

**Section 75, The Northern Ireland Act  
1998 (The Equality Duty)**



**Consultation on  
the Screening of  
Policies**

**31 July 2002**

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## INTRODUCTION

The Northern Ireland Council for the Curriculum, Examinations and Assessment (CCEA) was established on 1 April 1994 under the Education and Libraries (Northern Ireland) Order 1993. Its functions and responsibilities are derived from statute.

CCEA has a statutory responsibility to:

- keep under review all aspects of the curriculum, assessment and examinations;
- give advice to the Department of Education about the curriculum, assessment, examinations and external qualifications;
- publish and distribute information about the curriculum, assessment and examinations;
- carry out consultation about proposed changes to the curriculum, assessment and examinations;
- conduct Northern Ireland GCSE, GCE A Level and AS Level examinations;
- conduct pupil assessment at the end of Key Stages 1, 2 and 3;
- conduct other tests and examinations.

CCEA also engages in a range of corporate services to support its core activities. These include the recruitment of staff and the procurement of services, goods and equipment.

## **CCEA'S MISSION STATEMENT**

CCEA's mission is to work in partnership to develop a broad and relevant curriculum, supported by high quality assessment and examinations, so that young people are given the best opportunities to fulfil their potential.

## **CONTEXT**

Section 7 of CCEA's Equality Scheme sets out the procedures for the screening and impact assessment of CCEA's policies.

A summary of the screening process is included at Appendix 1.

In developing the timetable for impact assessments, CCEA recognises the need to work in close co-operation with the Department of Education, Department of Employment and Learning, Education and Library Boards, Qualifications and Curriculum Authority and other Non-Departmental Public Bodies to ensure that a consistent approach is taken to policy development.

## **EXPLANATION OF DECISION**

Initial decisions fall into the following categories:

- 1 Impact Assessment;
- 2 No Impact Assessment;
- 3 Review of Policy.

Policies that are reviewed will be screened and/or impact assessed as appropriate.

## CONSULTATION

This document sets out CCEA's policies, comments on issues identified in the screening of each policy and a statement of whether or not the policy has been included for impact assessment.

CCEA recognises the importance of the consultation process. In accordance with its Equality Scheme, CCEA will circulate this report widely and will endeavour to ensure that consultation is carried out in an effective way. All enquiries relating to these policies should be directed to:

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This document will be made available, on request, in alternative formats, including large font, audio cassette, Braille, disc and the main minority languages for those people not fluent in English.

The consultation exercise will close on 31 October 2002. Comments on the screening exercise should be provided prior to that date.

## TIMETABLE FOR EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

Policy	Action	Timetable
<b>Curriculum and Assessment (Section 1)</b> Curriculum and Assessment Proposals (1.1)	Co-join with the Department of Education in Equality Impact Assessment	Ongoing
Key Stage Assessment (1.2)	Co-join with the Department of Education's Equality Impact Assessment on Statutory Assessment	Year 3
Transfer Test (1.3)	Co-operate with the Department of Education's Equality Impact Assessment	Year 2
Providing Support for Teachers in Implementing the Curriculum and in Relation to Qualifications (1.4)		Year 3
<b>Examinations (Section 2)</b> Design and Conduct of Examinations which includes:	Policies 2.1, 2.2, 2.3 and 2.4 will be joined in the one Equality Impact Assessment.	Year 4
Specification Design and Development (2.1)		
Preparation of Examination Question Papers (2.2)		

Policy	Action	Timetable
Arrangements for the Conduct of Examinations and Assessments in Centres including Special Requirements (2.3)		
Enquiry About Results, Access to Examination Scripts and Appeals (2.4)		
<b>Regulation (Section 4)</b> Regulation of Qualifications (4.1)	Work closely with the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority	Year 3
Qualifications Framework 16–19 (4.2)	Co-join with Department of Education and work closely with the Department of Employment and Learning	Year 2
<b>Employment (Section 6)</b> Employment and Promotion (6.1)		Year 2
Family Friendly Policies (6.3)		Year 3
<b>Other (Section 7)</b> Procurement (7.9)	Co-operate with Department of Finance and Personnel's Equality Impact Assessment	Year 1

The above outlines CCEA's proposed programme for the implementation of impact assessments.

The programme and timetable is subject to consultation with interested groups, individuals and other public authorities.

Those policies that either originate or are controlled in full or in part across the education sector require arrangements to be put in place to co-ordinate Equality Impact Assessments between the various public authorities concerned.

In order to implement this, it has been agreed with the Department of Education and the Department of Employment and Learning, where appropriate, that they will co-join and/or co-operate with CCEA in conducting Equality Impact Assessments.

↳ To co-operate means that CCEA will provide information and support to the Department of Education or the Department of Employment and Learning on the conduct of Equality Impact Assessments. On completion of the various elements of an Equality Impact Assessment the decision-making responsibility will remain with the Department of Education or the Department of Employment and Learning.

