9 Marks and Standards

9.1 Introduction

This Marks and Standards Section complies with QQI's *Assessment and Standards, Revised 2013,* and specifically reflects QQI's Sectoral Conventions for Assessment.
The document reflects the College's policy in respect of Assessment and Standards and describes how this policy and associated assessment regulations and academic procedures are implemented for all College programmes leading to QQI awards.
The Marks and Standards section does not replace the Quality Assurance Manual or other policies and procedures relating to assessment but rather complements them.
Examiners must familiarise themselves with the Marks and Standards and the QA Manual and learners are strongly advised to become familiar with the essential procedures as they apply to their studies.
The document is subject to review and, from time to time, may be revised and updated with the approval of the Academic Council.
The assessment of learning is a complex process. In the context of College programmes, assessment of learners entails appropriately and experienced qualified persons making inferences about a learner's knowledge, skills or competence. This is always based on appropriate evidence, and evaluations are criterion-referenced, meaning they are made with reference to pre-defined standards.
The College is committed to operating assessment methods that:

- Are fair and consistent and align with relevant award standards determined by QQI.
- Are effective in measuring the students' attainment of the intended learning outcomes.
- Provide feedback to the learner enabling the learner to improve their performance.
- Contribute positively to the total learning experience and in particular to achieving the intended learning outcomes.
- Encourage creativity and originality where appropriate.

9.2 Approved Programme Schedule

The Approved Programme Schedule defines the programme structure approved at validation. It details, for each stage, the modules, and combinations thereof, validated by QQI for that programme.

In the context of Marks and Standards, the Schedule shows the credits, total learner effort and weighting of each element of assessment, for each module. It will also include any special conditions of validation.

9.3 Precepts for Assessment

The fundamental precepts for assessment are:

9.3.1 Learners

Learners are responsible for:

- Demonstrating their achievement of the learning outcomes.
- Undertaking assessment in a fair and honest manner.

9.3.2 Assessment methods:

- Support credible evaluations of the achievement of learning outcomes.
- Support effective teaching and learning.
- Are regularly reviewed and improved.
- Are valid, fit for purpose and reliable.
- Incorporate reasonable accommodations.

9.3.3 Assessment processes:

- Are transparent and easily accessed by learners and other stakeholders.
- Are clearly communicated to learners within a programme.
- Are equitable and reflect QQI's guidelines.
- Are subject to internal moderation and external authentication.
- Include procedures to facilitate learners seeking a recheck, review or appeal of an assessment decision.

9.4 Principles of Assessment

The College manages its assessment processes based on the precepts above and applies the following principles:

- Assessment is an integral part of programme design and is constructively aligned with the programme/module learning outcomes.
- Assessment opportunities support standards based on learning outcomes.
- Assessment is fit for purpose, authentic, relevant and varied.
- There are clear and consistent assessment criteria prepared by the examiner and these are provided to the learner at the time the assignment is set.
- Assessment is transparent.
- Assessment is valid, reliable and free from bias.
- The assessment framework facilitates the learner's learning and informs and supports learner progression.
- The assessment process is inclusive and equitable.
- Learners are provided with opportunities to demonstrate the extent to which they have achieved the programme learning outcomes.
- Learners are provided with feedback on assessment that is timely and promotes learning and facilitates improvement.

- The management of assessment is efficient, especially regarding the amount and timing of assessments, taking into account learner workloads and allows time for learner reflection.
- The processes for appeals are straightforward, clearly communicated and executed in an efficient and timely manner.
- The staff development policy and strategy supports the College's policy to ensure that all staff involved in the assessment of learners are competent to undertake their responsibilities.

9.5 Responsibilities for Assessment

9.5.1 The Academic Council

The Academic Council has overall formal responsibility for formative and summative assessment. These regulations are subject to the approval of the Academic Council. The College's Assessment Strategy is subject to the approval of the Academic Council.
The Examination Board has the final decision regarding assessment results. The Academic Council is responsible for monitoring the overall assessment process and ensuring issues are addressed and good practice is sustained. The Academic Council receives and reviews the minutes of the Examination Boards, the Examinations Reports, which contains details on any trends or anomalies in assessment, External Examiners Reports, Progression and Retention Report and Annual Programme Monitoring Reports and other such reports or audits that it deems necessary to discharge its responsibilities for summative assessment.
The Academic Council approves External Examiner nominations for appointment by the College.

9.5.2 Director of Academic Affairs and Undergraduate Programmes

The Director of Academic Affairs and Undergraduate Programmes has executive responsibility for the overall management of assessment and conduct of examinations and is tasked with ensuring the effective implementation of policies and procedures approved by the Academic Council.
The Director of Academic Affairs and Undergraduate Programmes is responsible for ensuring all learners are properly registered for the examinations and resit examinations as appropriate and ensuring that processes covering reasonable accommodation, mitigating circumstances, academic misconduct and appeals are implemented.
The Director of Academic Affairs and Undergraduate Programmes office is responsible for handling, managing and recording assessment data and compiling and maintaining the Examination Board broadsheets.
The instruction for 'Regulations for the Management of Assessment and the Conduct of Examinations' includes:

- The organisation of examinations.
- Mechanisms to ensure security of assessment material, including examination papers and scripts.
- Arrangements for the archiving and retention of learner assessment data including, transcripts, the relevant curricula and such information as is required to facilitate the issue of a Diploma Supplement, subject to the College's Data Retention Schedule.

9.5.3 Registrar

The Registrar is responsible for the College's teaching, learning and assessment strategies that provide a framework within which programme and module assessment strategies are developed and to ensure that these strategies are current and informed by best practice.
The Registrar is responsible for ensuring that assessment is conducted within the QA Framework.
The Registrar is responsible for ensuring the Examiners Meetings and the Examination Boards are conducted in accordance with these regulations.

9.5.4 Head of Academic Programmes

The Head of Academic Programmes has overall responsibility for managing programme level assessment. This includes the development of the programme assessment strategy prior to validation, the implementation of that strategy by ensuring academic staff are assessing modules in accordance with the Approved Programme Schedule; and ensuring that academic staff fulfil their obligations in respect of marking and providing feedback to learners.
The Head of Academic Programmes is responsible for the monitoring and analysis of learner performance to initiate enhancement activities and for liaising with external examiners to facilitate improvement.

9.5.5 Programme Leads

Programme Leads are responsible for consulting with the teaching and assessment team to ensure coordination of all module assessment strategies. It is their role to ensure that the module assessment is aligned with the overall programme assessment strategy, to ensure the teaching team select appropriate assessment instruments to assess the learner's achievement of the learning outcomes and to determine strategies for reassessment. The teaching team is also responsible for ensuring that the policy and procedures governing assessment are properly observed, such as security of examination material and responding to external examiners
The Programme Lead is also responsible for approval of draft examination papers, or other major elements of summative assessment, before being forwarded to the external examiner, for review.

9.5.6 Internal Examiners

The role and responsibilities of internal examiners is as follows:

- Submit draft examination papers/assessment briefs for 100% CA modules, together with appropriate marking schemes and worked solutions to numerical questions involving quantitative data, to the appropriate programme lead for review.
- Following approval by the programme lead, to forward the draft assessments and associated documentation to the External Examiner(s), in good time.
- Take account of all suggestions, criticisms, or amendments proposed by the External Examiner(s).
- Submit examination papers and marking schemes, as approved by the External Examiner(s), to the Registrar, or to the person nominated thereby for this purpose.
- Retain all examination material in a secure manner and ensure that all communications in relations to examinations by telephone, email, are consistent with GDPR guidelines.
- Upload their results for all exam components to the Learner Management System (LMS).

