDPR requirements. We collect, use and retain personal data and information (for as long as is necessary for the purpose for which it was obtained) for its staff, Learners and other relevant individuals. Data is collected for the following purposes:

- Organisation and administration of programmes including processing of assessments/results
- QQI requirements for certification
- External evaluation activities
- Recruitment and remuneration of staff
- Compliance with legal obligations to regulatory bodies including the QQI & PSA.

If the purpose for which the information was obtained has ceased and the personal information (such as PPS numbers) is no longer required, Markwatch discards/deletes the data in a secure manner.

Markwatch may also provide promotional and marketing materials to individuals who have provided personal information such as email addresses. Individuals can remove themselves from all mailing lists generated by Markwatch at any time. We are in the process of publishing our data protection guidelines and instituting a system of obtaining individual consent in all cases.

GDPR Legislation and Key Changes:

Markwatch is conscious of the new GDPR Legislation (effective in Ireland from 25 May 2018). The key changes, that the new GDPR Legislation imposes as listed below, are being catered for in the new GDPR policy documentation:

Increased Territorial Scope (extra-territorial applicability)

Arguably the biggest change to the regulatory landscape of data privacy comes with the extended jurisdiction of the GDPR, as it applies to all companies processing the personal data of data subjects residing in the EU, regardless of the company's location.

Penalties

Under the new GDPR, organisations in breach of GDPR can be fined up to 4% of annual global turnover or €20 Million (whichever is greater). There is a tiered approach to fines e.g. a company can be fined 2% for not having their records in order (article 28), not notifying the supervising authority and data subject about a breach or not conducting impact assessment. It is important to note that these rules apply to both controllers and processors -- meaning 'clouds' will not be exempt from GDPR enforcement.

Consent

The conditions for consent have been strengthened, and companies will no longer be able to use long illegible terms and conditions full of legalese, as the request for consent must be given in an intelligible and easily accessible form, with the purpose for data processing attached to that consent. In the case of Markwatch, the learner's consent is obtained on their Registration Forms which also explain the purposes for which that information is used, which include sharing of their data with QQI/PSA/An Garda Siochana etc.

Data Subject Rights

Breach Notification

Under the GDPR, breach notification will become mandatory & must be done within 72 hours of first having become aware of the breach.

Right to Access

Part of the rights of data subjects outlined by the GDPR is the right for data subjects to obtain from the data controller confirmation as to whether or not personal data concerning them is being processed, where and for what purpose. This change is a dramatic shift to data transparency and empowerment of data subjects.

Right to be Forgotten

Also known as Data Erasure, the right to be forgotten entitles the data subject to have the data controller erase his/her personal data.

Privacy by Design

Privacy by design as a concept has existed for years now, but it is only just becoming part of a legal requirement with the GDPR. Article 23 calls for controllers to hold and process only that data that is absolutely necessary (data minimisation), as well as limiting the access to personal data to only those who need it.

Data Protection Officers (DPO)

The appointment of a DPO is not mandatory for Markwatch, being a small scale data controller. However, internal record keeping will be maintained for necessary safeguards.

Disclosure to Third Parties

Sensitive information may in some cases be disclosed to third parties such as QQI & PSA where it is legally required. In the case of Learners who have enrolled on programmes through their employers, their data (such as attendance and assessment results) may be shared with the employer.

7. Public Information

Markwatch's policy statement in regard to its policy and procedures for provision of information to the public is given below:

Markwatch Training Services are committed to providing accurate, impartial, objective and readily accessible information about the programmes which they offer.

Provision of Programme Information

Information which is published on programmes offered by Markwatch Training include the following:

- Programme Title
- Award Type & Awarding Body
- NFQ Level
- Credits applicable- based on award specifications issued by QQI
- Entry/access Requirements
- Detailed Programme Outline
- Teaching and Learning details and Relevant Supports for learners
- Assessment Information
- Tutor Details
- Learner Testimonials if available
- Programme Schedules
- Programme Pricing

Some of the information above is provided to potential Learners and other stakeholders through the following channels:

- Markwatch Website https://www.markwatch.ie/
- Social Networking Sites such as Facebook
- Annual Calendar/Prospectus/leaflets/Diaries
- Promotional Emails

Freedom of Information

Markwatch recognise its responsibility under the Freedom of Information Acts 1997 and 2003 and the right of Learners to gain access to information held about them by Markwatch and will comply with any reasonable request under the Acts.