The Department of Education or the Department of Employment and Learning and CCEA will co-join, on a partnership basis, on the conduct of an Equality Impact Assessment for those policies that exist at both strategic and operational levels and where equality issues have emerged at both of these levels. On completion of the various elements of an Equality Impact Assessment, the decision-making authority will rest with the Department of Education or the Department of Employment and Learning and/or CCEA as per their area of responsibility.

In addition, CCEA will work closely with the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority on Equality Impact Assessments that affect both organisations.

## **OUTCOME OF SCREENING**

### **1 CURRICULUM AND ASSESSMENT**

#### **1.1 CURRICULUM AND ASSESSMENT PROPOSALS**

##### **Policy Summary**

CCEA has responsibility for keeping the Northern Ireland statutory curriculum and assessment under review and advising the Department of Education on the need for change.

CCEA has carried out a review of the statutory curriculum and assessment currently in place in schools in Northern Ireland. As a result of the review, CCEA has produced a new set of proposals to meet the needs of young people, society, the economy and the environment in the twenty-first century.

##### **Comment**

Issues have been raised in relation to the need for a curriculum that better meets the needs of all young people, for example, those from ethnic minorities, the Traveller community, those with disabilities and those from faiths other than Christian faiths.

Prior to the screening of its policies, CCEA gave a commitment in its Equality Scheme to carry out an impact assessment on the curriculum proposals.

##### **Outcome**

Impact Assessment, co-join with the Department of Education.

#### **1.2 KEY STAGE ASSESSMENT**

##### **Policy Summary**

Key Stage Assessment is part of the process of statutory assessment in primary and secondary schools.

In Years 4 (end of Key Stage 1) and 7 (end of Key Stage 2) primary schools are required to report to parents on the achievements of each child in English and mathematics. In Irish medium schools, Irish is also assessed and achievement reported to parents.

The class teacher carries out the assessments. Every three years a sample of pupils' work is reviewed by CCEA to ensure the assessments are carried out to the agreed standard.

In Year 12 (end of Key Stage 3) post-primary school pupils take tests in English, mathematics and science. Pupils in Irish medium schools also take tests in Irish. The tests are set and marked by CCEA. Teacher assessment is also required in the process but is not reviewed by CCEA.

CCEA sends the test results and teachers' assessments to the schools in August each year.

### **Comment**

There is evidence to show that, at each of the key stages, girls achieve higher levels than boys. There is also evidence to show that Roman Catholic pupils are over-represented at the lower levels by 2–3% at Key Stage 3 and that there is some variation in attainment between maintained and controlled schools at Key Stage 2.

Children with special educational needs can avail of a range of special arrangements to enable them to take Key Stage 3 tests.

CCEA has, following a review of the current curriculum and assessment arrangements, drafted proposals for a new framework. Phase 2 of the proposals are currently out for consultation. The proposals will be subject to an Equality Impact Assessment.

### **Outcome**

Impact Assessment, co-join with the Department of Education in the EQIA of Statutory Assessment.

## **1.3 TRANSFER TEST**

### **Policy Summary**

Northern Ireland has a selective structure of post-primary education. The Department of Education is responsible for the overall policy governing the operation of the Transfer Procedure. CCEA is responsible for developing and setting the Transfer Test, arranging for the conduct of the test, distributing test papers to schools, marking the papers and determining the grades. CCEA also issues the test results to the Education and Library Boards.

### **Comment**

There is evidence to suggest that this policy has a differential and in some cases, a differential impact on a number of categories, eg gender, religion, race and disability. A major review of this policy is being carried out by the Department of Education. The Department of Education has indicated in its Equality Scheme that an equality impact assessment will be undertaken as an integral part of the development of any policy proposed as a result of its review.

## **Outcome**

Co-operate with the Department of Education's Impact Assessment 'Selective Structure of Post-Primary Education: Transfer Procedure Test'.

### **1.4 PROVIDE SUPPORT FOR TEACHERS IN IMPLEMENTING THE CURRICULUM IN RELATION TO QUALIFICATIONS**

#### **Policy Summary**

CCEA provides a range of support materials to assist teachers in implementing the curriculum.

The support includes:

- guidance on specific aspects of the curriculum, in particular, areas that are new or under-developed;
- classroom materials in new or under-developed areas.

To support the implementation of the revised curriculum, CCEA is providing, for the first time, Sample Teaching Plans which teachers can adapt for their own needs.

CCEA also provides support for teachers in relation to qualifications.

This includes:

- information events;
- teaching and assessment materials.

#### **Comment**

During consultation, issues were raised by groups from different religious belief, racial group, age, sexual orientation, gender and disability in relation to the need to provide materials for teachers that promote greater inclusion and positive images of members of the groups.

## **Outcome**

Impact Assessment.

## **2 EXAMINATIONS**

### **2.1 SPECIFICATION DESIGN AND DEVELOPMENT**

#### **Policy Summary**

CCEA designs and develops high quality syllabuses (now known as specifications) as additional needs are identified by government, statutory agencies and teachers.

