Procedure on Grading and Certification of Learner Assessment

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 procedure is to set out the guidelines under which assessments are graded and moderated prior to submission of learner results to QQI for Certification.

2.0 Procedure

2.1 Marking of Assessment Tasks

2.1.1 Internal assessors(s) who mark and/or moderate assessment tasks are Registered Tutors or staff who hold a MSc in Education involved in programme delivery, and programme facilitators who are expert within the programme's field of learning

2.1.2 Internal moderators may also be Registered Tutors or staff who hold a MSc in Education who co-ordinate or facilitate on QQI HET validated programmes, and who are familiar with the programme's field of learning

2.1.3 An internal assessor must not continue as a member of the assessment panel if a learner has a close personal relationship with that person, such as might give rise to a conflict of interest or create bias in the assessment process

2.1.4 Internal assessors must declare any relevant circumstances that might give rise to a conflict of interest (actual or potential, real or apparent) (QQI 2013)

2.1.5 The Programme Coordinator ensures that all formal written examinations remain anonymous throughout the assessment process

2.1.6 Internal Assessors are required to mark and grade learner evidence for each assessment task.

2.1.7 Each assessment task should be accompanied by Statement of Authorship/Verification of Written assessment form before they can be considered for marking and grading. If this is not included, then marking cannot occur

2.1.8 In the moderation process, the Programme Coordinator ensures a ten per cent (10%) sample from each band (70+, 60-69, 50-59, 40-49, below 40) and are moderated by a Registered Tutor and/or designated internal assessor who is expert within the programme's field of learning and contributes to programme delivery

2.1.9 Internal Assessor(s) and moderator(s) meet and agree marks using the approved model answers and grading scheme criteria

2.1.10 Assessment tasks that require audio or visual recording, a panel of assessors will be required.

    2.1.10.1 Each internal assessor must mark each learner's independently using the approved Assessment Marking Criteria

    2.1.10.2 On completion of assessments, assessors discuss and agree marks for each learner

    2.1.10.3 In the event that a final mark cannot be agreed, the Chairperson is responsible for facilitating robust discussion with the aim of reaching a consensus

    2.1.10.4 The Chairperson retains all marking sheets until the assessment panel meeting has concluded

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2.1.10.5 The Chairperson of the panel of assessors is responsible for the security of assessment related materials in compliance with the Procedure on the Security of Assessment, for Programmes Validated by QQI

2.1.10.6 The Programme Coordinator makes available to the External Authenticator (FET) or External Examiner (HET) all learner audio and or video recorded presentations.

2.1.11 Assessment of performance of learners in a clinical setting will be conducted in line with this policy. This includes:

2.1.11.1 Informing the clinical assessors of the specific assessment procedures and criteria to be used in assessing the performance of learners;

2.1.11.2 For HET Programmes of education containing a clinical placement module performance evaluation will include timely feedback to the learner and written documentation supporting supervised practice and final assessment.

2.1.12 The Programme Coordinator is responsible for the storage and subsequent disposal of assessment related material, including audio and video recordings in line with the Policy and Procedure on Security of Assessment, for Programmes validated by QQI.

2.2 Borderline Performance

2.2.1 Learners results including borderline grades/fails are presented for objective review by External Authenticator/External Examiner

2.2.2 Review and approval of final grades will take place following discussion with the External Authenticator/External Examiner (Refer to Policy and Procedure on External Authentication /External Examination)

2.3 Security of Marks

2.3.1 Assessed work, marks and grades should be stored, handled and transported securely

2.3.2 Any marked assessment should be handled securely when transporting to examiners, e.g. anonymised assessment documents, password protected e-mail systems

2.3.3 It is the responsibility of the Centre to ensure security, see Security of Assessment & Data Protection procedure for further information.

2.4 Grading Classifications FET

2.4.1 QQI FET level 5 and level 6 awards are graded and classified as Pass, Merit or Distinction where a learner has achieved the standards for the award within the grading criteria.

2.4.2 When a learner has not achieved the minimum standards for an award the grade is recorded as Referred.

2.4.3 Grading criteria describe what a learner must attain to achieve a particular grade for an award at a particular level.

