Chapter 3 - Assessment of Learners

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## Introduction

The Institute has, as part of its quality assurance procedures, systematic arrangements for evaluation and for auditing the effectiveness of learner assessment procedures to ensure that they are, in the context of the national framework of qualifications, fair in practice, consistent and in compliance with Institute and QQI standards.

The standard for validation of programmes by QQI, which provides a basis for IT Sligo’s policy are described in Section 45 (3) (*b*) of the **Qualifications and Quality Assurance (Education and Training) Act 2012 as follows …..***Establish procedures which are fair and consistent for the assessment of enrolled learners to ensure the standards of knowledge, skill or competence determined by the Authority under*[*section 49*](http://www.irishstatutebook.ie/2012/en/act/pub/0028/print.html#sec49)*(1) are acquired, and where appropriate, demonstrated, by enrolled learners*

## Scope

This Chapter describes the processes and procedures utilized by the Institute related to the assessment of learners. All procedures referred to in this chapter are contained in the Institute Marks & Standards as well as in the Institute’s procedures manual.

## Learning and Assessment

* + 1. Learning refers to the processes by which a sustainable change in a learner’s knowledge, skill or competence occurs as a result of experience (of phenomena). Experience includes everything that affects the learner. Learning actively involves the learner.
    2. Learning activities are diverse: examples include study, writing, practice, discussion, enquiry, experience, reflection working in a group, problem solving, performing, game playing, designing, composing, etc. Both learners and teachers can set learning activities.

Effective learning activities are purposefully directed towards attainment of the programme’s educational goals (intended programme learning outcomes) and build on (connect with) prior learning.

The engagement by the learner with any assessment process, including the reception of feedback, is a learning activity.

* + 1. “Learning outcomes” generally describe the change in knowledge, skill and/or competence in an individual (differential form) but they may also mean the cumulative result of all learning including prior learning at the time of entry to the programme (integral form). Award standards and award-type descriptors generally describe cumulative learning outcomes.
    2. Intended programme learning outcomes describe the minimumachievement (in terms of knowledge, skill and competence) that the learner is certified to have attained if he/she successfully completes a particular programme (i.e. passes all the required assessments). The pass rate of 40% endorses that the programme learning outcomes have been achieved.
    3. The intended learning outcomes are the minimum learning outcomes that the teacher intends that learners will attain as a result of teaching and learning activities. A threshold of 40% of these is necessary to pass a module.
    4. Principles of assessment

Learner assessment means inference (e.g. judgement or estimation or evaluation) of a learner’s knowledge, skill or competence by comparison with a standard based on appropriate evidence. Self-assessment is included in this.

**There are six core principles related to the assessment of learners:**

1. **Learners are responsible for demonstrating their attainment**

A *learner* who is enrolled on a *programme* should submit himself or herself to assessment for the purpose of demonstrating attainment of the programme’s *intended learning outcomes*.

Each learner should undertake assessment tasks honestly and truthfully and not engage in plagiarism and other forms of academic dishonesty.

The *provider* should ensure that there are appropriate learning opportunities for the programme’s intended learning outcomes except those which are satisfied by prior learning.

1. **Assessment supports standards based on learning outcomes**

Awards (including those made under delegated authority) are made and classified exclusively on the basis of *criterion referenced* assessment of learning outcomes (knowledge, skill and competence.)

The learning outcomes required to qualify for QQI awards, or those made by IT Sligo under delegated authority are specified by the *awards standards* issued by QQI.

The awards standards are threshold standards which means that they describe the minimum learning outcomes to be attained before an award may be made (i.e. the learning required to pass).

The *intended programme learning outcomes* define the minimum learning outcomes for a particular programme. A learner who completes a validated programme is eligible for the relevant award if he or she has demonstrated, through assessment (including by recognition of prior learning), attainment of the relevant intended programme learning outcomes. Credit (e.g. ECTS), while not a proxy for attained learning outcomes, should normally be linked to them.

1. **Assessment promotes and supports effective learning and teaching**

Teaching and learning and assessment are linked activities— they affect one another.

Effective assessment is (i) consistent with, (ii) supportive of, and (iii) derived from the intended programme and module learning outcomes.

*Module assessment strategies* and *programme assessment strategies* are necessary for effective assessment.

The effort required of a learner to complete an assessment task should be proportional to the associated educational benefit to him or her.

*Formative assessment* supports learning and should involve *formative feedback*.

Teachers and learners share in the responsibilities for effective learning. Involvement of learners in the construction of assessment tasks and criteria can enhance learning.

*Authentic* assessment supports effective learning.

1. **Assessment procedures are credible**

Credible assessment is *fair* and *consistent* and more specifically it is *valid* and *reliable*.

Fair assessment is inclusive, recognising that different people can have different learning needs, styles and approaches.

Any person who would have a conflict of interest (actual or potential, real or apparent) if he/she were to act as an assessor in a particular situation should neither act nor be required to act as an assessor in that situation.

The processes for assessment *complaints* and *appeals* should meet the same standards of fairness, consistency and fitness for purpose as assessment in general. In particular they should be straightforward, efficient, timely, and transparent.

1. **Assessment methods are reviewed and renewed as necessary to adapt to evolving requirements**

Developing and testing new assessment methods, tactics and strategies is necessary for continual enhancement and to cope with emerging challenges.

**6. Learners are well informed about how and why they are assessed**

Learners need to be familiar with the relevant programme and module assessment strategies and regularly reminded of these and the assessment regulations—providers should inform learners (e.g. in a programme handbook and programme web page) appropriately.

## Pre-Examination Procedures

The quality of the pre-examination process at the Institute is managed by of a range of procedures which have been developed and adopted by the Academic Council of the Institute and supplemented with Institute generated procedures. These are outlined below.