- Participate in the post assessment moderation process with colleagues by making available a sample of assessments to a colleague for review.
- Make available all examination and assessment material for scrutiny as required by the External Examiner(s).
- Consult with the External Examiner(s) prior to the meeting of the Examination Board, and to agree the marks proposed to be awarded.
- Attend all meetings in relation to examination process and the meeting of the Examination Board.
- Be available to meet with learners, either in person or on-line, by appointment to discuss assessment performance.
- Participate as required in the Review/Recheck process.

Internal Examiners are normally required to meet, as a group, in the days prior to the Examination Board to review and discuss their findings; ensure that they are accurate; and prepare the draft broadsheet of results for presentation to the Examination Board.

9.6 External Examiner Policy

The College appoints External Examiners to assure standards, to enhance teaching, learning and assessment and to support programme development. See section 8.2 External Examiner Policy

9.7 Learners

Learners must familiarise themselves with:

- Assessment schedule for their programme.
- Penalties for work submitted late.
- Procedures for seeking a CA deadline extension.
- Assessment criteria used to mark submitted work.
- Guidelines for referencing.
- Plagiarism Policy.

Learners will be briefed on their responsibilities during induction and have access to the relevant information via the VLE/Website throughout their studies. This communication will be managed by the relevant Programme Lead.
Furthermore, learners must:

- Ensure that they are correctly registered on programmes.
- Ensure that they are correctly registered for examinations.
- Attend examinations, class tests, practical etc.
- Complete all CA work as required.
- Notify the Registrar (or their nominee) in writing of reasons for absence from class tests, practical etc. (supplying relevant documentary evidence).

- Notify the Registrar (or their nominee) in writing of compassionate circumstances that have impeded their examination/assessment performance.
- Comply with any programme board requirements for (i) receipting work, (ii) seeking deadline extensions, and (iii) referencing.
- Retain a copy of submitted work.

It is the responsibility of learners to check the date, time and venue for each of their examinations and learners must adhere to Examination Guidelines.
Any candidate who fails to attend for an examination, who arrives late, or who leaves early for any reason other than they have completed the examination, is required to send a written explanation to the relevant Programme Lead and as appropriate complete the Examinations Deferral Form.

9.8 Conflict of Interest Policy

All persons involved in the examination/assessment process must be aware of the College's Conflict of Interest policy. See Section 15 Conflict of Interest Policy

9.9 Registration for Assessment

Learners who are registered with the College are automatically registered for the examination for the programme on which they are enrolled. Maximum registration periods for a programme are normally:

Programme Duration/Minimum Registration Period (Years)	FT/PT	ECTS	Maximum Registration Period (Years)
2	FT	120	5
3	FT	180	5
4/5	PT	180	8
4	FT	240	6
5/6	PT	240	9
1	FT	60/90	4
2	PT	60/90	5

Figure 8.1: Registration Period (Note: exceptions apply for learners with exemptions)
Where a learner's registration period expires, including periods of deferral, they are notified and formally withdrawn at the next Examination Board for that programme. Where a learner has failed a module, they will be automatically registered for the next available sitting until they have exhausted sittings (maximum of four attempts), unless formal arrangements have been made under the policy for Reasonable Accommodation.

9.10 Deferrals

A learner may be granted a deferral of an examination, a module, or a stage under the Reasonable Accommodation Policy. In cases where a deferral has been granted, the learner will be recorded as deferred for that examination and the subsequent attempt will be treated

as a first sitting for the purposes of progression and award calculations. Any marks already awarded for completed module components in that module will be carried forward.

9.11 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, medical conditions or temporary support needs, and will make Reasonable Accommodations and provide Additional Supports for learners as far as is reasonably practicable. Details of the relevant policy are included in Section 8.4 Policy for Reasonable Accommodation and Additional Supports.

9.12 Mitigating Circumstances

Learners should seek advice and support offered by the College via the Learner Support Coordinator in circumstances where an assessment is missed, or their performance may have been adversely affected due to a health or compassionate grounds. In the case of missing an assignment deadline, the learner must notify the lecturer who will direct them to the Programme Lead who may arrange for an extension or advise the learner to apply for consideration of mitigating circumstances. Where a learner has not communicated with the College staff a late penalty will be applied.
In the case of an examination where a learner knows in advance that they are going to miss the examination, they must apply to the Office of the Director of Academic Affairs and Undergraduate Programmes for authorised absence from the examination via a formal application for the consideration of mitigating circumstances.
In the case of missing an examination due to an unforeseen circumstance or being taken ill during an examination, then the learner must apply for the consideration of mitigating circumstances as soon as they are well enough to return to College. In cases of an ongoing issue, a learner may apply for a deferral or an alternative assessment or additional supports in cases involving temporary injury or disability. An alternative assessment will be aligned to the same learning outcomes and be of the same standard as the original assessment.

9.12.1 Application for Consideration of Mitigating Circumstances

To apply for consideration the learner is required to fill out the Request for Mitigation Form available from the Examinations Office and submit it to that office with all relevant paperwork. The form is screened for eligibility by the Examinations Office and if it is deemed valid will be passed to the Director of Academic Affairs and Undergraduate Programmes for consideration, prior to the appropriate Examination Board. Where there is a suite of examinations at the same time, a learner may not select to take some and present mitigation for others, unless there were special circumstances. Where a learner is taken ill or unforeseen circumstances arise just before or during an examination the invigilator should be notified, and the circumstance recorded in the Invigilator's Report. The learner may fill out the Mitigating Circumstances Form on their return. In all cases of a medical nature, medical certification will be required – such certification must be issued by recognised practitioners and dated at the time of the illness and not be retrospective. Where a learner presents at an examination, they have deemed themselves fit to take that examination. The Director of Academic Affairs and Undergraduate Programmes and Head of Academic Programmes will

meet to consider those applications that the Registrar has approved for the consideration of mitigating circumstances.
They determine:

- If the circumstances presented were exceptional and may have affected performance.
- The degree to which the performance may have been affected.
- The actions taken to mitigate the effect on performance.

The typical outcomes where a case is upheld are:

- The learner is allowed to defer the examination.
- Penalties for late submission may be lifted or reduced.
- Consideration will be made in respect of borderline cases, where there is other evidence the learning outcomes have been achieved.

In all cases, the nature of the mitigating circumstances is confidential, and the Examination Board is provided with only sufficient information to discharge its duty. The Programme Lead will note the decision and liaises with the Office of the Director of Academic Affairs and Undergraduate Programmes to update the LMS. All applications for reasonable accommodations and mitigating circumstances are recorded and an overall, anonymised, analysis is included in the Director of Academic Affairs and Undergraduate Programmes Examination Report to the Academic Council.
Deferrals are not indefinite and learners who defer an examination must take that examination at the next available sitting or apply to renew the deferral. The learner's registration status must also be taken into consideration.

9.12.2 Extensions and Late Submission of Assessed Coursework

A learner may apply for an extension to the deadline for an element of continuous assessment under the College's policy for reasonable accommodation. Extensions are considered only where a written application is submitted to the lecturer in advance of the deadline with supporting evidence as to why the extension is warranted (e.g. medical certificate). Extensions to coursework may be approved by the Programme Lead who will consult with the Head of Academic Programmes as appropriate. Technical problems, such as computer failure or viruses, are not deemed legitimate reasons for late submission or non-submission of work. The only exception is if the College's system for submission of coursework is not operating and in those cases a report will be sent from IT to the Office of the Director of Academic Affairs and Undergraduate Programmes and Head of Academic Programmes to ensure learners are not disadvantaged.
If an extension has not been granted and work is submitted after the extended due date, late submission of assignments is penalised as follows:

- 10% penalty for assignments submitted within three days of the submission deadline. (e.g. a grade of 50% would become (50*0.9) = 45.0%)
- 20% penalty for assignments submitted within one week (seven days) of the submission deadline. (e.g. a grade of 60% would become (60*0.8) = 48.0%)

Later submissions, i.e. after one week, will not normally be accepted. Learners are expected to retain a copy of all submitted coursework.