Protection for Learners

Markwatch Training has learner protection arrangements in place with respect to enrolled learners on all QQI validated courses in accordance with the Qualifications and QA (Education and Training) Act 2012. Although we do not run any courses of durations more than 90 days at present, we are committed to ensure that learners will be facilitated to complete their award/s if the organisation unexpectedly ceases trading.

APPENDIX 'A' LEARNER HANDBOOK

MARKWATCH SECURITY TRAINING SERVICES LTD

Table of Contents- Learner Handbook

Markwatch Security Training Services Ltd

Learner Handbook

Welcome to Markwatch Security Training Services Ltd

Furthering education is a wonderful way to change many aspects of your life. We hope you enjoy the course you have chosen to take here at Markwatch and wish you every success for the future.

Training Mission

The mission of the Markwatch is to alleviate the problems encountered by the unemployed and those trapped in low paid employment by providing training, education and information support to those people needing our services.

Entry Requirements

Requirements for entry to courses will vary and will appear on the individual course/programme booklets. Some general entry requirements for security courses are listed below:

English language skills: Before seeking entry to any security courses with the aim of obtaining the PSA Licenses, Learners must understand that the skill to effectively communicate in English is central to any role carried out by the PSA licensed Irish Security Officers. If English is not your first language you maybe unsure if you have the necessary English language skills to attend our courses. Please see below for detailed guidelines, based on the PSA requirements, regarding the required English language skills.

Garda Vetting requirements: All learners who after completing our security courses wish to apply for a PSA License would also be required to apply for Garda Vetting at that stage. In case you receive an adverse report from the National Vetting Bureau you may be denied the PSA License or may be removed from their position even after employment in the Security Sector. All learners are, therefore, advised to familiarise themselves with these legal provisions as they relate to them before paying their fees and booking our security courses (Relevant PSA Links in this regard are available on Markwatch website Homepage).

Policy on English Language Verification & Supports

The PSA guidelines require all learners to possess a minimum of B1 level of English on the Common European Framework of Reference (EFR) for Languages for the face-to-face Classroom courses [*B1 level is the ability to express oneself in a limited way in familiar situations and to deal in a general way with non-routine information. Example: CAN ask to open an account at a bank, provided that the procedure is straightforward*]. The B2 level of English is required for the Virtual Classroom courses [*B2 level is the ability to achieve most goals and express oneself on a range of topics. Example: CAN show visitors around and give a detailed description of a place*]. If you are unsure of your current level of English, you can take a free test on several sites like http://www.examenglish.com/leveltest/index.php.

It is your responsibility as a learner to ensure that you have the required level of English, as described above, prior to making a booking. You will be given an English Language Verification Test before joining the security courses at Markwatch. This English Language Verification Test is conducted based on a reading/writing/listening format. In case of failure in the English Language Verification Test, you will not be able to access this programme. However, we will provide you with a list of learning programmes / bodies that you can contact to improve your English comprehension and rejoin the programme later after successfully completing the English Language Verification Test.

In some cases when after joining the security courses, if at any stage your tutor certifies that your level of English comprehension is not good enough to complete the training program, you will be informed accordingly and asked to leave the program, with a refund of fees paid. In such a case, we will provide you with a list of learning programmes / bodies that you can contact to improve your English comprehension and rejoin the programme later after successfully completing the English Language Verification Test again. In these cases, if you do not agree with tutor's decision concerning your level of English proficiency, you can appeal this decision to the Managing Director of Markwatch.

Equality Statement

We provide quality and professional services to all our clients, regardless of age, sex, race, colour, religion, national origin, sexual orientation, mental or physical disabilities. Our values system is to show a sensitive and caring response and to be both accountable and transparent in all our dealings with our clients Our drive is to pursue a path of

professional excellence and quality standard system to serve our community's needs. Markwatch brings fairness and a high moral ethic to the delivery of all its services.

Consistent Assessment

All National Framework of Qualification awards courses follow the marking system that we have validated for our courses with theQQI.

Communications Policy

Markwatch endeavours to ensure that all information is accessible to all parts of the community we serve and is available in formats that our target audience can understand. We actively seek and listen to the views of learners, employees and the wider community and to use that feedback in the planning, preparation, publishing and review of information. We also ensure that our information and publicity materials conform to quality assurance procedures.

Assessment and Appeals Policy

All our courses' assessment principles adhere to quality control procedures. In the event of an appeal being requested, we carry out a proper review and reassessment.

