

Policy on External Examination (HET)

Policy Procedure Protocol Guideline

Office of the Nursing and Midwifery Services Director (ONMSD): Consortium of Centres of Nursing and Midwifery Education (CCNME)

Title of PPPG Development Group:	Consortium of Centres of Nursing and Midwifery Education (CCNME)		
Approved by:	Academic Council: 04/11/2022		
Reference Number:	CCNME06(17)2022		
Version Number:	1		
Publication Date:	2022		
Date for revision:	2025		
Online Location:	https://healthservice.hse.ie/filelibrary/onmsd/policy-external-examination-het.pdf		
Version	Date Approved	List section numbers changed	Author

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1.0 Purpose

The CCNME adopts and maintains an External Examining process that promotes public confidence in ensuring learners have been judged fairly, consistently, ethically and objectively to attain the standard that is certified by their award in the context of the National Framework of Qualifications (NFQ) in compliance with Quality Qualifications Ireland (QQI) standards and guidelines (2013, 2015).

2.0 Scope

This policy applies to the following:

Academic Council	Quality Enhancement Committee	Programme Development Committee	Programme Board	Programme Committee	CCNME Programme Teams	External Examiner	Learner
✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

3.0 Policy Statement

External examination is a core condition of CCNME initial validation for QQI HET accredited programmes and the CCNME implements the QQI *Effective Practice Guidelines for External Examining* (2015) for their process. It is an objective, independent, quality assurance mechanism employed by the CCNME to ensure the integrity of assessments and to support public confidence in its academic qualifications (QQI, 2015). External examination provides an independent examination of a programmes learning outcomes, procedures for the assessment of Learners and its compliance with national standards. The CCNME is cognisant of its professional responsibility for meeting the Post Registration Nursing and Midwifery Programmes Standards and Requirements (NMBI, 2015) to ensure that QQI HET accredited programmes are designed to develop the knowledge, skills, competence and professional values of registered nurses and midwives.

4.0 Roles and Responsibilities

	Academic Council	Quality Enhancement Committee	Programme Development Committee	Programme Board	Programme Committee	CCNME Programme Teams	External Examiner
Responsible for Implementation	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Responsible for Monitoring & Review	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

4.1 Academic Council

- 4.1.1 Oversee the process for the nomination, selection and appointments of External Examiners.
- 4.1.2 Delegate authority to the relevant academic committees to nominate, select, and appoint External Examiner for HET validated programmes.
- 4.1.3 Formally appoint an External Examiner on behalf of the CCNME.
- 4.1.4 Retain a copy of External Examiner Curriculum Vitae (CV).

4.2 Programme Development Committee

- 4.2.1 Identifies a potential External Examiner who meets the selection criteria for the programme being developed.
- 4.2.2 In the event of more than one nomination, the Programme Development Committee will forward to the Quality Enhancement Committee who will determine suitability of the potential External Examiner against the selection criteria.
- 4.2.3 Receive from the Quality Enhancement Committee, confirmation of the appointment of the External Examiner(s) for the programme.
- 4.2.4 Agree the External Examiners scope of operation at the outset, along with supporting documentation that assists them in their role.

4.3 Quality Enhancement Committee

- 4.3.1 External Examiner nominations will be considered by the Quality Enhancement Committee who will recommend to the Academic Council.
- 4.3.2 Formally communicate with the External Examiner(s) inviting him/her to act as an External Examiner for the programme.
- 4.3.3 Issue a formal appointment letter and include the CCNME documentation to support them in their role.
- 4.3.4 Receive and forward the External Examiners CV to the CCNME Academic Council for submission to QQI (and NMBI if required).
- 4.3.5 Inform the Programme Development Committee of the appointment of the External Examiner.

4.4 Programme Board

- 4.4.1 Responsible for scheduling QQI HET programmes of education and Board of Examiners to ensure appropriate and timely scheduling of CCNME activities.
- 4.4.2 Receive the External Examiner Report following the Board of Examiners' meeting.

