



# ICHAS

## Section 2 (a) – Terms of Reference for Decision Making Structures

Subject:	Terms of Reference for the Examinations Board		
Date Approved by Board of Directors:			July 2019
Policy Version	1/2019	Date due for Revision	July 2020

### **PURPOSE (including Scope of Functioning/ Key Responsibilities and Accountabilities)**

The Board of Examiners is a sub-committee of Academic Council and has delegated responsibility from Academic Council for decision-making for summative assessment decisions, as well as decisions related to the recommendations of internal and external examiners.

The Examination Board considers the recommendations of all assessors, grade moderators, external examiners, associated with the programmes under consideration. The Examination Board is charged with the responsibility for determining the summative assessment outcomes achieved by individual students with a view to determining eligibility for progression or award on all modules on all programmes validated by QQI leading to awards on the National Framework of Qualifications. The Examination Board;

- Determines and agrees the final award classification for all students
- Makes decisions concerning mitigating or extenuating circumstances submitted by students in respect of their assessments.

### **MEMBERSHIP**

- Vice President (Academic Affairs) - Chair
- Director of Undergraduate Studies
- Director of Graduate Studies
- Quality Enhancement Officer
- Registrar - Secretary
- Programme Co-ordinators
- Programme Directors
- All Module Leaders/Lecturers involved in assessment of students
- External Examiners for the programmes being considered.
- QQI Representative

### **ROLE AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

The Board of Examiners meets following the pre-examination board and is responsible for the review of the combined outcome of academic work and standards following internal examination, internal moderation and external examination processes. The

Board of Examiners sits at least tri- annually or additionally as otherwise deemed necessary.

### **Role of the Chair of the Examinations Board**

The Chair is responsible for ensuring that the conduct and deliberations of the Examination Board are in accordance with the Policy on Assessment of Learners. The Chair is responsible for directing the board appropriately where misinterpretation, misunderstanding or incorrect application of regulations is apparent, and the Chair is required to have sufficient knowledge of programme regulations, Policy on Assessment of Learners so as to properly conduct meetings of the Board of Examiners.

### **Role & Expectations of Members of the Examinations Board**

At all times, the Board members is expected to be aware of the confidential nature of proceedings. The following decisions are required of the Board, to ensure that:

- Grading is aligned with approved MIMLOs and MIPLOs.
- Assessments have been appropriately graded and learner's results have been appropriately classified.
- Any errors have been appropriately remedied
- Due consideration is given to grade inflation.
- Balanced consideration is given to "borderline" grades with as much deliberation given to increasing and decreasing these grades.

The Examinations Board is expected to:

- Ensure the fair consideration and review of all academic work presented for marking with particular consideration provided to borderline cases and extenuating circumstances in advance of final decisions on grades being reached as highlighted by the Internal Moderation Committee.
- Note the opinions of the External examiners in relation to academic standards.
- Endorse a broadsheet of results, which confirms, and records total marks or grades awarded to each candidate in each course module and which indicates a candidate's overall results.
- Review statistics and trends regarding assessment results of programmes under consideration, comparing same with national norms.
- Recommend improvements in process that would enhance the quality of the assessment process.
- Make recommendations for progression.
- Make recommendations to the academic awarding body (QQI) in relation to awards.

### **Operating Procedures**

- The Chairperson normally clarifies the roles of board members, and the order of programmes and stages to be considered by the Board. He/she also states the process for recording changes on the original broadsheets.
- Copies of broadsheets are provided to all members on coloured papers for use during the meeting of the examination board. These are collected by the Secretary before the meeting is closed and shredded.

- One original broadsheet for each programme is held during the meeting by the Registrar, who checks results and records changes as results are formally considered. This broadsheet as maintained by the Registrar is distributed for signing by the members of the examination board.
- All attendees must be clearly informed that the proceedings and deliberations of the Board of Examiners are confidential and that, under no circumstances, should any discussion or decision of the Board be disclosed to any other person.
- The External Examiner should attend all Boards of Examiners considering progression and award for learners. Where an external Examiner cannot attend, the approval of the Vice President (Academic Affairs) must be given for the Board to proceed. In such cases, the agreement of the absent External Examiner with the outcomes of the meeting of the Board of Examiners must be secured prior to the publication of results.
- QQI are entitled to have a representative in attendance at meetings of the Board of Examiners.

### **Appointment to Examinations Board**

As Examinations Board is a Sub Committee of Academic Council, members of the Examination Board are appointed by Academic Council.

### **Meetings of the Examinations Board**

**Frequency of Meetings:** The dates of meetings of the Board of Examiners are agreed annually but normally happen three times per annum following each semester.

**Quorum:** The Board of Examiners convenes only when there is an appropriate quorum for the proper discharge of the Board's responsibilities. As per QQIs' Assessments and Standards (2013), an inquorate board of examiners meeting does not have the authority to make (legitimate) assessment decisions. Therefore, an inquorate Board has no authority and should not proceed. In order to be deemed quorate, a meeting of the Board of Examiners must include the following participants;

- Chair
- Secretary
- The Programme Director or nominee
- At least one external examiner
- At least 50% of the module leaders/ lecturers.

**Powers of Decision Making:** The Examinations Board is charged with making decisions appropriate to the responsibilities set out above. In reaching decisions the Board should adhere to the following principles;

- Examination Board meetings are formal
- Agreement is normally by consent
- Where intractable disagreement between an Internal Assessor and the Board arises, the majority decision of the Board of Examiners will be considered final.

- Where intractable disagreement between the External Examiner and the Board arises, the majority decision of the Board of Examiners will be considered final.

Any disagreement should be diligently recorded in the minutes with due consideration to the implications of dissent in this context.

**Reporting Relationships**

The Examinations Board reports to Academic Council.