### Responsibility for Examinations

The Institute’s Marks and Standards Section A3, specifies that the President or nominee has overall responsibility for the conduct of examinations at the Institute and lists the responsibility of the President for the proper conduct of the examinations, including invigilation, accommodation, preparation of examination papers and marking of scripts.

### Intern Examiners

Section A4 of the Institute’s Marks and Standards details the duties and responsibilities of the intern examiners. The annual examination paper submission dates are covered by Institute procedure Exam 001. Storage and incineration of examination scripts is covered by Institute procedure Exam 004.

### 3.4.3 Extern Examiners

For every Programme the Institute appoints at least one External Examiner. External Examiners for all taught courses are approved by the Academic Council. The overall role of the external examiners is to ensure adequacy of standards at Higher Certificate, undergraduate degree and post graduate examinations.

External examiners are expected to act in an ethical manner, and demonstrate a fair and consistent approach through objectivity, confidentiality, declaration of interests, and the avoidance of conflicts of interest, etc.

Former staff should not be appointed as external examiners within 5 years of leaving employment in IT Sligo. Graduates should not be appointed as external examiners within 7 years of graduating from IT Sligo. Guest lecturers should not normally be appointed as external examiners, though exceptions may be considered on a case by case basis.

The processes related to External Examiners are specified in the following sections.

### 3.4.4 Nomination and Appointment of External Examiners

The Institute shall ensure that sufficient External Examiners are appointed so that it can satisfy that:

the standard of its programmes and student performances can be adequately moderated

and

the assessment, examination and determination of award processes are being fairly conducted.

External Examiners may be appointed on the basis of Department, course/programme, or module/subject as determined by the needs of the Institute.

An External Examiner may moderate one or more Programmes.

External Examiners may be appointed who have expertise in particular subject areas, as determined by the Institute, and may be involved with particular modules for a range of programmes across all Schools.

The Registrar shall seek nominations from each school (signed off by the Head of School, see Appendix 3.1) who may consult externally for persons to act as External Examiners. The Head of School/Department may seek recommendations for nominations through a Programme Committee. The criteria for nomination are specified in Appendix 3.2.

In the nomination of External Examiners the need for continuity in the process from one year to the next should be considered.

In exceptional circumstances, where it is proposed to nominate a person who does not satisfy the criteria for appointment, this shall be clearly noted in the External examiner nomination form and reasons given for the nomination.

The Head of Department/School may consult the person proposed for nomination to seek his/her consent to be nominated and to determine his/her availability to act as an External Examiner. This is a consultation process only and should not imply any commitment on behalf of the Institute to make an appointment.

Consultation may take place with other Institutions with a view to arriving at suitable arrangements in relation to the appointment of External Examiners to more than one Institute, taking into account the requirement for independence of External Examiners and such other requirements as noted in the criteria for appointment in the Appendices.

Approval as External Examiners by the Academic Council shall take place by 1st April each year for the following academic year. The Academic Council shall satisfy itself that persons nominated for appointment satisfy the criteria for appointment as detailed in the Appendices.

Following approval of an External Examiner by the Academic Council, the Registrar shall issue a letter of appointment (see Appendix 3.3) together with a contract (Appendix 3.4) for signing by the appointee and the Registrar. The duties and responsibilities are listed in the Guidelines for the effective practice of External Examining(Appendix 3.5).

The term of office shall normally be for a period of three years, or as determined by the Institute (i.e. subject to annual re-appointment). In exceptional circumstances, the appointment may be extended by one further term. The circumstances shall be advised to the Academic Council prior to the proposed extension taking place.

The External Examiner is appointed from the date of signing of the contract. Normally, the term of office shall commence on the 1st October each year.

If there is any breach by the External Examiner of any of the terms and conditions or if at any time in the opinion of the Institute the Extern shall fail to provide a satisfactory service, the Institute may terminate the agreement by giving the External Examiner one month’s notice in writing to that effect. Should it be necessary to terminate the contract, the Head of Department/School shall recommend termination of the contract to the Academic Council, detailing the reasons for the proposed termination. The Registrar shall notify in writing an External Examiner whose contract has been terminated.

Following appointment, the Schools/ Institute shall ensure that the External Examiner receives adequate additional documentation and training to enable him/her to understand the examination processes operated by the Institute. The External Examiner may be invited to visit the Institute to become familiar with its operations and to discuss his/her responsibilities as an External Examiner. Such visits should occur before the External Examiner commences examining activities.

Where External Examiners are required to act as a team, the institute shall ensure that such External Examiners have an opportunity to meet prior to a final Board of Examiners meeting.

External Examiners are required to submit a written report to the Registrar following the Summer/ Autumn Examinations (see Appendix 3.6). The details in respect of the external examiners visit to the Institute are specified in section A5 of the Institute’s Marks and Standards.

### Student Registration and Notification of Examination Regulations and Timetable

With the exception of repeat students the procedure for registering for examinations is part of the normal registration process at the beginning of the year and is the responsibility of the Registrar. The Head of Department signs off on the class lists in early February, highlighting any discrepancies on the official register. It is the responsibility of repeat students to register for examinations and they are informed of this by notice with their transcript of results.

All registered students are issued with a copy of the Student Support Services Handbook which includes the examination regulations and requirements. Information on the complete range of examination procedures is posted on the examination notice boards and is dealt with in a comprehensive manner in the student induction programme and on the Institute’s website

The Examination time table is made available on-line to both academic staff and students in advance of the commencement of the formal end of semester or end of year examinations.

