

## Assessment Policy (LID-Pol-076)

|   |   |
|---|---|
| <b>Document Title</b>                       | Assessment Policy   |
| <b>Document Number</b>                      | LID-Pol-076   |
| <b>Version</b>                              | 3.0   |
| <b>Department</b>                           | Learning, Innovation and Development  |
| <b>Owner/Responsible for Implementation</b> | Learning, Innovation and Development Manager  |
| <b>Approving Body</b>                       | Academic Board  |
| <b>Effective date:</b>                      | October 2024  |
| <b>Next Review date:</b>                    | October 2027  |
| <b>Related Documents</b>                    | LID-SOP-077 – Assessment and Grading Procedure<br>LID-SOP-079 – Programme Exam Board Procedure<br>LID-SOP-080 – External Examining Procedure<br>LID-GL-061 – RCPI Teaching, Learning and Assessment Framework |

## 1. Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to set out RCPI's approach to assessment in relation to learners enrolled in Education Programmes and in all modes of study. This policy is designed with regard to the Assessment and Standards (Revised 2022) 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 Learning, Innovation and Development Manager 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 For group work assessments:
  - How the groups are formed and the rationale for this will be clearly communicated with learners.
  - Clear project or assessment objectives and learning outcomes will be communicated effectively to learners before the commencement of the group work.
  - Assessment methods will be communicated clearly to learners in a timely manner.
  - The process and timelines for giving feedback to learners throughout the group work will be clearly outlined.
- 4.1.5 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 Written assessment outcomes are accompanied by qualitative feedback on the learner's effort which correlates with the marks awarded. Learners are advised when feedback will not be available (e.g. SBA examinations). In these cases, group level feedback is generally provided.
- 4.3.5 Assessment supports effective teaching and learning.
- 4.3.6 Assessment is regulated, professionally managed, and coordinated.
- 4.3.7 Programme assessment strategies are produced for each programme, and module assessment strategies are included within that.

#### 4.4 **Learners' Responsibilities in Upholding Academic Integrity.**

- 4.4.1 Learners are responsible for demonstrating they have achieved the intended learning outcomes of the programme.
- 4.4.2 Learners must be familiar with assessment regulations and processes and ensure they adhere to:
  - Academic Integrity Policy for Learners (LID-Pol-063)
  - Academic Integrity Procedure for Learners (LID-SOP-064)
- 4.4.3 Learners are required to complete assessments honestly, diligently and accurately, ensuring submissions are a truthful reflection of their own work.

#### 4.5 **Learner Feedback**

- 4.5.1 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 programme's assessment strategy and must be in line with the Teaching, Learning and Assessment Framework (LID-GL-061).
- 4.5.2 The articulation of clearly defined, measurable MIMLOs that can be mapped to MIPLOs guides the selection of teaching strategies and assessment types.
- 4.5.3 Assessment is an integral part of learning and incorporates formative assessment and feedback, summative assessment, and progression.

- 4.5.4 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.
- 4.5.5 For online and blended learning programmes, feedback may be written, audio, asynchronous and/or synchronous video feedback.
- 4.5.6 Feedback should be specific, focus on learner performance and their learning and not on the learner themselves or their attributes.
- 4.5.7 Feedback is provided in a manner that learners can act on in terms of future learning.
- 4.5.8 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 1. Programmes and modules can be graded using either 'Pass/Fail' or a percentage grading system.
- 5.1.2 2. All programme and module grades are provisional until agreed at a formal meeting of the Programme Exam Board.
- 5.1.3 3. Borderline grades 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 2022.
- 5.2.2 In group work assessments:
- All learners in a group will receive a group mark for the output of the assignment or project which is an assessment of the content covered.
  - Learners will also complete a self-assessment of their involvement and contribution to the group for the duration of the project.
  - Learners will also assess the participation and contribution of other members of the group throughout the project.
  - The proportion of group to individual work etc. will be decided by the relevant programme board at the development of the assessment strategy.
- 5.2.3 Grades indicate the extent to which a learner has met or exceeded the minimum intended learning outcomes for the relevant assessment.
- 5.2.4 Non classified awards are given when the learners attain all the minimum intended learning outcomes from the programme.