9.13 Preparation and Marking of Assessment

The responsibility for the assessment of learners is within the Faculty.

- The Module Leader is responsible for managing assessment processes at the module level supported by the Programme Lead and Head of Academic Programmes.
- The External Examiner provides public reassurance as they review the assessment process and safeguard standards.

The Head of Academic Programmes and Registrar are responsible for the appointment of appropriately qualified Module Leaders and recommending appropriately qualified External Examiners for appointment by the Academic Council and/or awarding bodies.
Internal Examiners should prepare draft examination papers/assessment briefs for 100% CA modules, together with appropriate marking schemes and worked solutions to numerical questions involving quantitative data and submit these to the appropriate programme lead for review. The Programme Lead should consult with the internal examiner, in a collegiate manner, with a view to arriving at an agreed draft, which will be submitted to the external examiner. In the event of a disagreement, the Registrar will be asked to intervene, and their decision is final.

9.13.1 Marking Principles

The College uses a criterion referenced marking system. Each module is marked by the Internal Examiner(s) against a set of agreed criteria informed by the appropriate awards standards and set out in a published marking scheme. Marks are awarded as specified in the appropriate Approved Programme Schedule, relating to the validated programme, as published in the Student Handbook and are provisional until they have been verified and agreed at the Examination Board which ultimately makes decisions regarding awards.
Marks are awarded on the basis of an individual's performance. Assessment determines a learner's individual achievements of the intended learning outcomes. Marks are expressed as percentages.
To ensure validity and reliability of assessment staff undertake staff development activities in teaching and assessment. Strategies to support staff in the assessment process include peer review of both teaching and assessment. Moderation and Double-blind marking support these development activities.

9.13.2 Marking Processes

For individual, high-stakes assessment instruments the Module Leader must provide a grading scheme to the External Examiner prior to the approval of the assessment task.
All assessment instruments are marked according to the agreed grading scheme and aligned to the relevant grade criteria. Marks are included on the assignment or script and are clearly annotated.

9.13.3 Feedback

For assessment to be effective 'as and for' learning, formative, timely and personalised feedback is essential. Feedback provides a transparent evaluation of the learner's performance regarding the assessment and is benchmarked against published criteria.
Internal Examiners:

- Must ensure that they supply considered, personalised and formative feedback.
- Must supply feedback in a timely manner after the agreed submission date unless otherwise agreed with the Programme Lead and learners are notified.

- May use generic feedback to highlight common successes and problems; this should be delivered as soon as marking is complete and in a classroom setting.

The Regional Programme Administration Team support the Internal Examiners by:

- Facilitating communication and distribution of examination material between examiners, moderators and External Examiners where appropriate.
- Monitoring the submission of coursework as part of the learner success and academic retention strategy and support the Internal Examiners.

9.14 Moderation and Double Marking

9.14.1 Policy

The College has developed processes to ensure that assessments are fair, consistent and as part of this it has developed a Policy for Moderation. See Section 8.5 Policy for Moderation:

9.14.2 Procedure for Post Examination Moderation

The programme team takes a random sample of the grades for moderation. The sample chosen will include at least one example of work from the percentage bands, 30-39, 40-49; 50-59; 60-69; 70-79; Above 80. All borderline grades shall also be included.

The moderator reviews the application of the marking scheme against the learner effort by the original marker to ensure consistent and fair assessment. Variation in grading between the first examiner and the moderator is discussed between the two in order to reach agreement. In some cases, it may be necessary to engage the Registrar or the Programme Lead in the discussion, to determine the final grade that will be presented to the Examination Board.

The Registrar has the final decision on moderation of a grade, subject to the Board of Examiners.

Where double marking is required such as in postgraduate projects or dissertations, the College uses double-blind marking to ensure reliability. The Internal Examiners mark independently of each other and fill out individual feedback sheets. On completion of the process the markers consult and arrive at an agreed mark. Where agreement cannot be reached, or the individual marks differ by more than 10%, the Programme Lead will work with the Internal Examiners to facilitate resolution.

Procedures for the management of assessment, including preparing assignment specifications and communicating provisional results can be found in the guidelines for Regulations for the Management of Assessment and the Conduct of Examinations.

9.15 Responsibilities for Preparation and Marking

9.15.1 Module Leader's Responsibilities

The lecturer responsible for teaching and assessing a module is termed Module Leader for the purposes of the academic administration of a module. Normally there is one lecturer per module but where a module has more than one lecturer, then one lecturer is assigned responsibility for coordinating the assessment and other academic administrative functions. The Module Leader is responsible for:

- The preparation and coordination of all assessment instruments for that module.

- Consulting with the teaching team in advance of the commencement of teaching, ensuring the preparation of examination papers in good time and ensuring the paper is moderated before it is submitted to the external examiner.
- The security of the examination paper as it is prepared and submitted to the Director of Academic Affairs and Undergraduate Programmes office.
- Ensuring the assessment material is marked and the provisional results are uploaded to the LMS.
- Ensuring the learners are supplied with feedback within the published timescales and that scripts and assignments are sent to the Office of the Director of Academic Affairs and Undergraduate Programmes for verification.
- Liaising with the External Examiner regarding content, learning outcomes and standards.
- Ensuring that they themselves are familiar with all assessment policies and procedures and be able to advise learners regarding reasonable accommodation.
- Taking account of feedback from the External Examiner.
- Monitoring assessment trends, completing a Module Review and Development Form (Ref: Associated Form 2) and feeding into the appropriate Programme Board.
- Ensuring that the assessment is managed in accordance with instructions laid out in the Regulations for the Management of Assessment and the Conduct of Examinations.

9.15.2 Material for External Examiner

All examinable material is available to external examiners. However, as a matter of procedure, a sample of at least 10% of assessment material is sent to the External Examiner prior to the Examination Board in good time to allow the examiner to respond in advance of the Examination Board.
Criteria for the selection of material to be sent to External Examiner:

- The sample should contain examples of all assessment instruments contributing to the final assessment mark for that module.
- The sample should represent at least 10% of the cohort, but no fewer than 3 learners' work.
- The sample should include a sample of failed work and borderline cases with examples from the middle of each classification.

All learner work that contributes to the overall final assessment should be available on request to the External Examiner. Where practical demonstrations are assessed, and where they represent a significant component (i.e. >25%) of a module then a representative sample of these may be recorded.

9.15.3 Broadsheets

All marks are recorded in the LMS and presented to the Examination Board on formal broadsheets.

- The Programme Lead is responsible for checking that all module marks have been properly uploaded to the LMS in advance of the Internal Examination Board.
- The Programme Administration Team provides an additional final verification of the inputted data prior to the submission of the module data to the Office of the Director of Academic Affairs and Undergraduate Programmes via the LMS.

- The Office of the Director of Academic Affairs and Undergraduate Programmes is responsible for:
    - Compiling and maintaining the Examination Board broadsheets.
    - Ensuring that the system is populated with all registered learners for that module and that the broadsheet includes the module calculation as per the appropriate Approved Programme Schedule.
    - Updating the broadsheet to reflect agreed outcomes from the Examination Board.

9.16 Examination Boards

9.16.1 Internal Examiners Meeting

An Internal Examiners Meeting is convened at the completion of every stage of a programme. Results are presented to this meeting, verified by the programme Lead. The purpose of the meeting is to give the Internal Examiners an opportunity to:

- Review and discuss their findings.
- Consider overall trends in module marks, averages etc.
- Review the overall profile of learners.
- Ensure that the results presented are complete and accurate.
- Prepare the draft broadsheet of results for presentation to the Examination Board.