Each specification developed by CCEA meets criteria published by the Regulatory Authorities in England, Wales and Northern Ireland.

When a new specification is developed, CCEA also produces teaching and assessment materials to support teachers.

#### **Comment**

Research would indicate that the uptake of public examinations by members of ethnic minorities and those with a disability is lower. Issues have arisen in relation to gender and suitability of specifications for adult learners.

#### **Outcome**

Impact Assessment.

### **2.2 PREPARATION OF EXAMINATION QUESTION PAPERS**

#### **Policy Summary**

CCEA's examination question papers are produced in accordance with a Code of Practice agreed by CCEA and the other Regulatory Authorities in England and Wales.

The Code of Practice sets out guidance to be followed to ensure that question papers are of the highest quality, accurate, fair to all candidates and are based on the specified content of the syllabus/specification studied.

The preparation of examination papers also involves:

- ensuring that question papers address the syllabus/specification content and assessment objectives;
- ensuring that the way in which the content of the syllabus/specification is tested in questions is clear;
- agreeing how marks will be allocated;

- ensuring, where candidates can choose between questions, that alternative questions are of similar demand;
- ensuring that account is taken of feedback from previous examinations, including recommendations from relevant monitoring reports.

### **Comment**

Issues have been raised on occasions in relation to religion and cultural bias in some questions in examination papers.

### **Outcome**

Impact Assessment.

## **2.3 ARRANGEMENTS FOR EXAMINATIONS AND ASSESSMENTS IN CENTRES INCLUDING SPECIAL REQUIREMENTS**

### **Policy Summary**

CCEA is responsible for ensuring that appropriate arrangements are in place in all centres where examinations and assessments are held.

Each year CCEA officers visit about half of all examination centres to ensure that procedures are being adhered to.

CCEA, in conjunction with other awarding bodies in England and Wales, recognises that some candidates may experience learning problems or be affected by difficulties close to the time of an assessment or examination.

Such difficulties may arise as a result of:

- a permanent or long-term disability or learning difficulty;
- a temporary disability or illness;
- English not being the first language;
- an event occurring at the time of the assessment, for example, a fire alarm or bomb alert.

To ensure candidates who experience such difficulties receive appropriate recognition for their achievement, while not giving an unfair advantage over other candidates, special arrangements can be made and special considerations taken into account.

Special arrangements are intended to allow achievement to be demonstrated and may include an allowance of additional time, rests during the examination, or providing a reader, signing, audio taped versions of question papers, Braille, enlarged print or modified papers for candidates with a hearing loss. Special arrangements are agreed before the examination or assessment.

Special consideration relates to an adjustment of marks awarded after the examination or assessment has taken place. The adjustment of marks is to ensure that a candidate who had a difficulty, for example, a temporary illness or injury, is given some compensation for the potentially detrimental impact of such a difficulty on their examination performance.

### **Comment**

Issues have been raised by groups representing pupils with hearing loss and impaired vision in relation to appropriateness of special arrangements. Representatives from ethnic minorities have raised issues regarding arrangements for children whose first language is not English.

During 2000 and 2001 more males than females required special arrangements, particularly at GCSE level.

### **Outcome**

Impact Assessment.

## **2.4 ENQUIRY ABOUT RESULTS, ACCESS TO EXAMINATION PAPERS AND EXAMINATIONS APPEALS**

### **Policy Summary**

Following the issue of examination results, candidates who feel their result does not reflect their performance can apply to have their examination paper re-marked.

A re-mark can result in a higher grade/mark being awarded, the original grade or mark being reduced or no change to the original outcome.

A re-mark is available for all CCEA examinations. There is a charge for the re-marking of Key Skills, GCE and GCSE examinations and coursework. Candidates can also have access to their marked and re-marked examination papers. There is an additional charge for this service.

There is no charge for a re-marking of Key Stage Tests or the Transfer Test. Candidates do not have access to marked or re-marked Transfer Tests.

Where a candidate is not satisfied with the outcome of the enquiry about results service, an appeal can be made to CCEA.

Only privately entered candidates can approach CCEA directly for a re-mark of their paper or coursework. Candidates entered through a school or examination centre must avail of the service through their centre.

### **Comment**

During 2000 and 2001 a larger proportion of females than males requested access to and re-marking of examination and coursework.

### **Outcome**

Impact Assessment.

## **2.5 REGISTERING, ENTERING AND PROVIDING RESULTS TO CANDIDATES TAKING CCEA EXAMINATIONS AND ASSESSMENT**

### **Policy Summary**

CCEA sets out the procedures by which schools and examination centres register and enter candidates for CCEA examinations and assessment and how results will be issued. The procedures used by CCEA are similar to those used by the other examination and awarding bodies throughout England and Wales.

### **Comment**

There have been no equality issues raised in relation to these procedures.

### **Outcome**

No Impact Assessment is required.