Students who have Special Learning Needs or Disability may apply for special arrangements for sitting assessments/examinations in accordance with Institute Procedure Exam 009**.**

## Written semester/annual examinations

### Examination Papers

Examination papers are prepared by intern examiners and are submitted to external examiners in accordance with deadlines listed in the Institute Calendar for semester, annual and autumn repeat examinations Procedure Exam 001. Examination papers, reviewed by the external examiners are submitted to the Examination Secretary in accordance with this Procedure. Procedure Exam 004 deals with safe storage of exam scripts.

### Examination Invigilation

Examination invigilators are selected and trained by the Examinations Secretary in accordance with the Institute’s Human Resource Policies and Procedures. The Examination Secretary also sets out their duties and responsibilities. These include procedures for dealing with late arrivals, examination irregularities, and illness during examinations and collection of scripts.

### Alleged infringements of examination regulations

Copying or cheating at any examination or test, bringing notes or other unauthorised materials into an examination hall, removing scripts or other stationery from an examination hall, any other breach of the examination regulations or any offence involving the integrity of an examination is considered to be an infringement of examination regulations.

Plagiarism, which is the copying of another person's writings or works or ideas in any thesis, essay, project, laboratory report or other exercise, that forms part of the requirements for an academic programme where such copying is either unauthorised by the copyright owner or unacknowledged in the thesis, essay, project, laboratory report or other exercise is also considered to be an infringement of examination regulations.

The Disciplinary Procedure for Students (Examination) is EXAM 024.

### Student feedback on the examination process

The Examination Secretary carries out an annual survey of students on the quality of examination services. This is reviewed and analysed by the Assistant Registrar. The Examinations Office endeavours to respond to any queries or issues regarding examinations.

### Assessment of Scripts

The role and responsibility of intern examiners in providing marking schemes and in marking scripts in a transparent, fair and consistent manner, is included in the Institute’s Marks and Standards Documentation Section A4.

The responsibility of the intern examiners to consult with external examiners and to agree grades/marks for each candidate is also covered in the Institute’s Marks and Standards Section A4.

## Continuous Assessment

### Guidelines

A wide range of continuous assessment modes are utilized in the Institute. These may entail Theory tests, Assignments, Practical work, Site or Industrial visits, Art & Design work, Industrial placement, Projects and Oral presentations. It is critical in relation to continuous assessment of learners, that:

* The aims and objectives of the assessment are compatible with the stated learning outcome for the programme/module
* Procedures at institute level and within each school/programme are fair, consistent and transparent.
* In the delivery of a programme, the scheduling of assessment tasks should be coordinated to ensure an appropriate workload balance for learners.
* That all students are assessed individually, even in the context of group projects. This is particularly important as it is the individual, not group, achievement of learning outcomes that is being assessed. Parts of this assessment will, however, determine how well each individual performs as a member and/or leader of group work.

### Essential requirements

The lecturers should

* Have a defined marking scheme.
* Specify the details of the assignment in writing and provide these to the student.
* Provide details of
  1. How the marks are allocated
  2. Feedback processes on performance on assignments - i.e. Lecturers are encouraged to give timely feedback, especially to first year students
  3. Attendance requirements
     1. The requirement for attendance by students at formal timetabled learning periods is to be determined by each lecturer, as they consider appropriate to the achievement by the student of the learning outcomes of the particular module. Where a lecturer can demonstrate that non-attendance has resulted in a failure of the student to attain the learning outcomes of a

module (and where there is documented evidence of non-attendance), this may be brought to the attention of the Progression and Awards Board when the overall performance of the student is being considered. Undocumented evidence will not be considered.

* 1. Explain how students who miss assessments/assignment deadlines, etc. Will be dealt with.
  2. Explain Appeal procedures

A lecturer should clarify to students how they intend to address an appeal made by a student directly to a lecturer. If the matter is not resolved, there are formal Institute appeals processes relating to examinations which include an appeal in respect of continuous assessment.

* Seek to ensure that plagiarism does not occur.
* Seek to ensure that practical assessment procedures are equitable.
* Seek to ensure that individual student assignments/mini-projects/essays, etc., are equitable, i.e., comparable in complexity and levels of competence required.
* Programme handbooks or other written requirements provided to students are to be held by the lecturer until expiry of the period for any possible appeal.
* Programme assessment strategies should take cognisance of the practicalities of offering repeat continuous assessment opportunities. For example, it may not be feasible for some conceivable continuous assessment tasks to be repeated in the same timeframe as written examinations. However, alternative assessment modalities may be employed provided they address the same learning outcomes.

### Guidelines for Continuous Assessment Modes (Not Mandatory)

The examples below are not intended as a comprehensive list.

**Continuous Assessment of Theory**

* 1. Mid-term written assessment tests
  2. Assignements/mini-projects/essays, etc.A marking scheme for oral presentations associated with such assignments/mini-projects/essays, etc., may be helpful to ensure that they are equitably assessed.

A lecturer should clarify to students how they intend to address an appeal made by a student directly to a lecturer. If the matter is not resolved, there are formal Institute appeals processes relating to examinations which include an appeal in respect of continuous assessment.

**Continuous Assessment of Practical Work**

* 1. **Laboratory/workshop practical courses, Site/Industrial Visits, Field Trips, etc.**Marking schemes for these may be based on performance, results, notebooks, reports, attendance, etc.
  2. **Course Specific Subjects assessed exclusively (or almost exclusively) by Continuous Assessment**  
     Many programmes list Project as a separate subject in the Approved Course Schedule. Very often this subject is weighted by a factor of 2 or 3, and therefore makes a very important contribution to the overall Level of Award.

This category of continuous assessment also includes practical courses in disciplines such as Fine Art, Interior Architecture, Industrial Design, Tourism & Recreation, Performing Arts, etc., which contain subjects which are assessed entirely, or almost entirely, by practical continuous assessment. These are subjects largely carried out through Studio Work, such as Painting, Sculpture, Design, Printing, etc. They also include activities such as Swimming, and other formal Sports Activities formally associated with a course. Also included in this category are certain Information Technology/Computing courses involving software development and web-based design.  
  