The Internal Examiners Meeting may influence, but not compel, assessors to review their assessment findings. Marks are not changed at this meeting unless they are factually incorrect. Where there may be, for example, a module with a grade distribution which is persistently and significantly inconsistent with others, it will be investigated and if mitigation is required this will be discussed with the Examining Team and External Examiner and a solution proposed if appropriate. Any adjustments proposed are recommended to the Examination Board. No changes to marks are made at the Internal Examiners Meeting.
This meeting is chaired by the Head of Academic Programmes or Registrar. An External Examiner may attend this meeting, by invitation, or at their own request. This meeting is minuted and the minutes made available to the External Examiners and Examination Board as required.

9.16.2 Examination Board

The Examination Board is convened at the completion of every stage in a programme to consider all assessment findings, including the findings of repeat/supplemental assessment and to determine assessment results for each of the learners presented.
The Examination Board has the final decision regarding assessment results.
Assessment results presented to the Board have been marked, verified and samples seen by the External Examiner. The Examination Board considers overall trends in module outcomes and then considers each learner's profile to determine progression or an award.
The Examination Board is chaired by the Head of Academic Programmes or Registrar and follows the Internal Examiners Meeting. It is a formal board convened to make determinations regarding progression or awards.
The Examination Board considers overall trends in module marks, averages, etc. before reviewing individual performance. Where issues, such as anomalies or evidence of significant systematic bias, raised at the Internal Examiners meeting have been addressed and when the

Examination Board is satisfied that there are no further issues then the learners' individual performances are considered.
The Academic Council receives minutes of the Examination Boards, External Examiner Reports and receives an Examination Report from the office of the Director of Academic Affairs and Undergraduate Programmes.

9.16.3 Preparation for an Examination Board

The dates of the Examination Board are agreed by consultation with the External Examiners and communicated to all members in good time.
The Examination Board is supplied with:

- The programme assessment strategy and Approved Programme Schedule.
- A draft broadsheet of results, complete with all verified marks.
- A short report on trends in module marks.

9.16.4 Examination Board, Frequency of Meetings, Membership and Quorum

The Examination Board comprises:

- Chair: Head of Academic Programmes or Registrar or nominee as required
- Only (and all) Internal Examiners who have a role in the assessment of the programme
- External Examiners
- Programme Lead and Head of Academic Programmes.

To be quorate there should be:

- A sufficient number of the programme's assessors present to deliberate competently upon the assessment findings presented.
- At least one External Examiner present where awards are to be decided.

The Chair will determine if the Examination Board is quorate and if not, the Examination Board must be reconvened.
There may be rare and exceptional circumstances where an External Examiner is unable to attend the Examination Board. Arrangements will be made for virtual attendance. In exceptional cases where they have examined the assessment findings and agree with the recommendations recorded on the draft broadsheet of results and still cannot attend, they may provide a written report to be read out at the Examination Board by the Registrar.
Where an External Examiner becomes incapacitated during their term of office, or unable to attend the Examination Board owing to unforeseen circumstances, a replacement External Examiner will be appointed.

9.16.5 Post Examination Board

On completion of the Examination Board, the broadsheet is signed by the members of the Examination Board and retained by the College in compliance with the College's Data Protection and Record Management Policy. The office of Director of Academic Affairs and Undergraduate Programmes is responsible for maintaining these records.
The LMS is updated to reflect the outcome of the Examination Board. The signed broadsheets are sent to QQI by the Director of Academic Affairs and Undergraduate Programmes office.

Transcripts are issued from the LMS when formally released by the Registrar The Director of Academic Affairs and Undergraduate Programmes signs the academic transcripts and the Registrar oversees the publication of results on the College Innoskills (Moodle) and by post.
A preliminary report on the examination process, including minutes of the Examination Boards and External Examiners Reports, where available shall be sent to the Academic Council as soon as practicable after the examination board meetings.
A more comprehensive report, as detailed in section 14 of this Manual is furnished to the Academic Council at the designated time.
The minutes of the Examination Meeting are retained by the Office of the Director of Academic Affairs and Undergraduate Programmes and subject to the College's Data Protection and Record Management Policy.

9.16.6 Confidentiality

The proceedings and deliberations of meetings of Boards of Examiners are strictly confidential. Excepting legitimate reporting requirements, no person who has attended or observed a meeting of a board of examiners may disclose to any other person a decision of the board or any document, information or opinion considered, conveyed or expressed at the meeting.

9.16.7 Examination Board Decisions – Assessment Regulations

The Examination Board is formal and deliberative. Decisions regarding progression and awards are made at the Examination Board in the presence of External Examiners. The Examination Board should satisfy itself that the learners' work has been appropriately marked and classified, that the prescribed learning outcomes have been attained and that the assessment regulations as described in this document are applied alongside any special regulations as recorded in the Approved Programme Schedule.
Where there are decisions to be made requiring academic judgement such as borderline cases for awards or, in rare cases, the readjustment of a module mark to mitigate a systematic trend that may indicate a bias (positive or negative) then the Chair attempts to arrive at a decision by consensus. Where a consensus cannot be reached, the majority ruling is taken. No one member of the Examination Board has more influence than another. Where there is disagreement, the minutes should reflect the deliberation and the outcome without identifying those involved.
In the unusual event that an adjustment has had to be made to compensate for a significant systematic error, a supporting rationale is to be recorded in the minutes so that the Programme Board and the Academic Council are informed for the purpose of monitoring and follow-up.
All trends are reflected in the office of the Director of Academic Affairs and Undergraduate Programmes ' Examination Report to monitor trends in retention, progression and awards and benchmarked against other providers where the data is available for the purposes of comparison and vigilance against any tendency toward grade inflation.

9.16.8 Examination Board Decisions Regarding Progression

Each assessment and module is marked as a percentage. The pass mark on higher education (i.e. Level 6 – 8) programmes for modules is 40%, unless otherwise stated in the Approved Programme Schedule or Programme Specification.
The pass mark on further education programmes (FET) for modules is 50%.

A pass in a module is a positive statement of achievement of the stated Minimum Intended Module Learning Outcomes. A learner may not reattempt a module they have passed with the intention of achieving a better mark.

9.16.9 Stage Progression

A percentage point average system is used, this is defined as the credit- weighted mean of the percentage values for the constituent modules. The percentage point value is the same as percentage except for marks below 35 where it is zero. A candidate must pass all modules in a stage to progress to the next stage of the programme with the following exceptions:

a) Where exemption from part of the programme has been agreed on admission.
b) Where the Examination Board permits a pass by compensation, higher education (Level 6-8) only.
c) Where in exceptional circumstances a candidate is permitted to progress carrying failed modules (credit deficit) to be passed during the subsequent stage.

Where a candidate has failed or is just below pass in each of a string of independent modules in the same stage, the results are reinforced and compensation or trailing with credit deficit is not appropriate.

9.16.10 Pass by Compensation (Higher Education (Level 6-8) only)

Where a learner has marginally failed to demonstrate attainment of the minimum intended module learning outcomes, a pass by compensation may be allowed subject to the following conditions:

a) The learner has been assessed for all stage modules and no module in the stage has been failed outright (i.e. <35%).
b) The results of all modules in the stage are from first attempts, in the case of full-time learners, the results are from the same sitting.
c) Up to one third of the credit for the stage: e.g. 20 credits in a 60-credit stage, can be compensated.
d) To apply the compensation rule, the stage aggregate of credit-weighted excesses of percentage marks (>40) is greater than or equal to twice the stage aggregate of credit- weighted deficits of marks (<40).