## **2.6 STANDARDISATION OF MARKING OF QUESTION PAPERS AND COURSEWORK IN ALL EXAMINATIONS**

### **Policy Summary**

Standardisation of marking is a process by which CCEA ensures that the marking of all CCEA examinations is carried out consistently to the required standard by all examiners.

This process includes training examining personnel on the agreed mark scheme, monitoring of examining personnel and an inspection of each examiner's marked scripts.

The standardisation of coursework (ie moderation) is a process by which CCEA ensures that all marking of coursework by teachers is carried out consistently to the required standard. This process includes training moderation personnel who inspect samples of teacher marked coursework to verify the standards of marking.

The standardising and moderation processes are set out in a Code of Practice for GCSE, GCE, VCE and GNVQ as agreed by CCEA and the other Regulatory Authorities in England and Wales.

### **Comment**

Comments from a small number of individual teachers suggest that there is the potential in a small number of subjects for bias to be exercised by examining personnel in relation to religious belief, political opinion or gender. For example, an examiner could allow his/her own political opinion to influence the mark awarded to an essay on ideology. However there is no evidence to suggest that such incidents have occurred. It is felt that raising awareness with examination personnel, through training and the provision of guidance documentation, would reduce the potential for bias.

### **Outcome**

No Impact Assessment is required.

## **2.7 AWARDING GRADES AT GCSE AND GCE**

### **Policy Summary**

Awarding is the process through which the marks required to achieve particular grades are decided. This is based on the inspection of marked scripts by senior examiners with reference to relevant statistical information.

The awarding process is set out in a Code of Practice for GCSE, GCE, VCE and GNVQ and agreed by CCEA and the other Regulatory Authorities in England and Wales.

### **Comment**

No equality issues have arisen.

### **Outcome**

No Impact Assessment is required.

## **2.8 PROMOTION OF CCEA QUALIFICATIONS**

### **Policy Summary**

CCEA organises events and meetings aimed at increasing awareness of the full range of qualifications offered by the organisation. Teachers and other educationalists are invited to attend the meetings and events.

### **Comment**

Issues have been raised on a few occasions in the past in relation to access for people with disabilities. CCEA now ensures that the venues it uses for such events are accessible and that special requirements of people with disabilities are addressed.

### **Outcome**

No Impact Assessment is required.

## **2.9 PAPERLESS EXAMINATIONS**

### **Policy Summary**

The Paperless Examinations Project is an initiative involving CCEA and Edexcel, one of the English examination bodies. This development project has been set up to explore the potential for the use of Information Communication Technology (ICT) in examinations.

The project is testing the feasibility of:

- providing exam papers to schools on-line;
- candidates taking examinations on computer and having their work marked electronically;
- examining bodies reporting results back to schools and pupils electronically.

Seven post-primary schools in Northern Ireland took part in Phase 1 of the project. Phase 2 commenced in October 2001 with the number of schools now involved in Northern Ireland increasing to 13.

### **Comment**

During phase 2 of the project, information will be collected and analysed to assist with the screening of this project should it become a proposed policy.

### **Outcome**

Review.

### **3 ACCREDITATION**

#### **3.1 PRIMARY RECORD OF ACHIEVEMENT**

##### **Policy Summary**

Primary schools have a statutory requirement to record pupils' achievements throughout and at the end of each year. These ongoing records contribute to the primary Record of Achievement, which is provided to the parents of Year 7 pupils leaving school. The primary Record of Achievement contains a final report and is passed from the primary school to the post-primary school.

The content of the primary Record of Achievement is prescribed by the Department of Education.

Currently CCEA provides folders and inserts for schools to assist teachers and pupils with the recording of achievement.

##### **Comment**

The inserts for recording achievement have been modified by teachers in Special Schools to assist children with learning difficulties.

The primary Record of Achievement currently in place in primary schools is likely to be affected by the new Curriculum and Assessment proposals that are currently out for consultation and by the Burns proposals.

The Equality Impact Assessment that is to be carried out on the Curriculum and Assessment proposals will address any equality issues in relation to the primary Record of Achievement and subsequent pupil profile.

##### **Outcome**

No Impact Assessment is required.

#### **3.2 NATIONAL RECORD OF ACHIEVEMENT – VALIDATION AND ACCREDITATION**

##### **Policy Summary**

The Department of Education requires that all pupils at 16 and 18 be provided with a National Record of Achievement (NRA) indicating their academic ability, other skills, talents and interests during their time in post-primary education.

CCEA has responsibility for the validation and accreditation of the NRA in schools in Northern Ireland. Validation and assessment procedures provide quality assurance for the NRA. The validation process allows schools to confirm the accuracy and appropriateness of their ongoing records. Accreditation refers to the schools' NRA having been developed in accordance with CCEA's procedures.

### **Comment**

The participation in the validation and accreditation of NRA by teachers in special schools has not been as high as would be expected. Discussions are taking place with teachers in special schools to look at ways of overcoming any barriers to participation.