Special arrangements may be necessary to ensure that such courses are equitably assessed. These may include a detailed marking scheme, clearly defined criteria for allocation of marks within each category of the marking scheme, and/or assessment by a panel of two or more examiners. It may also include the External Examiner being involved in oral presentations or other parts of the assessment.

**Continuous Assessment of Industrial Placement/Work Experience**

As for project work, the written instructions for industrial placement/ work experience could list the learning objectives.   
  
These instructions may be supplied to the industrial partner and the student and may be the basis of their unwritten contract with the Institute covering the placement. It may include a clear statement that it is the student’s responsibility to find a placement that allows them to meet the defined learning objectives, and that the Institute’s role is simply one of facilitation.

It remains the responsibility of the Institute to assess the student and decide the mark allocated. Placement tutors are expected to look critically at any feedback being provided by industrial supervisors before using it to assign a mark for the placement. Other means should be used for the majority of the marks. This might be a report written by the student to demonstrate the achievement of the learning objectives of the placement and / or an oral presentation on return to college.   
Where practical, the placement mark should not be a part (at least not a significant part) of the marks used to decide the award level (pass / honours etc.). If the placement occurs during a year that contributes to the average mark used for award classification, this may be achieved by making it a PASS / FAIL subject with no mark assigned.

Students who fail this subject should have some means open to them to repeat, though it is not necessarily the Institute’s responsibility to facilitate this.

**Continuous Assessment of Oral/Viva Voce Presentations**

In many final year Degree Courses oral/viva voce presentations may contribute significantly to the Level of Award. In such cases, there should be mechanisms/ regulations/procedures appropriate to relevant course disciplines.

## Progression and Award Board Meeting

### Compiling of Marks

The process for the submission and compilation of examination marks/grades is included in Section A7 of the Institute’s Marks and Standards.

### Pre-Meetings

It is normal practice in the Institute for each Programme Board and or Department to hold a Pre-Meeting at which all results from “subject marks sheets” are compiled on an electronic Broadsheet and checked for accuracy. External examiners are not usually present at Pre Meetings. The School Secretary takes minutes of the proceedings of these meetings and these minutes are available at the Institute’s Board of Examiners Meetings.

### Meeting of Board of Examiners

Procedures for the conduct and operation of the meeting of Board of Examiners are included in Section A7 of the Institute’s Marks and Standards. Examination Boards are chaired by a Head of School (excluding the School relevant to the Board Meeting), the President and the Registrar. At the examination board meeting, the School Secretary or his/her nominee minutes:

* All modifications to submitted results, with reasons for modification;
* All borderline case discussions,
* Certified illnesses,
* Extenuating circumstances etc.

### Special Considerations

Upon completion of examinations, and prior to the meeting of the Progression and Award Board, candidates may make a formal submission to the examiners requesting that they take certain facts into consideration when deliberating upon the candidates results. In the interests of fairness and consistency, such requests are reviewed by the Examinations Board.

The Request for Review of Circumstances adversely affecting Exam Results is Procedure EXAM 007.

The functions of the SCB are to:

1. Consider all requests for special consideration from candidates prior to the meeting of the Progression and Awards Board
2. Apply established criteria for responding to categories of requests (e.g. for illnesses, bereavements or accidents) and special cases.
3. Make a recommendation in response to each request
4. Return the recommendations to the Progression and Awards Board.

## Notification of Examination Results

### Presentation of Results

Procedures in relation to the notification of provisional Examination results are provided in Section A7.11 of the Institute’s Marks and Standards. Provisional results of Semester and Annual examinations for programmes are available within 48 hours of the Board meeting.

### Written Notification

Each student is notified by the Registrar of his or her provisional Semester One result. These results are provisional and may be modified in the summer where it is in the interests of the student. Where appropriate, students are informed by email from the examinations office of their repeat requirements. This may include examination, continuous assessment and other recommendations with respect to fulfilling all conditions required to pass the examinations. Following the summer series of examinations, each student is notified in writing by the Registrar/Head of Department of his or her official examination result. The notification will inform the student as follows:

1. In the case of a terminal award students will be advised of the classification of the award e.g. Pass, merit 2.
2. In the case of the completion of a stage e.g. a first year student will be advised that he or she passed the examination and is therefore eligible to proceed to the next stage.
3. In the case of non-satisfactory completion of a stage the student will be so advised and will also receive instructions on the conditions he or she must fulfil in order to pass the examination.

Results are posted on the web and are accessible to each student using a unique pin-code.

### Ratification by Academic Council

A summary of the Broadsheet results for all examinations are presented by the Registrar to the Academic Council at the earliest possible occasion after the completion of the examination period. The Academic Council is asked to ratify the examination results. Any concerns regarding the examination process may be raised at this time. The decision of the Academic Council is referred to the Governing Body for noting.

## Post Examination Procedures

### Pastoral Meeting: Consultation/Results discussion days

All academic staff members will be available to students on a nominated day, between the date of notification of examination results and the 20th June to provide advice and support on examination performance. This date is published on the Academic Calendar at the commencement of each year. Academic Heads of Departments are available to students up to 30th June to provide advice and guidance in relation to repeat examination requirements.

### Request for Review of Examination Results

Students have a right to have access to their scripts. In order to facilitate a request to view a script by a student, the Institute has a Procedure Exam 010 dealing with the matter. It is the practice of this Institute to initially recommend this route to students who may be contemplating lodging a request for a formal recheck or review of their examination results.