Compensation may be applied only to enable a learner to pass a stage (at the award stage, a learner who passes by compensation remains eligible for honours, etc.).
Compensation does not change the result of the modules passed in that way. When reporting module passes by compensation, the actual result is returned, e.g. 37%, along with an indication that the module pass has been granted by compensation. Pass by compensation does not preclude an honours award.

9.16.11 Progression with Credit Deficit

In exceptional circumstances a candidate may be permitted to progress to the next stage of a programme carrying a failed module(s). This is subject to any special regulations for that programme reflected in the Approved Programme Schedule or Programme Specification, and is considered on a case by case basis using the following criteria:

a) The failed modules are no more than 16% of a stage (10 ECTS of a typical 60 ECTS stage).
b) The candidate has demonstrated, as determined by the Examination Board, an otherwise strong performance across the stage that would indicate a reasonable

expectation of achieving the minimum intended learning outcomes for the failed module in addition to the workload in the subsequent stage.

Where this is allowed, the candidate must retrieve the failed module(s) within the next stage. The additional workload cannot be used as mitigation for further accommodation.

9.16.12 Reassessment

Where a candidate fails to pass an examination or assessment component the following may apply:

a) The candidate is required to re-sit the failed component of the module. The marks for all other complete components are carried forward.

b) The candidate is required to retake the full module; this includes attendance and all coursework. Previous marks awarded for completed components are not carried forward.

c) The candidate is required to re-sit stage, i.e. resit certain elements of the stage, previous marks for completed components awarded are carried forward at the discretion of the Examination Board which will also determine the attendance requirements.

d) The candidate is required to repeat stage, i.e. repeat the full stage of a programme with attendance; previous marks awarded in that stage are not carried forward.

There is a maximum of four attempts for a module, i.e. two iterations of the module. Where a candidate does not pass a core module at the last attempt they are withdrawn and deemed to have failed the programme. Where a candidate has exhausted sittings on an elective module the module may be substituted with an alternative elective.
Reassessment instruments are prepared, by the examiner, in advance of the Examination Board and re-assessments are not the same as the original assessment.
When a candidate has passed all of the modules in a stage the Examination Board allows them to progress to the next stage or at the final stage determines an award.
Where a candidate has demonstrated extremely poor performance by failing the majority of modules with low marks the Examination Board may decide, at its discretion, to terminate the registration of the candidate and remove them from the programme. In this case, the candidate is deemed to have failed the programme. The Examination Board should ensure consistent treatment of all candidates in these cases.

9.16.13 Suspension and Withdrawals

A candidate may be suspended or withdrawn from a programme for disciplinary reasons such as Severe Academic Misconduct or a penalty determined by the Student Disciplinary Committee. A candidate may elect to withdraw from a programme at any time.

9.16.14 Examination Board Decisions Regarding Awards

The Examination Board reviews the overall profile of the candidates to determine the classification of an award. All major awards which have a volume of at least 60 ECTS are classified.

QQI's Revised Sectoral Convention 3 on Determination of Award Classification 2022:

Calculation of the award classification shall be based on the credit-weighted mean value of the allowable grades (i.e. those that contribute to the classification) for modules of a specific programme which has been validated by QQI or by a recognised institution for the purpose of making the award.

A learner may claim exemption from a module whose grade would otherwise contribute to the award classification, provided that he or she can demonstrate the attainment of the relevant knowledge, skill and competence. In cases where the attainment cannot be graded fairly and consistently, only an unclassified award shall be available.

Procedures for exemption and/or pass by compensation shall not compromise national standards for awards.

When a module whose grade is designed to contribute to the determination of an award classification is failed on the first attempt, the maximum achievable grade shall be capped at Pass for any and all subsequent attempts and the capped grade shall be used in the determination of the award classification which is not capped at Pass.

Classification is determined by the appropriate Examination Board and is informed by the award calculation. A borderline zone is determined around classification boundaries to allay the effects of measurement uncertainty and to ensure that the award is based on an academic decision and not merely on computation. Borderline is defined as within 1% of a classification boundary, unless otherwise stated in the Approved Programme Schedule or Programme Specification.
In such cases the Examination Board should discuss the merits of the candidate and whether the mark accurately reflects the candidate's achievement. A candidate may drop a classification as well as be promoted, in each case the rationale for promotion or demotion is documented. When the Examination Board decision has been made to change a mark, the broadsheet is adjusted by the Office of the Director of Academic Affairs and Undergraduate Programmes to reflect that decision.
Criteria to assist in determining the outcome of borderline cases for undergraduates:

- Within 1% (percentage point average) of the classification boundary.
- Demonstrate continued improvement over the programme in respect of the Minimum Intended Programme Learning Outcomes.
- Have the greater number of modules (adjusted for credit weighting if appropriate) in the higher classification.

In some very exceptional circumstances, and with the agreement of the Chair and External Examiners, a learner may be called for a viva voce. The learner must be given adequate notice and be informed of the learning outcomes to be determined. The viva voce is undertaken by the Module Leader and one External Examiner. A nominee of the Director of Academic Affairs and Undergraduate Programmes chairs the viva voce.

9.16.15 Percentage Point Values (PPA) and Corresponding Award Classifications Higher Education

Table 8.1: Percentage Point Values and Corresponding Award Classifications

Classification Higher Certificates (Level 6) and Ordinary Bachelor's Degrees (Level 7) awards	Percentage Point Value (PPA) boundary values	Description
Distinction	70%	Indicative descriptor: Achievement includes that required for a Pass and in

		most respects is significantly and consistently beyond this
Merit Grade 1	60%	Indicative descriptor: Achievement includes that required for a Pass and in many respects is significantly beyond this
Merit Grade 2	50%	Indicative descriptor: Attains all the minimum intended programme learning outcomes
Pass	40%	Definitive descriptor: Attains all the minimum intended programme learning outcomes

Bachelor's Degrees (Level 8) awards	PPA Boundary Values	Description
First Class Honours	70%	Indicative descriptor: Achievement includes that required for a Pass and in most respects is significantly and consistently beyond this
Second Class Honours	60%	Indicative descriptor: Achievement includes that required for a Pass and in many respects is significantly beyond this
Second Class Honours Grade 2	50%	Indicative descriptor: Attains all the minimum intended programme learning outcomes
Pass	40%	Definitive descriptor: Attains all the minimum intended programme learning outcomes

Classification of Postgraduate Diploma (Level 9)	PPA Boundary Values	Description
Distinction	70%	Indicative descriptor: Achievement includes that required for a Pass and in most

		respects is significantly and consistently beyond this
Merit	60%	Indicative descriptor: Achievement includes that required for a Pass and in many respects is significantly beyond this
Pass	40%	Definitive descriptor: Attains all the minimum intended programme learning outcomes

Classification of Taught Master's Degrees (Level 9)	PPA Boundary Values	Description
First Class Honours	70%	Indicative descriptor: Achievement includes that required for a Pass and in most respects is significantly and consistently beyond this
Second Class Honours	60%	Indicative descriptor: Achievement includes that required for a Pass and in many respects is significantly beyond this
Pass	40%	Definitive descriptor: Attains all the minimum intended programme learning outcomes

9.17 Percentage Point Values (PPA) and Corresponding Award Classifications Further Education

Classification Further Education Certificates (Level 5)	Percentage Point Value (PPA) boundary values	Description
Distinction	80% +	Indicative descriptor: Achievement includes that required for a Pass and in most respects is significantly and consistently beyond this
Merit	65% - 79%	Indicative descriptor: Achievement includes that required for a Pass and in many respects is significantly beyond this

Pass	50% - 64%	Definitive descriptor: Attains all the minimum intended programme learning outcomes
Referred	Less than 50	Did not demonstrate the minimum intended learning outcomes

9.18 Embedded Awards

Where a learner is registered for an award and exits from that award before completing it, they may be made an alternative award subject to the following conditions:

a) There is an embedded award validated for that programme.
b) The learner has successfully completed all modules required for that award and accumulated sufficient ECTS in the modules of the embedded awards.

