



ICHAS

Section 7- Policies and Procedures on Teaching, Learning & Assessment

Subject:	Policy on Assessment of Learners		
Applicable QCI Core Standard	Assessment of Learners		
Date Approved by Board of Directors:			July 2019
Policy Version	1/2019	Date due for Revision	February 2024

CONTEXT

ICHAS, as a provider of QQI validated awards, is required to adhere to the guidelines and principles of assessment and the Quality Assurance of Assessments as stipulated by QQI. In that regard, Assessments for QQI awards are expected to be criterion-referenced i.e. learners are assessed and the assessment judgment is made based on whether the learner has reached the required national standards of knowledge, skill and competence for the award. QQI Award standards clearly set out the knowledge, skill and/or competence that must be attained by a learner in order to achieve a specific award. These standards are expected to be expressed as learning outcomes and are presented in the Award Specification (or Module Descriptors) for each named award. The Award Specification will also identify valid and reliable techniques for the assessment of learner achievement. ICHAS will ensure that learner achievement is assessed in a fair and consistent way in line with the national standards for the award. QQI (2013, p.5) expects that assessment processes will meet the following principles.

Assessment for QQI awards is criterion-referenced i.e. learners are assessed and the assessment judgment is made based on whether the learner has reached the required national standards of knowledge, skill and competence for the award. National standards identify the knowledge, skill and/or competence that must be attained by a learner in order to achieve a specific award. These standards are expressed as learning outcomes and are outlined in the Award Specification (or Module Descriptors) for each named award. The Award Specification will also identify valid and reliable techniques for the assessment of learner achievement.

Quality assured assessment ensures learner achievement is assessed in a fair and consistent way in line with the national standards for the award. The following principles underpin the policy on quality assuring assessment (QQI, 2013, pp5-6)).

Validity

Validity is a key principle which underpins assessment. A valid assessment means that the

assessment should measure what it is supposed to measure i.e. only the standards of knowledge, skill or competence required for the award should be assessed. An assessment is valid when it;

- is fit for/appropriate to the purpose (i.e. a practical assessment should be used to assess practical skills)
- allows the learner to produce evidence which can be measured against the standards
- facilitates reliable assessment decisions by assessors
- is accessible to all candidates who are potentially able to achieve it.

Reliability

Reliability refers to the accuracy with which an assessment measures the skill or attainment it is designed to measure. An assessment which is unreliable cannot be valid. A reliable assessment consistently gives the same result under similar conditions. A reliable assessment produces reliable assessment decisions. To be reliable an assessment must:

- be based on valid assessment techniques
- ensure evidence is generated under consistently applied conditions of assessment
- ensure reliability of learner evidence
- produce consistent decisions across the range of assessors applying the assessment in different situations and contexts and with different groups of learners be consistent over time

Fair

A fair assessment in addition to being valid and reliable provides equity of opportunity for learners. Unfairness in assessment is based on unequal opportunities i.e. lack of resources/equipment, inappropriate techniques, inexperienced assessors. For assessment procedures and practices to be fair and equitable for learners the influence of these factors must be taken into account in the design and implementation of assessment.

Quality

Quality is a key principle in ensuring the credibility and status of QQI awards. Quality will be assured through the publication of national award standards, the providers' own quality assurance, the establishment of an assessment framework, programme validation, the process of self-evaluation and national monitoring.

Transparency

A transparent assessment policy and guidelines will ensure clarity and understanding by all relevant stakeholders. This will include clear and unambiguous definitions and requirements with regard to fairness, consistency, validity and reliability.

Complementarity

The principle of complementarity acknowledges the separate and distinct roles of the provider and QQI in the context of their explicit responsibilities relating to assessment as outlined in the Qualifications Act”.

POLICY STATEMENT

Student assessment is recognised as both a core teaching activity and a primary means of delivering the College's programmes of learning. The principles that underpin the assessment of students at ICHAS are derived from Assessment & Standards (QQI, 2013) summarised in six themes as well as QQI's guidance on Quality Assuring Assessment for Providers (Revised, 2013). The learner's responsibility to actively demonstrate the attainment of appropriately designed, unambiguously defined and openly accessible intended learning outcomes form the basis of the assessment strategy in the college. Assessment is not viewed narrowly as outcome but rather as a means of supporting and promoting effective teaching and learning developed organically through robust monitoring, review and renewal. To this end, credibility founded on the principles of fairness and consistency should permeate each and every assessment related policy and associated procedures, where the learner is fully and repeatedly informed of his/her assessment responsibilities prior to and during the learning cycle and where the assessments are fairly and robustly considered against identifiable intended programme or module outcomes.

SCOPE

Applies To	Staff	Students	Both	
			✓	
Responsible for Implementation	Registrar Quality Assurance & Enhancement Officer			
Responsible for Monitoring & Review	Vice President (Corporate Affairs)	Vice President (Academic Affairs)	Registrar	Quality Assurance & Enhancement Officer
		✓		

DEFINITIONS

In the context of QQI Awards, assessment is criterion-referenced i.e. learners are assessed and the assessment judgment is made based on whether the learner has reached the required national standards of knowledge, skill and competence for the award for which they are studying.

Assessment of learners may take place in a range of settings including: classrooms, the workplace, on the job, community setting or by computer based/e-assessment. The assessment guidelines are applicable to all types of delivery and assessment settings.

RELEVANT GUIDELINES/ POLICIES INFORMING THIS POLICY

- Assessment and Standards (QQI, Revised 2013)

- QQI (Revised, 2013) Quality Assuring Assessment Guidelines for Providers
- Common Awards System Restatement of Policy and Guidelines (2014)
- Green Paper on Assessment of Learners and Learning (Draft 2018)
- European Standards & Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ENQA, 2015)
- Effective Practice Guideline for External Examining (QQI, 2015)
- HET Core Validation Policy and Criteria (2013)
- The International Center for Academic Integrity (2012). The Fundamental Values of Academic Integrity (2nd Edition)
- European Network for Academic Integrity (2018) Glossary for Academic Integrity Report
- Quality and Qualifications Ireland (2016) Statutory Quality Assurance Guidelines Developed by QQI for use by all Providers
- European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ENQA) et al (2015) Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG).
- Quality and Qualifications Ireland (2016) Sector Specific Statutory Quality Assurance Guidelines Developed by QQI For Independent/Private Providers Coming To QQI On A Voluntary Basis
- Government of Ireland (2012) Qualifications & Quality Assurance (Education and Training Act).

Linked Policies or Procedures

Linked Policies	Policy on Teaching & Learning Policy on Work Based Learning Policy on Marking, Grading and Certification in Assessment Policy on Fitness to Practice Policy on Mitigating/ Extenuating Circumstances Policy on Reasonable Accommodation
Linked Procedures	Procedures associated with Teaching & Learning Procedures associated with Work Based Learning Procedures associated with Assessment of Learner Procedures associated with Marking, Grading and Certification in Assessment Procedures associated with Fitness to Practice Procedures associated with Mitigating/ Extenuating Circumstances Procedures associated with Reasonable Accommodation