

2012

FETAC Key Dates and Information

*Six certification periods are
now available to all providers*

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FETAC has increased its services to providers. Six certification periods are now available to all providers.

FETAC is committed to ensuring that all approved certificates will issue directly to each centre on the specific date for each certification period.

NOTE Each centre should ensure that the data input process starts sufficiently in advance of the final submission date in each certification period to allow for data verification and results approval. It is strongly recommended that each centre develop a schedule which will ensure that results approval meetings occur before a target submission date, allowing time for subsequent amendments to be made to data, if necessary.

February Certification 2012 Levels 1-6

All results being submitted for this period must have gone through internal verification, authentication and results approval prior to submission.

12 February	Final submission date for this certification period. All authenticated results must be submitted and the declaration completed
16 February	Final Statement of Results available to centres to download
29 February	Issue of certificates to all centres for February certification period

April Certification 2012 Levels 1-6

All results being submitted for this period must have gone through internal verification, authentication and results approval prior to submission.

12 April	Final submission date for this certification period. All authenticated results must be submitted and the declaration completed
16 April	Final Statement of Results available to centres to download
30 April	Issue of certificates to all centres for April certification period

June Certification 2012 Levels 1-6

All results being submitted for this period must have gone through internal verification, authentication and results approval prior to submission.

12 June	Final submission date for this certification period. All authenticated results must be submitted and the declaration completed
16 June	Final Statement of Results available to centres to download
15 July	Issue of certificates to all centres for June certification period

Compliance with Data Protection Legislation

As a FETAC registered provider you collect personal data for your learners. This data is required by FETAC to process results and issue certificates to learners. You should be aware of your obligations under Data Protection Legislation 1998 and 2003.

To ensure you are dealing with the data you collect appropriately please view www.dataprotection.ie

August Certification 2012 Levels 1-6

All results being submitted for this period must have gone through internal verification, authentication and results approval prior to submission.

12 August	Final submission date for this certification period. All authenticated results must be submitted and the declaration completed
16 August	Final Statement of Results available to centres to download
31 August	Issue of certificates to all centres for August certification period

October Certification 2012 Levels 1-6

All results being submitted for this period must have gone through internal verification, authentication and results approval prior to submission.

12 October	Final submission date for this certification period. All authenticated results must be submitted and the declaration completed
16 October	Final Statement of Results available to centres to download
31 October	Issue of certificates to all centres for October certification period

December Certification 2012 Levels 1-6

All results being submitted for this period must have gone through internal verification, authentication and results approval prior to submission.

12 December	Final submission date for this certification period. All authenticated results must be submitted and the declaration completed
16 December	Final Statement of Results available to centres to download
4 January 2013	Issue of certificates to all centres for December certification period

Notes and Reminders

Accuracy of Data: It is your responsibility to ensure that all details are accurately entered prior to submitting for certification. Please pay particular attention to the spelling of your learner's name. Due to the high volume of requests to correct misspellings on certificates FETAC is now considering introducing a charge for corrected certificates.

Compliance with Award Structure: Since 2011, major awards are achieved based strictly on the award structure and rules published in the Awards Directory on www.fetac.ie. Centres using component combinations which differ from the published award structures should amend their programmes accordingly. Queries about published award structures should be made via the Contact Us page on www.fetac.ie, specifying 'Award Structure' as the query area.

Certification Helpline: A Certification Helpline certification@fetac.ie is operated to manage your queries. All queries are assigned a call number and are dealt with in strict rotation, ensuring a prompt and efficient service.

FETAC Business System (FBS)

The Web Candidate Entry System (WCES) has been replaced with FETAC Business System (FBS). Since May 2010, FBS is being used by new applicant providers, for Awards and Standards development and for the public website. Since January 2011, some 250 centres are using FBS for certification and some 800 remaining centres were moved to FBS on 9 June 2011.



FETAC's Web Candidate Entry System (WCES) closed Tuesday, 7 June 2011. Your user name (centre number) and password have been sent by email to your centre/provider co-ordinator. You may continue to use your current VASCO details.

Computer based training and other resources for using FBS can be found at www.fetac.ie/fetac/providers/tools/FBSRollout.htm

Common Award System - CAS

FETAC has published an information note entitled 'Managing the Transition to the Common Award System - July 2011' which contains detailed information on awards that have been published in the CAS and existing awards to be deactivated. The information note is a working document and will be updated in Autumn 2011. View document at www.fetac.ie

To ensure system coherence and to best serve learners it is important that the changeover to the Common Award System takes place as quickly and efficiently as possible.

Between 2011 and 2014, all existing awards at level 3-6 will be deactivated and replaced by new common awards.

A deactivation date means that as and from that date, providers will no longer be able to enter learners for a specific named award (affected awards are listed in the information note).

A number of new awards will also be published during 2011, 2012 and beyond.

New common awards are published in the form of specifications. There are four types of specifications – certificate specifications for major awards, component specifications for minor awards, specific purpose specifications for special purpose awards and supplemental specifications for supplemental awards.

Common awards are distinguished from existing awards by their code number.

The code of a common award indicates its level and the award type, for example: '3' for Level 3 and then a character for the award type; 'M' for major awards; 'S' for special purpose awards; 'U' for supplemental awards and 'N' for minor awards. For example:

- 3M0874 General Learning is a major award**
- 3N0880 Communications is a minor award**
- 3S0924 Culinary Skills is a special purpose award.**

The information note also includes:

- a) examples of changeover timelines for programmes running over an academic year, over a calendar year and where short programmes are being offered
- b) how learners can claim exemptions for minor awards already achieved when they are applying for major or special purpose award in the common award system.

