

Document Title/Reference	Marks & Standards
Purpose	To outline the requirements for an award. To provide, as far as reasonably practical, consistent and fair assessment processes to support examiners and students in the assessment phase.
Scope	Assessments, student progression
Contents	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Undergraduate Programmes: Certificates, Diplomas, Professional Certificates & Diplomas, Degrees <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1.1 Marking Scales & Classifications 1.2 Requirements for Progression 1.3 Eligibility for Award 2. Postgraduate Programmes: Postgraduate Certificates & Diplomas, Professional Certificates & Diplomas <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2.1 Marking Scales & Classifications 2.2 Eligibility for Award 2.3 Requirements for Progression 3. Postgraduate Programmes: Master's Degrees <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 3.1 Marking Scales & Classifications 3.2 Requirements for Progression 3.3 Eligibility for Award 4. Compensation 5. Grade Descriptors 6. Release of Marks to Students 7. Supplementary Examinations 8. Monitoring Student Progression 9. Role of IPA Examiner/ Extern Examiner/ Exam Board 10. Examiners' Reports 11. Credits and Subject Accumulation 12. Leave of Absence
Definitions	<p>Board of Examiners – (aka Examination Board) Board of internal and extern examiners at which recommendations in relation to a student's assessment results, examination stage or award are approved.</p> <p>Extern Examiners – external examiners act as independent guarantors of the examination process and are appointed by NUI. They approve exam questions and the marking of them. They confirm that the standard of exams is consistent with that of other third-level providers. They also sit on the Board of Examiners.</p>
Contextual Guidelines	<p>ESG 1.2 & 1.3 and QQI Core Guidelines No. 6.1, which require providers to publish in advance the 'criteria for and method of assessment as well as criteria for marking' and to ensure that assessment is appropriate and 'fairly applied to all students and carried out in accordance with stated procedures'.</p> <p>NUI Senate Policy Document: 'NUI Extern Examiners - Primary Degree and Taught Postgraduate Courses in NUI Recognised Colleges' (NUI, December 2019)</p>
Related IPA Policy	<i>Procedures for Appeal of Examination Results</i> <i>Assessment Regulations & Procedures</i>
Audience & Communication	All Staff, Students, Examiners & Externs and Exam Boards

<p>Policy Owner and Implementation</p>	<p>The policy owner is the Head of the Education Division. The policy is approved by IPA Faculty.</p> <p>The Head of the Education Division and assistant registrar have overall responsibility for ensuring that the procedures are implemented. At a local level, responsibility rests with administrative staff and module/programme co-ordinators.</p>
<p>Key Implementation Actions</p>	<p>Marks & Standards distributed to internal and external examiners. Grade descriptors and guidelines for marking issued to examiners.</p> <p>Marks & Standards available to students on Moodle, and principal extracts included in Programme Guides.</p> <p>Comprehensive grade descriptors provided to students in Programme Guides to outline what is expected of them in assessed work.</p> <p>Marking schemes submitted by examiners in conjunction with sample exam papers to facilitate consistency of marking. Exam questions and marking schemes and, where appropriate, model answers approved by extern examiners.</p> <p>Mechanisms established to provide clear and timely assessor feedback to students on submitted work.</p> <p>Pre-Board of Examiner review meetings established at faculty level to review marks, special cases, and mitigating circumstances.</p> <p>Sample of student’s assessed work and model answers/marketing schemes reviewed by extern examiners.</p> <p>Clear procedures and guidelines provided to students concerning absence from examinations, release of examination results, feedback on examination results, appeal of results, re-assessment of material & supplementary exams.</p>
<p>Monitoring, Review & Continuous Improvement</p>	<p>Internal examiner report returned to IPA with corrected scripts, providing commentary on standard of student material, question choice etc, and also identifying issues for further programme enhancement.</p> <p>Formal Board of Examiners established to consider and approve examination results.</p> <p>Extern reports submitted to awarding body assessing and approving the standard of examination questions, marking schemes, marking of student work, exam administration and the conduct of boards of examiners.</p> <p>Extern reports and awarding body comments made available to programme co-ordinators for review and action.</p> <p>Post-exam statistics provided to examiners and co-ordinators for review and action.</p> <p>Supervised administrative processes in place to oversee the dissemination of marks & standards, grading schemes, results processing.</p>
<p>Revision History & Commencement Date & Date of Next Review</p>	<p>2006: Version 1 2010: Version 2 2016: Version 3 2021: Version 4</p> <p>Commencement Date (Version 4): September 2021</p> <p>Date of Next Review: 2026</p>

