Procedure for the Appointment of Subject Matter Experts, External Examiners, External Authenticators and External Chairpersons of Committees

Policy ☐   Procedure ☒   Protocol ☐   Guideline ☐

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

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1.0 Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to ensure the CCNME is compliant with QQI Statutory Quality Assurance (QA) Guidelines relating to the recruitment, engagement, role and responsibilities of subject matter experts, External Examiner and External Authenticator (Refer to Policies and Procedures for External Authentication (QQI FET) and External Examination Standard 6 Assessment of Learners. The CCNME will also comply with Section 5 on External Examiners, in the Nursing and Midwifery Board of Ireland (NMBI) Post Registration Nursing and Midwifery Programmes Standards and Requirements (NMBI 2015).

2.0 Procedure

2.1 Role of the External Examiner

2.1.1 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:

2.1.1.1 Review the appropriateness of the minimum intended programme learning outcomes (i.e. the programme's basic educational goal), and other programme objectives;

2.1.1.2 Probe the actual attainment of learners (actual programme learning outcomes) using information agreed with and supplied by the provider;

2.1.1.3 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;

2.1.1.4 Determine whether or not the applied procedures for assessment are valid, reliable, fair and consistent;

2.1.1.5 Review the appropriateness of the programme assessment strategy and the assessment procedures and, flowing from this, consider subsidiary module assessment strategies;

2.1.1.6 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;

2.1.1.7 Report findings and recommendations to the provider. Assures academic standards of programmes of education are consistent with the specified learning outcomes of the programme.

2.2 Criteria for appointment as an External Examiner

2.2.1 The external examiners academic and professional qualifications should be appropriate to the subject being examined;

2.2.2 External examiners should have academic standing and expertise with the expertise to adjudicate on comparability of standards;

2.2.3   There must be no conflicts of interest whether personal, professional or commercial that would undermine or be seen to undermine the independence of the proposed external examiner;

2.2.4   External examiners for post-registration nursing and midwifery education programmes/units of learning;

2.2.5   Are registered Nurses/Midwives with professional Qualifications appropriate to the post-registration programme/units of learning being examined;

2.2.6   Hold academic and teaching qualifications and have at least 3 years full-time teaching experience in courses appropriate to the post-registration programmes/units of learning being examined;

2.2.7   Have experience in examining and assessing post-registration students;

2.2.8   Have experience in the development, management, delivery and evaluation of post-registration programmes/units of earning (NMBI 2015 p.15);

2.2.9   External examiners are appointed for a maximum of three academic years. They may be appointed to serve for an additional year but generally no further extension years;

2.2.10 Should the external examiner not be in a position to fulfill their term of appointment, the process for replacing external examiners within their appointed term will follow the normal appointment process. In the event of more than one examiner being appointed to review a programme a chief External Examiner will be appointed to collate feedback.

2.3 External Authenticator Role

2.3.1   Provides independent authoritative confirmation of fair and consistent assessment of learners in accordance with Quality Qualifications Ireland (QQI) Quality Assurance (QA) guideline (QQI 2016);

2.3.2   Moderates assessment results in accordance with the CCNME sampling strategy;

2.3.3   Reviews the internal verification and external authentication process;

2.3.4   Meets with a random sample of learners who have completed the programme if required;

2.3.5   Approves final results;

2.3.6   Completes the external authentication report and submits it to CCNME programme team;

2.3.7   Completes the authentication process before the results approval process is implemented;

2.3.8   Is responsible for the security of assessment materials during the authentication process;

2.3.9   Identifies any issues arising in relation to the process or the results and makes recommendations for corrective action

2.4 Criteria for Appointment as an External Authenticator

2.4.1   Has subject matter expertise within the appropriate field of learning;

2.4.2 Has experience delivering programme assessment relevant to the field of learning;

2.4.3 Agrees to undertake appropriate training and to attend appropriate briefings;

2.4.4 Has the qualities necessary to interact with learners, and CCNME programme teams as appropriate;

2.4.5 Can undertake to operate within the CCNME Guidelines policy and procedures for the assessment of learners in accordance with QQI QA policies (Standard 6);

2.4.6 Is available to the CCNME at appropriate times;

2.4.7 Is independent of the Centre to which assigned (FESS)

2.5 Subject Matter Expert Role

2.5.1 Provide expertise on effective teaching, learning and assessment methodologies for the subject matter;

2.5.2 Provide expertise on curriculum design and indicative content for the subject matter;

2.5.3 Provide expertise on learner entry requirements to programme;

2.5.4 Provide expertise on appropriateness of exit award;

2.5.5 Provide expertise on Quality Assurance and Standards.

2.6 Subject Matter Expert Criteria for appointment

2.6.1 A subject matter expert is a person who is competent and regarded to have expert knowledge in the area which is being examined;

2.6.2 Educated to minimum of Level 9 Masters;

2.6.3 Minimum of 5 years' experience in area of expertise;

2.6.4 Expert clinical knowledge or teaching learning and assessment knowledge;

2.6.5 Knowledge and expertise in quality assurance;

2.6.6 Expert understanding in decision making in the subject matter and can recognise any threats in decision making;

2.6.7 Be familiar with QQI QA monitoring review and evaluation procedures;

2.6.8 Be independent of the CCNME.

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Related Policies & Procedures	• Policy on Assessment of Learners [PDF, 8 Pages] • Procedure on Assessment of Learners [PDF, 7 Pages] • Policy on Grading and Certification of Learner Assessment [PDF, 6 Pages] • Procedure on Grading and Certification of Learner Assessment [PDF, 8 Pages] • Policy on External Authentication (FET) [PDF, 6 Pages] • Procedure on External Authentication (FET) [PDF, 4 Pages] • Policy and Procedure on Board of Examiners: Results Approval Panel [PDF, 6 Pages] • Policy on External Examination (HET) [PDF, 9 Pages] • Policy on Programme Monitoring and Review [PDF, 7 Pages] • Procedure on Programme Monitoring and Review [PDF, 6 Pages]