Certification Note

Only CAS components can contribute to a CAS major or special purpose award. Centres should ensure that a learner is not entered for a mixture of CAS and non CAS awards. For information on exemptions see Appendix 5, 'Managing the Transition to the Common Award System - July 2011'.

Programme Validation

Any programme leading to a common award must be validated by FETAC, prior to commencement of the programme. Only registered providers, who have agreed quality assurance systems with FETAC, may submit programmes for validation. For further details view Programme validation at www.fetac.ie/fetac/providers/registration/validation.htm

Quality Assured Assessment Requirements

FETAC's Assessment policy sets out a distinct role for the provider and FETAC in relation to assessment. All registered providers are required to have in place and appropriately documented, procedures for fair and consistent assessment, including:

- Internal verification
- External authentication, including the assignment of an external authenticator
- Results approval
- Learner appeals

NOTE The appointed panel of external authenticators, with contact details, is available on the FETAC website www.fetac.ie Providers are responsible for ensuring the Authenticator carries out their role including completion of a full authentication report confirming compliance with national standards for the award.

Monitoring

A key function of FETAC is to monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of the provider's quality system to ensure the integrity of FETAC's awards. The FETAC policy on monitoring sets out the features and processes of monitoring which comprises monitoring, site visits and follow up and review by a panel of monitors. The FETAC monitoring report documents the review of the provider's quality system, identifying good practice and areas for improvement, as appropriate.

The current focus of monitoring is the effectiveness of the provider's quality systems, including assessment, and targets providers offering FETAC awards across a wide range of fields and sectors. When provider's quality systems are not in compliance FETAC applies a range of sanctions which may include withholding certification.

All providers can expect to be monitored by FETAC as a condition of registration. Providers are contacted in advance and are fully informed about the monitoring process by the FETAC monitor.

Individual providers' monitoring reports and Report of Providers Activities are available to download on the FETAC website www.fetac.ie

Protection for Learners

As set out in Part VII of the Qualifications (Education and Training) Act 1999, providers who offer programmes for longer than three months on a commercial and profit making basis are required to put in place Protection for Learners arrangements. This is in order to protect the learner where the provider ceases to provide the programme concerned.

FETAC would like to advise providers that these arrangements must be put in place for each new programme planned and agreed with FETAC, prior to the programme being offered.

Providers who do not have appropriate arrangements in place will be subject to penalties as set out in Section 47 of the Act. For details of the policy and specific requirements view

www.fetac.ie/fetac/providers/registration/registration.htm

Access, Transfer and Progression

FETAC has prepared guidelines for providers on the specific information that they must make available to learners in order to fully inform learners about access and progression opportunities within the National Framework of Qualifications (NFQ). For details view 'Information for Learners: Guidelines for Providers'

www.fetac.ie/fetac/documents/Info_for_Learners_Guidelines_for_Providers.pdf

Many learners progress to higher education on the basis of their FETAC Level 5 and 6 award. For information view 'Progression from FETAC Level 5 Certificates and Level 6 Advanced Certificates to Higher Education Courses' and 'Progression from FETAC Advanced Certificate – Craft to Higher Education Courses' which are available to view at www.fetac.ie/fetac/aboutfetac/pubstats/publications.htm

As part of the management of transition to FETAC's new common awards, from 2013 the CAO scoring system for all FETAC applicants to higher education institutions will change, including for learners presenting with existing awards as part of their application. Details of any changes will be published on the CAO website www.cao.ie and on the websites of individual higher education institutions.

Self-Evaluation of Programmes and Services

Under the terms and conditions of registration with FETAC, providers must carry out a self-evaluation of at least one of their programmes within a calendar year of the date of their initial registration and at least once every five years thereafter. This evaluation process is critical to ensure the effective application of quality assurance policies and procedures of providers and evaluation reports will be used by FETAC for monitoring.

For details on Self-Evaluation of Programmes and Services view Section B9 of the QA Guidelines at www.fetac.ie/fetac/documents/Policy_and_Guidelines_on_Provider_QA_v1.3.pdf. FETAC has developed templates to assist providers when conducting a self-evaluation. The templates include a Self-Evaluation Checklist, a Self-Evaluation Report and a Programme Improvement Plan. While the Evaluation Report and Programme Improvement Plan are for the provider, copies of completed reports should be submitted to qa@fetac.ie

Provider Five Year Review

A condition of a provider's registration agreement is 'participation in a FETAC review of its quality assurance system within a maximum period of five years from the date of registration.'

FETAC would like to advise providers that the five year review is now in place for those providers registered for more than five years. This will comprise a review by FETAC of an evaluation by the provider of their implementation of their quality system.

In order to prepare for this review providers should ensure their quality policies and procedures are fully up to date, and have solid evidence of the effective implementation, including self-evaluations.

Following the FETAC review of the provider the registration agreement will be renewed, or withdrawn. All providers scheduled for review will be contacted by FETAC in due course.

Amalgamation

FETAC, HETAC, NQAI and IUQB are amalgamating. For up to date information on the establishment of a new single agency, Qualifications and Quality Assurance Ireland, view www.fetac.ie



Ireland's EU Structural Funds
Programmes 2007 - 2013

Co-funded by the Irish Government
and the European Union

