


#	POLICY TITLE:	POLICY AREA:	VERSION:	DATE ADOPTED :
	6.1 ASSESSMENT POLICY	6) ASSESSMENT OF LEARNERS	2.0	August 2020



Introduction and Context

SNMCI programmes leading to QQI awards are governed by QQI Assessment and Standards (revised 2013), SNMCI policies and procedures related to assessment, and the approved programme schedule for each programme.

The Programme Assessment Strategy for each programme is outlined during Programme Validation.

This document outlines SNMCI's general policy for and approach to assessment.

It refers throughout to more detailed policies and procedures relating to different aspects Assessment, e.g.

QA 6.2: Lecturer submission of exams and assignment briefs for approval;

QA 6.3: TOR Assessment Board;

QA 6.4: Assessment Control Principles;

QA 6.6: Correction and Provision of Feedback;

QA 6.8: Exam Regulations

Policy Statement

- Assessment is criterion referenced and is linked to programme and modular learning outcomes
- It is employed to measure the attainment of intended learning outcomes and to gauge progression readiness
- Assessment is seen as a means of supporting and promoting effective teaching and learning and is developed through robust monitoring, review and renewal
- According to the SNMCI *Teaching, Learning and Assessment Strategy* (Wider Horizons, 2018) all assessment at SNMCI:
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IsValid: Fit for purpose and measures what it intends to measure.

Is Transparent: There is clarity and understanding by all involved in the assessment processes.

Uses Summative Assessment: Continuous assessment occurring throughout the year and at end of semesters.

Uses Formative Assessment: Designed to provide feedback. Typically low stakes and may or may not be graded.

Is Fair: Accessible to all learners and provides equal opportunity for all learners to succeed.

Is Reliable: Uses valid assessment techniques and measures.

Is Authentic: Has real world applicability

Reflects Quality: Is reliable and equitable and in line with agreed standards and procedures.

Policy for assessment for online and blended delivery mode:

Integrating assessments with digital technology allows assessments to be completed online by learners, as part of a blended or online programme. Online assessments may involve e.g. learners logging on to the College's VLE Moodle for various activities e.g. MCQ, completing online exams, submitting work via Moodle or completing a live assessment. Using technology to assess learners in the blended learning format can enrich the learners experience and provide additional opportunities to assess 'for' and 'as' learning (National Forum).

In assessing in a blended format, to maintain the academic integrity of assessment, and therefore the programme itself, it is vital to manage the process of validating a learner's work and to prevent academic advantage or disadvantage of any sort.

SNMCI:-

- is committed to ensuring that there is a commitment to quality across all assessments;
- will give careful consideration to the assessment strategy for each programme/module that is incorporating online assessments, to ensure the College's quality standards are met;
- is committed to designing assessments integrating technology that enhance learning and maintain the academic integrity of the assessment;
- is committed to the idea of accessibility and universal design in assessment to support the growing diversity of learners in higher education;
- will support staff to create innovative types of assessment using different assessment tools, e.g. online quizzes, discussion boards and classroom response systems to create formative assessment;
- will support staff to use digital technology for formative and summative assessment;
- will investigate ways to support learners to demonstrate and communicate their understanding;
- use data generated from online assessments to support learner progress;
- use review and evaluation of online assessment to improve assessment processes

Staff Involved:

All lecturing staff; Programme Directors; Director of Quality and Academic Affairs (DQAA); External Examiners; Teaching, Learning and Assessment Board; Examinations Board

Procedure	Person/s Responsible	Records generated to ensure evidence of follow through
Procedures: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The above principles are not merely aspirational but are supported by tangible guidelines and processes to ensure their realisation. 	PD's DQAA	Programme schedules Assignment schedules Assignment briefs

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Assessment strategies, in line with all policies and procedures, are documented for each programme of the College. <p>Academic Staff:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - All members of staff designing, implementing and grading assessment in SNMCI are familiar with the College's range of assessment tools and techniques; - All staff are supported in developing their skills, knowledge and practices in respect of assessment; - There are detailed procedures related to lecturer submission of exams and assignment briefs for approval by the Teaching, Learning & Assessment Board. - Assignment briefs with clear guidelines, in appropriate language, and with marking schemes are set in advance and reviewed by the Teaching, Learning and Assessment Board - Examination papers, written in clear and appropriate language and with indicative answers, are set in advance and internally and externally reviewed <p>Marking:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Assessment at SNMCI is criterion referenced and assessment decisions are not based on the comparison of one learner against another, or by the requirement to have a specified number in any given mark band. - All assignment briefs come with clear marking criteria and the College has a range of rubrics pertaining to types of assessment - A mark of 70% or above is deemed worthy of first class honours - A mark of below 40% is deemed unsatisfactory in that it has not evidenced attainment of the learning outcomes - A mark of between 35% and 38% may be awarded where the examiner feels that the fail is marginal in that it has attained some of the learning outcomes. In these cases pass by compensation may apply. <p>(Note: Pass by Compensation is governed by QQI Assessment and Standards and will only be applied within the standards stated therein)</p>	<p>PD's DQAA</p> <p>QA (6.2)</p> <p>Lecturers/ PD's Assessment Board Internal reviewers External reviewers</p> <p>Programme Committees DQAA Programme Committees</p>	<p>Exam Papers Rubrics Indicative answers</p> <p>Staff Induction Lecturer Assessment Guide Staff CPD on Assessment Programme Committee meetings</p> <p>Minutes of T,L & A Board review of assessment Internal reviewers form FQA 6.2 External reviewers report</p> <p>QQI Assessment and Standards (2013) Programme documents Lecturer Handbooks Assessment meetings Assessment criteria and rubrics</p> <p>Moodle feedback Moderation process</p>
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<p>Examiners should avoid issuing borderline marks i.e.1% below the next marking band especially when it pertains to a pass/fail borderline Details of the allocation of marks in line with the marking scheme, must be apparent to learners, internal moderators and external examiners</p>	<p>DQAA Assessment Board Review Board Exam Board PD's Lecturers Lecturers PD's Programme Managers PD's Programme Manager DQAA Programme Managers PD'S/ Programme Managers Learner</p>	<p>Moodle feedback Programme information Learner Handbooks Assessment timetables Moodle Hardcopy comments Class feedback Annual assessment schedule Learner induction Learner Handbook QA Manual End of module feedback forms Assessment surveys Correspondence Mitigating Circumstances Form FQA 6.5 Learner Handbooks QA Manual</p>
<p>Information for Learners:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Learners are well informed about how and why they are assessed. This occurs throughout the academic year as well as at induction. - Learners receive timely and supportive feedback for all types of assessment to enable them to improve performance in future assessment tasks - Learners receive assignments in a planned fashion to avoid assessment overload across modules - Learners are made aware of all policies and procedures related to submission, late submission, plagiarism, appeals and resubmission - Learner feedback is sought in relation to assessment - Reasonable accommodation is made for learners in exceptional or mitigating circumstances that might hinder learners in fulfilling their assessment responsibilities 		
<p>Learner Responsibility:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Learners should make themselves aware of all information relevant to assessments and examinations - Learners should confirm submission and examination dates - Learners should check e-mail for reminders and submission details from Programme 		