### **Outcome**

No Impact Assessment is required.

## **3.3 ICT ACCREDITATION AT KEY STAGES 2 AND 3**

### **Policy Summary**

Between 1997 and 1999 CCEA introduced schemes to enable schools to apply for accreditation to assess pupils in Information Technology (IT) at the end of Key Stage 2 (Year 7 in primary schools) and at the end of Key Stage 3 (Year 10 in post-primary schools). Pupils who complete the scheme and demonstrate the required competencies receive a certificate of IT competence.

The scheme supports the teaching of IT as a cross-curricular theme. Assessment is carried out by the pupil's own teacher. Pupils are required to apply skills appropriately to a range of tasks and problems. Schools are encouraged to produce their own tasks and these tasks must be approved by CCEA before they can be used for assessment.

To ensure that standards are being maintained across all schools, schools are required to submit a sample of pupils' work to CCEA. The work submitted to CCEA includes samples of pupils' work demonstrating the range of levels in that school.

### **Comment**

There is some evidence to suggest a lower uptake by girls in the maintained sector. However, there does not appear to be any difference in the level of attainment achieved by boys and girls at Key Stage 2 or Key Stage 3.

CCEA has been working with teachers of pupils with special educational needs to develop tasks to suit some specific needs.

**Outcome**

No Impact Assessment is required.

### **3.4 GRADED OBJECTIVES IN MODERN LANGUAGES**

**Policy Summary**

A Graded Objective in Modern Language (GOML) provides pupils at Key Stage 3 (Year 10 in the post-primary school) with a CCEA certificate of attainment. The certificate recognises the pupil's competence in a modern language. The modern languages that are included in CCEA's GOML certification scheme are French, German, Irish, Italian and Spanish.

**Comment**

Limited information is available. No equality issues have been identified in relation to this policy.

**Outcome**

No Impact Assessment is required.

### **3.5 ENTRY LEVEL, ESSENTIAL SKILLS AND KEY SKILLS**

**Policy Summary**

Entry Level, Essential Skills and Key Skills Qualifications are a part of the National Qualifications Framework (NQF). The NQF is a framework within which general, vocational and occupational qualifications are accredited by the regulatory authorities.

For Entry Level and Essential Skills the assessment is targeted at learners who would achieve below the lowest grade in GCSE.

Key Skills can be taken at four different levels and are targeted at the full range of learners from GCSE to graduate level.

Entry Level and Key Skills involve tests or tasks set by CCEA and a portfolio of work.

Essential Skills has just been introduced to Northern Ireland and will be assessed through tasks set by CCEA.

### **Comment**

Limited information is available. No equality issues have been identified in relation to this policy.

### **Outcome**

No Impact Assessment is required.

## **4 REGULATION**

### **4.1 REGULATION OF QUALIFICATIONS**

#### **Policy Summary**

CCEA has regulatory functions that involve ensuring public confidence in the qualifications and examination process in Northern Ireland is maintained. This responsibility relates to qualifications taken by Northern Ireland candidates through CCEA and all other English and Welsh awarding bodies.

CCEA publishes criteria for qualifications, accredits qualifications against the criteria and monitors the performance of the awarding bodies in providing the accredited qualifications.

#### **Comment**

While no issues have been identified in the screening of this policy area, it is felt that, given the importance of qualifications to future employability prospects, a more rigorous look at the possible equality implications should be undertaken.

#### **Outcome**

Impact Assessment and work closely with the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority (QCA).

### **4.2 QUALIFICATIONS FRAMEWORK (16–19)**

#### **Policy Summary**

CCEA has responsibility to advise the Department of Education on an appropriate qualifications framework for students in full-time education from age 16 to 19.

CCEA and the other regulatory bodies in England and Wales have developed a National Qualifications Framework. The aim is to establish equivalences between general, vocationally related and occupational qualifications in a clear way that is easily understood by the general public.

In 1999 a government initiative aimed at increasing breadth of study and promoting parity of esteem between different types of qualifications was introduced. This involved changes to A Levels and GNVQ qualifications and the introduction of Key Skills. This initiative is sometimes referred to as 'Curriculum 2000' because it was first implemented in September 2000. In addition, it was recommended that CCEA should begin to develop a framework that best suits the needs of students in Northern Ireland.

After the first year of implementing Curriculum 2000 CCEA carried out consultation with senior managers in schools and colleges, teachers, students and parents. Following on from the consultation recommendations have been made for changes to the content, structure and assessment of qualifications.

CCEA is currently finalising detailed proposals that will be issued for consultation early in 2003.

### **Comment**

While no issues have been identified in the screening of this policy area, it is felt that, given the importance of qualifications to future employability prospects, a more rigorous look at the possible equality implications should be undertaken in relation to the proposals.

### **Outcome**

Impact Assessment, co-join with the Department of Education and work closely with the Department of Employment and Learning.