4.5 Programme Committees

- 4.5.1 Arrange induction for the External Examiner to be familiar with the CCNME, its policies on external examining, including reporting requirements and the structure, MIPLOS and assessment procedures of relevant HET programme(s) of education and determine any further requirements.
- 4.5.2 Agree with the External Examiner a schedule for review and submission of assessment material.
- 4.5.3 Submit to the External Examiner for review, all draft assessments tasks, including marking schemes, examination papers, assignments, guidelines, answer plans etc, prior to circulation to learners.
- 4.5.4 Amend assessment tasks, based on the External Examiners recommendations/ feedback.

- 4.5.5 Provide the External Examiner with a sample of graded learner assessment, previously agreed with the Programme Co-ordinator at induction.
- 4.5.6 Formally communicates with the External Examiner(s) identifying date(s) and agreed time(s) and venue(s) for visit(s).
- 4.5.7 Identify a sample of learners who have completed the programme and relevant staff to be available to meet with the External Examiner(s) on the date(s) of the External Examination if requested
- 4.5.8 Ensure that the External Examination process is adhered to and when complete prepares for the Pre-Board of Examiners and the Board of Examiners meetings

4.6 CCNME Programme Teams

- 4.6.1 Ensure all relevant staff within the Centre aware of and comply with this policy and associated procedures
- 4.6.2 The Programme Coordinator will communicate with programme facilitators, internal assessors and internal moderators regarding the External Examination process.
- 4.6.3 Provide internal assessor/moderators with date(s), times and venues of Pre-Board External Examiner(s) and Board of Examiners meetings
- 4.6.4 Ensure that the External Examiner(s) feedback is available for the Pre-Board of Examiners and the Board of Examiners

4.7 External Examiner

The main functions of the external examiner as adopted from the QQI Effective Practice Guidelines for External Examining (2015) (or external examiner team) are these:

- 4.7.1 Review the appropriateness of the minimum intended programme learning outcomes (i.e. the programme's basic educational goal), and other programme objectives.
- 4.7.2 Probe the actual attainment of learners (actual programme learning outcomes) using information agreed with and supplied by the provider.
- 4.7.3 Compare and contrast both the minimum intended programme learning outcomes and the actual attainment of learners with the relevant awards standards, with the National Framework of Qualifications, and with corresponding data from other programmes in the same discipline in other higher education institutions in Ireland and beyond.
- 4.7.4 Determine whether or not the applied procedures for assessment are valid, reliable, fair and consistent.
- 4.7.5 Review the appropriateness of the programme assessment strategy and the assessment procedures and, flowing from this, consider subsidiary module assessment strategies.
- 4.7.6 Review key assessment tasks prior to their assignment in light of the programme and module assessment strategies and learners' prerequisite (prior) learning. Where key tasks include key continuous assessment tasks, it might not be feasible to review them prior to assignment, but they should still be reviewed by the external examiner.

- 4.7.7 Report findings and recommendations to the Programme Committee.
- 4.7.8 Attend at least one Board of Examiner within the academic year.
- 4.7.9 Submits External Examiners Report to the Chairperson of the Programme Board
- 4.7.10 External Examiners will consult with the Programme Committee and agree prior to commencement of programme
 - 4.7.10.1 The assessments tasks to be reviewed, including marking schemes, examination papers, assignments, guidelines, answer plans etc
 - 4.7.10.2 The sample of learner assessments to be reviewed
 - 4.7.10.3 Timeframes for submission of the above.

