

Assessment and Grading Procedure (ED-SOP-077)

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| Related Documents | <p>ED-Pol-076 – Assessment Policy</p> <p>ED-SOP-079 – Programme Exam Board Procedure</p> <p>ED-SOP-080 – External Examining Procedure</p> <p>ED-Pol-071 - Appeals Policy</p> <p>ED-T-081 – External Examiner Report Template</p> <p>ED-GL-061 – RCPI Teaching, Learning and Assessment Framework</p> |

1. Introduction

There are five stages in quality assuring RCPI's assessment procedures, these are designed in line with the Quality Assuring Assessment Guidelines for Providers (Revised 2013). These stages are made clear to all learners through the relevant policies and procedures.

The 5 stages are as follows:

1. **Assessment** – this process assesses learner achievement in relation to the standards of knowledge, skill and competence so that the learner will receive an award. In this document we refer to this stage as designing our assessment strategy.
2. **Authentication Process** – this process ensures fairness, consistency, and validity of assessment and of the outcome of assessment. There are two stages to this process within RCPI, the internal verification and external verification. This process is outlined in section 2 of this procedure. There is also further information in our [Assessment Policy \(ED-Pol-076\)](#).
3. **Results Approval** – this process ensures that appropriate decisions are taken regarding the outcome of the assessment and authentication process. The process includes internal verification (Grade Moderators) and an [External Examiner Report \(ED-T-081\)](#). The process followed by Grade Moderators is outlined in section 3.5 of this procedure.
4. **Appeals Process** – this process enables the learner to appeal the assessment process and/or the assessment result. The appeals process is outlined in the [Appeals Policy \(ED-Pol-071\)](#).
5. **Request for Certification** - Final results are submitted for the purpose of issuing certificates. Before issuing certificates, RCPI ensures that internal verification and external verification has taken place, and that all relevant procedures have been adhered to.

2. Designing the assessment strategy

A programme assessment strategy is a document aimed at faculty, learners and Assessment Lead who are involved with the programme. It is prepared for every programme during the programme's development and maintained thereafter.

- 2.1 A member of the Programme Board is nominated as an Assessment Lead.

- 2.2 Programme assessment strategy, module assessment strategy and the grading scheme (see below further information on designing grading rubrics) are agreed for each programme by the Programme Board in line with the [Teaching, Learning and Assessment Framework \(ED-GL-061\)](#).
- 2.3 Assessment tasks are scheduled when designing the programme assessment strategy so that there is an appropriate workload balance for learners.
- 2.4 The assessment tasks are scheduled so that learners have an appropriate amount of time to acquire the knowledge and skills from the module or learning outcome that is being assessed.
- 2.5 The Programme Assessment Lead and Education Specialist work collaboratively on the development of the programme and module assessment strategy with relevant personnel, including module leads, faculty and members of the Programme Board, bearing in mind the following:
- The Minimum Intended Module Learning Outcomes (MIMLOs) are clearly defined, measurable and mapped to the Minimum Intended Programme Learning Outcomes (MIPLOs) and guide the selection of teaching, learning and assessment types.
 - The design of assessment criteria is guided by the minimum intended learning outcomes.
 - The assessment supports the learning process and includes an appropriate mix of formative assessment and summative assessment.
 - The programme and module assessment strategy:
 - includes a range of assessment types to assess different domains of learning (see assessment types table below).
 - is directly linked to the programme’s teaching and learning strategy.
 - is designed to help equip learners with a wide range of transferable skills and competencies.
 - focuses on optimising the learner experience and take account of faculty and staff resources.
- 2.6 Authentication Process – Internal Verification and External Authentication:
- 2.6.1 When the programme assessment strategies and module assessment strategies are complete, these are presented to the RCPI Teaching, Learning and Assessment Lead by the Programme Assessment Lead and the Education Specialist for approval.
- 2.6.2 The programme assessment strategy and module assessment strategies are approved internally by the Programme Board and reviewed externally by an External Examiner. The External Examiner’s report is considered by the Programme Board and changes implemented as appropriate prior to the next intake.
- 2.6.3 The Education Specialist also shares a sample of the assessment tasks with the External Examiner for review, other documentation such as the marking scheme and rubrics are also shared with the External Examiner.