- 5.2.5 Classified awards are graded as Pass, Merit and Distinction and are aligned with QQI Sectoral Conventions for Assessment for level 9 award.
- 5.2.6 Rubrics which are available to learners in advance of submission, provide an overview of the grading structure and expectations for the assessment. Rubrics clearly detail the criteria required to achieve each grade, including the required standard to pass.

### 5.3 **Aggregate Mark Calculation**

- 5.3.1 **Aggregate Marks and Passing Criteria:** Within modules that have multiple assessment components, learners can achieve a passing grade by balancing weaker performance in one component with stronger performance in another. The aggregate mark across all components must meet or exceed the module pass mark. This is not applicable in modules that have only one assessment component.
- 5.3.2 **Conditions for Aggregation:** The curriculum for each programme will detail the application of aggregate marks within each module. Certain assessment components may be excluded from aggregation and must be passed individually.
- 5.3.3 **Application of Aggregate Marks:** The calculation of aggregate marks will be applied automatically where a learner meets the criteria outlined in the programme curriculum.
- 5.3.4 **Overall Programme Grade:** Marks from individual modules will be combined to calculate an overall programme grade. However, unless specified in the programme curriculum, learners are required to pass each module independently to successfully complete the programme.

### 5.4 **Moderation of Grades**

Moderation is in place to verify that the grading criteria and standards have been consistently and accurately applied across all submissions. It involves a review of a selected sample of assessments to ensure fairness and alignment with the established marking guidelines.

- 5.4.1 Moderation is not considered a double-marking process. Where submissions require double marking, this is specified in the programme curriculum.
- 5.4.2 **Scope of Moderation:**
  - For programmes with fewer than 100 learners, a minimum of 20% of all assessment submissions will be subject to moderation.
  - For programmes with 100 or more learners, between 10% and 15% of assessment submissions will be moderated, as agreed with the Programme Board.
- 5.4.3 **Selection of Submissions for Moderation:**
  - Moderation will specifically include:

- All submissions that fall within 5% of the pass mark
- An even distribution of samples across the remaining grade bands (i.e., fail, pass, merit, distinction)

#### 5.4.4 Moderation Process:

- Moderators will be appointed by the Programme Lead.
- Moderators will review the selected sample of submissions to assess whether the marking is consistent with the established rubric and grading criteria.
- Any discrepancies >5% identified during moderation will be discussed with the original assessor(s) to reach a consensus on the appropriate mark.
- If a systemic issue with marking is identified, additional samples may be moderated, or a full review may be conducted at the discretion of the Programme Lead.

#### 5.4.5 Reporting and Feedback:

- Moderators will provide a report summarising their findings, highlighting any areas of concern and providing feedback to assessors.
- Moderation reports will be available to the Programme Exam Board.

### 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 The External Examiner has unfettered access to any Programme Information pertaining to teaching, learning or assessment as they may request.
- 5.5.4 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.
- 5.5.5 At a minimum, a sample of grades awarded at each band, including fails and borderline grades, are subject to consideration by an External Examiner.
- 5.5.6 The External Examiner report is considered by the Programme Exam Board in advance of the ratification of grades and issuing of awards.

## 5.6 Certification

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

## 1. References

QQI Assessment and Standards (Revised 2013)

[https://www.qqi.ie/Publications/Publications/Assessment\\_and\\_Standards%20Revised%202013.pdf](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](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 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

[www.qqi.ie/sites/default/files/2021-11/qp-17-policies-and-criteria-for-the-validation-of-programmes-of-education-and-training.pdf](http://www.qqi.ie/sites/default/files/2021-11/qp-17-policies-and-criteria-for-the-validation-of-programmes-of-education-and-training.pdf)