Markwatch Complaints Policy & Procedure

The Markwatch Complaints Procedure offers a facility to members of the public and Markwatch learners who wish to make a complaint to Markwatch regarding our services or the manner in which we conduct our business (other than appeals/complaints related to the course's assessments, which are dealt with in the 'Appeals Procedure' for learners). It is the policy of Markwatch to deal with all complaints in a fair manner and in accordance with the principles of natural fairness and equality.

This policy covers all types of complaints not just bullying or harassment. Complainants should raise their concerns as soon as possible. Where the conduct complained of is violent or criminal in nature, the Gardai will be contacted without delay. When it is necessary to proceed to a formal complaint, it should be made at the earliest possible date in writing to Markwatch who will establish and review the facts in an expeditious manner and provide redress quickly. The complaints procedure is outlined below.

Informal Complaints Procedure

While in no way diminishing the issue or the effects on individuals, an informal approach can often resolve matters. The course Tutor will conduct the Informal Complaints Procedure. The objective of the Informal Complaints Procedure is to resolve the matter with the minimum of conflict and stress. If the complained of situation or behaviour continues the complainant can proceed to making a formal complaint.

Formal Complaints Procedure

When it is necessary to proceed with a formal complaint, it should be made at the earliest possible date in writing to the Markwatch. It is important that the following information is provided when making a complaint:
(please refer copy of the Formal Complaint Form at the end-Appendix AA)

•Name, home address and a daytime telephone/mobile number
•Full details of the complaint including times, dates etc.
•Names of those involved (including   staff),
•Copies of any relevant documentation

Hearing of a formal Complaint

-The investigation will be conducted promptly, objectively and with utmost confidentiality. In the case of a complaint against another person the alleged perpetrator will be notified, in writing, as soon as possible, that an allegation has been made against him or her and will be given a copy of the complainant's statement and advised that he or she will be given an opportunity to respond to the allegation.
- He or she will be requested to respond to the allegations in writing within 10 working days. This time limit may be extended by a reasonable period depending on the circumstances outlined in such a request.
- A copy of the response will be made available to the complainant.
- Both parties are entitled to participate in the Hearing and are entitled to be accompanied and/or represented at any interviews and at the Hearing.
- A written record of the proceedings will be kept and will be made available to the complainant and the alleged perpetrator.
On completion of the Hearing, a report on the findings will be communicated in writing to both parties.

LEARNER CONTRACT

While the needs of Learners of all ages, disability, family status, gender, race, marital status, sexual orientation, religious beliefs or members of the travelling community will be catered for as far as practicable; the learners are expected to abide by some rules and decorum as outlined below as the Learner Contract with Markwatch:

Personal Conduct.
Markwatch will not tolerate any form of harassment of any nature and will deal with it accordingly in conjunction with our Quality Assurance procedures. Please help us maintain our reputation for being a warm and inviting centre

Attendance and Timekeeping
Responsibility for course/class attendance rests with you as the learner. Regular and punctual attendance at all scheduled classes is essential and is part of the certification requirements. Learner absences may affect grades in the final certification. If training is part of a funded 'return to work programme' non-attendance will be reported to the funders.

Health and Safety.
All Learners receive full information regarding Health and Safety rules and guidelines at the beginning of the first class. Fire alarm procedures, class rules, accident procedures and security will be covered by your tutor. Please help us maintain our H&S standards.

Mobile Phones.
Mobile phones are a necessity to most learners. However, all phones must be set to silent mode during classes and not cause disturbance to others.

Return of Assessment Material to the Learner
Written assessment material will not be returned. Learners are advised to make copies of their work before submission. Assessment material will be securely stored by Markwatch until the deadline for appeals has elapsed, upon which time it will be disposed of appropriately.

Submission of assessment work for certification purposes:
Learners must observe deadlines as notified by the Assessor/Tutor, for the submission of assessment material. In exceptional circumstances, additional time may be granted by the Assessor/Tutor. If work is not submitted by the new deadline, the Learner will forfeit the right to have the work put forward for that assessment period. Learners will be informed of when examinations will be held, and it is the responsibility of the Learners to ensure their attendance at all examinations.

Certificate Collection
You will be notified when your certificate is ready for collection. Markwatch does not post certificates to participants due to the chance of them getting lost during transit. In the event of any participant insisting that certificates are posted, an email accepting full responsibility must be sent to markwatch216@gmail.com.

Plagiarism

Markwatch expects Learners to follow acceptable standards of academic honesty. Plagiarism constitutes an act of academic dishonesty and is not accepted or tolerated by Markwatch. Plagiarism is the act of taking or copying someone else's work, including another Learner's, and presenting it as if it were their own. Plagiarism is a form of cheating and is dishonest.