- 2.7 The approved assessment strategy is published on the RCPI website as part of the programme information available to all learners.
- 2.8 Clear and approved marking criteria are made available to learners.
- 2.9 Consideration will be given to learners whose assessment methods and supports may require adjustment in line with [Reasonable Accommodation Policy \(ED-Pol-084\)](#).

3. Grading Schemes, Allocating Marks and Providing Feedback

3.1 Grading

- 3.1.1 The Assessment Lead compares the learner's performance in the assessment task with the grading scheme, using their academic judgement to determine the marks a learner merits.
- 3.1.2 Grades are linked to the appropriate grading scheme which specifies how learner effort should be scored and how the total score is calculated.
- 3.1.3 The Assessment Lead uses the full spectrum of marks from 0% to 100%.
- 3.1.4 The Assessment Lead avoids issuing borderline grades wherever possible.
- 3.1.5 The Assessment Lead provides feedback in support of their assessment decisions which correlates with the grade awarded and assessment criteria.

3.2 Penalties

- 3.2.1 Penalties can be applied to a learner's grade awarded for failing to comply with procedural rules for assessment:
- A learner failing to comply with the word-count limits for a piece of continuous assessment work will normally incur a 10% penalty applied to the marks awarded for the particular piece of work e.g. a 10% penalty on a mark of 60% will reduce the mark to 54%.
 - Learners who submit continuous assessment work late will normally incur a 10% penalty applied to the marks awarded for the piece of work being assessed. A late submission is defined as a piece of assessment submitted within seven days after the assigned submission date.
 - Any assessment submitted after seven days post assignment submission date, or not submitted at all, is considered a non-submission. Non-submissions incur a grade of 0%. The non-submission of an assessment which is deemed mandatory for completion of the programme, and if not submitted, will result in failure to complete the programme.

3.3 Transparency of Assessment Decisions

- 3.3.1 It must be clear to the Programme Exam Board and learner, based on the grading scheme, how the Assessment Lead arrived at their decision.

3.3.2 The feedback provided must explain the grade awarded.

3.3.3 The final grade for a module is determined by the combination of the numerical marks awarded for assessments in that module.

3.3.4 Where the combination of component-level marks results in a borderline module grade, the grade is internally verified by the Assessment Lead and the mark awarded is placed within a clear grade band, if appropriate.

3.4 Release of Grades

3.4.1 Following grading by the Assessment Lead, learners' grades are collated by the Programme Board.

3.4.2 Grades, following grade moderation, are released to learners as provisional grades pending confirmation by the Programme Exam Board.

3.5 Grade Moderation

3.5.1 Appointment of Grade Moderators

- Experienced, competent Assessment Leads are appointed as Grade Moderators by the Programme Exam Board.
- The Grade Moderator for a particular set of grades should have had no prior involvement in making academic judgement for the relevant pieces of learner effort.

3.5.2 Sampling

- The Grade Moderator takes a sample of the grades for moderation.
- This sample group should include:
 - a. Any borderline grades
 - b. Any fail grades
 - c. A random sample from within each grade band

3.5.3 Grade Moderation

- Grade moderation takes place in line with the [Assessment Policy \(ED-Pol-076\)](#).
- Grade Moderators review the application of the marking scheme against the learner effort by the original Assessment Lead to ensure consistent and fair assessment.
- Grade Moderators submit a report detailing any proposed adjustments to the grades selected for moderation along with detail of the extent to which they believe the grading scheme and criteria were correctly applied.

- Variation in grading between the Assessment Lead and the Grade Moderator may be discussed between the two to reach agreement.
- Variation in grading may be discussed between the Grade Moderator and the Programme Lead or nominee to determine the final grade.
- The Programme Lead has the final decision on moderation of a grade, subject to the Programme Exam Board.

3.6 Dissemination of results

3.6.1 Learners can view their results of their programme through the Virtual Learning Environment (VLE). Specific feedback on the learner's results is also available through the VLE.

3.6.2 The results are given to learners within a specified timeframe, this is communicated to the learner through the Programme Handbook.