Students who wish to request a formal recheck or review of their examination results may do so in accordance with Procedure Exam 006.

### Cluster Boards

The Academic Council decided to form a number of Cluster Boards. A Cluster Board comprises all internal examiners who are involved in the assessment of modules in a similar discipline area. While such a board does not have a specific role at examination time, it may wish to review the examination performance of modules in a discipline area. The Cluster Board may also make recommendations, from time to time and in consultation with Programme Boards, to the Academic Council regarding the module content and modes assessments.

### Programme Board Audits

Examination Board results are considered at the first programme committee meeting held each academic year. At these meetings, the committee reviews the actions and outcomes since the previous year’s meeting, retention, progression and completion, External Examiners’ Reports, student course evaluation reports and staff evaluation of subjects by students, as reported by individual lecturers. Consequent action for the next academic year is discussed and agreed. This review is summarised in the Programme Monitoring Report, which is described in more detail in Chapter 4.

### Academic Council Audit of Examination Results and Process

Following the Autumn Examination Board meetings the Registrar prepares an overall analysis of the performance of students, on all Higher Education programmes in the Institute. Annually in October this analysis (which addresses the outcome of each programme), is presented to the Academic Processes Committee of the Academic Council for its consideration. The Registrar then issues the analysis to Departments and seeks responses from Programme Boards where pass rates are unacceptably low and attrition rates are unacceptably high.

As Extern Examiners Reports become available the Examination Secretary issues them to the President, the Registrar, Heads of Schools and for consideration by Programme Boards. The October meeting of the Academic Processes Committee of the Academic Council reviews and considers them using the technique “managing by exception”. The Committee will also have a dossier prepared by the School Secretary, outlining in summary form examination issues which particular Extern Examiners require the Institute to address. Following consideration by the Committee the Registrar will communicate with the Relevant Head of Department and request action or explanation where necessary.

### Report on the Administration of Examinations

An annual report is prepared by the Examinations Secretary on the organisation conduct and functioning of the Summer and Autumn Examination. The Examinations Secretary requests reports from the Chairperson of the Summer and Autumn Examination Board Meetings and exceptional matters to the examination process are reported upon. This report is considered by the Executive Committee and the Standards and Examinations Committee of the Academic Council.

## Post Graduate Research Degrees

Awards granted for taught programmes at Postgraduate Diploma and Masters Level are classified as per Institute’s Marks and Standards. Research Degrees of Masters of a Doctor of Philosophy are awarded without classification. In the case of successful candidates, the Broadsheet of Results is annotated "Recommended" and signed by the Internal Supervisor(s) and External Examiner(s) concerned.

## 

## APPENDIX 3.1

### INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY, SLIGO

### INSTITIÚID TEICNEOLAÍOCHTA, SLIGEACH

**Nomination Form for External Examiner**

**(To be forwarded by Head of School to the Registrar)**

**Name of nominee**: …………………………………………………………………………..

**Duration of Contract**

Extension for 1 year New Contract (3 years)

Other arrangement please specify: …………………………………………………………

\*End date of contract: 30th Sept, \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ **(must complete year** e.g**.**30/09/**2014)**

Academic/Professional qualifications:

Areas of specialisation:

Place of work:

**Correspondence address: (must complete)**

………………………………………………………………………………………………….

………………………………………………………………………………………………….

………………………………………………………………………………………………….

Telephone: Fax: Email: ………………………….

Summary of relevant experience:

Programmes/Courses: **Exact title of each course must be given**

1. 6.

2 . 7

3 . 8

4. 9

5. 10.

Specific Subjects / Modules for External Examiner:

Other Information:

Has the nominee agreed to act as proposed? **Yes\_\_\_\_ No\_\_\_\_**

Has the nomination been recommended by the Programme/Programme Board with the approval of Head of Department and Head of School? **Yes\_\_\_\_ No\_\_\_\_**

Are you satisfied that:

1. that the nominee is not and has not been a staff member of the institute during the past 5 years or has any other conflict of interest  **Yes\_\_\_\_ No\_\_\_\_**
2. there is no reciprocation (i.e. no ITS staff act as externs on

programmes for which the nominee has any responsibility **Yes\_\_\_\_ No\_\_\_\_**

1. the nominee’s qualifications and experience meet ITS criteria for External Examiners **Yes\_\_\_\_ No\_\_\_\_**

**Signed**:\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ **Date:**\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**Head of School**

## APPENDIX 3.2

Criteria for the Nomination and Appointment of External Examiners

1. The primary criterion is that an external examiner nominated for appointed should be a person of academic or professional distinction, whose association with a particular programme(s) is considered to enhance the academic integrity of the programme(s).
2. Two External Examiners may be appointed per programme, with one External Examiner drawn from academic life and a second, where appropriate, from business, industry and professional practice. External examiners drawn from business, industry or professional practice should be of senior standing in their fields.
3. External examiners should be suitably qualified with a minimum of an honours degree or equivalent. They should have both current and relevant experience in the areas of industry, education or research. External examiner nominations/appointments should be such as to ensure maximum objectivity in relation to the institutions.
4. Academics may be nominated from Irish higher education institutions and from universities and other higher education institutions at home and abroad. Institute of Technology, Sligo should seek to draw nominations from a variety of institutions, and within a single discipline should avoid multiple nominations from the same institution.
5. Normally, an external examiner drawn from academic life should hold an academic qualification, in the appropriate discipline, to a higher level than that of the programme(s) to which he/she has been nominated. In general only persons associated with degree and postgraduate programme in their own institutions should be nominated for degree programme in other institutions.
6. Institute of Technology, Sligo should take due cognisance for the desirability of gender balance when nominating teams of external examiners.
7. It is wholly inappropriate for individuals to canvass colleges/institutions on their own behalf for the purpose of seeking a nomination as an external examiner.
8. External examiners should not normally exceed more than one appointment period (3 years) on a programme and not more than two appointment periods within the Institute. External examiners who have served for two appointment periods or more should not be considered for re-nomination until a minimum of three years has elapsed.