5.0 Document Control

Policy on External Examination (HET)	
Author	Consortium of Centres of Nursing and Midwifery Education (CCNME)
Version Control	Version
	Date of Approval
	V.1.0
	04/11/2022
Policy Review	November 2025
Supporting Documentation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ENQA). (2015). <i>Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG)</i> [online]. Available from: https://www.enqa.eu/wp-content/uploads/2015/11/ESG_2015.pdf [accessed 23 January 2022]. • Nursing and Midwifery Board of Ireland (NMBI). (2015). <i>Post Registration Nursing and Midwifery Programme: Standards and Requirements</i> [online]. Available from: https://www.nmbi.ie/NMBI/media/NMBI/Post-registration-nursing-midwifery-programmes.pdf?ext=.pdf [accessed 23 January 2022]. • <i>Qualifications and Quality Assurance (Education and Training) Act 2012</i>. No. 28/2012 [online]. Available from: https://www.irishstatutebook.ie/eli/2012/act/28/enacted/en/html [accessed 31 January 2022]. • <i>Qualifications and Quality Assurance (Education and Training) (Amendment) Act 2019</i>. No. 32/2019 [online]. Available from: https://www.irishstatutebook.ie/eli/2019/act/32/enacted/en/html [accessed 31 January 2022]. • Quality and Qualifications Ireland (QQI). (2013). <i>Assessment and Standards, Revised 2013</i> [online]. Available from: https://www.qqi.ie/sites/default/files/2021-09/assessment_and_standards-revised-2013.pdf [accessed 30 January 2022]. • Quality and Qualifications Ireland (QQI). (2015). <i>Effective Practice Guidelines for External Examining Revised February 2015</i> [online]. Available from: https://www.qqi.ie/sites/default/files/2021-

	<p>10/effective-practice-guidelines-for-external-examining-revised-february-2015.pdf [accessed 23 January 2022].</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quality and Qualifications Ireland (QQI). (2017a). <i>Policies and criteria for the validation of programmes of education and training</i> [online]. Available from: https://www.qqi.ie/sites/default/files/2021-11/qp-17-policies-and-criteria-for-the-validation-of-programmes-of-education-and-training.pdf [accessed 2 January 2022]. • Quality and Qualifications Ireland (QQI). (2017b). <i>Policy and Criteria for Making Awards</i> [online]. Available from: https://www.qqi.ie/sites/default/files/media/file-uploads/Policy%20and%20Criteria%20for%20Making%20Awards.pdf [accessed 30 January 2022]. • Quality and Qualifications Ireland (QQI). (2012). <i>Policy for Collaborative Programmes, Transnational Programmes and Joint Awards Revised 2012</i> [online]. Available from: https://www.qqi.ie/sites/default/files/2021-10/policy-for-collaborative-programmes-transnational-programmes-and-joint-awards.pdf [accessed 23 January 2022]. • Quality and Qualifications Ireland (QQI). (2014). <i>Policy for Determining Awards Standards</i> [online]. Available from: https://www.qqi.ie/sites/default/files/media/file-uploads/Policy%20for%20Determining%20Award%20Standards.pdf [accessed 30 January 2022]. • Quality and Qualifications Ireland (QQI). (2016). <i>Policy on Quality Assurance Guidelines</i> [online]. Available from: https://www.qqi.ie/sites/default/files/2021-11/qp-10-policy-on-quality-assurance-guidelines.pdf [accessed 1 February 2022]. • Quality and Qualifications Ireland (QQI). (2018). <i>Quality Assuring Assessment Guidelines for Providers Revised 2013 (Version 2 - revised 2018)</i> [online]. Available from: https://www.qqi.ie/sites/default/files/2021-10/quality-assuring-assessment-guidelines-for-providers-revised-2013.pdf [accessed 30 January 2022].
Related Policies & Procedures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Policy on Assessment of Learners [PDF, 8 Pages] • Procedure on Assessment of Learners [PDF, 7 Pages] • Policy on Reasonable Accommodation in Assessment [PDF, 5 Pages] • Procedure on Reasonable Accommodation in Assessment [PDF, 5 Pages] • Policy on Submission of Assessment [PDF, 4 Pages] • Procedure on Submission of Assessment [PDF, 5 Pages] • Policy on Security of Assessment [PDF, 4 Pages] • Procedure on Security of Assessment [PDF, 8 Pages] • Procedure on Regulations for the Conduct of Written Examinations [PDF, 8 Pages]