1 Undergraduate Programmes: Certificates, Diplomas, Professional Certificates & Diplomas, Degrees

1.1 Marking Scales & Classifications

The following scales have been approved by faculty for use in the IPA.

1st class honours	70%-100%
2nd class honours, grade 1	60%-69%
2nd class honours, grade 2	50%-59%
Pass	40%-49%

1.2 Requirements for Progression

- 1.2.1 In order to progress to the next stage of their programme, students must achieve an overall stage average of 40% or more in their end of year examinations and, unless the compensation rule is invoked (see section 4 on compensation below), must achieve an aggregate of at least 40% in each of their modules. Some programmes will require students to achieve a minimum of 40% in each of the assessed elements of a module (eg. project, assignments and exam) in addition to the aggregate of 40%. Students will be provided with specific requirements in their Programme Guides.
- 1.2.2 Students who attain an aggregate of 40% or more at an award stage may progress towards a higher qualification in the same subject area if available; for example, from a Certificate in Public Management to a Diploma in Public Management programme or from a Diploma in Public Management to a BA in Public Management.
- 1.2.2 Students must attain at least a Second Class Honours in order to progress from the Bachelor's Degree to Postgraduate Degree programmes. Students must attain at least a Pass in order to progress from the Bachelor's Degree to Postgraduate Diploma programmes.

1.3 Eligibility for Award

The award of a Certificate, Diploma or Bachelor Degree may be made at Pass or Honours classifications (First Class Honours, Second Class Honours Grade 1 and Second Class Honours Grade 2). These awards will be based on the aggregate percentage marks for the award stage of the programme. The award stage of the Certificate is at stage 1, the Diploma at stage 2 and the degree at stage 4.

1.3.1 *Pass Classification*

To be eligible for consideration for the award at Pass classification a candidate must:

- (i) undertake all subjects listed in the course schedule for an award stage and satisfy all the examination and other requirements set for the course;

- (ii) pass each module as a whole, unless there is an additional requirement to pass some or each part of the assessed elements within a module;
- (iii) obtain an aggregate mark of at least 40% across the final examinations as a whole.

1.3.2 Honours Classification

To be eligible for consideration for an award at Honours classification, a candidate must:

- (i) undertake all subjects listed in the course schedule for an award stage and satisfy all the examination and other requirements set for the course;
- (ii) pass each module as a whole, unless there is an additional requirement to pass some or each part of the assessed elements within a module;
- (iii) fulfil the following conditions:
 - (a) the student's aggregate mark across the examination as a whole must meet the Honours Standard, viz.

1st class honours	at least 70%
2nd class honours, grade 1	at least 60%
2nd class honours, grade 2	at least 50%
 - (b) the aggregate mark shall be computed from the marks scored at the *first* attempt in the modules of the award stage and, for regular mode students, in one sitting, and, for subject accumulation students, in multiple sittings as determined by the phased completion of individual modules.