## **5 RESEARCH AND STATISTICS**

### **5.1 RESEARCH**

#### **Policy Summary**

The aim of this policy is to design, conduct and report on research projects and statistical investigations within all aspects of CCEA's work and to provide professional and technical advice and support on all research and statistical matters.

#### **Comment**

Further consideration will be given at the planning stage of research projects to the involvement of the dimensions under Section 75.

#### **Outcome**

No Impact Assessment required.

## **5.2 STATISTICS**

### **Policy Summary**

The aim of this policy is to collect, analyse and provide statistical information for a number of purposes, in particular to inform decision-making in areas relevant to the key functions of CCEA.

### **Comment**

A review of the data collected by CCEA is underway to ensure that information is collected relating to the dimensions under Section 75.

### **Outcome**

No Impact Assessment required.

## **6 EMPLOYMENT**

### **6.1 EMPLOYMENT AND PROMOTION**

#### **Policy Summary**

In this policy CCEA sets out how it will ensure that all applicants (internal or external) are offered equality of opportunity in relation to appointment or promotion within the organisation.

The policy also covers the appointment and promotion of examining teams, clerical markers and invigilators.

Vacancies for posts at senior clerical officer level and up to, and including, assistant principal officer are internally trawled. However, where the specific skills needs of a post are not identified within the organisation, the post is externally advertised. All vacancies for posts at principal officer level and above are externally advertised.

#### **Comment**

Equal opportunities monitoring indicates an imbalance in terms of gender at senior level. The existing policy is currently being reviewed. The review will include an Equality Impact Assessment.

#### **Outcome**

Impact Assessment.

## **6.2 TERMS AND CONDITIONS OF EMPLOYMENT**

### **Policy Summary**

This policy sets out the terms and conditions under which CCEA staff are employed. The terms and conditions are determined through National Joint Council negotiations.

### **Comment**

No issues have arisen in respect to this policy or how it has been implemented.

### **Outcome**

No Impact Assessment is required.

## **6.3 FAMILY FRIENDLY POLICIES**

### **Policy Summary**

CCEA provide a range of flexible working arrangements consistent with organisational need, which enable staff to more effectively combine work and home life. The range of policies include:

- flexible working hours;
- part-time working;
- career breaks;
- job share;
- time off for dependants;
- parental leave.

### **Comment**

These arrangements are family friendly, aimed at promoting equality of opportunity. There is evidence that more females than males take up job share, career break and part time working arrangements. These policies are currently under review and the review will include an equality impact assessment.

### **Outcome**

Impact Assessment.

## **6.4 TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT**

### **Policy Summary**

CCEA aims to ensure that all staff have the knowledge and skills required to do their job effectively and efficiently. CCEA also encourages the professional and personal development of all staff consistent with the needs of the organisation. The policy includes the conditions under which CCEA will provide assistance to undertake further qualifications and professional development.

### **Comment**

Training and personal development opportunities are available and are accessed across the organisation at all grades.

### **Outcome**

No Impact Assessment is required.

## **6.5 STAFF APPRAISAL**

### **Policy Summary**

All CCEA staff have an annual discussion with their manager on performance and the identification of training and development needs.

### **Comment**

The policy applies to all staff. Staff appraisal in CCEA is not linked to pay or promotion. No issues have been raised in respect of this policy or how it has been implemented.

### **Outcome**

No Impact Assessment is required.

## **6.6 OVERTIME**

### **Policy Summary**

To ensure that, as far as possible, the hours worked by staff are not in excess of their contracted hours and that where overtime is unavoidable, a fair procedure is in place to manage the process. The policy applies to staff working at grades from Clerical Officer to Senior Executive Officer.

**Comment**

Issues have been raised in relation to payment for overtime to part-time employees.

**Outcome**

Review.

**6.7 HEALTH AND SAFETY**

**Policy Summary**

The policy outlines CCEA's commitment to ensuring the health, safety and welfare at work for all of its staff.

**Comment**

No issues in relation to the policy or how it has been implemented have been raised.

**Outcome**

No Impact Assessment is required.

**6.8 MANAGING ATTENDANCE**

**Policy Summary**

This policy aims to minimise staff absence among CCEA employees. The policy sets out the roles and responsibilities of both staff and managers in relation to absenteeism, explains the standards that are expected and sets out the procedures to be followed in the case of absences.

**Comment**

There is no evidence of any differential impact of the operation of this policy. No issues have been raised in respect of this policy or how it has been implemented.

**Outcome**

Review.

**6.9 EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES POLICY**

**Policy Summary**

This policy aims to promote equality of opportunity for applicants for employment and employees within CCEA.

### **Comment**

The policy aims to promote equality of opportunity for all. CCEA has an additional policy aimed at promoting equality of opportunity for employees with disabilities in CCEA and persons with disabilities applying for employment with CCEA.

The policies are to be reviewed in the light of CCEA commitments under Section 75.

### **Outcome**

Review.

