ICHAS

Section 7– Policies and Procedures on Teaching, Learning & Assessment			
Subject:	Procedures associated with Assessment of Learners		
Date Approved by Board of Directors:			**July 2019**
Policy Version	1/2019	Date due for Revision	February 2024
Parent Policy	Policy on Assessment of Learners		

INTRODUCTION - Guidelines on Consistency and Fairness

The College is committed to the application of assessment strategies that are fit for purpose and directly related to the programme topic and level and ensures that the purpose of assessment is manifest and integral and there is no deviation from the stated purpose or function. All forms of assessment promote and support teaching and learning. This acknowledges curriculum and assessment as inseparable and requires a programme assessment strategy that is plainly written and communicated at induction and repeatedly throughout the programmatic cycle.
The following guidelines underpin assessment procedures in the college.

To establish and ensure the credibility of all assessment processes at ICHAS, the principles of consistency and fairness permeate all assessment policies and procedures so as to ensure credibility of assessment processes. Therefore, assessment is inclusive, transparent and administered equitably, impartially and without bias in all instances and in all cases.

Programmatic Alignment and Benchmarking

- Modular assessment is integrated with the overall programmatic strategy and that each stage of assessment is suited to an eventual determination of eligibility for a QQI award.
- Student assessment is designed according to validated criteria and is employed exclusively to assess the attainment of intended learning outcomes and the appraisal of progression readiness and for no other purpose.
- The content and connectivity between learning outcomes and assessment is clearly defined and published by the College and that all teaching and learning stakeholders are as fully informed as possible of the rationale and origin of assessment procedures
- The assessment task is commensurate with the intended learning outcomes and is appropriate to sectorally agreed benefits for the stage of progression.
- Reliability should be established through benchmarking against local and sectoral norms without compromising innovation and progressivity.

- Any programme's assessment strategy will communicate and define assessment procedures as an integral progression gateway and as the means of establishing the attainment of intended/minimum intended learning outcomes and hence eligibility for HE awards.
- A match between the programme's assessment instruments to the requirements of the sectoral and institutional grading system is evident.
- Any programme's assessment strategy will describe special regulations that may apply to the programme e.g. progression eligibility, compensation, sectoral conventions relating to repeats, pass by compensation, etc.
- The College will benchmark compatibility between programme content and professional, statutory and regulatory bodies' educational requirements where relevant.

Assessment Composition

In relation to the Composition of Assessment work, Lecturers and Programme teams have to ensure that:

- Assessment methodologies are criterion referenced - being derived and clearly linked to modular and programmatic learning outcomes based on a knowledge, skills and competencies approach aligned to specified Awards Standards as contained in the programme validation document or approved revisions of same.
- A rationale for the choice of assessment tasks, criteria and procedures is provided and clarification on how fairness and consistency can be achieved across the range of tasks is evident. In particular, it describes how the validity, reliability and authenticity of the assessment tasks and procedures can be assured.
- Any programme employs an efficient and fair workload balance across assessment strategies including an appropriate balance of formative and summative assessment approaches. The distinctiveness of these forms of assessment should be persevered and made clear to learners.
- The distribution of assessment over the course of the academic year is planned so as to avoid a convergence of assessment or over-assessment/double-assessment across modules.
- Any programme's continuous assessment workload is planned and distributed in an appropriately balanced fashion and that account is taken of specific complexities arising from this form of assessment (e.g. opportunities for repeat assessment etc.)
- Any new assessment methods are tested in advance of deployment and carefully monitored thereafter.
- All forms of assessment are consistent between different examiners and different course centres, and evidence of reviewing and assuring this consistency is maintained.

Grading, Results and Feedback

- Assessment tasks, criteria and grading are clear, unambiguous and expressed in appropriate and discernible language with advance access to grading

schemes for students undertaking assessments. Marking schemes are set and documented for each assessment in advance and are consistently applied by examiners and internal moderators and external examiners.