Categories of Plagiarism
Plagiarism can take a variety of forms and can be categorised as follows:
- copying a whole or substantial parts of a paper from a source text (e.g. a web site, journal article, book or encyclopedia), without proper acknowledgement
- piecing together sections of the work of others into a new whole
- procuring a paper from a company or essay bank (including Internet sites)
- submitting another Learner's work, with or without that Learner's knowledge
- submitting a paper written by someone else (e.g. a peer or relative), and passing it off as one's own

Procedure for Dealing with Plagiarism
Step 1: Where a Tutor/Internal Verifier suspects that a piece of coursework contains plagiarised material, a short report would be prepared for the Academic Committee within 5 working days, including a marked up copy of the assessment material, together with any evidence for suspected plagiarism.

Step 2: The Academic Committee will carry out an initial investigation based on the information provided. If a case is not proven, the Committee will inform the relevant Tutor/Internal Verifier of the reasons for his/her decision. If a case is proven, relevant tutoring staff will examine the candidate orally on the content of the coursework or ask the Learner to attend an interview to discuss the piece of work within 10 working days. The aim of the interview being to determine whether the allegation is well founded and if so, what the appropriate penalty will be. As a best practice more than one Tutor would be present when interviewing a Learner. A record of the meeting would be kept and reported to the MD.

Step 3: If plagiarism cannot be confirmed as a result of the interview process, the Learner will be notified in writing. If plagiarism has been confirmed, the Learner will be penalised taking into account the history of the Learner (1st, 2nd time offence), amount/extent of plagiarism (% of document plagiarised), level of the award and credit weighting and value of the assignment. The Learner would be informed of the penalty accordingly within 5 working days of the interview.

Right to Appeal

The Learner has the right to appeal the decision which must be done within 5 working days of the correspondence from Markwatch.

Reasonable Accommodations

The needs of Learners of all ages, disability, family status, gender, race, marital status, sexual orientation, religious beliefs or members of the travelling community will be catered for as far as practicable.

Markwatch may implement any of the following assessment procedures for a Learner with a disability without having to request permission from (QQI):

• Oral or audio evidence
• Modified presentation of assignments/examination papers, e.g. Enlargements
• Scribes/readers
• Sign language interpreters
• Rest periods
• Extra time.

Special accommodations will be implemented in a fair and impartial manner and will in no way prove to be an advantage or disadvantage for the Learner. Special Accommodations will only be provided where doing so will not compromise the integrity of the award.

Markwatch will be responsible for the implementation of special requirements and any costs incurred. The appropriate application of these procedures will ensure that all Learners will be assessed on an equal basis

Learners' Special Requirements

Markwatch will facilitate all learners' needs to the best of our ability. Please inform us prior to the start of your course of any special needs/requests. If there is anything in this Learners Information Guide that you wish to discuss further or enquire about, please do not hesitate to phone or email us at any stage. Please see contact details on the last Page.

APPENDIX 'AA' to Learner Handbook - Formal Complaint Form

ATTENTION:

By completing this form, you are beginning the formal complaints procedure as outlined in our learner information handbook. By signing this form, you agree to abide by the principles set out in that policy, and adhere to the procedure. This does not affect your statutory or legal rights or obligations.

PART A – PERSONAL INFORMATION

Forename(s)

Surname [Family Name]

Female   Male (please tick)   Date of Birth   Nationality

Permanent Address

Mobile Telephone Number   Home Phone Number

Work Telephone Number

Can we contact you at work? Yes   No   (please tick)

PPS Number

Email Address

Course Attending (Learners only) ……………..

PART B – DETAILS OF THE COMPLAINT

NATURE OF COMPLAINT: PLEASE WRITE NEATLY AND LEGIBLY HERE (add additional pages if required)

TYPE OF REDRESS SOUGHT (add additional pages if required)

PART C - DECLARATION
I hereby declare that all information stated on this document is to the best of my knowledge truthful and without prejudice.
I understand the policy and procedures as set out in the Markwatch Complaints Policy & Procedure.
Signature: Date:
PART D – OFFICIAL USE ONLY
RECEIVED BY: Signature: Date:

CONTACT DETAILS:
Phone: 01-8206307
Address:
Markwatch Security Training Services Ltd.
Unit 216 Blanchardstown Corporate Park 2
Blanchardstown
Dublin 15
Email: markwatch216@gmail.com
Website: www.markwatch.ie