The award may be classified as outlined in Table 8.1 as appropriate.
This is only accessed by learners who enrol on a principal programme and exit early but have been assessed as having met the requirements for the lower NFQ level award.

9.19 Procedures for Reviewing an Examination Board Decision

The College procedures comprise a hierarchy of decision-making whereby the decision taken at any stage may be changed at the next proximate stage, without referral backward and in which the decision-making entity at any particular stage has full powers in relation to any decision brought before it.

9.19.1 Definitions

- QQI's Assessment and Standards defines a **Recheck** as '*the administrative operation of checking the recording and the combination of component scores for a module and/or stage*'
- QQI's Assessment and Standards defines a **Review** as '*the re-consideration of the assessment decision, either by the original assessor or by other competent persons*'. The College defines 'assessment decision' in this regard as referring to the decisions of an Examination Board. The College also allows the Director of Academic Affairs and Undergraduate Programmes to initiate a review in relation to the examination process, where significant information comes to light following the examination cycle, that might have had a material impact on the process.
- The College defines an **Appeal** in this context as the re-consideration by the Appeal Board of the outcome of a review.

9.19.2 Procedure for Viewing Scripts

Recognising the ruling of the European Court of Justice (ECJ) that exam scripts constitute personal data, all learners are offered the opportunity to discuss their examination scripts with the internal examiner. This process takes place by appointment, not later than three working days after the date of the publication of results. The discussion may be conducted

face-to-face or virtually and is designed to give the learner the opportunity to discuss with the examiner the rationale for the awarding of marks. Learners are encouraged to exercise this option before requesting a recheck or review.
Learners may not be accompanied and may not remove any examination material.
If the learner believes that there is an arithmetical error on the examination script, they should invoke the Recheck process.

9.19.3 Procedure for Seeking a Recheck

A candidate wishing to have the marks awarded for a particular module (or modules) re-examined should seek a recheck of the relevant module(s). A recheck is defined as the administrative operation of checking the recording and the combination of component scores for a module and/or stage.
Only a written request for a recheck made on the Learner recheck form; signed by the learner; and submitted to the Head of Assessment will be considered. The form is available on the VLE.
The candidate can supply details that they believe will help expedite the recheck.
The College will complete all rechecks within five working days where recheck requests have been received by the Director of Academic Affairs and Undergraduate Programmes (or their nominee) not later than five working days after the examination results have been published.
The recheck will be coordinated by the appropriate Programme Lead and carried out by the internal examiner. The fee for a recheck shall be refunded in the event of a successful recheck. The Examinations Office will inform the candidate in writing of the outcome of the recheck. The Examinations Office will prepare an annual report on rechecks which will be reviewed by Academic Council.

9.19.4 Procedures for Seeking a Review

A candidate wishing to have the marks awarded for a particular module (or modules) re-examined should seek a review of the relevant module(s). The grounds on which a review may be sought are as follows:
A request for a review will only be considered on the following grounds:

1. Procedural irregularity: Where there is evidence of substantive irregularity in the conduct of the assessment process.
2. Extenuating circumstances –
    a) A prior circumstance emerged of which the Examination Board was not aware.
    or
    b) An extenuating circumstance of which the Examination Board was aware but had not considered because the submission was deemed too late.

Seeking a review disputing the academic judgment of the Examiners is not allowed.
The College will endeavour to complete all reviews within 10 working days where review requests have been received by the Head of Assessment not later than 10 working days after the examination results have been published.

1. Only a written request for a review made on the Learner Review form and signed by the person concerned will be considered. The form is available on the VLE.
2. The candidate must supply evidence in support of their request.
3. Formal processing of reviews of examination matters will be carried out having due regard to the schedule of meetings of the Academic Council and the annual conferring date.

4. The fee for a review shall be refunded in the event of a successful review.

The Director of Academic Affairs and Undergraduate Programmes shall appoint a senior academic staff member, who was not involved in the decision under review, to act as chair and convenor of the Review Board.

The Review Board is constituted as follows:

- The Chair
- 2 experienced members of the lecturing staff, nominated by the Director of Academic Affairs and Undergraduate Programmes neither of whom participated in the original Examination Board Meeting.
- 1 chair of an Academic Council committee, who has not participated in the original Examination Board Meeting.
- A learner representative, normally a class rep from another cohort.

The Head of Assessment will act as Secretary to the Review Board.

The Review Board shall consider requests for review received and shall in the first instance decide whether a review should proceed. Where a review proceeds, the Review Board may request information, for example, from the Registrar or the Director of Academic Affairs and Undergraduate Programmes Office to expedite the review. The relevant Programme Lead and the Office of the Director of Academic Affairs and Undergraduate Programmes will compile the information necessary for the Review Board to complete its task. The relevant Programme Lead will be available to clarify any matters addressed to them by the review board with a view to assisting it in reaching a final resolution.

The Review Board shall consider the evidence presented to it and decide the outcome of the review. In carrying out a review, the Review Board may consult with such persons, as it deems appropriate. The Review Board may require that a re-marking of a script be undertaken by an alternate qualified examiner, who shall liaise with the extern examiner. In situations where a partner organisation has a role in the assessment process (e.g. work placements) the Review Board may consult with that partner organisation in reaching its conclusion.

All decisions of the Review Board will be by majority vote. In the event of a tie, the Chair will have a casting vote. The candidate and the Programme Lead will be informed by the Examinations Office in writing. A candidate dissatisfied with the outcome or conduct of a review process may appeal the decision of the Review Board.

The Examinations Office will prepare an annual report on reviews which will be reviewed by Academic Council.

9.19.5 Procedures for Seeking an Appeal

The candidate may appeal the outcome of a review within four working days following receipt of the decision of the review board. The appeal must be based on one or more of the following grounds and must include evidence backing up the claim:

1. The College did not follow an established procedure in the making of a decision.
2. Circumstances or information of which the original decision-making body was not aware when its decision was taken, and a valid, substantiated reason why that information was not made available by the *appellant* (the person making the appeal).
3. Evidence of substantive bias by one or more of the decision-makers in arriving at a decision.