<p>Managers</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Learners should obey all assessment and examination regulations - Learners should make themselves aware of relevant quality assurance policies and procedures attached to assessment (QA, Vol 2, Section 6) - Learners should submit applications for extensions or mitigating circumstances, in good time, and through the proper channels <p>Administration:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Programme Managers send detailed reminders to all learners re due dates and procedures for submission as assessment becomes due - Administration verification and control checks are carried out in relation to each piece of assessment (QA6.4: Assessment Control) - Assessment is subject to internal and external moderation procedures (QA 6.7: Internal Moderation; QA 6.11: Role and Responsibilities of the External Examiner) - Programme Committees: - Assessment strategies form part of the annual programme review (QA 11.2: Annual Review) by Programme Committees - Changes are approved and documented by the Assessment Board <p>Recording and Communicating Results:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Marks and formative feedback will be returned to learners within a reasonable time (two weeks for correcting and one week for moderation) - Assignments, with mark and feedback, in any module which also has an exam component 	<p>Learner</p> <p>Programme Manager Programme Committee External Examiner</p> <p>PD'S DQAA</p> <p>Programme Manager Lecturer</p> <p>Programme Manager Learner</p> <p>Exam Board External Examiners</p>	<p>Correspondence</p> <p>Assessment control form FQA 6.4</p> <p>Moderation forms</p> <p>Records Annual Programme Report (FQA 11.2) Minutes Assessment Board APR</p> <p>e-mail to corrector identifying turnaround time</p> <p>Exam Board outcome</p> <p>Correspondence</p>
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<p>must be returned in good time to allow learners to process the feedback before the exam (at least 3 weeks prior to exam).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Marks are released through Moodle following the internal moderation process. - The programme Manager will send an e-mail notifying learners that marks are available - Each learner will log in with their own private log in details. - All marks are deemed provisional until ratified at Exam Boards - Examination marks will be disclosed to learners when they have been ratified by the Exam Board - Assessment Review, Recheck and Appeals: - There are clear policies and procedures in place for learners to appeal both an assignment and an examination (QA 7.11: Appeals) - Learners are made aware of SNMCI's Appeals Policy - An appeal is a request to a higher authority for the alteration of the decision or judgement of a lower one. In the context of the assessment of learners, the lower authority could be a Board of Examiners, and the higher authority the Academic Board. - The outcome of a successful appeal will be a <i>review</i> of the assessment material in question 	<p>DQAA</p> <p>DQAA PD'S Examinations Office</p>	<p>(F QA 7.11)</p> <p>Minutes/records of appeal process</p>
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Policy Control Sheet

Policy	QA 6.1: Assessment Policy
Version	2.0
Adopted/Effective	August 2020
Supersedes	N/A
Monitoring/ Next Review Date	Yearly/August 2021
Responsible Officer(s) Designated Reviewer(s)	Director of Quality and Academic Affairs
Scope	Programme Wide

References

SNMCI Policy area	6) Assessment of Learners: QA Vol 2
Developed with reference to	QQI, <i>Assessment and Standards</i> (2013) <i>Green Paper on Assessment</i> (2018) ENQA, <i>European Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Education Area</i> (ENQA, 2015) QQI, <i>Effective Practice Guidelines for External Examining</i> (2015) HET <i>Core Validation Policy and Criteria</i> (2013)
Related SNMCI Policies / Forms	QA 6.2: Lecturer submission of exams and assignment briefs for approval; QA 6.3: TOR Assessment Board; QA 6.4: Assessment Control Principles; QA 6.6: Correction and Provision of Feedback; QA 6.8: Exam Regulations; FQA 6.4: Assessment Control; FQA 6.2: Internal Reviewers; FQA 6.5: MCF;

Revision

Revision Number	Revision Description	Originator	Approved By
1.0 August 2020	Review on application for blended learning status	Office of DQAA	AB