2.4.4 The following table outline the grading criteria for QQI awards at levels 5 - 6.

Table 1: Award and Grading Criteria for awards at Level 5 - Level 6

Pass (A learner must have achieved a mark of between 50-64%)	Merit (A learner must have achieved a mark of between 65 – 79%)	Distinction (A learner must have achieved a mark of between 80% or over)
A Pass indicates that the learner has: • Achieved the learning outcomes as outlined in the minor award - a pass is the minimum acceptable standard • Used the language of the vocational/specialised area competently • Attempted to apply the theory and concepts appropriately • Provided sufficient evidence which has relevance and clarity.	A Merit indicates that the learner has: • Achieved the learning outcomes as outlined in the minor award - a merit implies a good standard has been achieved • Used the language of the vocational/specialised area with a degree of fluency • Expressed and developed ideas clearly • Demonstrated initiative, evaluation and analytical skills • Presented coherent and comprehensive evidence.	A Distinction indicates that the learner has: • Achieved the learning outcomes as outlined in the minor award - a distinction implies that an excellent standard has been achieved • Used the language of the vocational/specialised area fluently and confidently • Demonstration-depth understanding of the subject matter • Demonstrated a high level of initiative, evaluation skills • Demonstrated analytical and reflective thinking • Expressed and developed ideas clearly, systematically and comprehensively • Presented coherent, detailed and focused evidence

2.5 Grading Classifications HET

2.5.1   QQI HET Special Purpose Awards are classified as either Pass or Fail

2.5.2   Special-purpose awards which have a volume of at least 60 credits and are comparable to a major award (at the same NFQ level) may be classified in accordance with the convention for the relevant major award. Otherwise, awards of this type shall be unclassified.

2.5.3   The following table describe the classification for unclassified awards made by QQI in the National Framework of Qualifications (NFQ). They also specify the required boundary values for grade point average (GPA) and percentage point average (PPA) (QQI, 2013)

Other unclassified awards	GPA boundary values	PPA boundary values	Description 2009 - 2010 and following
Unclassified	2.0	40%	Definitive descriptor: Attains all the minimum intended programme learning outcomes

2.6 Certification of HET and FET Programmes

2.6.1 Results Approval Panel meeting is convened at Board of Examiners' in respect of QQI (FET) validated programme(s) to officially ratify all learner's assessment results prior to submission to QQI for Certification in accordance with the Policy and Procedure on External Authentication and Policy and Procedure on Results Approval

2.6.2 A Board of Examiners' meeting is convened in respect of QQI (HET) validated programme(s) to officially ratify all learners' assessment results prior to submission to QQI for Certification, in accordance with the Policy on Board of Examiner (QQI HET) and the Procedure on the Process of Board of Examiners meetings for QQI HET validated programmes

2.6.3 Assessment results are ratified by the Board of Examiners as per Policy on Board of Examiner (QQI HET) and the Procedure on the Process of Board of Examiners meetings for QQI HET validated programmes.

2.6.4 Except for appeals and complaints processes the Board of Examiners have the final decision concerning assessment results as per Policy on Board of Examiner (QQI HET) and the Procedure on the Process of Board of Examiners meetings for QQI HET validated programmes.

2.7 Issuing Learner Results

2.7.1 The Programme Coordinator and a Registered Tutor or staff who hold a MSc in Education, involved in and familiar with the Certification process for QQI (HET and FET) validated programmes, complete and sign off on the following administrative checks prior to issuing any learner results:
- Learner Name
- Learner Number
- Correspondence Address
- Agreed Mark as per 'Feedback from External Authenticator\Examiner and/or Broadsheet of Results' if available

2.7.2 The Programme Coordinator posts a *Provisional Result Letter* to each learner at an agreed contact address, following marking, grading and moderation of assessments, review by the External Authenticator/Examiner, and verification of results using an agreed Provisional Results Letter Template

2.7.3 The Programme Coordinator retains original documentation outlining all verification checks, which are signed and dated by the Programme Coordinator and the Registered Tutor or staff who hold a MSc in Education completing the checks as per the Policy and Procedure on External Authentication and Policy and Procedure on Results Approval and Policy on Board of Examiner (QQI HET) and

the Procedure on the Process of Board of Examiners meetings for QQI HET validated programmes

2.7.4 Information relating to assessment results will not be communicated to learners by phone, fax, email or other electronic means in compliance with the Policy and Procedure on External Authentication and Policy and Procedure on Results Approval and Policy on Board of Examiner (QQI HET) and the Procedure on the Process of Board of Examiners meetings for QQI HET validated programmes

2.7.5 Learners are notified of provisional examination results, by the Programme Coordinator, in line with Policy and Procedure on External Authentication and Policy and Procedure on Results Approval and Policy on Board of Examiner (QQI HET) and the Procedure on the Process of Board of Examiners meetings for QQI HET validated programmes

2.7.6 Learners are notified of final examination results, by the Programme Coordinator, in line with the Policy and Procedure on External Authentication and Policy and Procedure on Results Approval and Policy on Board of Examiner (QQI HET) and the Procedure on the Process of Board of Examiners meetings for QQI HET validated programmes

2.7.7 Learner results will not generally be communicated to a third party.

2.8 Provision of Learner Feedback

2.8.1 Learners are supported in their learning, and the achievement of the stated learning outcomes of the programme, through the provision of formative feedback

2.8.2 Each internal assessor is responsible for completing a *Feedback Form*, which enables the provision of systematic comprehensive feedback that forms the basis of constructive feedback for the learner.