1.3.3 Further Considerations in Determining Eligibility for Award

- (i) In exceptional circumstances, students who score between 35%-39% may be eligible to pass the examinations as a whole if they fulfil the requirements for compensation laid out in Section 4 below.
- (ii) Students who are permitted to pass the examination by compensation as per Section 4 below will also be permitted to hold any honours classification due based on their final aggregate.
- (iii) A student required to undertake a second or subsequent attempt at a module as a result of previous absence or failure will forfeit any honours classification due based on their final aggregate (see 1.3.2 (iii) (b)).
- (iv) Where illness is pleaded as an extenuating circumstance in relation to a candidate's absence from an examination or in relation to a candidate's performance at an examination, only properly certified illness of the candidate may be taken into consideration. In any such case medical certification must be provided to the Institute within seven days following the date of the relevant examination or earlier if candidate is aware of a scheduled hospitalisation that coincides with exams.
- (v) A student who is granted a deferral from an examination based on extenuating circumstances outlined in 1.3.3 (iv) will be permitted to hold any honours classification due based on their final aggregate.
- (vi) Where a student passes a module, they may not make a subsequent attempt at an assessment for that module in order to increase their mark.

(vii) Students who successfully complete stage 1 of the BA or BBS degree and 2 of the BA or BBS degree programmes will be awarded a Certificate and Diploma respectively, provided they take all four subjects listed in the course schedule for those stages. Students who choose to avail of stage 1 or stage 2 exemptions will not be awarded a Certificate or Diploma, though they may proceed to the next stage as normal if successful in their assessments.

2 Postgraduate Programmes: Postgraduate Certificates & Diplomas, Professional Certificates & Diplomas

2.1 Marking Scales & Classifications

The following scales have been approved by faculty for use in the IPA:

1st class honours	70%-100%
2nd class honours, grade 1	60%-69%
2nd class honours, grade 2	50%-59%
Pass	40%-49%

2.2 Eligibility for Award

The award of Postgraduate Certificate & Diploma or Professional Certificate & Diploma may be made at Pass or Honours classifications (First Class Honours, Second Class Honours Grade 1 and Second Class Honours Grade 2). These awards will be based on the aggregate percentage marks for the programme.

2.2.1 *Pass Classification*

To be eligible for consideration for the award at Pass classification a candidate must:

- (i) undertake all subjects listed in the course schedule and satisfy all the examination and other requirements set for the course;
- (ii) pass each module as a whole, unless there is an additional requirement to pass some or each part of the assessed elements within a module;
- (iii) obtain an aggregate mark of at least 40% across the final examinations as a whole.

2.2.2 *Honours Classification*

To be eligible for consideration for an award at Honours classification, a candidate must:

- (i) undertake all subjects listed in the course schedule and satisfy all the examination and other requirements set for the course;
- (ii) pass each module as a whole, unless there is an additional requirement to pass some or each part of the assessed elements within a module;
- (iii) fulfil the following conditions:
 - (a) the student's aggregate mark across the examination as a whole must meet the Honours Standard, viz.

1st class honours	at least 70%
2nd class honours, grade 1	at least 60%
2nd class honours, grade 2	at least 50%

- (b) the aggregate mark shall be computed from the marks scored at the *first* attempt in the modules of the award stage and, for regular mode students, in one sitting, and, for subject accumulation students, in multiple sittings as determined by the phased completion of individual modules.

2.2.3 *Further Considerations in Determining Eligibility for Award*

- (i) In exceptional circumstances, students who score between 35%-39% may be eligible to pass the examinations as a whole if they fulfil the requirements for compensation laid out in Section 4 below.
- (ii) Students who are permitted to pass the examination by compensation as per Section 4 below will also be permitted to hold any honours classification due based on their final aggregate.
- (iii) A student required to undertake a second or subsequent attempt at a module as a result of previous absence or failure will forfeit any honours classification due based on their final aggregate (see 2.2.2 (iii) (b)).
- (iv) Where illness is pleaded as an extenuating circumstance in relation to a candidate's absence from an examination or in relation to a candidate's performance at an examination, only properly certified illness of the candidate may be taken into consideration. In any such case medical certification must be provided to the Institute within seven days following the date of the relevant examination or earlier if candidate is aware of a scheduled hospitalisation that coincides with exams.
- (v) A student who is granted a deferral from an examination based on extenuating circumstances outlined in 2.2.3 (iv) will be permitted to hold any honours classification due based on their final aggregate.
- (vi) Where a student passes a module, they may not make a subsequent attempt at an assessment for that module in order to increase their mark.
- (vii) As all modules contribute towards the final award, students may not be awarded exemptions from modules based on previous qualifications.

