8 Assessment and Standards

8.1 Policy for Assessment and Standards

	• Programmes of Education and Training • Governance and Management of Quality • Documented Approach to QA
	☐ Staff only ☐ Learners only ☒ Staff and Learners
	Director of Academic Affairs and Undergraduate Programmes

8.1.1 ESG Standard 1.3: Student-centred Learning, Teaching and Assessment

Standard: Institutions should ensure that the programmes are delivered in a way that encourages students to take an active role in creating the learning process, and that the assessment of students reflects this approach.

8.1.2 Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to set out the principles underpinning Assessment of Learners at the College, in alignment with QQI's Assessment and Standards, 2013 and the Core Statutory QA Guidelines.
The policy recognises that prospective and enrolled learners at the College are diverse and may at times require reasonable accommodations and additional supports to facilitate their full and equitable participation in the programmes delivered by the College.
It includes Marks and Standards governing assessment on College programmes that lead to QQI awards.

8.1.3 Scope

This policy applies to all QQI validated programmes. This policy and the associated Marks and Standards apply to all members of faculty and support and administrative staff at the College who have contact with learners.

8.1.4 Policy for Assessment

This policy should be read in conjunction with Section 7 (Teaching and Learning) of this Manual. The type(s) of assessment employed and their contribution to the overall grade are decided as part of the Programme Teaching, Learning and Assessment Strategy during Programme Design and Validation.

College programmes leading to QQI awards are governed by QQI's Assessment and Standards, revised 2013, the College's Marks and Standards and the approved programme schedule of the programme in question. Any special regulations are articulated on the approved programme schedule as part of the validation process and are communicated to learners at the outset of their studies and as part of the assessment brief.

All lecturing staff involved in designing, implementing and grading assessments in the College are familiar with the specified assessment tools and techniques and are supported in developing their skills, knowledge and practice in respect of assessment.

The College's assessment regulations, Marks and Standards and QA policy reflect best practice as articulated in guidelines of the Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG), 2015.

The ESG sets out the basic principles underpinning assessment as follows:

'The assessment of students is one of the most important elements of higher education. The outcomes of assessment have a profound effect on students' future careers. It is therefore important that assessment is carried out professionally at all times and that it takes into account the extensive knowledge which exists about testing and examination processes. Assessment also provides valuable information for institutions about the effectiveness of teaching and learners' support.'

QQI's Assessment and Standards elaborates on these principles under six themes, which the College adheres to in its Teaching, Learning and Assessment Strategies:

1. Learners are responsible for demonstrating their achievement.
2. Assessment supports standards based on learning outcomes.
3. Assessment promotes and supports effective learning and teaching.
4. Assessment procedures are credible.
5. Assessment methods are reviewed and renewed as necessary to adapt to evolving requirements.
6. Learners are well informed about how and why they are assessed.

8.1.5 Programme Assessment Schedule

It is College policy that a schedule of assessment be provided for all programmes. The assessment schedule will include:

1. The allocation of marks between Continuous Assessment (CA) and the final examination.
2. The number of CA elements and the associated weighting.
3. The type of CAs i.e. practical, report, presentation etc.
4. Whether the CA is group or individual.
5. The submission date for each CA element.
6. The method of repeating the assessment (i.e. exam only, CA only or both CA and examination).

The Assessment Schedule for the academic year is agreed by the Programme Board before teaching begins. The agreed Assessment Schedule is communicated to all learners during induction and made available on the VLE.

8.1.6 Definitions

QQI's Assessment and Standards offers the following definitions for the components of assessment:

8.1.6.1 Summative Assessment:

Aims to determine if (or sometimes the extent to which) a set of specified learning outcomes has been attained by a person and (typically) their entitlement to academic credit. It normally contributes to learner's results for a module or a programme. It includes results from continuous assessment, project work, oral assessment, written examinations etc.

8.1.6.2 Formative Assessment:

Supports the learner in attaining specified learning outcomes. It does not normally penalise error, or credit achievement. 'Formative assessment is concerned with how judgements about the quality of learner responses (performances, pieces, or works) can be used to shape and improve the learner's competence by short-circuiting the randomness and inefficiency of trial and error learning'. Formative assessment supports learning and should therefore involve formative feedback. It is an essential part of any programme of education and training.

8.2 External Examiner Policy

External Examiners are appointed who are recognised experts in their subject areas and are from institutions with excellent academic reputations. The College works closely with External Examiners to assure standards, to enhance teaching, learning and assessment and to support programme development.

The External Examining Process Precepts:

- External examining is a QA mechanism employed by the College that supports public confidence in academic qualifications.
- The external examining process offers an objective interface: a principal outcome of external examining is the introduction of an independent element into the procedures for the assessment of learners.

- 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 their likelihood of having the authority necessary to fulfil the responsibilities of the role.
- The scope of operation of the External Examiner is agreed with the College. It may be extended, for example, to provide advice and guidance to the programme team. An external examiner may be invited to comment on the design, structure and content of a programme and its constituent components.
- An External Examiner's term of appointment is sufficiently long to allow them to assess trends, and sufficiently short to provide diversity and maintain the required level of independence.

8.2.1 Role of External Examiners

The role of the External Examiner is to assure academic standards and the quality of teaching, learning and assessment. The External Examiner confirms that the academic standards of modules and the awards to which they lead are consistent with the academic outcomes specified and are comparable to those achieved in the subject nationally. The process assures the fairness, validity and rigour of assessment. Feedback provided by the External Examiner facilitates the academic departments to enhance teaching, learning and assessment and the overall learning experience.

