

4.3.3 The Conduct of Assessment and Examinations

Assessments and examinations at ICD are subject to the policies located in section 5.2, and subsections, of the present document. The conduct of examinations is supervised and coordinated by the Registrar in conjunction with the administration office at ICD and examination invigilators.

4.3.3.1 Programme-level Management of Assessment

As per QQI (2013b) guidelines, the Registrar and Administrative office staff (under the supervision of the Registrar) coordinate examinations in the following ways:

- the secure printing and distribution of examination papers
- coordinating, preparing, and resourcing venues for assessments
- organising and training invigilators
- collecting scripts from venues and recording their collection (in coordination with invigilators)
- coordinating grading processes
- maintaining records of attendance at examinations (and in classes/lectures)
- make all reasonable arrangements for learners requiring special accommodation (in examinations and throughout their learning experience at ICD)
- securely transfer scripts to assessors who must count and sign for all assessments in the company of an administrative staff member, on receipt and return of assessments to the administration staff who ensure the exam scripts are stored securely. This includes all examinations being graded on ICD premises only

The Registrar and respective Programme Director(s) for each programme carry out the following functions, as described by QQI (2013b section 4.6) *Assessment and Standards* guidelines:

- **Ensure that assessment procedures accord with QQI (2013b) *Assessment and Standards* guidelines and foundations/principles** through coordinating assessments across each programme in conjunction with respective lecturers/assessors. This includes planning assessments, ensuring effectiveness of assessments, sequencing of assessments, and assessment work-load analysis. The effectiveness of assessments refers to the effectiveness of the assessment to facilitate learners to demonstrate achievement of module and

programme learning outcomes in a manner that allocates, to learners, a sufficient and appropriate workload. The effectiveness of assessments is a direct output from how accurately assessment requirements are designed to test specific module and programme learning outcomes through criterion-referenced assessments of specific learning outcomes. Effective assessment supports are also provided to students through ongoing formative feedback on learners' assessment planning and attempts, along with summative assessment feedback, with assessments being seen as assessment of learning (summative) and assessment for learning (formative). Please see section 4.3 of ICD's QA document for greater detail on the principles of assessment at ICD.

- **Ensure that programme boards and assessors discharge their assessment functions professionally.** A programme board at ICD contains the Programme Director and the teaching staff on that programme. Programme board meetings take place every semester to plan delivery of the programme and to plan assessments (including sequencing and workload management) and to discuss any issues pertaining to the programme (e.g. the semester one 2019-2020 addition of a mandatory induction module). The Registrar liaises with the Programme Director and lecturers as appropriate to provide supervisory coordination at the programme level (e.g. coordinating activities across stages of programmes and across programmes, including matters such as timetabling and resourcing). Programme Boards report to the Programme Development Committee and the Academic Council, with primary responsibility for reporting allocated to the Programme Director(s).
- **Monitor programme assessment findings, making national and international comparisons and diagnosing problems, followed by taking appropriate remedial action to address the causes of the problems (and not just the symptoms) and confirming that the actions have had their intended effect.** Monitoring assessment findings entails receiving quantitative (student grades; student feedback surveys) and qualitative data (student feedback surveys; lecturer feedback surveys) on student performance in assessments and the overall effectiveness of assessment instruments, and the overall effectiveness of teaching and learning supports and strategies at ICD. Feedback on assessment findings and effectiveness (of assessments and their supports) is also reported at Examination Board meetings and at Academic Council. An example of a problem diagnosed at ICD relates to plagiarism. In recent years, ICD examiners have become concerned about plagiarism as a growing problem across the higher education sector, but one that we, at ICD, are not willing to take a laissez-faire attitude towards. In 2019, ICD formally approached QQI to discuss the matter and received feedback that plagiarism is a national and international problem. ICD, of its own volition,

decided to create a mandatory academic skills (and academic integrity) module to be used across all programmes, approached QQI for approval, received approval, and is now (August 2019) designing that module. This initiative is designed to improve the effectiveness of assessment supports and includes continuous work done by the Head of Academic Development under the supervision of the Head of Quality Assurance, Registrar, and respective Programme Director(s) in order to inform and train students with regard to academic integrity (e.g. shunning plagiarism) and other general academic skills (as achieved by the induction module described elsewhere in the QA document; as also achieved by continuous academic skills/writing sessions at ICD about citation and referencing, how to complete specific types of assessments; also achieved by English language supports and training, where appropriate). ICD has already 2017-2019 been increasing student awareness of plagiarism prevention through increased citation and referencing classes and has already increased plagiarism detection rates. This action is already (summer 2019) beginning to have its intended effect with plagiarism issues reducing. However, the process continues with the objective of reducing incidents of plagiarism to their minimum. This is a problem across higher education but is also one that ICD is determined to solve. The Urkund system is being rolled out at ICD as an added support both for learners (e.g. self-plagiarism checking and reports) and to assessors/lecturers.

- **Prepare the information required by boards of examiners.** At ICD, the Registrar coordinates the preparation and distribution of information required by examination board meetings, in conjunction with the Programme Director(s), lecturers/assessors, and External Examiners, as is described in the next section of the QA document

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