3.7 Review and Re-checks

3.7.1 In the instance that a learner requires their grade to be re-checked, the Assessment Lead will check the recording and combination of component scores for a module to ensure that there has been no error in the calculation of the learner's grade. The learner will be notified of the outcome of the re-check within 5 working days.

3.7.2 If there has been an error in their grade, the learner's grade will be corrected. Any errors will be reported to the External Examiner and Programme Exam Board.

3.7.3 In the instance that a learner requests their that provisional summative assessment decision is reviewed, prior to it's ratification by the Programme Exam Board, this is done by the Assessment Lead. Learners are required to state the grounds for the requested review. The review is overseen by the Programme Board. If there is a proposed change in the classification after review, the External Examiner may be consulted or notified.

3.7.4 The review can be sought if a learner suspects that the assessment result was erroneous in some respect.

3.7.5 The External Examiner will be informed if there are any amendments made to the learner's grade following the review.

3.7.6 The learner can appeal a decision of the review through the [Appeals Policy \(ED-Pol-071\)](#).

3.8 Viewing of Examination Script(s)

3.8.1 Learners may apply to the Programme Exam Board to inspect their marked examination script(s). An appointment will be arranged where a member of RCPI staff will accompany the learner to a specified

venue where script(s) and any supporting material from the exam can be viewed. Please be aware of the following rules for viewing of script(s):

- The learner may not take notes or any photographs during the viewing.
- The learner is permitted to have somebody accompany them to the viewing, provided this person is not a member of faculty/staff member.
- Learners are not allowed to remove scripts from the room or make copies.
- The learner must present a form of photographic identification to view the script(s).
- Please allow sufficient time for the requested script(s) to be located and organise for an invigilator to be available at suitable time and venue.

3.9 Retention of Assessment Submissions

3.9.1 The Postgraduate Medical Education Centre Manager has overall responsibility for maintaining records relating to learner assessment. Records relating to summative assessment results are permanently and securely retained, this material includes scripts, continuous assessment submissions, project reports and dissertations.

3.9.2 In terms of administrative infrastructure, Programme Coordinators are responsible for the following:

- Securely print and distribute examination papers
- Coordinate and approve the venues for assessment
- Organise invigilation
- Collect scripts from venues and log them
- Maintain records of attendance
- Securely transfer the scripts to Assessment Lead
- Make arrangements for learners requiring special accommodation

4. Assessment Types

Brown's, "Assessment: A Guide for Lecturers" (2001) provides a useful starting point to consider the variety of assessment possible. Below is a table of possible assessment types available for use:

| Assessment Type | Details |
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| Cases and open problems | An intensive analysis of a specific example. |
| Computer-based assessment | The use of computers to support assessments. |
| Essays | Written work in which learners try out ideas and arguments supported by evidence. |

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| Learning logs/ diaries | Wide variety of formats ranging from an unstructured account of each day to a structured form based on tasks. |
| Mini-practicals | A series of short practical examinations undertaken under timed conditions. Assessment of practical skills in an authentic setting. |
| Modified Essay Questions (MEQs) | A sequence of questions based on a case study. After learners have answered one question, further information and a question are given. |
| Multiple Choice Questions (MCQs) | Select the correct answers. |
| Orals | Verbal interaction between Assessment Lead and assessed. |
| Objective Structured Clinical Examinations (OSCEs) | Candidates measured under examination conditions on their reaction to a series of short, practical, real-life situations. |
| Portfolios | Systematic collections of educational or work products that are typically collected over time. Wide variety of types from a collection of assignments to reflections upon critical incidents. |
| Poster sessions | Display of results from a project. |
| Presentations | Oral reports on projects or other investigative activities. |
| Problems | Measures application, analysis and problem-solving strategies. |
| Group Projects and Dissertations | Assessment by a teaching faculty member/Assessment Lead of the learner group work. |
| Questionnaires and report forms | One or more questions presented and answered together. |
| Reflective Practice Assignments | Measures capacity to analyse and evaluate experience in the light of theories and research evidence. |
| Reports on Practical's | Methodically written account of a practical investigation |
| Self-assessed questions based on open learning (distance learning materials and computer-based) | Strictly speaking, a method of learning not of assessment. A process by which an assessment instrument is self-administered for the specific purpose of providing performance feedback, diagnosis and prescription recommendations rather than a pass/fail decision. |
| Short answer questions | Brief answers that can measure analysis, application of knowledge, problem-solving and evaluative skills. |
| Simulated interviews | Useful for assessing oral communication skills. |
| Single Essay Examination | Usually three hours on prepared topic. |
| Work based Assessment | Variety of methods possible including learning logs, portfolios, projects, structured reports from supervisors or mentors. |