The External Examiner undertakes to:

a) Acknowledge receipt of examination and assessment material.

b) Review all drafts of Examination papers/Assessment Briefs for 100% CA modules, marking schemes, worked solutions, etc. External Examiners shall have the right to make such suggestions, criticisms, and propose amendments as they deem appropriate.

c) Review a representative sample of examination material presented by learners, including borderline cases. The sample, which should be drawn on a basis agreed between the Internal and External Examiner(s), should include sufficient material to enable the External Examiner(s) to form a judgement as to the appropriateness of the marking at all levels of classification.

d) Probe the actual attainment of learners (actual programme learning outcomes) using information agreed with and supplied by the College.

e) Compare and contrast both the Minimum Intended Programme Learning Outcomes and the actual attainment of learners with the relevant awards standards, with the NFQ, and with corresponding data from other programmes in the same discipline in other higher education institutions in Ireland and internationally.

f) Determine whether the applied procedures for assessment are valid, reliable, fair and consistent.

g) Review the appropriateness of the programme assessment strategy and the assessment procedures and, flowing from this, consider subsidiary module assessment strategies.

h) Review key assessment tasks prior to their assignment in light of the programme and module assessment strategies and learners' prerequisite learning. Where key tasks include key continuous assessment tasks, it might not be feasible to review them prior to assignment, but they should still be reviewed by the External Examiner.

i) Attend at least one Examination Board annually, ideally that examination board when stage progression decisions are made. In any event, they must attend the award stage examination board. Before such examination boards commence, the external examiners must:

   a. Review borderline cases.

   b. Agree with the respective Internal Examiner(s) the proposed final marks for consideration by the appropriate Examination Board.

j) Report findings and recommendations to the College and QQI as appropriate.

8.2.2 Extent of the External Examiner's Authority

The External Examiner does not mark or remark assessments; their primary role is to verify that standards are achieved.

Where an External Examiner determines that a mark or series of marks is not appropriate, they liaise with the Internal Examiner and Programme Lead. Where there is an issue with the Internal Examiner not agreeing with the External Examiner then the Head of Academic Programmes or Registrar Programmes are informed and will attempt to facilitate a resolution. In very exceptional circumstances the College may appoint a senior academic, independent of the College to arbitrate. This process will be managed by the Director of Academic Affairs and Undergraduate Programmes

Nominating External Examiners

The Programme Lead identifies potential External Examiners, reviews their experience against the criteria and liaises with them to determine their willingness to act as an External Examiner. The Registrar then nominates them for appointment and provides a rationale for the nomination and a CV of the proposed examiner. Where the Director of Academic Affairs and Undergraduate Programmes endorses the nomination and is satisfied that it meets the criteria for appointment, the application is forwarded to the Academic Council to approve the nomination for appointment by it, or by the awarding body, where appropriate.
The nominated employee must have completed a conflict of interest declaration form before he/ she can be considered for appointment (Section 15 Conflict of Interest Policy)

8.2.3 Appointment of External Examiners

At least one independent expert External Examiner is appointed for each award programme. The appointment is for three years. In some cases, normally to provide continuity in an examining team where appointments were made concurrently, the tenure of one External Examiner per programme may be extended for an additional year, subject to Director of Academic Affairs and Undergraduate Programmes approval, on behalf of the Academic Council.
External Examiners are expected to attend all Examination Boards, at a minimum one per programme per annum.
If there are several External Examiners as members of a programme examining team, they are assigned, by agreement, to a module or group of modules as determined by the Head of Academic Programmes.
All external examiners will be provided with an induction session which will outline their role and responsibilities relevant to the programme they are acting as external examiner on. A distinction will be made for training purposes between external examiners working on further education and higher education programmes.

The College reserves the right to recommend termination of an External Examiner's appointment at any time. This will be a decision made by the Academic Council and may be presented in writing to QQI with the reason for termination such as non-engagement with the agreed process.
Payment to External Examiners is made on receipt of their annual report.

8.2.4 The Criteria for the Appointment of External Examiners

Prior to its appointment of an External Examiner, the Academic Council must be satisfied that the proposed External Examiner:

a) Possesses academic and professional qualifications that are appropriate to the discipline, programme or subject to be examined and at a minimum; and should not, unless in exceptional circumstances, be below the level of qualification to be awarded on the basis of the examinations in question.
b) Has appropriate academic standing and expertise and has sufficient academic experience to adjudicate on comparability of standards.
c) Has the capacity to discharge their duties in good time and is not examining at multiple centres.

Where an External Examining team is appropriate, it is expected that that expertise will be complementary. In such cases representation from industry or a relevant professional body may be appointed to provide additional insight, provided that they are supported by an academic member of the team.
An individual who has retired, but who remains active in academic life and continues to engage in teaching, research or other academic activities relevant to the extern examiner role, is eligible for appointment as an External Examiner.
External Examiners may **not** be selected from:

- College staff
- Staff who have worked in or have had a significant relationship with the College within the last five years
- The same institution, or constituent College of a merged institution, as their predecessor unless there is an adequate reason acceptable to the Academic Council.

An External Examiner who has acted previously should not normally be re-appointed until at least five years have elapsed since their previous appointment.
Once formally appointed, the Director of Academic Affairs and Undergraduate Programmes will confirm their appointment, dates, role and responsibilities, in writing. The Registrar is responsible for ensuring the External Examiner and Programme Team are properly inducted in the external examining process. The Programme Lead is responsible for ensuring that the External Examiner has sight of all assessment material, as agreed and in good time before the assessment date. The Registrar is responsible for ensuring the External Examiner is supplied with all assessment materials required.

8.2.5 External Examiners Reports

On completion of the assessment process and after the final External Examination Board for a stage or award each External Examiner will produce an annual report and submit it to the Director of Academic Affairs and Undergraduate Programmes. The objective of the report is to satisfy the Academic Council that:

- The External Examiner was provided with sufficient information in good time to discharge their duties effectively.
- The assessment process complies with the College policies and regulations.
- The assessment strategy and assessment instruments are fit for purpose.
- The marking was fair, consistent and transparent.
- The quality of the learner work is comparable to other institutions nationally.
- The External Examiner is satisfied that previous recommendations were properly considered, and any issues have been resolved.