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Policy on Grading and Certification of Learner Assessment [PDF, 6 Pages] • Procedure on Grading and Certification of Learner Assessment [PDF, 8 Pages] • Procedure on the Process of Board of Examiners Meetings for QQI HET Validated Programmes [PDF, 8 Pages] • Policy on Assessment Appeals [PDF, 7 Pages] • Procedure on Review, Recheck and Appeal of Learner Assessment Decisions [PDF, 6 Pages] • Policy on Promoting and Maintaining Academic Integrity [PDF, 7 Pages] • Procedure on Promotion of Academic Integrity among Learners [PDF, 5 Pages] • Policy on Data Protection, Usage and Management [PDF, 7 Pages]
Related Resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • External Examiners Report • Broadsheet of Results and Reporting Results

Appendix 1: Broadsheet of Results and Recording Results

(QQI (2013) Assessment and Standards, Revised 2013)

Broadsheets of Results and Recording Results

A broadsheet of results (broadsheet) is a formatted Microsoft Excel spreadsheet produced by QQI for each programme to facilitate the recording of results by the provider. Broadsheets will be produced for each session (summer and autumn) by QQI, listing all learners registered with QQI as presented by the provider in the registration files.

One Excel file per programme, with multiple worksheets, will be provided. Each worksheet contains a broadsheet. Broadsheets are produced for each programme stage and learner type — e.g. a three-stage programme with regular and ACCS learners on all stages, will have six broadsheets each on a separate worksheet. Each worksheet contains a signature page to be completed at the meeting of the Board of Examiners.

Summer broadsheets are usually issued late in April, while autumn broadsheets are issued in August.

There must be an overall result (pass, exempt, withheld etc.) for every learner whose name is included on the broadsheet.

Alternative broadsheets/special request

To accommodate diverse needs, QQI offers the special broadsheets on receipt of a written request. One example of this is the provision of broadsheets to facilitate repeating learners following an earlier version of a programme.

Completing broadsheets

Providers have the option of completing broadsheets by keying in results or uploading learner results from their own information system. Detailed operating instructions are available from QQI and should be consulted.

Withholding a result

Should a provider wish to withhold a learner's result, it should use the result code *Withheld* (WHL) on the broadsheet. This may be done for discipline, personal, health, or any other legitimate reasons. It is a matter for the provider whether it will present such a learner again and, if it does so, under what circumstances, e.g. as a first attempt or otherwise.

A provider may have legitimate reason to exclude a learner's name from the broadsheet. In this case, of course, there is no result code.

Changes in learners' results after the meeting of the Board of Examiners

Notification of any legitimate changes of results (e.g. arising from a formal appeal process) should be sent to QQI on the date on which broadsheets are returned or within two weeks of that date, and always well in advance of the relevant conferring date to ensure the correct result appears on the award parchment.

Result Code	Result	Effect on Number of Exam Attempts	Recorded on Broadsheet
EXE	Exemption(s) Granted	<i>Counted as an Attempt</i>	<i>Overall EXE – note the number of the exemptions in space provided (boxes)</i>
EXE module repeat	EXE in module/subject result box to indicate modules passed in previous session		<i>Applicable to the overall result – normally further EXE or PASS or FAIL etc.</i>
Absent	Absent from Examination	<i>Counted as an Attempt</i>	ABS
Fail	Fail	<i>Counted as an Attempt</i>	<i>Fail is only recorded in the overall result when a learner has achieved no exemptions</i>
Deferral	Deferral of Result(s) A Board of Examiners may, in the case of illness or bereavement, recommend that a final decision on a candidate's result be deferred to enable the candidate to complete specific outstanding requirements of the course or examination	<i>Not Counted as an Attempt</i>	<i>DEF in overall result</i>
Withdrew	Withdrew from Course. The provider normally has evidence stipulated in its procedures that the learner has withdrawn from the programme	<i>Counted as an Attempt</i>	WDRW
Withheld	Learner's Result(s) Withheld	<i>Provider to determine – attempt or otherwise</i>	WHLD

Table 1