## **6.10 HARASSMENT PROCEDURE**

### **Policy Summary**

CCEA currently has separate harassment policies in respect of racial, sectarian and sexual harassment. The policies set out CCEA's commitment to prevent racial, sectarian and sexual harassment in the workplace and the steps that will be taken in dealing with incidents should they occur.

### **Comment**

The policies and procedures to combat harassment in the workplace are to be reviewed in light of CCEA's commitment under Section 75.

### **Outcome**

Review.

## **6.11 DISCIPLINARY PROCEDURE**

### **Policy Summary**

This policy aims to ensure that any disciplinary action initiated within CCEA is necessary, fair and consistent and that all employees are aware of the procedures and are provided with adequate information and the reason for disciplinary action.

### **Comment**

The disciplinary procedure is a standard agreed procedure based on the Labour Relations Agency's Code of Practice. No issues in relation to this policy or how it is implemented have been raised.

### **Outcome**

No Impact Assessment is required.

## **6.12 GRIEVANCE PROCEDURE**

### **Policy Summary**

This policy provides the opportunity for an employee's grievance to be addressed effectively in a fair and equitable manner and, where possible, resolved at the earliest opportunity.

### **Comment**

The grievance procedure is a standard agreed procedure based on the Labour Relations Agency's Code of Practice. No issues in relation to this policy or how it is implemented have been raised.

### **Outcome**

No Impact Assessment is required.

## **6.13 PREMATURE RETIREMENT**

### **Policy Summary**

The policy makes provision for the early or premature retirement of staff aged 50 years and over on the grounds of either redundancy or in the interests of the efficiency of the organisation.

### **Comment**

There are no significant equality of opportunity issues.

### **Outcome**

No Impact Assessment is required.

## **6.14 REDUNDANCY**

### **Policy Summary**

CCEA ensures that, as far as possible, redundancy situations are avoided and that, where redundancy is unavoidable, a fair procedure is in place to manage the process.

### **Comment**

There have not been any compulsory redundancies within in CCEA.

### **Outcome**

No Impact Assessment is required.

## **7 OTHER**

### **7.1 EQUALITY SCHEME**

#### **Policy Summary**

This policy sets out the arrangements made to implement and monitor the implementation of CCEA's Equality Scheme and encourage the mainstreaming of equality issues throughout the organisation.

#### **Comment**

The scheme is designed to promote equality of opportunity and good relations. The scheme has to be delivered in line with legislation and strict guidelines laid down by the Equality Commission.

#### **Outcome**

No Impact Assessment is required.

### **7.2 COMMUNICATIONS**

#### **Policy Summary**

CCEA is committed to the effective management of internal communications and to building proactive relationships with local and national media to promote the organisation.

#### **Comment**

No significant equality of opportunity issues have been identified in relation to this policy area. Further consideration will be given to widening the circulation of press releases to include more groups from S75 categories.

#### **Outcome**

No Impact Assessment is required.

### **7.3 QUALITY**

#### **Policy Summary**

CCEA is committed to meeting and exceeding its stakeholders' expectations and needs through a process of continuous improvement involving all staff.

#### **Comment**

No equality of opportunity issues have been identified.

#### **Outcome**

No Impact Assessment is required.

## **7.4 RISK MANAGEMENT**

### **Policy Summary**

This policy sets out the procedures by which CCEA ensures that all potential risks to the organisation are identified and measures put in place to minimise risk and any potential impact.

### **Comment**

CCEA, as well as other public bodies, is required to have a risk management system in place that complies with recommendations in the Government Internal Audit Manual. No equality of opportunity issues have been identified.

### **Outcome**

No Impact Assessment is required.

## **7.5 COUNTER FRAUD**

### **Policy Summary**

CCEA is committed to identifying any inappropriate use of resources and to ensuring that all suspected frauds are promptly investigated and appropriate action is taken in line with the requirements in the Government Internal Audit Manual.

### **Comment**

There are no equality of opportunity issues.

### **Outcome**

No Impact Assessment is required.

## **7.6 COMPLAINTS**

### **Policy Summary**

CCEA is committed to providing high quality services and products that meet or exceed individual's expectations. A complaints mechanism is in place to facilitate individuals who are not satisfied with any aspects of the service provided by CCEA.

### **Comment**

There is no evidence to indicate that there is a higher or lower participation or uptake by different groups. Individual specific needs will be addressed as required to ensure the procedure is understood and is accessible, eg provision of an interpreter.

### **Outcome**

No Impact Assessment is required.

## **7.7 INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY STRATEGY**

### **Policy Summary**

CCEA makes use of Information and Communication Technology (ICT), where appropriate, to support the delivery of its services. The ICT developments and applications are user driven and form part of the service delivery in each service area. The strategy is in support of the government's e-services policy. CCEA works closely with the Department of Education and the Education and Library Boards to ensure that CCEA's systems are compatible with systems in the education sector.

### **Comment**

There is no equality of opportunity impact.