APPENDIX 3.3 Appointment as External Examiner – Acceptance Form

**INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY, SLIGO**

### INSTITIÚID TEICNEOLAÍOCHTA, SLIGEACH

I accept / am unable to accept the offer of appointment in accordance with the contract for the provision of an External Examiner service for the Institute of Technology Sligo and the associated duties and the letter of offer to you **dated**: \_\_\_\_\_

I understand that the duration of this appointment will be for \_\_\_\_\_ academic years and will terminate on **30 September 20\_\_**. I know of no reason where a conflict of interest would arise as a result of me accepting this appointment.

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

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|  |  | | |
| **NAME:** |  | | |
|  |  | | |
| **PPS NO:** |  | | |
|  |  | | |
| **ACADEMIC / PROFESSIONAL QUALIFICATIONS:** |  | | |
|  |  | | |
| **JOB TITLE:** |  | | |
| **ADDRESS FOR** |  | | |
| **CORRESPONDENCE:** |  | | |
|  |  | | |
|  |  | | |
|  |  | | |
| **E-MAIL:** |
| **COURSES:** |  | | |
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## APPENDIX 3.4



Contract for the provision of an External Examiner service to the Institute of Technology Sligo

The Institute of Technology, Sligo wishes to enter into an agreement for use of your services as an External Examiner for the Institute’s Academic Programmes.

* This is not a contract of employment – rather it is a contract for services. You will be paid a schedule of fees as set out below and in addition will be eligible to claim for any legitimate expenses incurred while providing the service using civil service rates. Payment will be in the form of a cheque.
* Expense forms should be submitted before the end of September of each Academic Year to ensure payment.
* The schedule of payments is as follows:

(€224) Institute fee

(€152) per programme

Expenses as per civil service rates.

Please note that the final decision as to what constitutes a legitimate expense rests with the Secretary/Financial Controller of the Institute.

* It should be noted that it is the responsibility of the External Examiner to ensure that all returns are made to the Revenue at the appropriate time. **As from 1 January 2012 Please note due to Revenue returns all External Examiners MUST complete their PPS no./Tax Reference No. on their contract and claim form.**

2 Scope of the agreement

* The duties, responsibilities and workload of the external examiner are described in ‘Guidelines for the effective practice of External Examining’, see Appendix 3.5 of the Institute’s QA procedures.

## APPENDIX 3.5

**Guidelines for the effective practice of External Examining.**

1. **Preamble**

This Section outlines the expectations of and from external examiners in relation to the examination quality assurance procedures of IT Sligo.

These guidelines encompass the external examining of all full programmes and modules.

1. **Responsibilities of Institute of Technology Sligo**
   1. The Institute is responsible for the assessment of learners and the maintenance of programme standards that accord with the relevant award standards.
   2. The Institute’s external examining policy in regard to selection, and conditions of external examiners includes:
   3. a statement of the competencies to be demonstrated prior to nomination of the extern examiner recognising that the required competencies can be met by a team of external examiners where appropriate (for example, in relation to examining theory and practice);
   4. nomination of external examiners having regard to the need for independence, gender balance, and the avoidance of conflicts of interest;
   5. ratification of the external examiner nomination by academic council or equivalent and appointment;
   6. the role and responsibilities of the external examiner;
   7. the extent of the external examiner’s authority;
   8. formal agreement between the provider and the external examiner; and
   9. the process and criteria for the replacement of an external examiner.

The process of reporting and timeframes, as well as, notification of appointment and other contractual issues are also addressed.

* 1. The Institute will communicate to stakeholders the name and primary occupation of the external examiner(s) for each of its higher education and training programmes.

1. **Duties of the External Examiners As Agreed by Academic Council**
   1. External Examiners are normally appointed with responsibility for a programme or a module/subject or range of modules/subjects over a number of programmes. External Examiners deal primarily although not exclusively with the award year(s) of programmes.
   2. External Examiners should approach their responsibility with a view to ensuring that each candidate’s performance is properly assessed subject to the regulations and standards applicable generally for the award.
   3. It shall be the duty of the External Examiner to examine the relevant syllabi and the drafts of all examination papers, marking schemes and worked solutions before the examination papers are printed and copied. External Examiners have the right to make such suggestions regarding deletions, additions and amendments as appropriate to draft examination papers.
   4. External Examiners are expected to communicate with Internal Examiners within ten (10) working days following receipt of examination documentation e.g. draft examination papers.
   5. Correspondence between Internal and External Examiners including finalisation of examination papers should normally be by registered post.
   6. External Examiners should review a representative sample of scripts and other material presented for assessment especially work which contributes to a student’s final award and classification. e.g. projects, practical work and continuous assessment.
   7. The sample should include sufficient material to enable the External Examiner to form a judgement on the reliability and consistency of marking and on the levels of classification including borderline cases and proposed fails.
   8. The External Examiner should certify the agreed marks for each candidate on the appropriate documentation e.g. White Sheets and Broadsheets.
   9. External Examiners may be consulted about relevant matters concerning Examination Appeals requested by candidates.
   10. External Examiners are expected to visit the Institute **once** in each academic year. This visit will normally take place at the time of determination of final results at the Summer Examination Board Meeting.
   11. External Examiners shall ensure that the confidentiality of Examination Board Meetings is maintained at all times.
   12. External Examiners are required to submit a report on the prescribed form for each programme(s) module(s)/subject(s) for which they have responsibility. The payment of expenses and fees will be conditional on the submission of this report and claim form. Please note you must submit claim form with **PPS number** even if you are not claiming travel but getting paid honorarium & course fees.
   13. If there is any breach by the External Examiner of any of the terms and conditions or if at any time in the opinion of the Institute the External Examiner shall fail to provide a satisfactory service, the Institute may terminate the agreement by giving the External Examiner one month’s notice in writing to that effect.
   14. Once notice has been given the Institute may decide to pass over the duties to another External Examiner.
   15. In other circumstances the agreement may be terminated with a minimum of three (3) months’ notice by either party. Such notice shall be given in writing.
   16. Please be advised that the Institute deems that all documentation in the examination process is accessible under the Freedom of Information Act which came into force on 1 October 2001. Accordingly we recommend that following the completion of the Summer Examinations the External Examiner should hand over to the Institute all correspondence and documentation associated with the examination in his/her possession.
2. **The external examining process**
   1. External examining is a quality assurance mechanism employed by providers that supports public confidence in academic qualifications.
   2. The external examining process offers valued objective interface; a principal outcome of external examining is the introduction of an independent element into learner assessment procedures.
   3. An external examiner is an independent expert who is a member of the broader community of practice within the programme’s field of learning and whose accomplishments attest to his/her likelihood of having the influence necessary to fulfil the responsibilities of the role.
   4. External examiners will be selected from a variety of backgrounds – including industry, academic, module and programme. Typically, two external examiners are engaged for a full programme; one from academic and one from the world of work – although additional external examiners may be deemed necessary from time to time depending on the complexity of the programme.
   5. The main functions of the external examiner are