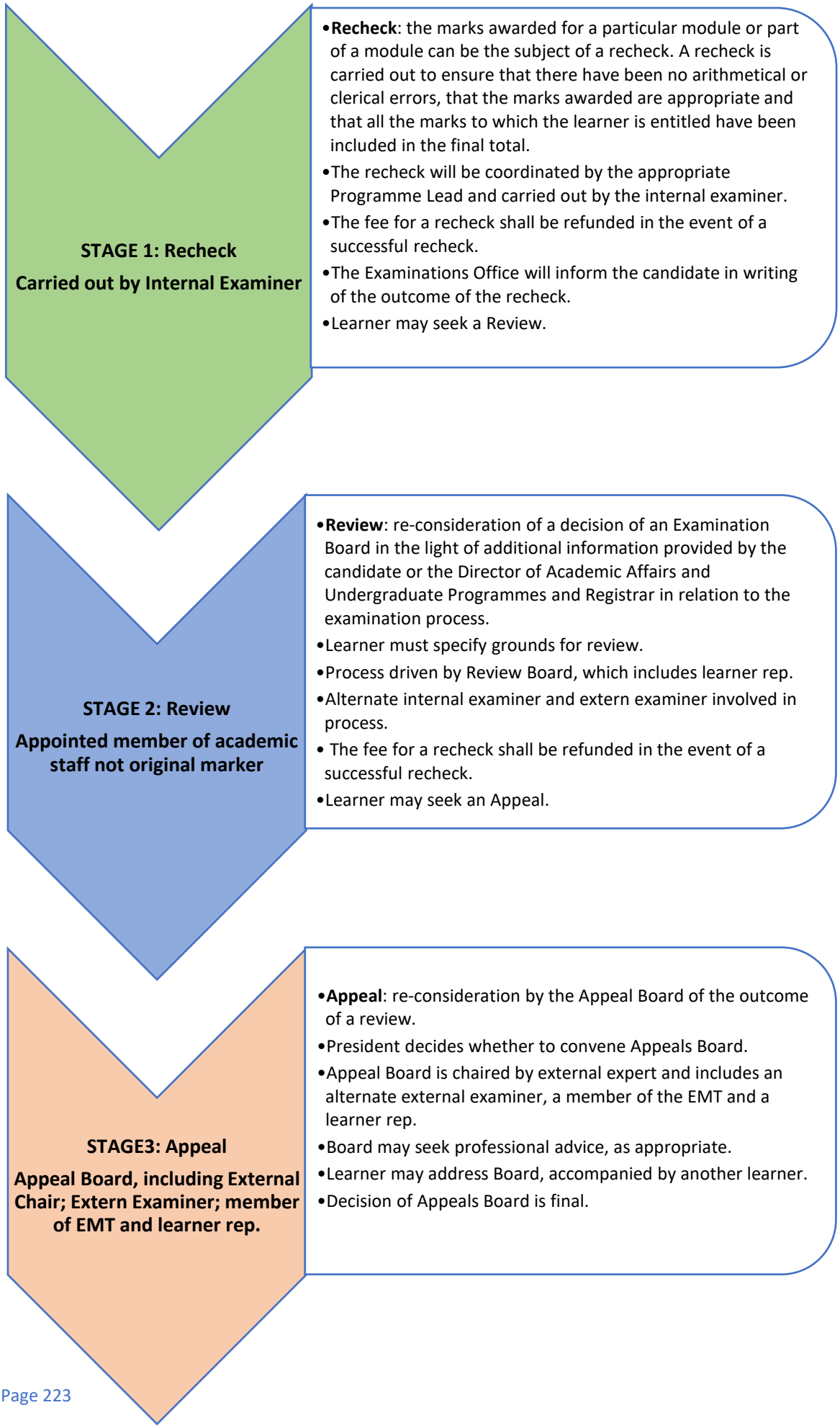
The following exclusions *do not* constitute grounds for an appeal:

1. Disagreement with an academic decision in respect of assessment.
2. Disappointment with the result of an assessment or an opinion that a higher mark should have been obtained.
3. Complaints about persons or procedures, which must be addressed in the first instance under the College's complaints policy and procedure.
4. Reopening of a matter that has already been decided on in a previous appeals process.

The introduction of new material that could have been included in the submission for the review shall not be a valid ground for appeal.

In the event where significant information comes to light following the completion of a review, that might have had a material impact on the result, the Director of Academic Affairs and Undergraduate Programmes may seek to have an appeal conducted in respect of a review.

The detailed policy and procedure for an appeal is described in Section 3.8 Policy for Appeals.


STAGE 1: Recheck
Carried out by Internal Examiner
•Recheck: the marks awarded for a particular module or part of a module can be the subject of a recheck. A recheck is carried out to ensure that there have been no arithmetical or clerical errors, that the marks awarded are appropriate and that all the marks to which the learner is entitled have been included in the final total.
•The recheck will be coordinated by the appropriate Programme Lead and carried out by the internal examiner.
•The fee for a recheck shall be refunded in the event of a successful recheck.
•The Examinations Office will inform the candidate in writing of the outcome of the recheck.
•Learner may seek a Review.
STAGE 2: Review
Appointed member of academic staff not original marker
•Review: re-consideration of a decision of an Examination Board in the light of additional information provided by the candidate or the Director of Academic Affairs and Undergraduate Programmes and Registrar in relation to the examination process.
•Learner must specify grounds for review.
•Process driven by Review Board, which includes learner rep.
•Alternate internal examiner and extern examiner involved in process.
• The fee for a recheck shall be refunded in the event of a successful recheck.
•Learner may seek an Appeal.
STAGE3: Appeal
Appeal Board, including External Chair; Extern Examiner; member of EMT and learner rep.
•Appeal: re-consideration by the Appeal Board of the outcome of a review.
•President decides whether to convene Appeals Board.
•Appeal Board is chaired by external expert and includes an alternate external examiner, a member of the EMT and a learner rep.
•Board may seek professional advice, as appropriate.
•Learner may address Board, accompanied by another learner.
•Decision of Appeals Board is final.

9.20 Academic Misconduct Policy

The College regards Academic Misconduct as a serious academic offence. Details of the policy are shown in Section 8.6 Policy Relating to Academic Misconduct.

9.20.1 Procedure for Dealing with Cases of Plagiarism

Incidents of alleged or suspected plagiarism should be reported to the relevant Programme Lead in writing. A meeting with the academic member of staff, the learner concerned, and the Programme Lead takes place where the learner is given the chance to explain.

If, in the judgement of the Programme Lead, a satisfactory explanation has been given, caution and further guidance/advice on plagiarism can be given to the student. If no satisfactory explanation is given, then the plagiarism disciplinary procedures are commenced.

Poor academic practice is handled at faculty level. It may arise from a lack of understanding of academic protocols or a misunderstanding of expected academic conventions of the discipline. However, a prime facie case for academic misconduct exists if:

1. There is any indication that the learner intended to gain an unfair advantage or had the intention to deceive the examiner.
2. The learner had already been found guilty of a similar offence of poor academic practice and could therefore be reasonably expected to have familiarised themselves with the academic practice of the discipline.

In all cases where poor academic practice or academic misconduct is found the learner must undergo training in good academic practice, including information literacy classes.
Where plagiarism or collusion is suspected the examiner must mark the work and then present a case for an investigation of academic misconduct. The case may include reference to plagiarism detection software, but it should be noted that whilst such software supports the detection of plagiarism, it does not prove it and therefore cannot be the sole reason for an allegation of academic misconduct. Where the case is supported by the Head of Academic Programmes it is referred to the Registrar.
Where cheating in an examination is suspected, the invigilator records the incident in the Invigilator's Report. On completion of the examination, the issue is brought to the attention of the Registrar who will determine if there is a case to answer.

9.20.2 Investigation of Alleged Cases of Academic Misconduct

The Registrar reviews all academic misconduct cases presented 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 Office of the Registrar informs the learner of the allegation of academic misconduct and invites them to that meeting.
The composition and membership of an Academic Misconduct Committee is set out in this policy.

In judging the level of academic misconduct (minor, moderate, serious), the Academic Misconduct Committee will consider the following criteria:

1. The student's intent. If there is evidence of a deliberate attempt to deceive, to disguise plagiarism, this is considered very serious.

2. History of academic misconduct, i.e. more serious for a repeated offence.
3. The extent of the plagiarism, i.e. considerable textual plagiarism or plagiarism of critical ideas is considered serious.
4. The level of academic study, i.e. plagiarism by a learner on a level 8 programme is considered more serious than a learner on level 6.
5. Location of the plagiarism. More serious in the core part of the assessment / argument/ conclusions, less so in the background or appendix.
6. Time the learner has spent studying at the College.
7. The Assignment in question. i.e. Plagiarism on a dissertation is considered more serious than plagiarism in a minor assignment

The learner involved in the alleged academic misconduct incident may, if they wish, have another learner enrolled at the College accompany them to this meeting.