In addition, the External Examiner provides specific feedback regarding the assessment to the lecturers and makes recommendations as appropriate.
All External Examiner Reports are reviewed by the Programme Team, the Registrar and the appropriated Head of Academic Programmes. The Head of Academic Programmes compiles a response to the External Examiner acknowledging comments and providing a response in respect of recommendations made. This response is endorsed by the Registrar and sent to the External Examiner. Copies of all External Examiner Reports and responses must be kept by the Director of Academic Affairs and Undergraduate Programmes to ensure the recommendations are properly considered and are implemented where appropriate. Where the External Examiner has an issue with the institutional management of the assessment process then the Director of Academic Affairs and Undergraduate Programmes compiles an additional response. The External Examiner may make a confidential report directly to the President where it is deemed necessary.
On completion of the process the Director of Academic Affairs and Undergraduate Programmes compiles a summary of all External Examiner comments, recommendations and actions from the reports for information to the Academic Council.
The College will publish the names and affiliation of all External Examiners and make External Examiner Reports available to staff, learners, stakeholders and awarding bodies.

8.3 Conflict of Interest

Persons will not be appointed as examiners, external examiners and invigilators where there is any foreseen possibility of conflict of interest. Even the appearance of conflict of interest, where none exists, can damage the credibility of the person selected in this process.
Any person involved in the assessment process must be familiar with the College's Conflict of Interest Policy, detailed in section 15,.
The instances listed below are given as examples. They are not intended to comprise an exhaustive list of situations where a conflict of interest might arise.

- A staff member with access to an examination paper with a personal link or professional association to one or more learners siting the examination, that might influence his/ her ability to be objective.
- Where a staff member is also a learner of the College.
- Persons who have potential future conflict of interest.

The Director of Academic Affairs and Undergraduate Programmes will make appropriate arrangements to safeguard the integrity of the assessment process; in the case of any doubt,

advice should be sought in advance from the Director of Academic Affairs and Undergraduate Programmes.
Since cases can arise where the possible appearance of a conflict of interest is not generally known, the primary responsibility for disclosing such a possibility rests on the prospective independent evaluator.
Prospective individuals involved in the assessment process are required to declare any relevant interests and potential conflicts of interest prior to appointment. If there are no relevant interests or conflicts this should be declared, by completing the conflict of interest decaration in Appendix 15.B
Where a potential conflict of interest emerges after appointment, they should inform the College without delay.

8.4 POLICY FOR REASONABLE ACCOMMODATION AND ADDITIONAL SUPPORTS

The College is committed to facilitating fair, equitable and accessible participation in learning and assessment for learners with disabilities, learning differences or medical conditions of a temporary or ongoing nature. Accordingly, the College will make Reasonable Accommodations and provide Additional Supports for learners as far as is reasonably practicable. Learners and prospective learners at the College are encouraged to disclose any specific or additional needs to the College's representatives in order to facilitate this. The College and its staff will at all times strive to provide a supportive and inclusive learning environment.
The College does not have the expertise or capacity to undertake medical or psychological assessments, or to determine the supports required to accommodate the needs of learners who seek reasonable accommodations or additional support (defined as actions taken to alleviate substantial disadvantage due to disabilities, learning differences or medical conditions). Therefore, the College will, under normal circumstances, require learners seeking reasonable accommodations or additional supports to provide documentation from a medical consultant, educational psychologist or appropriately qualified expert (this requirement is exercised at the discretion of the College). This documentation should include recommendations regarding the form or nature of the accommodations or supports required.
Following the disclosure of specific or additional needs to the College by a learner, the allocation of reasonable accommodations and additional supports will be guided by the following principles:

8.4.1 Principles Guiding Reasonable Accommodation & Additional Support

- Reasonable Accommodations and/or Additional Supports remove disadvantages.
- Reasonable Accommodations and/or Additional Supports do not provide advantages.
- The College reserves the right to require that appropriate evidence of a disability, learning difference, medical condition or other form of disadvantage be submitted by the learner before committing to the facilitation of Reasonable Accommodations and/or Additional Supports.

- The College reserves the right to decide what is reasonable.
- Reasonable Accommodations and/or Additional Supports cannot, under normal circumstances, be applied retrospectively.
- Reasonable Accommodations for assessment activities will be restricted to the minimum changes/amendments required and will not dilute the standard of learning to be obtained.
- All learners, including those requiring Reasonable Accommodations, must demonstrate attainment of learning outcomes in order to pass.
- Where Reasonable Accommodations and/or Additional Supports are deemed practicable and reasonable, they will be provided by the College. Within reasonable limitations, the College will strive to provide these at no additional cost to the learner. Examples of accommodations and supports are:
    - Extra time in assessment
    - Spelling/Grammar waiver
    - Advance access to learning materials and course readings
    - Changes to font types or sizes
    - Changes to the assessment/examination environment
    - Use of assistive technology

8.5 Procedure for Supporting Learners Applying for Reasonable Accommodation

Definitions & terms:

8.5.1 Disability

The Disability Act 2005 refers to: "disability", in relation to a person, means a substantial restriction in the capacity of the person to carry on a profession, business or occupation in the State or to participate in social or cultural life in the State by reason of an enduring physical, sensory, mental health or intellectual impairment." Substantial restriction means a restriction that is permanent (or likely to be permanent) which results in significant difficulty in communication, learning or mobility and means that the person has a need for services to be provided on a continuous basis.

8.5.2 Reasonable Accommodation

Reasonable accommodation can be defined as "any action that helps alleviate a substantial disadvantage. [It] is a facility outside the mainstream provision to allow the [learner] with a disability to participate fully, and without an educational disadvantage in comparison with his/her peers" (Mullan & Treanor, 2013).

There are other occurrences when Reasonable Accommodations will be required, for example due to an incident / accident or other emergency reason. These instances are managed separately, under the Mitigating Circumstances policy.