5. Designing Grading Rubrics

Stevens & Levi, *An Introduction to Rubrics* (2005) offer guidance on the design and use of rubrics for assessment.

Rubrics can help instructors communicate their expectations to learners and assess learner work fairly and efficiently. Rubrics can also provide learners with informative feedback on their strengths and weaknesses, and prompt reflective practice.

5.1 How to Create a Grading Rubric

5.1.1 Define the purpose of the assignment/assessment for which you are creating a rubric.

- **What exactly is the assigned task?**
- **What does exemplary learner performance look like?**
- **What kind of feedback do you want to give learners on their work/performance?**
- Decide what kind of rubric you will use: a holistic rubric or an analytic rubric. Holistic and analytic rubrics use a combination of descriptive rating scales (e.g., weak, satisfactory, strong) and assessment criteria to guide the assessment process.
 - A holistic rubric uses rating scales that include the criteria. For example:
 - Weak:** thesis is unclear due to writing style, organization of ideas, and/or grammatical errors.
 - Satisfactory:** overall thesis is clear, writing style and organization mostly support the thesis.
 - Strong:** Introduction includes a thesis statement, writing style and organization offer ample evidence to support the overall thesis.
 - An analytic rubric uses a rating scale to evaluate each criterion separately, forming a grid or table in which the rating scale is presented in the top row and each criterion is listed down the leftmost column.

5.1.2 Define the criteria, considering; what knowledge and skills are required for the assignment/assessment? Make a list of these, group, and label them, and eliminate any that are not critical. The list should contain no more than 6-7 criteria but need not include that many.

5.2 Design the rating scale.

5.2.1 Most rating scales include 3-5 levels. Consider the following:

- **Given what learners can demonstrate in this assignment/assessment, what are the possible levels of achievement?**
- **Will you use numbers or descriptive labels for these levels?**
- **If you choose descriptive labels, what labels are most appropriate? Will you assign a number to those labels?**
- **In what order will you list these levels – from lowest to highest or vice versa?**

5.2.2 Write descriptions for each level of the rating scale. Create statements of expected performance at each level of the rubric. For an analytic rubric do this for each criterion of the rubric. These descriptions help learners understand your expectations and their performance regarding those expectations. Well-written descriptions:

- **describe observable and measurable behaviour**
- **use parallel language across the scale**
- **indicate the degree to which the standards are met**

5.3 Create your rubric

5.3.1 Develop the criteria, rating scale and descriptions for each level of the rating scale into a rubric. Space permitting, include the assignment at the top of the rubric. For reading and grading ease, limit the rubric to a single page, if possible. Consider the effectiveness of your rubric and revise accordingly.

5.4 How to Use a Grading Rubric

5.4.1 In addition to using the rubric to grade an assignment/assessment, you may wish to:

- **distribute the rubric with the assignment.**
- **ask learners to use the rubric to evaluate their own work.**
- **ask learners to use the rubric for peer review.**

6. References

QQI Assessment and Standards (Revised 2013)

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

QQI Quality Assuring Assessment, Guidelines for Providers (Revised 2013)

<https://www.qqi.ie/Downloads/Quality%20Assuring%20Assessment%20-%20Guidelines%20for%20Providers%2C%20Revised%202013.pdf>

QQI's Core Statutory Quality Assurance Guidelines

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

Brown, G., & Manogue, M. (2001). AMEE Medical Education Guide No. 22: Refreshing lecturing: a guide for lecturers. *Medical teacher*, 23(3), 231-244.

Stevens Dannelle, D., & Levi, A. J. (2005). Introduction to Rubrics.