Each case will be considered individually, taking into account the particular circumstances. The aim is always to educate the learner on the seriousness of this offence and prevent it happening in the future.

The Committee reviews the case and the evidence, interviews the learner, and determines an outcome.
Possible outcomes include:

1. There is no case to answer
2. Poor academic practice is found
3. Minor academic misconduct is found
4. Moderate academic misconduct is found
5. Serious academic misconduct is found.

The outcome is recorded on the learner record unless there is some mitigating factor determined by the Academic Misconduct Committee. Where there is no case to answer , no record is kept.
In the case of poor academic practice, it is advised that learners are directed to take information literacy classes.

Possible penalties for **minor or moderate academic misconduct** may include:

1. Caution and guidance / advice on plagiarism;
2. Require resubmission of assessment with no penalty;
3. Require resubmission of assessment with mark capped at 40% for that assessment.

Penalties for any minor and moderate academic misconduct are retained on the learner record for the duration of the programme.

Students who are found to have committed either poor academic conduct, minor or moderate academic misconduct shall have details of the breach excised from their learner record on completion of their programme.

Possible penalties for **serious academic misconduct** may include:

- Resubmission of the work as a second attempt with a capped mark.
- Resit an examination for a capped mark.
- Resit all examinations in a series for capped mark.
- Suspension.
- Expulsion.

Where a case of serious Academic Misconduct is found, it should be recorded on the learner's permanent record.
Where the outcome of an Academic Misconduct Committee meeting is pending at the Examination Board, the broadsheet should reflect 'Pending' against the learner status.

The Registrar will report annually to Academic Council on the number of Plagiarism cases and the penalties applied.

9.20.3 Appeals

Appeals against the decision of an Academic Misconduct Committee are heard by an Appeal Board, established in accordance with the provisions of Section 3.8 Policy for Appeals.

9.21 Learner Identification and Verification

The College implements a range of measures to verify learner identity and support the integrity, security and reliability of assessment and examination processes across all delivery modes. These measures are designed to ensure that the learner completing an assessment is the registered learner and that the integrity of the assessment process is maintained.

9.21.1 Online and Automated Assessments

Upon enrolment, learners are issued with unique College credentials to access the College's Innoskills (Moodle), the College's Virtual Learning Environment (VLE). Access to the VLE is controlled through individual usernames and passwords and is supported by two-factor authentication (2FA), whereby a verification code is issued to the learner's registered email address. Learners are responsible for maintaining the confidentiality of their login credentials and must not share access details with any other individual.

Access to online learning activities and assessments is restricted to authenticated users of the VLE. Learner activity, assessment submissions, assessment attempts and assessment completion records are associated with the learner's unique account credentials and recorded within the system.

Automated assessments delivered through the VLE are accessible only to authenticated learners and may be further controlled through assessment availability windows, attempt restrictions, question randomisation and other system controls, where appropriate.

9.21.2 Assessment Security and Academic Integrity

The College supports assessment integrity through a range of mechanisms including the Academic Misconduct Policy, plagiarism detection software, learner authentication controls and requirements relating to the declaration of generative artificial intelligence (AI) use.

Learners must declare the use of generative AI tools in accordance with College policy. Submitted work may be reviewed through plagiarism detection software and other academic integrity procedures where appropriate.

9.21.3 In-Person Assessments and Examinations

For in-person examinations and assessments, learners may be required to present valid photographic identification prior to commencing the assessment. Acceptable forms of identification include a student identification card, passport or driver's licence.

Attendance records are maintained for examinations and other supervised assessment activities in accordance with the College's examination procedures. Examination supervisors and invigilators are responsible for supporting the secure administration of examinations and reporting any concerns regarding assessment integrity.

9.21.4 Verification of Authenticity

Where concerns arise regarding the authenticity, authorship or integrity of submitted work, additional verification measures may be implemented in accordance with the College's Academic Misconduct Policy and assessment procedures.

Such measures may include further review of submitted work, discussion with the learner, a viva voce assessment or other appropriate verification activities to establish the learner's understanding of, and contribution to, the submitted assessment.

These arrangements support the verification of learner identity and contribute to the integrity, fairness and security of assessment processes across the College's programmes.

9.22 Plagiarism Detection Software

Text-matching software is commonly used as a screening tool for work submitted for assessment, and it may also be used as an educational tool. The software can be used:

- Formatively, to facilitate discussion about good academic practice, correct citation techniques and identify learners in need of extra support at an early stage;
- As a deterrent to plagiarism; and
- As a detection tool.

The College recognises that there is a clear distinction between the academic and disciplinary aspects of using these tools. In alignment with the principles of fairness, consistency and transparency in assessment, the College applies such software as a matter of course to all assignments. Information about plagiarism and good academic practice is introduced in induction material and classroom activities.
It is the responsibility of the Programme Lead to ensure all learners understand that on submission of their assignments the software is used to assist the detection of plagiarism. In

line with the Data Protection Policy, no personal information may be included in the submission, and learner numbers and module codes are used to identify learners.
The College recognises the limitations of using plagiarism detection software, for example:

- The software may be limited in detecting matches to sources not available on the internet, or search password-protected essay banks
- Failure to detect work which is copied by translation from a non-English source.
- Failure to detect matching images, including graphs and mathematical equations inserted as images etc.

In many cases the software highlights correctly cited references or innocent matches. Therefore, examiners must carefully review originality reports to assess whether the work does contain plagiarism; the software does not obviate the need for careful checking of the report to distinguish between innocent matches and plagiarism.
Where plagiarism is suspected the assessor may, as matter of judgement, invoke the Academic Misconduct procedures.
The assessor will determine the extent of the learner's contribution and award marks appropriately. This may result in a lower mark than may otherwise have been the case. However, no marks may be deducted. Marks may only be deducted as an outcome of an Academic Misconduct Committee.

9.23 Awards and Conferring

9.23.1 Awards and Parchments

Awards are determined at meetings of an Examination Board.
The examination broadsheet is signed by the Examination Board and retained by The College. Final results are submitted to QQI, in the case of QQI submitted to the QBS system, then awards may be made. QQI may have an observer at the Examination Board; the Office of the Director of Academic Affairs and Undergraduate Programmes is responsible for sending QQI a schedule of Examination Board dates annually.
Parchments are prepared by QQI and issued at a conferring ceremony arranged and managed by the office of Director of Academic Affairs and Undergraduate Programmes.

9.23.2 Conferring Protocols

The conferring protocol is informed by the relevant awarding body. The wording for the awards is subject to approval by QQI and is signed off annually. Robes and hoods comply with QQI guidelines which advise on the colour of gowns, epitogues, hoods and caps to be worn.

9.23.3 European Diploma Supplement

On successful completion of their studies, learners are entitled to receive a Diploma Supplement. The Diploma Supplement facilitates the academic and professional recognition of qualifications (diplomas, degrees, certificates etc.).
This Diploma Supplement follows the model developed by the European Commission, Council of Europe and UNESCO/CEPES. The purpose of the supplement is to provide sufficient independent data to improve the international 'transparency' and fair academic and professional recognition of qualifications (diplomas, degrees, certificates etc.).
The Diploma Supplement provides additional information regarding the learner's award which is not available on QQI parchments such as the skills and competencies acquired and entry requirements and access opportunities to the next stage of education.

It is designed to provide a description of the nature, level, context, content and status of the studies that were pursued and successfully completed by the individual named on the original qualification to which this supplement is appended. It should be free from any value judgements, equivalence statements or suggestions about recognition. Information in all eight sections should be provided. Where information is not provided, an explanation should be given as to the reason why. This is provided by the Director of Academic Affairs and Undergraduate Programmes' office.