2.3 **Requirements for Progression**

- 2.2.1 Students must attain at least an Honours in order to progress from the Postgraduate Diploma to Postgraduate Degree.

3 Postgraduate Programmes: Master's Degrees

3.1 Marking Scales & Classifications

The following scales have been approved by faculty for use in the IPA for stage 2 of the Master's Degree. The marking scale for stage 1 is the same as for the Postgraduate Diploma (see section 2.1).

1st class honours	70%-100%
2nd class honours	60%-69%
Pass	40%-59%

3.2 Requirements for Progression

In order to progress from stage 1 to stage 2 of the programme, students must achieve an overall stage average of 40% or more in their end of year examinations and, unless the compensation rule is invoked (see section 4 on compensation below), must achieve an aggregate of at least 40% in each of their modules.

3.3 Eligibility for Award

The award of a postgraduate Degree may be made at Pass or Honours classifications (First Class Honours, Second Class Honours). These awards will be based on the aggregate percentage marks for the award stage of the programme. The award stage of postgraduate programmes comprises both stage 1 and 2 of the programme.

3.3.1 *Pass Classification*

To be eligible for consideration for the award at Pass classification a candidate must:

- (i) undertake all subjects listed in the course schedule for stage 1 and 2 and satisfy all the examination and other requirements set for the course;
- (ii) pass each module as a whole, unless there is an additional requirement to pass some or each part of the assessed elements within a module;
- (iii) obtain an aggregate mark of at least 40% across the modules and dissertation as a whole.

3.3.2 *Honours Classification*

To be eligible for consideration for an award at Honours classification, a candidate must:

- (i) undertake all subjects listed in the course schedule and satisfy all the examination and other requirements set for the course;
- (ii) pass each module as a whole, unless there is an additional requirement to pass some or each part of the assessed elements within a module;

(iii) fulfil the following conditions:

(a) the student's aggregate mark across the modules and dissertation as a whole must meet the Honours Standard, viz.

1st class honours at least 70%

2nd class honours at least 60%

(b) the aggregate mark shall be computed from the marks scored at the *first* attempt in the modules of the award stage and, for regular mode students, in one sitting, and, for subject accumulation students, in multiple sittings as determined by the phased completion of individual modules.

3.3.3 Further Considerations in Determining Eligibility for Award

- (i) In exceptional circumstances, students who score between 35%-39% may be eligible to pass the examinations as a whole if they fulfil the requirements for compensation laid out in Section 4 below.
- (ii) Students who are permitted to pass the examination by compensation as per Section 4 below will also be permitted to hold any honours classification due based on their final aggregate.
- (iii) A student required to undertake a second or subsequent attempt at a module as a result of previous absence or failure will forfeit any honours classification due based on their final aggregate (see 3.3.2 (iii) (b)).
- (iv) Where illness is pleaded as an extenuating circumstance in relation to a candidate's absence from an examination or in relation to a candidate's performance at an examination, only properly certified illness of the candidate may be taken into consideration. In any such case medical certification must be provided to the Institute within seven days following the date of the relevant examination or earlier if the candidate is aware of a scheduled hospitalisation that coincides with exams.
- (v) A student who is granted a deferral from an examination based on extenuating circumstances outlined in 3.3.3 (iv) will be permitted to hold any honours classification due based on their final aggregate.
- (vi) Where a student passes a module, they may not make a subsequent attempt at an assessment for that module in order to increase their mark.
- (vii) As all modules contribute towards the final award, students may not be awarded exemptions from modules based on previous qualifications.

4 Compensation

A candidate who fails to attain the required pass standard in one or two of the modules under examination may, nevertheless, at the discretion of the Board of Examiners, pass the examination by compensation.

