Document Title/Reference	Exam Administration: Policy & Procedures
Purpose	To outline the procedures for the production of exam papers; staging & conduct of exams; correction of scripts; and checking of marks to ensure the security, integrity, accuracy and fairness of the examination process.
Scope	Logistical and administrative procedures surrounding the examinations.
Contents	1. Policy Statement 2. Examination Arrangements 3. Examination Papers 4. Examination Venue Arrangements 5. Dispatch of Exam Scripts to Examiners 6. Preparation of Final Results 7. Publication of Results 8. Student Appeals
Contextual Guidelines	ESG 1.3 'Student Centred Teaching, Learning and Assessment' and QQI Core Guidelines No.6.1 require "systems for the security and integrity of the assessment process".
Related IPA Policy	*Assessment Regulations & Procedures* *Procedures for Appeal of Examination Results* *Marks & Standards*
Audience & Communication	Applicable to all Staff
Policy Owner & Implementation	The policy owner is the Head of the Whitaker School. The policy is approved by IPA Faculty. The Head of the Whitaker School and assistant registrar have overall responsible for ensuring that the procedures are implemented. At a local level, responsibility rests with administrative staff and module/programme co-ordinators.
Key Implementation Actions	Guidelines issued to examiners with clear instructions on preparing exam papers, marking schemes and solutions; and on submitting papers to the IPA. Secure system in place for in-house preparation of papers, for internal/external review of papers, and for production, storage and distribution of exam papers to venues and for safe return to the IPA of exam material. Guidelines issued to exam personnel on exam venue conditions, conduct of examinations and required invigilation practices.

	Guidelines issued to students outlining exam venue protocols and breaches of exam regulations. Comprehensive system in place for processing student assessment work, correction of student material, double-checking of marks awarded, and presentation of material to Board of Examiners.
Monitoring, Evaluation and Continuous Improvement	Designated staff members complete logs to control production of papers, exam hall arrangements and processing and checking of results. Exam administration placed as running agenda item at Administrative meetings and Faculty meetings during the exam period to monitor activity and ensure regular communication between administrative staff and module/programme coordinators, assistant registrar and Head of the Whitaker School. Debriefings after examinations highlight any issues that may have arisen that can be addressed in advance of the next examination session. Evaluation of this policy will be performed annually and will be based on feedback from students, staff and invigilators. The institute will through its continuous review processes make adjustments where necessary to ensure the effectiveness of examination processes. A cyclical review will be carried out every 3 years.
Revision History & Commencement Date & Date of Next Review	2006: Version 1 2010: Version 2 2016: Version 3 Commencement Date (2016 Version): September 2017 Date of Next Review: 2020

WHITAKER SCHOOL
OF GOVERNMENT AND MANAGEMENT

1 Policy Statement

The Institute's policy is to provide the student with an opportunity to demonstrate their knowledge under a well-ordered and conducive exam regime and to protect the integrity of the exam process through secure, accurate and effective administrative processes.

The administrative procedures that follow are an essential ingredient of the examination process. They cover the production of exam papers, staging & conduct of exams, correction of scripts, and checking of marks. They complement IPA *Marks & Standards, Assessment Regulations,* and *Procedures for the Appeal of Examination Results*. Taken together, these policies, procedures, and regulations underpin the secure, transparent and equitable management of student assessment in the IPA and facilitate the integrity of the Institute's assessment process.

2 Examination Arrangements

The Registrar's Office will arrange for examinations to be held at IPA HQ and designated regional centres. The Office will draw up an Examination Calendar comprising (i) dates for examinations, (ii) date for the Board of Examiners, and (iii) key dates for the processing of examination papers and results. The administrative office will take appropriate steps to notify each registered student of the times and places of examinations. Unregistered students are not entitled to sit exams. Final responsibility for awareness of exam venue, date and time, and for attendance at examinations, rests with the student.

3 Examination Papers

3.1 Preparation & Production of Exam Papers

3.1.1 Examiners will be provided with clear guidance on preparing an exam paper. This guidance will include, inter alia, awareness of what is achievable in a period of time allocated for each answer; how the key verb in a question determines the kind of answer students are expected to give; how the weighting of marks for each part of a question is proportionate to the effort demanded; how examiners should avoid examining unrelated parts of a course in the same question; and how examiners should clearly spell out acronyms to prevent errors or misunderstandings.

3.1.2 Examiners will submit the draft copy of the examination paper to the Registrar's Office in the timeframe specified in the exam calendar and internal communication.

3.1.3 Each paper must be accompanied by solutions, model answers and marking schemes.

3.1.4 The IPA should observe strict security concerning the submission of draft papers by examiners, the production of master copies, the printing and storage of examination papers, and also in their transfer between offices. Designated individuals will be responsible for each stage of the process. Clear protocols and logs will be in place to safeguard each part of the process.

3.1.5 In respect of each paper, the assistant registrar or his/her nominee will determine how the paper is to be printed, the number of copies needed and the materials required by the candidates sitting the examination.

3.1.6 Each exam paper will clearly indicate the programme, stage and module being examined; date and time of sitting; duration of exam; exam requirements; and any other instructions to students that the IPA Examiner or Extern Examiner consider fair and appropriate guidance.

3.1.7 Exam questions, and any sub-sections or optional choices arising, will be numbered and clearly labelled. The papers will indicate the marks allocated to each question and, where applicable, the weighting allocated to parts and sub-sections of questions.