8.5.3 Procedure:

1. A person enquires about a programme. They are sent information about the programme along with an online application form. The application form contains a tick box for disability disclosure:
    - "I will require additional support/reasonable accommodations throughout the duration of this programme due to a diagnosed disability/learning difficulty" – YES/NO
    - "If YES, please provide brief details of potential supports required throughout the programme"

2. Learner Support Coordinator consults with the Director of Academic Affairs and Undergraduate Programmes on a case-by-case basis and liaises with Programme Managers. Applicants and learners will be supported by the College as far as is reasonably practicable.

3. Programme Managers have overview of applicants that have indicated a disability/learning difficulty. Application process continues, eligibility is assessed, and an offer is made (if relevant). Once the offer is accepted, the Learner Support Coordinator is informed and follows up with the learner to begin the registration process for reasonable accommodations.

    If the College cannot reasonably accommodate a disability
    - The applicant will be notified at the earliest possible opportunity, before they accept an offer (if offer is made), to allow them to pursue other applications

    If disclosure is made after registration
    - The learner will be supported by the College as far as is reasonably practicable

    If the learner has no Proof of Diagnosis
    - Advice on how this might be obtained if information is available
    - Advice on general supports that can be accessed (for example, within Innoskills/Learner Hub/Library)

    If an applicant/learner would like to appeal the decision made by the College
    - They can do so, following the Policy and Procedure for Appeals as outlined in the Quality Assurance Manual

4. Learner Support Coordinator issues a welcome email including:
    - Brief overview of application process
        i. Welcome call
        ii. Submission of Form and Proof of Diagnosis

iii. Follow up Needs Assessment meeting

- Link to pre-Needs Assessment online form where the learner will:
  i. Read the Reasonable Accommodations Policy (see Appendix II)
  ii. Sign the Declaration of Consent to Disclose and Share Disability Information form (see Appendix I)
  iii. Upload relevant Proof of Diagnosis (see Appendix III)
- Link to AHEAD online resources and supports

4. Once the learner submits Proof of Diagnosis & Declaration of Consent to Disclose and Share Disability Information, the Learner Support Coordinator schedules a Needs Assessment Meeting. This will preferably take place in person or on a video call but can be conducted by telephone if required.

6. The Needs Assessment Meeting takes place, facilitated by the Learner Support Coordinator or another appropriately trained/qualified member of staff.

   The purpose of the Needs Assessment is to:

   i. Understand the impact of the learner's disability on their study within a specific programme (modules, classes, timetable, assessment methods)
   ii. Check what (if any) specific impacts the learning environment (physical/virtual) may have on the learner
   iii. Ascertain what (if any) supports the learner has previously received in an educational environment and what supports they think they might need
   iv. Ascertain what familiarity the learner has with relevant assistive technologies and identify training that may be helpful
   v. Explain the nature of the support provided for learners with disabilities and how the process will work, including that an Individual Learning Support Plan will be issued to the learner within 4 weeks of the Needs Assessment Meeting
   vi. Explain how to contact the Learner Support office and who other key individuals are who can offer support throughout the programme (including Librarian, Programme Manager, Learner Support Coordinator)

7. An Assistive Technology session is offered and completed, if learner agrees to it, introducing some of the accessibility features on Innoskills and other resources, technologies and information that can help throughout the programme.

8. An Individual Learning Support Plan is generated by the Learner Support Coordinator, summarising:
   - Approval of Supports/Accommodations by Innopharma Education
   - Potential Impact of Disability on Studies (not disclosing the disability)

- Specific Accommodations Approved
- General Supports Available
- Contact Details of Key Staff Members

9. The Learner Support Coordinator will seek approval of the Individual Learning Support Plan from the Director of Academic Affairs and Undergraduate Programmes.

    - *If the Individual Learning Support Plan is not approved by the Director of Academic Affairs and Undergraduate Programmes:*
      Amendments are made as necessary

10. The Individual Learning Support Plan is issued to the learner, copying the Head of Assessment.

Each Semester

11. Individual Learning Support Plans are emailed to relevant teaching staff, on a need-to-know basis, copying the Head of Assessment and including:
    - A request for confirmation in terms of implementing the accommodations as specified in the Individual Learning Support Plan
    - A referral to Head of Assessment/TLA Committee/IT Specialist for any support needed to implement plan

If confirmation is not received, Programme Lead is notified for direct follow up with teaching staff.

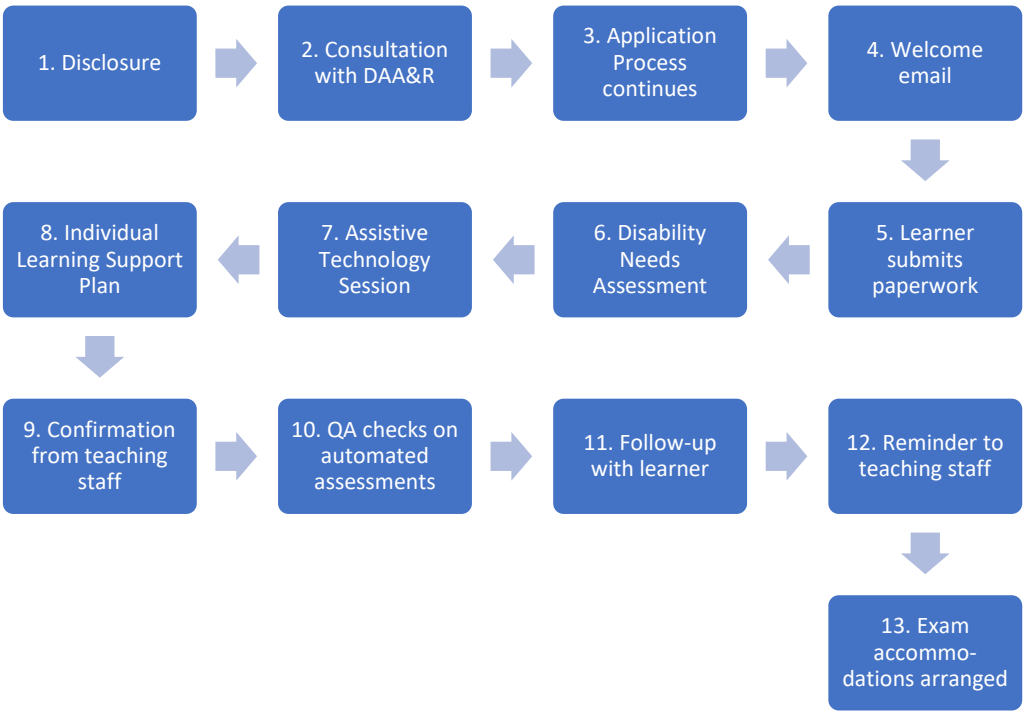
12. Supporting staff that carry out QA checks on automated assessments will be informed of relevant reasonable accommodations in order to ensure that accommodations are adhered to in every type of assessment.