2.8.3 Each Assessor provides written feedback on each learner's performance, including commendations and recommendations for improvement

2.8.4 The Programme Coordinator provides constructive feedback to each learner, enabling the learner to make sensible judgements regarding modifying aspects of his/her academic performance in order to meet the programme's learning outcomes.

2.8.5 Feedback provided by the Programme Coordinator enables learners to understand how their performance could be improved in subsequent learning activities.

2.8.6 Each learner is invited to contact the Programme Coordinator for feedback regarding each element of assessment on the *Provisional Results Letter* and *Final Results Letter.*

2.8.7 The Programme Coordinator must provide formative feedback to each learner who is required to repeat an assessment task.

2.8.8 The Programme Coordinator explains the basis of the learner's grade/mark as per the Grading scheme criteria Following issue of provisional and final results, the Programme Coordinator is available to meet each learner to review his/her assessment material and provide feedback

2.8.9 Learners have the right to view their examination scripts or assignments, but are not entitled to either the original or a copy

2.8.10 Learners are advised to retain a copy of all submitted assignments, portfolios and other assessment material as the originals are not returned

2.9   Repeat Assessment

2.9.1   Learners who are unsuccessful at assessment are notified, in writing, by the Programme Coordinator, of arrangements for repeat assessment, following the Results Approval Panel meeting/Board of Examiners' Meeting

2.9.2   The Programme Coordinator is available to meet individual learners to review their scripts, explain the basis of the learner's mark, and provide systematic and comprehensive feedback, enabling the learner to make sensible judgements regarding modifying aspects of his/her academic performance

2.9.3   Failure by learners to attend at scheduled repeat examinations and/or re-submit assignments by the identified date, in the absence of certified mitigating circumstances, is considered a repeat attempt.

2.9.4   Learners who receive a fail grade/mark for a programme will be offered no more than three repeat attempts (QQI 2013) .

2.9.5   For an unseen examination, the repeat examination paper should not be the same as the original assessment task.

3.0   Certification

3.0.1   Following the Results Approval Panel/Board of Examiners meetings the Programme Coordinator can submit learner, award and final result details to QQI via the secure online QQI QBS electronic system for the purpose of requesting Certificates for awards

3.0.2   The Programme Coordinator requests the learner to complete the Certification application form at the point of requesting Certification only

3.0.3   The Programme Coordinator submits learner results to QQI within the published QQI Certification periods, as published by QQI.

3.0.4   Once QQI have received the quality assured and fully authenticated results from the Centre, QQI will issue Certificates.

3.0.5   It is the responsibility of the Centre to check and verify the Certificates prior to circulation to the Learners.

4. 0   Document Control

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Author	Consortium of Centres of Nursing and Midwifery Education (CCNME)	
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	V.1.0	04/11/2022
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	https://www.irishstatutebook.ie/eli/2019/act/32/enacted/en/html [accessed 31 January 2022]. • Quality and Qualifications Ireland (QQI). (2013). *Assessment and Standards, Revised 2013* [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). (2016a). *Core Statutory Quality Assurance Guidelines developed by QQI for use by all Providers* [online]. Available from: https://www.qqi.ie/sites/default/files/media/file-uploads/Core%20Statutory%20Quality%20Assurance%20Guidelines.pdf [accessed 30 January 2022]. • Quality and Qualifications Ireland (QQI). (2014). *Policy for Determining Awards Standards* [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). (2018). *Quality Assuring Assessment Guidelines for Providers Revised 2013 (Version 2 - revised 2018*)* [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]. • Quality and Qualifications Ireland (QQI). (2016b). *Topic Specific: Statutory Quality Assurance Guidelines for Providers of Blended Learning Programmes* [online]. Available from: https://www.qqi.ie/sites/default/files/media/file-uploads/Statutory%20QA%20Guidelines%20for%20Blended%20Learning%20Programmes.pdf [accessed 30 January 2022].
Related Policies & Procedures	• 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] • 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] • Policy on Grading and Certification of Learner Assessment [PDF, 6 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]
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