Assessment Policy (ED-Pol-076)

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Related Documents	ED-SOP-077 – Assessment and Grading Procedure ED-SOP-079 – Programme Exam Board Procedure ED-SOP-080 – External Examining Procedure ED-GL-061 – RCPI Teaching, Learning and Assessment Framework

1.   Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to set out RCPIs approach to assessment in relation to learners enrolled in Education Programmes. This policy is designed with regard to the Assessment and Standards (Revised 2013) QQI guidelines.

2.   Scope

This policy applies to all RCPI staff and Faculty who have responsibility for the design, development and implementation of assessment in RCPI's education programmes.

3.   Responsibilities

The Manager of the Education Development Department is responsible for the implementation of this policy.

4.   Guiding Principles for Assessment – Assessment of Learner Performance

4.1   Fairness

4.1.1   Learners have an equal opportunity to demonstrate their achievement of learning outcomes.

4.1.2   Assessment tasks reflect the type and level of the learning outcome(s) being assessed. Learners are not assessed on knowledge, skill, or competence they have not had an opportunity to acquire.

4.1.3   Assessments are a genuine evaluation of achievement of learning outcomes.

4.1.4   Learners may expect assessment to be directed in line with this policy.

4.2   Consistency

4.2.1   Learners are assessed by competent faculty. Assessment outcomes are internally verified and externally reviewed.

4.2.2   Learner performance is judged based on the achievement of learning outcomes and no other criteria.

4.2.3   Assessment outcomes are comparable from learner to learner, cohort to cohort and programme to programme. This does not mean assessment is done in the same way but that assessments are equally fair, and outcomes are broadly comparable.

4.3   Validity and Reliability of Assessments

4.3.1   The award standards and award type descriptors of the National Framework of Qualifications (NFQ), describe the standard to be achieved before an award can be made by QQI. RCPI assessments and procedures ensure that these standards are implemented.

4.3.2   A variety of appropriate assessment techniques and methodologies are used across programmes and cohorts.

4.3.3   The outcomes of assessment decisions are a valid means to ensure learners progression through the programme.

4.3.4   The Assessment Procedure and administrative processes are reviewed regularly to ensure that processes remain sound.

4.3.5   Assessment outcomes are accompanied by qualitative feedback on the learner's effort which correlates with the marks awarded.

4.3.6   Assessment supports effective teaching and learning.

4.3.7   Assessment is regulated, professionally managed, and coordinated.

4.3.8   Programme assessment strategies are produced for each programme, and module assessment strategies for each of its constituent modules.

4.4   Assessment Strategy

4.4.1   Decisions on types of assessment are constructively aligned to Minimum Intended Programme Learning Outcomes (MIPLOs) and in line with the Teaching, Learning and Assessment Framework (ED-GL-061).

4.4.2   The assessment strategies, types and methodologies are regularly reviewed and improved as necessary with the involvement of learners to adapt to evolving requirements.

4.4.3   A broad spectrum of assessment types is considered when designing the programme assessment strategy.

4.4.4   Assessment types include both formative and summative assessment and are fair, consistent and fit for purpose.

4.4.5   Summative assessment and Formative assessment are defined as follows:

4.4.6   Summative assessment is assessment that is used to signify competence or that contributes to a learner's grade in a programme.

4.4.7   Formative assessment, on the other hand, is assessment strictly used to provide feedback to the learner on their learning. It provides the learner with advice on how to maintain and improve their progress, but generally it does not form part of their summative grade or mark. Formative assessment also helps learners develop self-directed learning.

4.5   Learners' Responsibilities

4.5.1   Learners are responsible for demonstrating their achievement of the learning outcomes.

4.5.2   Learners should familiarise themselves with conditions and timelines associated with the assessment process and with the Academic Integrity Policy for Learners (ED-Pol-063) and Procedure.

4.5.3   Learners must submit themselves to assessment for the purpose of demonstrating attainment of the programme's intended learning outcomes. Each learner is expected to strive for academic integrity, and to undertake assessment tasks honestly and truthfully, shunning plagiarism and other forms of academic dishonesty or impropriety.

4.6   Information for Learners

4.6.1   The programmes assessment strategy and timelines are clearly communicated to the enrolled learner at the commencement of the programme.

4.6.2   The programmes assessment strategy is always available in written format on RCPI website.

4.6.3   The link between MIPLOs, MIMLOs and the specified assessment tasks, criteria and procedures is outlined in the Programme Assessment Strategy.

4.6.4   Learners are made aware of the assessment regulations, including the consequences of failing to comply with the requirements, as well as deadlines, marking criteria, decision-making and appeals processes

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4.7   Learner Feedback

4.7.1   Formative learning which aims to support the learning process occurs as part of assessment for learning and assessment as learning. Assessment for learning constitutes summative assessment. All elements must be identified as part of the programmes assessment strategy and must be in line with the Teaching, Learning and Assessment Framework (ED-GL-061).

4.7.2   The articulation of clearly defined, measurable MIMLOs that can be mapped to MIPLOs guides the selection of teaching strategies and assessment types.

4.7.3   Assessment is an integral part of learning and incorporates formative assessment and feedback, summative assessment, and progression.

4.7.4   Feedback is given within an appropriate timeframe to facilitate the learner to reflect on and use feedback. If formative assessment is included in the assessment strategy, formative feedback must be given to the learner.

