

3.7 Examination Board

Overview and Membership

The board of examiners, usually referred to as examination board at ICD, is the principal decision-making body for student progression, award and classification decisions. It considers and makes deliberative decisions regarding all results as recommended by assessors, ensures the internal and external oversight of all assessment procedures and learner achievement, and reports to the academic council via the registrar. A key objective of the board of examiners is to ensure consistency in 'the use of assessment findings in decision-making (...) including decisions concerning awards, grades and (if applicable) entitlement to credit or access, transfer or progression' (QQI 2013b, section 2.2.3).

Its membership comprises:

1. The college registrar - who also acts as the board's chair
2. A secretary – appointed from the college's administrative staff
3. The college's panel of external examiners*
4. The college's panel of assessors (internal examiners)
5. Programme directors

* ICD's policies pertaining to external examiners can be found in section 4.4 (and subsections).

3.7.1 Functions

The Examination Board responsibilities include:

1. Confirming learner achievement and progression, award and classification decisions
2. Making recommendations for the award of qualifications to QQI
3. Deciding on the eligibility of students to progress within programmes and on the conferment of awards
4. Monitoring and maintaining the academic standards of the college's programmes and modules

5. Facilitating the independent moderation of the college's marks and standards and their benchmarking against sectoral norms
6. Ensuring that all assessment, marking and moderation are carried out in a manner which is well-documented, consistent and fair
7. Inviting external examiners to scrutinise a sample of scripts and coursework in order to evaluate the standard of marking and quality of assessment instruments
8. Guaranteeing that all grade and award classification systems follow best practice guidelines as defined by QQI (2013b) Assessment and Standards Guidelines
9. Allowing external examiners to propose adjustments to grades for learners, as they see fit. These proposals are subject to Examination Board voting
10. Providing external examiners with opportunities to provide impartial, independent advice and informed comment on every aspect of the college's assessment practices, programme design, and academic standards.
11. Identifying any issues with module grading practices or programme assessment strategies and proposing actions to address these
12. Facilitating deliberation on any recommended changes between assessors, programme directors and external examiners and ensuring that clear, documented decisions are made
13. Making recommendations to academic council for the review of the college's assessment strategies and internal and external examination policies
14. Deliberating on cases where special consideration to the achievements of individual learners is due on the basis of extenuating circumstances
15. Safeguarding equity of treatment for all learners and protecting their confidentiality
16. Receiving and circulating reports from external examiners to all relevant internal stakeholders (including programme directors, assessors, and academic council)

3.7.2 Quoracy

For the board of examiners to be quorate, the college registrar and all external examiners must be present, alongside 40% of assessors. Where assessors are absent, it is the responsibility of the registrar to correspond with individuals about actions that require their attention, and to share relevant external examiners' reports with them. If the registrar cannot be present, the head of academic development or director of academic affairs may take their place.

3.7.3 Role of the registrar with regard to Examination Boards

The registrar shall be responsible for:

1. Convening and chairing exam board meetings, ensuring procedural compliance with all relevant QA policies
2. Ensuring that all marking and internal verification has been completed in advance of each exam board
3. Coordinating appointment of internal verifiers ('second markers') and overseeing their work, both in cooperation with respective Programme Directors
4. Keeping track of attendance and recording all absences (with the board secretary)
5. Liaising with all board members to notify them of scheduled meeting times, locations, and postponements
6. Preparing broadsheets and providing samples of assessments to external examiners
7. Ensuring that external examiners have access to all assessments and other relevant materials prior to and during the exam board
8. Facilitating discussion, deliberation and voting on proposed outcomes and adjustments to learner grades and handling all disagreements in an equitable manner (the view of the external examiner shall be particularly influential in the case of disagreement about an individual candidate, examination, or piece of assessment)
9. Ensuring that all assessors and external examiners sign respective broadsheets after all deliberations and decisions relating to said broadsheet are concluded
10. Overseeing the adjustment of grades as determined out of the deliberation of the examination board
11. Communicating the recommendations of external examiners to all staff and to academic council
12. Ensuring the confidentiality of all matters that come before the exam board and related materials
13. Ensuring that the secretary keeps an accurate record of each meeting of the board of examiners at which the results of examinations are determined
14. Inducting new members of staff and ensuring that they are fully aware of the purpose and nature of the external examination process
15. Preparing an annual written report to be submitted to academic council

3.7.4 Schedule of meetings

ICD business school's exam board meetings are held at all award and progression stages of programmes (ordinarily twice per year around June and September).

3.7.5 Voting

Where disagreements arise with the academic judgement of the exam board, the registrar shall be responsible for facilitating a vote, typically to be decided by majority consensus. The view of external examiners shall be particularly influential in the case of disagreement about an individual candidate, examination, or piece of assessment and in some cases may be drawn on to break a deadlock. In more complex cases – e.g. a Masters dissertation or 'borderline' cases – where assessors and examiners cannot agree, decisions may be deferred to allow for evaluation and, in some cases, 'third marking' by an external examiner or suitably qualified member of academic staff.

3.7.6 Reporting

The registrar and secretary shall prepare an annual report to be conveyed to academic council. External examiner reports will be circulated to all assessors and board minutes shared via the college intranet (to protect the confidentiality of the marking, moderation and verification process). Due consideration must be given to all the comments, proposed adjustments, and other matters recommended by external examiners. The Academic Council will ensure that key recommendations made by external examiners are systematically addressed and integrated into the college's quality assurance processes.

REFERENCES

QQI (2013b) *Assessment and Standards, Revised 2013*. Quality and Qualifications Ireland, Dublin.

Available

from:

https://www.qqi.ie/Publications/Publications/Assessment_and_Standards%20Revised%202013.pdf