* to comment on the programme standard (educational goal);
* to probe the actual attainment of learners using information agreed with and supplied by the provider;
* to comment where appropriate on the qualification-related assessment strategy and procedures and proceeding from there to probe the overall assessment strategy;
* to review written examinations prior to their assignment;
* to review continuous assessment work, either during the academic year or at the time of the final examination period;
* to review any recommendations for exemptions arising from the evaluation of prior learning, at the time of the final examination period;
* to report findings and recommendations to the Institute.
  1. An extern examiner is expected to comment on the design, structure, and content of a programme and its constituent components, and on the standard of the programme and its assessment in a national and international context.
  2. The term of appointment of an external examiner is sufficiently long to allow the extern to assess trends and sufficiently short to provide diversity and maintain the required level of independence. A typical term of office would be of 3 years duration.

1. **Determining scope and fulfilling the role of the external examiner**

**5.1** The Institute will agree with the external examiner:

* 1. the information required to enable the external examiner to carry out his/her functions effectively (for example, module and programme descriptors, draft examination papers and model answers); and
  2. a schedule of outputs and meetings including meetings with learners where appropriate.
  3. It is a normal requirement that external examiners visit the institute at least once in the academic year. The purpose of this visit is to, in addition to tasks under Section 4.5 above, ensure that the full range of assessments is covered, including continuous assessment.
  4. The Institute requires each external examiner to take part in an induction process (this might be delivered as an information pack) shortly after his/her appointment. Following this he/she will be able to:
  5. describe the mission of the Institute and place it in context with the Irish higher education system;
  6. (where the programme is a professional one) outline the relevant professional infrastructure (regulation, associations, etc.) in Ireland, the professional educational requirements, and how the programme prepares learners for entry into the profession;
  7. compare and contrast the **programme standard** with similar programmes with which they are already familiar;
  8. outline the overall structure of the programme and be familiar with the module and programme descriptors and the Approved Programme Schedules;
  9. discuss and critique the **programme assessment strategy**; marking schemes etc.
  10. explain how the programme standard relates to the **award standard** and how the award standard relates to the **National Framework of Qualifications,** and if the examiner is from outside Ireland how the NFQ relates to the other HE Qualifications Frameworks with which the extern may be familiar;
  11. outline the programme assessment procedures and explain the grading system and how awards are classified; and
  12. (for external examiners who are not academics) discuss the principles of learning outcome criterion referenced assessment.
  13. effectively carry out the functions of an external examiner.
  14. be familiar with the layout of the campus, and how to locate the appropriate meeting rooms.
  15. From time to time, the Institute may require external examiners to attend refresher meetings to update on, for example, new procedures, marks and standards and developments in the Higher Education sector.

1. **The report of the external examiner**

External Examiners are required to submit to the Registrar, not later than 1st October in each year, a full report on the examinations with which they are involved. One report covering the academic year will normally be sufficient. The report should be submitted in accordance with the standard Report Form supplied by the Institute (see Appendix 3. 6).

* 1. An external examiner will be facilitated in providing both verbal and written, informal and formal, feedback. Formal feedback in the format of a written report will constitute the official record.
  2. The external examiner issues a written report each time an individual or a cohort of learners is assessed. The report addresses the following:
  3. the evidence considered including meetings and interviews with learners and academic staff and others;
  4. the appropriateness of the provider’s programme standard (i.e. intended learning outcomes) in light of the external examiner’s experience and having regard to the award standard and the National Framework of Qualifications;
  5. the external examiner’s perception of the attainment of learners;
  6. the external examiner’s opinion of the quality of the programme (as distinct from the programme standard) citing strengths and areas for improvement;
  7. the quality of the assessment instruments (examination papers, dissertation guidelines, etc.) and scoring rubrics/schemes etc.
  8. the fairness and consistency of assessment procedures;
  9. the reliability of the provider’s benchmarking of its assessment procedures
  10. appropriate national and international comparisons
  11. any substantial concerns (even if they have already been communicated verbally) so that these may be addressed
  12. changes from previous years if not reporting for the first time
  13. the design, structure, and content of a programme and its constituent components, and on the standard of the programme and its assessment in a national and international context.
  14. It is important that the report is well balanced in terms of highlighting positive aspects and areas for concern.
  15. External examiner reports are securely retained in accordance with the adopted records retention policy by the Institute and will contribute to the quality assurance procedures and institutional research review activities.
  16. The Institute considers external examiner reports at all appropriate organisational levels. Actions arising from the report are recorded, communicated to learners, and other staff as appropriate.
  17. The external examiner is provided with a timely, considered response to his/her comments and recommendations, including information on any actions taken by the Institute.
  18. The Registrar shall provide a copy of the External Examiner’s report to the Head of School and School Secretary. The formal response of the School and the Department to the report is incorporated in the annual Programme Monitoring Report (see Appendix 4.1 of the Institute’s QA procedures), which are reviewed by the Academic Council.