13. Learner Support Coordinator follows up with learners by email or phone over weeks 7 – 10 of their programme to check on:
    - General progress/welfare
    - Effectiveness of supports/assistive technologies in place
    - Preparedness for final assessments

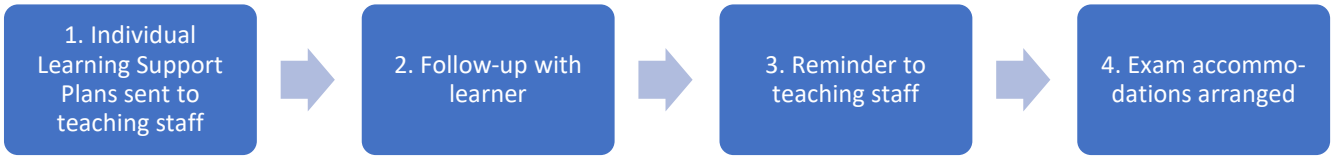
14. Learner Support Coordinator issues a reminder email to relevant teaching staff that Individual Learning Support Plans may require accommodation. The reminder is issued at the beginning of the new semester.

15. Learner Support Coordinator liaises with the Head of Assessment in relation to exam accommodations, no sooner than 4 weeks prior to the commencement of the examinations cycle.

PROCESS MAP OF PROCEDURE FOR SUPPORTING LEARNERS APPLYING FOR REASONABLE ACCOMMODATION



Actions each Semester



8.6 Policy for Moderation

The College has developed processes to ensure that assessments are fair, consistent and capable of resolving the standards of knowledge, skill and competence established at validation for the award. In pursuance of this, it has developed moderating processes. These moderating processes are twofold:

1. Major summative assessments proposed by the internal examiner are subject to review by the Programme Lead, before being forwarded to the external examiner for review.

2. Assessment outcomes are internally moderated by faculty and externally reviewed, by external examiners. This element of moderation is where a second internal examiner (moderator) will consider a sample of assessments from a first marker to assure that the appropriate mark has been awarded, thus helping to ensure the quality and reliability of marking standards. Variation in grading between the first examiner and the moderator is discussed between the two in order to reach agreement.

8.7 Policy for Internal Verification

Internal Verification is the process by which Innopharma FET assessment policies and procedures relating to planning, managing, and operationalising all aspects of assessment practices are internally verified, i.e. monitored by staff. The overall purpose of the Internal Verification process is to ensure that a provider is monitoring its own systems and procedures regarding assessment from planning of assessment to finalising results, ensuring that there is adequate learner evidence, and that results, and grades are correctly calculated and recorded (Quality Assuring Assessment – Guidelines for Providers, Version 2 Revised, QQI 2018)1 .

Internal verification of assessment procedures and assessment results takes place on a sampling basis.

The outcome of the internal verification process is an internal verification report. This report will be available to the external examiner and examinations board and will provide an auditable trail for QQI monitoring.

This procedure applies to all further education and training programmes provided by Innopharma education.

The Internal Verifier(s) systematically checks that Innopharma Educations assessment procedures have been applied consistently and verify the accuracy of provisional assessment results.

The following main steps will be employed:

1. Check that the Innopharma assessment procedures were adhered to, ensuring the following:

a. Assessment procedures have been applied consistently across all assessment activities

b. Learning has been assessed using the techniques and instruments as indicated in the validated programme

c. Assessment results are documented and recorded as per Innopharma procedures

2. Monitor all submitted portfolios through systematic checks of evidence presented as follows:

a. All evidence should be available for all learners presented for an award

b. Evidence has been generated as per the technique identified in the validated programme and using appropriate instruments as indicated in the validated programme

c. Assessment results are available for each learner

d. Marks are totalled, and percentage marks are calculated correctly on a sample basis

e. The percentage marks and grades awarded are consistent with QQI grading bands

3. Produce an Internal Verification report

a On a sample of learners the internal verifier will:

- check marks are totalled and percentage marks calculated correctly

- check marks are transferred correctly from learner evidence to learner marking sheet/record
- check percentage marks and grades allocated are consistent with QQI grading bands
- note errors and record corrections made
- identify any irregularities, notify appropriate assessor and take corrective action if required as per agreed procedures
- complete an internal verification report per award per programme.

The role of the External Examiner for FET Is to review Internal Verification reports and to authenticate the findings/outcomes.

Sample of Internal verifier report:

INTERNAL VERIFICATION REPORT

Number of assessors for whom assessment were sampled

Number of learners per sample

Semester

Programme name

Modules included

	Is the documentation sample verified correct Y/N	Is sufficient & reliable evidence available for all learners sampled Y/N	Was the evidence in line with assessment techniques/weighting as per validated programme document Y/N	Have marks been correctly totalled and grades awarded inline with FET requirements Y/N	Comments/Points of action if No
Award					

Internal Verifier

Name:

Signature:

8.8 Policy for Academic Misconduct

8.8.1 Definition of Academic Misconduct

The College defines the serious academic offence of Academic Misconduct as:

- The possession, use or attempted use of unauthorised material, books, notes, electronic aids or other materials in an examination.
- Obtaining access to an examination paper content ahead of its authorised release.
- Unauthorised collusion, i.e. either aiding or obtaining aid from another candidate or any other person, where such aid is not explicitly permitted in the assignment.
- Acting dishonestly in any way, whether before, during or after an examination or other assessment so as to either obtain or offer to others an unfair advantage in that examination or assessment.
- Deliberate plagiarism in any assessment, defined as direct copying of text, images and other materials (electronic or otherwise) from a book, article, fellow learner's work/assignment, handout, web page, artificial intelligence generated material or other source without proper acknowledgement.