- Students receive timely and instructional feedback on performance for all forms of assessment (but most especially in the case of formative learning) that is clearly related to the assessment and learning criteria as communicated in the Student and Programme Handbooks. Feedback is formulated and delivered in such a way as to enable students to improve their performance in future assessment tasks.
- Consistency, continuity and congruity should be achieved across the entire community of learners through regular and uniform modes of assessment, clearly evidenced through a transparent system of grading.
- Assessment outcomes are not based on single assessor/examiner marking. This includes clearly stated and comprehensive structures and procedures for internal second marking, examination board structure and functioning and external examiner oversight as established in the College's regulations.
- The college will ensure that administrative verification and procedural adherence checks are carried with regularity to determine both the accuracy and integrity of stated assessment policies and procedures. These will incorporate all possible consequences of examination regulations and procedures.
- Results management systems are robust and accurate, and the promulgation of results occurs in a timely and efficient manner. This extends to notification mechanisms agreed with awarding bodies.
- There are clear policies and procedures outlining opportunities for Repeats that are aligned with sectoral conventions (currently - fail affording the opportunity for three repeats).

Assessor Competence

- Mechanisms are in place to ensure assessor competence, independence and integrity and the existence of appropriate and trustworthy structures of oversight that inform all decision making at every stage of the assessment process.
- Those engaged in the development of assessment strategies possess the required expertise and competencies and have a deep knowledge and understanding of intended outcomes of learning. It is similarly anticipated that assessment development is a collaborative effort across the appropriate governance structure giving due consideration to learner input.

Clarity and Communication of Assessment

- Learners are fully informed on all elements of the College's assessment strategy including the validated criteria at modular, stage and programmatic levels.
- Student assessment procedure is set out in entirely unambiguous ways and in published format that facilitates permanent access.
- Students are informed in detail not only during induction but regularly during the learning cycle. Information mechanisms include open and accessible

explanation of the strategy, criteria, content and timing of assessments and examinations.
- Marking and grading systems are appropriately constructed and explicitly communicated

Monitoring of Assessment

- Assessment strategies are consistently monitored and evaluated through defined structures and systems.
- Assessment strategies are reviewed regularly and form part of the annual review by the relevant Programme Board. Changes to same are formally approved and documented by the Registrar, following approval and recommendation by the Programme Board. Allowance is made for learner participation in the review process. All reviews also include regulatory impact assessment.

Assessment Integrity and Security Management

- Confidence through confidentiality and professional integrity underpins the development of assessment tools, marking and invigilation and this be actively communicated to all faculty.
- The college has sufficiency of resources and facilities required to optimally deliver the assessment strategies.
- Assessment materials (most especially unseen examinations) are held securely before and after the assessment takes place to protect the integrity of the assessment process. This ensures efficient fail safes and recording procedures are in place for assessment submission including continuous assessments.
- The College operates an efficient, secure and standardised record keeping and archiving of scheduling around all assessment processes (project/examinations, scripts/submissions, minutes of examination board meetings, external examiners' reports, other committee minutes, broadsheets of results etc.).
- Results and information relating to academic credit are permanently securely stored and archived and student's submissions are retained for an appropriate timeframe and responsibly disposed of thereafter in line with the College's General Data Protection Policy.
- Invigilation procedures are clearly defined and communicated in advance of assessment and carefully managed and monitored during assessment.
- Principles of best conduct are consistently attained and that acts of plagiarism, collusion or any academic impropriety are actively discouraged by lecturers and examiners. Means of detecting misconduct supported by mechanisms of fair but robust adjudication are incorporated into submission and marking procedures.
- All lecturers and markers are made aware of the procedures to be applied when an incident of academic impropriety is suspected.

Reasonable Accommodation and Mitigating Circumstances

- Assessment procedures address exceptional or mitigating circumstances that

might hinder students in fulfilling their assessment responsibilities and that these procedures are clearly stated in the College's regulations.

- Procedural responses to mitigating circumstances are based on reasonable accommodation adhering to the principle of adaptation rather than dilution of assessment criteria; ensuring that those who do not receive reasonable accommodation are not disadvantaged.
- While all assessment would normally accommodate flexibility where necessary, any accommodation for flexibility should always be balanced by fairness and consistency for learner population taken as a whole.

Recheck and Review

There are opportunities and clearly stated procedures for re-checks or reviews of submitted assessments as per the Policy on Recheck and Review of Assessment Decisions.