3.1.8 Exam papers must be vetted by the relevant Extern Examiner at least four weeks before the examination. Any amendments recommended by the Extern Examiner should be made as requested in consultation with the Examiner and Extern Examiner.

3.1.9 Exam papers will be photocopied in a secure location under constant supervision and held in a locked space with access restricted to a designated individual.

3.2 Dispatch of Exam Papers to Exam Centres

3.2.1 Clear protocols and checks will be put in place to eliminate error and to safeguard security of exam papers being prepared for exam centres.

a) Exam papers will be collated in a secure environment in the IPA.

b) Papers for each module will be inserted into separate and clearly labelled envelopes for each centre.

c) Envelopes will be double-checked and sealed, and will remain sealed until the beginning of the exam when both invigilator and witnessing student sign the envelope to verify that it has not been opened.

3.2.2 Exam papers will be distributed to an examination centre by registered mail or courier.

4 Examination Venue Arrangements

4.1 Exam Stationery

4.1.1 The assistant registrar will undertake to distribute the official stationery to the exam centres in a timely and secure manner.

4.1.2 Answer books should be stamped with the date of the exam before distribution to students.

4.1.3 Students shall write their answers to the examination questions only in the answer books, or on the graph paper, officially supplied by the IPA, and shall not use any other paper.

4.1.4 Students are required to place their answer books into an official IPA envelope at the end of the exam.

4.1.5 All completed exam material should be stored securely and returned by registered courier to the IPA in line with arrangements agreed between the Examination Officer and the IPA.

4.2 Briefing for Examination Officers

4.2.1 To ensure the integrity and consistency of operations across all exam centres, the IPA will issue each examination officer with a Briefing for Examination Officers that outlines the accommodation and conditions required, IPA Assessment Regulations, and student details.

4.2.2 The Examination Officer at the exam centre will undertake to store the exam papers and stationery in a secure place with restricted access until required.

4.2.3 The Examination Officer at the exam centre will undertake to co-ordinate the examinations as outlined in both the Briefing for Examination Officers and Briefing for Invigilators.

4.3 Invigilation of Examinations

4.3.1 The IPA acknowledges that well-handled examinations are critical for maintaining the integrity of awards. Invigilators are expected to be firm but fair when interpreting the exam regulations. The IPA expects that, as our students are mature learners, a friendly professionalism will ensure an appropriate examination atmosphere.

4.3.2 The assistant registrar will arrange for invigilation at all centres.

4.3.3 Invigilators will be expected to adhere to the Briefing for Invigilators, which the IPA will supply to each invigilator. The Briefing outlines in detail what is expected of invigilators at the examination venue – distribution of papers, collection of scripts, announcements, enforcement of regulations and handling of suspected breaches of regulations.

4.3.4 After each examination, the chief invigilator will complete a form to verify that the examination was conducted according to IPA requirements as laid out in the Briefing to Invigilators. This will be counter-signed by the Examination Officer.

4.4 Notification to Students

4.4.1 The assistant registrar shall arrange for Exam venue protocols, Exam Regulations and disciplinary procedures in the event of breaches to be made available to students in programme documentation, on Moodle and on the IPA website. Responsibility for familiarising themselves and complying with these regulations remains with the student.

4.5 Procedures in the Event of an Incident at an Exam Venue

4.5.1 Each Examination Officer is supplied with IPA policy, procedures and regulations to be followed in the event of an incident or complaint at an exam venue. The documents cover suspected cheating, unruly behaviour, external interference, problems with an examination paper and student complaints. Examination Officers are required to make invigilators familiar with the Procedures.

4.5.2 In the event of an incident, invigilators and examination officers are expected to follow the IPA procedures. They are also requested to record both the problem and any action taken on an Examination Report Form.

5 Dispatch of Exam Scripts to Examiners

5.1 On return from exam centres, scripts should be counted and double-checked against exam registers made available by the examination centre.

5.2 A control sheet will be held in respect of every student sitting a module indicating what, and how many, exam questions they answered.

5.3 Answer books will be dispatched to examiners by secure means. Examiners will be provided with grade descriptors and Briefing Notes for Examiners on marking scripts and recording results, which they are obliged to follow.

5.4 Examiners are expected to keep student answer books safe. Examiners are expected to keep student material confidential.

5.5   Examiners are expected to keep any grades awarded confidential until such time that the Board of Examiners has endorsed the recommended marks.

5.6   Completed examination papers will be held by the Institute for one year and then disposed of with care and due diligence.

6   Preparation of Final Results

6.1   Examiners will input marks directly onto an electronic spreadsheet and return them to the IPA with the corrected answer books.

6.2   The assistant registrar will arrange for the comprehensive and detailed checking of these results before and after they are uploaded onto the student system.

6.3   The assistant registrar will, in conjunction with module and programme co-ordinators, arrange for the review of corrected student material by the appointed Extern Examiner.

6.4   The assistant registrar will arrange for the review of results by Faculty in advance of the Board of Examiners.

6.5   The assistant registrar will arrange for the endorsement of marks by a Board of Examiners.

7   Publication of Results

7.1   The assistant registrar will arrange for the notification of results to students in the manner provided for in Section 6 of the IPA Marks & Standards: Release of marks to students.

7.2   The assistant registrar will arrange for the discussion of results with students as provided for in Section 6 of the IPA Marks & Standards: Release of marks to students.

8   Student Appeals

7.1   The assistant registrar will facilitate an appeal of results by students as outlined in the IPA document *Procedures for Appeal of Examination Results*.