Severe academic misconduct includes:

- Any case where a learner has previously been penalised for academic misconduct.
- Taking notes into or using any unauthorised device in an examination, even if they are not used.
- Impersonating another person during an examination or arranging for another person to impersonate any individual during an examination.
- Purchasing material from 'essay sites' to submit as own work.
- Misconduct within a dissertation or thesis of a taught postgraduate programme.
- Where the College suspects that any of the underlying data used by the learner has been either falsified or fabricated.

8.8.2 Plagiarism Policy

Plagiarism is a serious offence and consists of submitting work which includes parts from sources which are not acknowledged. The approach of the College is to:

- Make it very clear to learners what plagiarism is and ensure learners have access to guides and other resources to facilitate understanding and awareness of plagiarism
- Actively work to prevent plagiarism through the use of software and the provision of assessment guidelines.
- Provide a clear framework for dealing with cases of plagiarism.

The College defines plagiarism as:

The act of presenting as your own, the words or ideas of someone else, whether published or not, without proper acknowledgement, within one's own work.

There are several forms of plagiarism, which could occur within all modes of assessment (including examination):

- Direct copying of text, images and other materials (electronic or otherwise) from a book, article, fellow learner's work/assignment, handout, web page, artificial intelligence generated material or other source without proper acknowledgement.
- Programme Leads will ensure that plagiarism is explained to students at learner induction. In addition, academic staff members are responsible for re-enforcing students' understanding of plagiarism. Departments will, in conjunction with the library function, ensure that appropriate training in citation and citation software is provided to students. The College will provide training for academic staff in:

  1) Assessment design to avoid plagiarism; and

  2) Use of software for detecting plagiarism to both detect plagiarism and to foster awareness of plagiarism with the emphasis on how to avoid it.

Individual assignments may have specific requirements. The College actively supports the prevention of plagiarism by ensuring that all students are fully informed about plagiarism, and its serious consequences. Both Academic staff and students have access to software for detecting plagiarism.

8.8.3 Academic Misconduct Committee

The Registrar reviews all academic misconduct cases presented to them and makes a judgement if there is a *prima facie* case to answer. If they determine there is a case to answer, they shall convene a meeting of the Academic Misconduct Committee.

The Academic Misconduct Committee has the following composition:

I. Chair: Registrar.
II. Members: Two members of academic staff not involved in the assessment of the learner.

A member of the Office of the Director of Academic Affairs and Undergraduate Programmes in attendance as recording secretary.

8.8.4 Academic Misconduct Process:

The table below details the steps to be taken should academic misconduct be suspected.

Process Stage	Action and Details
Initial Stage	• Lecturer sets deadline for assessment.
	• Clear Instructions on task and how to complete it are given.
	• Discussion on academic integrity/honesty— what it is in the context of this assessment.
Lecturer: Suspect Misconduct	• Inform Programme Lead.
	• Informal conversation with student to establish facts; programme lead can attend.
	• If no misconduct but poor academic practice, paper graded as normal, no record maintained, and student completes Academic Integrity training.
	• If issue persists, informs student of policy and next steps.
	• Lecturer grades the work (Day 1).
Formal Referral	• Lecturer completes academic misconduct form and submits to librarian via email within 2 days of informal conversation.
	• Inform Programme lead/DAP of enquiry into alleged misconduct.
	• Access to assessment and any other relevant information to be provided.
	• CC DAP & head of Assessment on email.
Librarian Analysis	• Librarian undertakes an analysis of the assignment and reports findings to lecturer, DAP, and head of Assessment within 3 days.

	• Librarian uses a consistent review list and Turnitin to make assessment.
DAP Judgement	• DAP decides if there is a case to answer.
	• If no case, no further action and no record maintained of investigation.
	• If yes, Academic Misconduct committee is convened.
	• Student notified of investigation, nature of misconduct, and link to policy; they have the right to reply and attend the hearing (5 DAYS).
	•if the learner denies the allegation, they are invited to attend the Academic Misconduct Committee Hearing
Academic Misconduct Committee Hearing	• Committee consists of DAP plus 2 members of academic staff.
	• Learner has the right to attend the hearing plus one witness.
	• If they do not respond, the hearing proceeds without them.
	• Committee judges level of misconduct (intent, extent, level, location, time with college) and penalty based on a clear matrix.
Committee Findings	1. There is no case to answer.
	2. Poor academic practice is found.
	3. Academic misconduct is found.
	4. Serious academic misconduct is found.
Potential Penalties	• Caution and guidance/advice on plagiarism.
	• Require resubmission of assessment with no penalty.
	• Require resubmission with mark capped at 40%.
	• Resit all examinations in a series for capped mark.
	• Suspension.
	• Expulsion.

8.8.5 Responsibility

- The **Academic Council** is responsible for approving this policy and associated procedures pertaining to assessment and delegating appropriate responsibility to the Examination Board.
- The **Registrar** and the **Director of Academic Affairs and Undergraduate Programmes** with the help of the **Programme Lead** has responsibility for the implementation of policy and procedure pertaining to Assessment in the context of a specific programme.
- The **Head of Quality Assurance and Admissions** is responsible for monitoring and maintaining the overall alignment of College policy and procedures pertaining to Assessment to QQI's guidelines and policy statements.