Complaints and Appeals

There is active and clear communication of procedures for appeals and complaints and the grounds for appeal and complaint are clearly defined. Grounds for complaint should include any deviation from stated assessment procedures, any inconsistencies in the content or delivery of assessment, any departure from the stated purpose of assessment or any instances where the College fails to meet its statutory obligations in relation to assessment.

RESPONSIBILITIES

ROLE/ PERSON	RESPONSIBILITY
Learner	To be informed of all assessment requirements To adhere to all assessment requirements
Lecturer	To formulate assessment tasks and strategies To adhere to assessment strategies To provide fair and consistent marking, feedback and grading strategies
Programme Director	To oversee all assessment strategies
Registrar	To oversee and monitor all assessment strategies
Director of Studies	To collaborate with module leads on assessment development To co-ordinate assessment planning strategy
External Examiner	The roles and responsibilities are outlined in detail in the Policy and Procedures pertaining to External Examination
Vice President (Academic Affairs)	To oversee and review all assessment strategies

PROCEDURES

In relation to the Quality Assurance of the Assessment Processes, ICHAS adheres to a four stage Process as recommended by QQI, as follows;

Assessment

- Establish and implement assessment policies, processes and procedures
- Devise assessment instruments, marking schemes and assessment criteria
- Assess and judge learner evidence
- Record outcome

Authentication

- Internal verification
- Verify that all assessment procedures have been applied
- Monitor the outcome of the assessment process i.e. The assessment results on a sample basis

External authentication

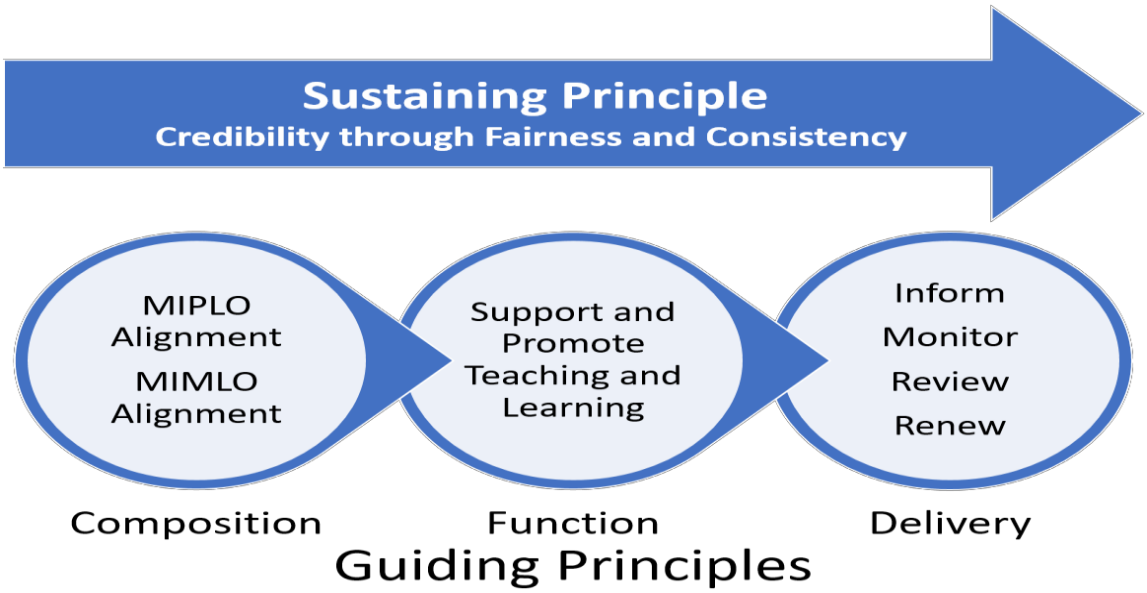
- Assign an external examiner per award based on broad award/field of learning expertise
- External Examiner to moderate assessment results by sampling learner evidence according to the College's sampling strategy.
- Results Approval
- Establish an Examinations Board
- Approve and sign off Assessments Results
- Make results available to learners