### **Outcome**

No Impact Assessment is required.

## **7.8 FINANCE**

### **Policy Summary**

CCEA monitors, controls and reports on all expenditure and income. It prepares annual financial statements in accordance with the requirements laid down by government.

### **Comment**

There is no equality of opportunity impact.

### **Outcome**

No Impact Assessment is required.

## **7.9 PROCUREMENT**

### **Policy Summary**

CCEA's procurement procedures set out how it will ensure value for money in all areas of expenditure and the arrangements to ensure compliance at all times with government accounting in Northern Ireland and relevant EC directives and guidance from the Procurement Service. Policies specify how contracts should be processed and awarded.

### **Comment**

The Department of Finance and Personnel is currently conducting a review of public procurement and purchasing arrangements with the Northern Ireland

Civil Service, their agencies and Non-Departmental Public Bodies. An integral part of this review is the conduct of an equality impact assessment of current and future procurement policies. CCEA is a Non-Departmental Public Body and will co-operate fully with the Department of Finance and Personnel in this impact assessment.

**Outcome**

Co-operate with the Department of Finance and Personnel's Impact Assessment.

## **APPENDIX 1 – SCREENING OF POLICIES**

### **HOW THE SCREENING PROCESS HAS BEEN CARRIED OUT**

Prior to screening, CCEA identified all policies and proposed policies. The screening of the policies and proposed policies was carried out using the four criteria specified in the Equality Commission's Guidelines. The four criteria are:

- 1 Is there any evidence of higher or lower participation or uptake by different groups?
- 2 Is there any evidence that different groups have different needs, experiences, issues and priorities in relation to the particular policy?
- 3 Is there an opportunity to better promote equality of opportunity or better community relations by altering the policy or working with others in government or in a larger community?
- 4 Have consultations with relevant groups, organisations or individuals indicated that particular policies create problems that are specific to them?

The screening of each policy was carried out by at least three senior officers, including the officer with responsibility for the policy.

The policies identified for impact assessment through the screening exercise were prioritised taking account of the criteria set out in the Equality Commission's guidelines:

- (a) social need;
- (b) effect on people's daily lives;
- (c) effect on economic, social and human rights.

In addition, CCEA had regard to:

- (d) the timetable established by other relevant statutory agencies, eg Department of Education.

All policies and proposed policies identified by CCEA for impact assessment will be assessed within the five year lifespan of the Equality Scheme.

## GLOSSARY OF TERMS

### Northern Ireland Act 1998

The Northern Ireland Act, implementing the Good Friday Agreement, received Royal Assent on 19 November 1998. Section 75 of the Act creates the 'statutory equality duty'.

Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 requires each 'public authority', in carrying out its functions relating to Northern Ireland, to have due regard to the need to promote equality of opportunity:

- between persons of different religious belief, political opinion, racial group, age, marital status or sexual orientation;
- between men and women generally;
- between persons with a disability and persons without;
- between persons with dependants and persons without.

Each public authority in Northern Ireland must also have regard to the desirability of promoting good relations between persons of different religious belief, political opinion or racial group.

### Equality Scheme

A document that outlines a public authority's arrangement for complying with Section 75. It must include an outline of the public authority's arrangements for carrying out consultations, monitoring, training, impact assessments, and ensuring access to information and services.

Screening	The procedure for identifying those policies that will be subject to a full equality impact assessment and how these will be prioritised. Its purpose is to identify those policies that are likely to have a significant impact on equality of opportunity so that greatest resources can be devoted to these. It requires a systematic review of existing and proposed policies.
Impact Assessment	Essentially the mechanism that underpins Section 75. Existing and proposed policies are assessed in order to determine whether they have an adverse impact on equality of opportunity for relevant groups.
Statutory Curriculum	The Department of Education sets out the legislation which details the curriculum which should be followed by all pupils in grant maintained schools in Northern Ireland up to the age of 16.
Grant Maintained School	Any school that receives grants from the Department of Education or an Education and Library Board.
Regulatory Authorities	The Qualifications and Curriculum Authority (QCA), the Curriculum Council for Wales (ACCAC) and CCEA have responsibility to ensure the quality of qualifications in England, Wales and Northern Ireland respectively. The three organisations co-operate closely in ensuring standards.
Code of Practice for GCSE, GCE, VCE and GNVQ	The Code of Practice sets out the procedures to be followed by all examination bodies in relation to the conduct of examinations. The Code of Practice is drawn up by CCEA and the other Regulatory Authorities in England and Wales.
Accreditation	The process by which CCEA ensures equivalent standards of performance by pupils in relation to achievements in areas other than statutory examinations.

Burns Proposals	A review of arrangements for transfer to post-primary schools.
Special Schools	As part of the provision under the 1986 Education and Library Boards (NI) Order special schools are provided for the education of some young people with special educational needs up to age 19.
Mainstreaming	Ensuring that an equality perspective is systematically incorporated into all policies at all levels and at all stages.



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