8.8.6 Related Legislation, Regulation or Guidelines

- Core Statutory Quality Assurance Guidelines 2016 (QQI).
- Sector Specific (Independent/Private) Statutory Quality Assurance Guidelines 2016 (QQI).
- Assessment and Standards – QQI, Revised 2013.
- Quality Assuring Assessment Guidelines for Providers – QQI, Revised 2013.
- Effective Practice Guidelines for External Examining – QQI, Revised 2015.
- The Policy, Guidelines and Procedures for the Granting of Reasonable Accommodations in Examinations to Students with Disabilities - Disability Advisors Working Network.

8.9 Artificial Intelligence Policy

QA Area (s)	Programmes of Education and Training
Applies to	Staff only ☐ Learners only ☐ XX Staff and Learners ☒
Policy Owner	Registrar
Approval Date	January 2026

8.9.1 Definition

Generative AI is a type of artificial intelligence that can learn from and mimic large amounts of data to create content such as text, images, music, videos, code, and more, based on inputs or prompts.

8.9.2 Purpose and Scope

This policy has been developed to ensure the responsible, ethical and effective use of AI across all academic activities at Innopharma Education. It aims to provide clear guidance for teaching, academic staff and learners on the appropriate integration of AI, safeguard academic integrity, and support innovation while addressing potential risks and challenges.

As there is potential for academic misconduct arising from the use of artificial intelligence, the Innopharma Education Academic Misconduct Policy (section 8.8 of the QA Manual) will continue to apply to all cases, including those involving AI.

8.9.3 Institutional Responsibilities

Innopharma Education has specific responsibilities to staff and learners:

- Currency and Relevance: Ensuring teaching, learning, and assessment approaches remain current so graduates are equipped for careers in their chosen fields.
- Knowledge and Competence: Supporting staff and learners to be well-informed about ethical AI use, including understanding AI capabilities, bias, transparency, environmental impacts, data privacy, IP issues, and copyright risks.
- Academic Integrity: Upholding academic integrity so qualifications reflect genuine knowledge, skills, and competencies of graduates.
- Informed Decisions: Enabling teaching and academic staff to make informed choices about appropriate AI use for learning and assessment.

8.10 Use of AI in Assessment: Artificial Intelligence Assessment Scale (AIAS) Framework

QA Area (s)	Teaching and Learning; Assessment
Applies to	Staff only ☐ Learners only ☐ XX Staff and Learners ☒
Policy Owner	Registrar
Next Review	January 2027

8.10.1 Attribution

Adapted from: Perkins, M., Furze, L., Roe, J. and MacVaugh, J., 2024. The Artificial Intelligence Assessment Scale (AIAS): A framework for ethical integration of generative AI in educational assessment. Journal of University Teaching and Learning Practice, 21(06).

8.10.2 Overview

Listed below are the levels of AI that may be chosen by a lecturer for each assignment. Note: The level you choose is not cumulative (Level 3 does not necessarily include Levels 0, 1, or 2). AI use at all levels must be declared by the learner.

LEVEL 0: **All AI Prohibited**	The use of any AI tool is not permitted for any part of an assessment, including closed book and time-bound examinations.
LEVEL 1: **AI for Idea Generation, Structure, and Research**	AI tools may be used at the planning stage. Examples: collaborative brainstorming, structural outlines, research assistance. Must be declared.
LEVEL 2: **AI Assisted Editing**	Learners can use generative AI for refining, editing, and enhancing language or content. Examples: grammar checks, word choice suggestions, structural edits. Must be declared.
LEVEL 3: **AI for Partial Task Completion**	Learners may use AI for menial or mechanical tasks that do not directly fulfil core learning outcomes. Examples: data formatting, summarising sources, basic calculations, template generation. Must be declared.
LEVEL 4: **AI Task Completion with Human Evaluation**	AI completes certain task elements; learners provide discussion, analysis, or commentary on AI-generated content. Requires critical engagement. Examples: critical analysis of AI output, discussion and commentary, evaluation of reliability and bias, integration and synthesis. Must be declared.
LEVEL 5: **Custom – As Defined by Lecturer**	Learners may use generative AI tools throughout the assessment task. Appropriate when AI use is integral to learning outcomes. Examples: co-creation, GenAI exploration, real-time feedback loops, GenAI products, image generation. Must be declared.

8.10.3 Requirements for All Levels:

- Learners must maintain transparency and document tools used and their contribution to the final product.
- All AI use must be declared.
- Assignment briefs must clearly outline permitted AI categories.
- Lecturers must explicitly specify how generative AI may be used (especially for Level 5).
- Clear guidance must be provided on the scope and boundaries of AI use.
- Any AI use category not explicitly permitted should be considered prohibited.
- Misuse of AI will be subject to Academic Misconduct procedures.

8.10.4 Scale Chart

Level	Name/Description	Permitted AI Use	Example Activities
1	AI for Idea Generation, Structure, Research	AI can be used at planning stage: brainstorming, feedback,	Outlines, topic brainstorming
2	AI Assisted Editing	AI can refine, edit, or enhance language/content of original	Grammar checks, rephrasing
3	AI for Partial Task Completion	AI may perform menial/mechanical tasks, not directly contributing to learning	Data formatting, summarising sources
4	AI Task Completion with Human Evaluation	AI completes certain elements of task; learners must analyse, discuss, or critique AI-generated	Critiquing AI-written sections
5	Custom: As Defined by lecturer	AI tools can be used throughout the task according to specific lecturer guidance.	Collaborative AI co-creation of research reports, multi-tool AI exploration, AI-assisted data analysis

The above levels of AI use are available for lecturers to select in advance, providing learners with clear guidance on what AI use is acceptable for each assignment.
Lecturers will specify which of these categories apply to a particular assignment. It is important that lecturers explicitly include or exclude each category rather than assuming that any unmentioned categories are permitted.

8.11 Formal Assessment of AI Awareness and Learner Declaration

Applies to	Staff only ☐ Learners only ☐

8.11.1 Purpose and Rationale

The College recognises that awareness of AI risks, benefits, and limitations must be formally assessed to ensure learner accountability and professional readiness. A multi-layered approach combines induction, structured resources, assessment brief guidance, and mandatory declaration at submission. This ensures awareness is not merely taught but actively assessed and documented.