Appeals Process

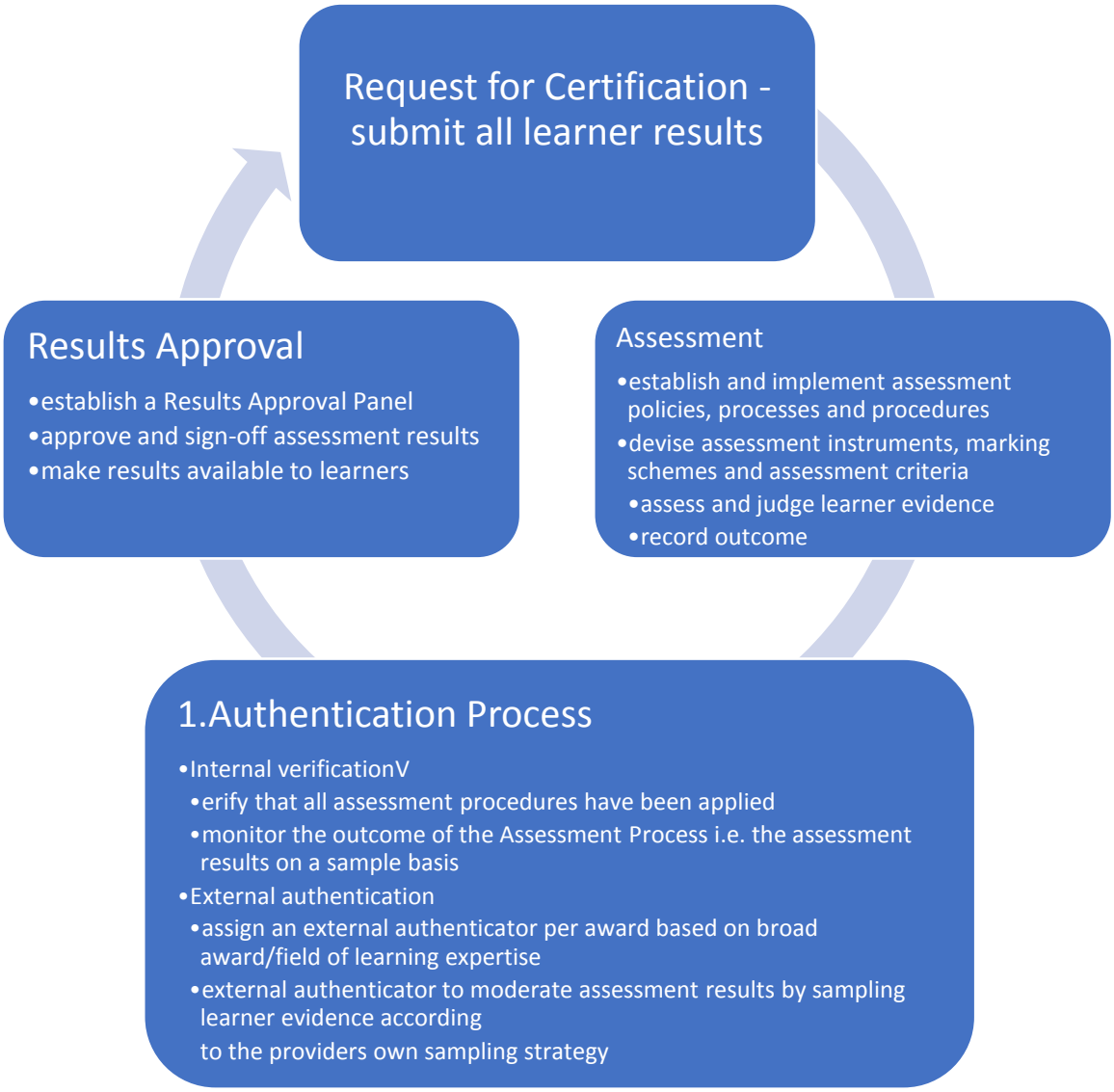
- Establish an appeals Process
- Process all appeals
- Request for Certification
- Submit All results

GRAPHICAL PRESENTATION OF THE PRINCIPLES UNDERPINNING ASSESSMENT

The following Chart outlines the Sustaining & Guiding Principles underpinning Assessment Strategies at ICHAS



The following Chart outlines the processes associated with the Quality Assurance of Assessment Strategies at ICHAS



Linked Policies and Procedures

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

Linked Procedures	Procedures associated with Teaching & Learning Procedures associated with Work Based Learning 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 Procedures associated with Appeals