4.7.5   For online and blended learning programmes, feedback may be written, audio, asynchronous and/or synchronous video feedback.

4.7.6   Feedback should focus on learner performance and their learning and not on the learner themselves or their attributes.

4.7.7   Feedback is provided in a manner that learners can act on in terms of future learning.

4.7.8   Learners are asked to provide feedback on assessment processes through a formal feedback mechanism.

5. Principles for the Grading and Certification of Learners Effort

5.1   Grading Standards

5.1.1   Programmes and modules can be graded using either 'Pass/Fail' or a percentage grading system.

5.1.2   All programme and module grades are provisional until agreed at a formal meeting of the Programme Exam Board.

5.1.3   Borderline grades (e.g. 39%) are not issued where possible. Instead, a clear decision is made about the grade band into which the learner effort falls.

5.2   Grades

5.2.1   Grading is carried out in line with the Sectoral Conventions for Assessment as set out in section 3 of Assessment and Standards, Revised 2013.

5.2.2   Grades indicate the extent to which a learner has met or exceeded the minimum intended learning outcomes for the relevant assessment.

5.2.3   Non classified awards are given when the learners attain all the minimum intended learning outcomes from the programme.

5.2.4   Classified awards are graded as Pass, Merit and Distinction and are aligned with QQI Sectoral Conventions for Assessment for level 9 award.

5.2.5   A grade of greater than 40% indicates that the learner's effort exceeds the minimum intended learning outcomes. Higher grades indicate and differentiate the extent to which they have been exceeded.

5.2.6   A grade of less than 40% indicates that the minimum intended learning outcomes were not met.

5.2.7   A marginal fail of 35-39% indicates that the learner's effort either almost meets the minimum intended learning outcomes or that some but not all learning outcomes were met. Learners with a marginal fail grade for a module may be eligible to pass by compensation.

5.2.8   An outright fail of less than 35% indicates that the minimum intended learning outcomes have not been met to any acceptable extent.

5.3   Pass by Compensation

5.3.1   Pass by compensation means that a learner who has achieved a marginal fail (35-39%) can, at the discretion of the Programme Exam Board, pass the module by compensation.

5.3.2   Compensation can only be applied to a full set of marks approved by the Programme Exam Board.

5.3.3   Compensation can only be applied to modules where programme rules allow it.

5.3.4   Compensation can only be applied to first attempts at assessments. It cannot be applied to results of repeat assessments.

5.3.5   Learners must pass overall at the assessment stage to pass by compensation in specific modules; that is, their average mark must be 40% or higher.

5.4   Moderation

5.4.1   As indicated, to obtain reliable results, assessment grades are internally verified and externally reviewed.

5.4.2   Moderation is where a second Examiner, the Grade Moderator, has access to the grades and comments of the first marker and considers a sample of assessments to assure that the appropriate mark has been awarded, thus ensuring the quality and reliability of marking standards. Variation in grading between the first Examiner and second Examiner, i.e., the Grade Moderator, is discussed between the two to reach agreement.

5.4.3   An Assessment Lead from a different programme can act as a Grade Moderator for another module.

5.4.4   The moderated sample will include assessments from all grade bands, all borderline grades and all fails.

5.4.5   At a minimum, a sample of all grades awarded at each band of award are subject to internal moderation.

5.4.6   All fail grades are subject to internal moderation.

5.5   External Examining

5.5.1   The external examining process is a quality assurance mechanism that supports the maintenance of academic standards, including the fair and consistent assessment of learners.

5.5.2   External Examiners act as independent and impartial advisers providing RCPI with informed feedback on the standards set and learner attainment in relation to those standards, i.e., intended learning outcomes and actual learner attainment.

5.5.3   For each stage of each cohort, a sample of assessment instruments for high stakes assessments are considered by an External Examiner to ensure they are comparable with assessment instruments in other institutions and appropriate for the intended learning outcomes.

5.5.4   At a minimum, a sample of grades awarded at each band, including fails and borderline grades, are subject to consideration by an External Examiner.

5.6   Certification

5.6.1   Learners are entitled to certification for completed programmes.

5.6.2   Learners who do not complete programmes on which they have been registered are entitled to accurate transcripts indicating their learning attainments.

5.6.3   Certification of programmes not leading to awards is undertaken with care to ensure that learners are clear about the nature of the programme and its certification status.

6. References

QQI Assessment and Standards (Revised 2013)

https://www.qqi.ie/Publications/Publications/Assessment_and_Standards%20Revised%202013.pdf

Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area, May 2015

https://enqa.eu/wp-content/uploads/2015/11/ESG_2015.pdf

QQI's Core Statutory Quality Assurance Guidelines

https://www.qqi.ie/Downloads/Core%20Statutory%20Quality%20Assurance%20Guidelines.pdf

Statutory Quality Assurance Guidelines developed by QQI for Independent/Private Providers coming to QQI on a Voluntary Basis

https://www.qqi.ie/Downloads/Sector%20Specific%20Quality%20Assurance%20Guidelines%20V2.pdf

Statutory Quality Assurance Guidelines for Providers of Blended Learning Programmes

https://www.qqi.ie/Publications/Publications/Statutory%20QA%20Guidelines%20for%20Blended%20Learning%20Programmes.pdf

QQI's Policy and Criteria for Making Awards and Policies and criteria for the validation of Education and Training Programmes

https://www.qqi.ie/Publications/Publications/Initial_Validation_policy_7_10_13.pdf