This aligns with QQI recommendations and sector best practice (HEA 2025, NAIN), which increasingly expect formal assessment of learner understanding of AI-related risks including GDPR, intellectual property, error-checking, and ethical accountability.

8.11.2 Multi-Layered Approach to AI Awareness and Formal Assessment

All learners undertake the following sequence:

1. AI INDUCTION (Programme Start)

Timing: Programme commencement

Delivery: Embedded in Academic Skills classes (facilitated by dedicated academic skills staff)

Content: Critical evaluation of AI outputs; GDPR implications; IP rights; academic integrity obligations; error-checking and bias recognition; ethical accountability

2. AI LITERACY LESSON (Ongoing Reference Resource)

Delivery: Self-paced structured resource on Innoskills LMS

Content: Risks, benefits, and limitations of AI; responsible use; tool evaluation; data privacy; copyright and IP; environmental considerations; sector guidance references

3. ASSESSMENT BRIEF GUIDANCE (Per Module)

Timing: Provided with every assignment brief

Delivery: Explicit AI usage guidance embedded in assignment briefs (per AIAS level)

Content: AIAS level specification; examples of acceptable vs. prohibited use; link to Innoskills AI lesson; lecturer expectations; consequences of AI misuse

4. MANDATORY STUDENT AI DECLARATION (At Submission)

Timing: Required before submission of every summative assessment

Delivery: Formal declaration form submitted via VLE alongside assessment

Content: Confirmation of AI lesson engagement; compliance with lecturer guidelines; responsible use within permitted levels; ethical accountability for all content; GDPR and IP awareness; error-checking commitment; adherence to Academic Misconduct Policy

8.11.3 The Student AI Declaration Form

- A mandatory Student Declaration must be completed before submission of all summative assessments. The declaration formally assesses learners' awareness of their obligations. It includes confirmation of:
- Originality of the work, and that it has not been previously submitted for any other qualification
- Having reviewed the Innopharma Education Academic Misconduct Policy, and awareness that any breach may lead to disciplinary action
- Having reviewed the AI lesson in the Innopharma Education library
- Compliance with lecturer-specified AI guidelines for the assessment
- Responsible use of generative AI only within permitted levels
- Proper referencing of all sources using the Harvard format
- Full ethical accountability for all submitted content, including evaluation of the ethical implications of any AI-provided suggestions or data, and confirmation that the final work reflects the learner's own critical judgment
- The completed declaration is retained as part of the learner's assessment record and serves as evidence of formal awareness and accountability.

8.11.4 Responsibilities

- College Librarian and Research Specialist:
  - Curates, maintains, and updates the AI literacy lesson on Innoskills (aligned with HEA, NAIN, QQI guidelines)
  - Provides guidance to lecturers on AI literacy integration and assessment brief templates
  - Monitors sector guidance changes and proposes annual policy updates
  - Coordinates AI literacy professional development for academic staff
- Registrar
  - Ensures implementation across all programmes and modules
  - Approves integration of AI guidance into all assessment briefs
  - Monitors compliance with mandatory Student Declaration requirement
  - Oversees policy review in accordance with QQI and sector guidance
- Head of Academic Programmes:

- Ensures all programme teams implement the multi-layered AI awareness approach
- Monitors completion of AI induction and lesson engagement
- Verifies all assignment briefs include explicit AI guidance and declaration requirements
- Supports staff training and development on AI integration

- Lecturers:
  - Specify AIAS level (0–5) for each assessment in assignment briefs
  - Reference the AI lesson on Innoskills in every assignment brief
  - Review learner declarations and flag discrepancies to Head of Academic Programmes
  - Participate in professional development on AI literacy and assessment design
  - Provide feedback on learners' AI use where relevant to assessment

- Academic Skills Team:
  - Deliver AI induction within Academic Skills classes
  - Ensure induction covers GDPR, IP rights, error-checking, and academic integrity
  - Facilitate discussion and critical reflection on AI in academic contexts
  - Signpost learners to Innoskills AI lesson and other resources

- Learners:
  - Complete AI induction prior to the commencement of the programme
  - Engage with the AI literacy lesson on Innoskills before first assessment
  - Review assignment brief guidance on permitted AI use
  - Complete and submit mandatory Student AI Declaration before submission
  - Maintain transparency and declare all AI use
  - Demonstrate ethical accountability and critical evaluation of AI content

8.11.5 Monitoring and Review

Implementation will be monitored and reported to Academic Council through:

- Tracking learner completion rates for AI induction and Innoskills lesson
- Analysis of Student Declaration submissions and compliance rates
- Review of assignment brief compliance (AIAS level and AI guidance inclusion)
- Annual audit of AI-related academic integrity cases
- Feedback from lecturers on learner understanding of AI risks
- Updates to sector guidance (HEA, NAIN, QQI)
- Learner feedback on AI literacy resources and support

This policy will be reviewed annually and revised as necessary to ensure alignment with sector best practice.

8.11.6 Guidance for Learners Using AI

Lecturers should alert learners to the following:

- Verification of AI Output: AI tools can hallucinate and provide false information. Verify output. Critical in pharmaceutical, medtech, and scientific contexts.
- Copyright Concerns: AI may return copyrighted material. Minimize content given to AI and verify generated content does not infringe copyright.
- Environmental Impact: Be mindful of greenhouse gas emissions from AI use. Favour energy-efficient tools where possible.
- Data Privacy and GDPR: Do not input confidential, personal, or sensitive data into cloud-based AI tools. Check your institution's approved tools policy.
- Intellectual Property: AI outputs may not be original. Verify claims, attribute sources, and understand IP rights ownership.
- Ethical Accountability: Learners remain responsible for all submitted content regardless of AI use. Accountability rests with the learner, not the tool.