## APPENDIX 3.6

# External Examiner’s Report

### INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY, SLIGO

### INSTITIÚID TEICNEOLAÍOCHTA, SLIGEACH

**External Examiner’s Report**

**This report should be based on the programme examined during the year and sent to Registrar, Institute of Technology, Sligo before the 30th September on the year of the examination.**

External Examiner: ……………………………………………………………………….

PPS No. ………………………………………………………………………..

(must complete in order to be paid)

Address: …………………………………………………………………………..

………………………………………………………………………….

Phone Number: …..……………………………………………………………………..

Programmes: (as per letter of offer)

1. 6.

2 . 7.

3 . 8.

4. 9.

5. 10.

………………………………………………………………………………………………….

Subjects / Modules Examined:

Date of Visit: ………………………………………………………………………………….

1. **Programme Documentation**

1.1 Did you receive appropriate programme documentation such as approved programme schedules/syllabuses?

Yes No

1. **Examination Papers and Assessments**

2.1 Did you receive draft examination papers, marking schemes and worked solutions, where appropriate, in reasonable time prior to the examinations?

Yes No

2.2 Did you approve the examination papers which were presented to the candidates?

Yes No

2.3 To what extent did the examination papers/assessment material cover the programme(s) as approved?

2.4 Did you receive a representative sample of examination scripts and other material presented for assessment?

Yes No

### INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY, SLIGO

### INSTITIÚID TEICNEOLAÍOCHTA, SLIGEACH

1. **Comments**

3.1 General comments on performance of candidates in the examinations:

* 1. How did the standards achieved by candidates compare with other institutions

with which you have experience?

3.3 General comments on the programme:

3.4 General comments on the examinations:

3.5 Aspects worthy of commendation?

3.6 Any other suggestions you would like to make:

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**Signature of External Examiner** **Date**

## APPENDIX 3.7 Guidelines for Continuous Assessment Modes (Not Mandatory)

The examples below are not intended as a comprehensive list.

1. **Continuous Assessment of Theory.**
   1. **Mid-term written assessment tests**
   2. **Assignments/mini-projects/essays, etc.**A marking scheme for oral presentations associated with such assignments/mini-projects/essays, etc., may be helpful to ensure that they are equitably assessed.
2. **Continuous Assessment of Practical Work.**
   1. **Laboratory/workshop practical courses, Site/Industrial Visits, Field Trips, etc.**Marking schemes for these may be based on performance, results, notebooks, reports, attendance, etc.
   2. **Course Specific Subjects assessed exclusively (or almost exclusively) by Continuous Assessment**  
      Many programmes list Project as a separate subject in the Approved Course Schedule. Very often this subject is weighted by a factor of 2 or 3, and therefore makes a very important contribution to the overall Level of Award.   
        
      This category of continuous assessment also includes practical courses in disciplines such as Fine Art, Interior Architecture, Industrial Design, Tourism & Recreation, Performing Arts, etc., which contain subjects which are assessed entirely, or almost entirely, by practical continuous assessment. These are subjects largely carried out through Studio Work, such as Painting, Sculpture, Design, Printing, etc. They also include activities such as Swimming, and other formal Sports Activities formally associated with a course. Also included in this category are certain Information Technology/Computing courses involving software development and web-based design.  
        
      Special arrangements may be necessary to ensure that such courses are equitably assessed. These may include a detailed marking scheme, clearly defined criteria for allocation of marks within each category of the marking scheme, and/or assessment by a panel of two or more examiners. It may also include the External Examiner being involved in oral presentations or other parts of the assessment.
   3. **Continuous Assessment of Industrial Placement/Work Experience**

As for project work, the written instructions for industrial placement/ work experience could list the learning objectives.   
  
These instructions may be supplied to the industrial partner and the student and may be the basis of their unwritten contract with the Institute covering the placement. It may include a clear statement that it is the student’s responsibility to find a placement that allows them to meet the defined learning objectives, and that the Institute’s role is simply one of facilitation.

It remains the responsibility of the Institute to assess the student and decide the mark allocated. Placement tutors are expected to look critically at any feedback being provided by industrial supervisors before using it to assign a mark for the placement. Other means should be used for the majority of the marks. This might be a report written by the student to demonstrate the achievement of the learning objectives of the placement and / or an oral presentation on return to college.   
  
Where practical, the placement mark should not be a part (at least not a significant part) of the marks used to decide the award level (pass / honours etc.). If the placement occurs during a year that contributes to the average mark used for award classification, this may be achieved by making it a PASS / FAIL subject with no mark assigned.

Students who fail this subject should have some means open to them to repeat, though it is not necessarily the Institute’s responsibility to facilitate this.

* 1. **Continuous Assessment of Oral/Viva Voce Presentations**

In many final year Degree Courses oral/viva voce presentations may contribute significantly to the Level of Award. In such cases, there should be mechanisms/ regulations/procedures appropriate to relevant course disciplines.