Compensation may be applied on the following basis:

- (i) Where the examination consists of:
 - (a) five modules, compensation may apply in the case of two modules;
 - (b) four modules, compensation may apply in the case of one module only.
- (ii) The marks obtained in the module being considered for compensation must not be lower than 35%.
- (iii) The pass standard must be reached in the remaining modules required to be passed.
- (iv) Aggregate excess gross marks above the pass standard obtained in modules required to be passed must be at least double the deficiency in the module being considered for compensation.
- (v) Compensation can only apply where all the modules as listed on the approved course schedule for a stage or semester are presented at the same sitting, unless the student has secured an official deferral for incomplete modules as per 1.3.3 (v), 2.2.3 (v) and 3.3.3 (v).
- (vi) Compensation may be applied only to enable a candidate to pass in the examination as a whole; it may not be applied to grant exemptions or additional exemptions.
- (vii) Compensation may not be applied where a candidate has been granted exemption from examination subjects at any stage of the course on the basis of qualifications from other approved educational institutions.

5 Grade Descriptors

Below is a table that outlines descriptors of performance in assessment and aligns them with grades and ranges of marks. These descriptors are formulated for humanities-type subjects rather than quantitative or numerically – based subjects. The descriptors are illustrative rather than definitive and are intended for use by examiners and students as a general guide to the level of performance associated with the various grades and ranges of marks. These descriptors are included in student programme guides and in the examiner pack, which is dispatched with continuous assessment work and examination scripts.

GRADE	MARKS %	DESCRIPTORS
1 st Class Honours	90-100	<p>Supreme performance engaging profoundly, systematically and comprehensively with question set and brilliantly demonstrating:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ A superlative mastery of the subject matter richly supported by evidence and citation reflecting deep and broad knowledge and understanding as well as extensive reading ▪ An outstanding ability to organise, analyse and express ideas and arguments in an original, sophisticated and discriminating manner ▪ An optimal capacity for critical analysis ▪ The display of rare penetrative insight, originality and creativity ▪ Superb writing style and presentation skills
	80-89	<p>Exceptional performance engaging deeply and systematically with the question set with consistently impressive demonstration of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ A comprehensive mastery of the subject matter amply supported by evidence and citation reflecting deep and broad knowledge and understanding as well as extensive reading ▪ An exceptional ability to organise, analyse and present arguments fluently and lucidly ▪ A very high level of critical analysis and insight ▪ An advanced capacity for original, creative and logical thinking ▪ Exceptional writing style and presentation skills
	70-79	<p>Excellent performance engaging closely and systematically with the question set with consistently strong evidence of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ A comprehensive mastery of the subject matter ably supported by evidence and relevant citation ▪ Excellent ability to organise, analyse and express arguments fluently and lucidly with a high level of critical analysis ▪ A highly developed capacity for original, creative and logical thinking ▪ Excellent writing style and presentation skills
2 nd Class Honours (Grade 1)	60-69	<p>Very Good performance engaging substantially with the question set, demonstrating:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Strong grasp of the subject matter well supported by evidence and relevant citation ▪ Well-developed capacity to analyse issues, organise material and present arguments clearly and cogently ▪ Some original insights and capacity for creative and logical thinking ▪ Articulate and fluent writing style and high level of presentation
2 nd Class Honours (Grade 2)	50-59	<p>Good performance — intellectually competent answer (i.e. factually sound) with evidence of a reasonable engagement with the question set (although omission of parts of the subject in question), demonstrating:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Solid grasp of the subject matter moderately supported by evidence and relevant citation, but the appearance of several minor errors ▪ Average capacity to organise material ▪ Ideas stated rather than developed ▪ Solid critical awareness and analytical qualities ▪ Limited evidence of capacity for original and logical thinking ▪ Writing of sufficient quality to convey meaning but some lack of fluency and command of suitable vocabulary

<p>Mid-Fail</p>	<p>25-34</p>	<p><u>Unacceptable</u> performance with failure to address the question resulting in a predominantly irrelevant answer but showing a little knowledge and material of very marginal relevance, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Deficient understanding of the question displayed ▪ Inadequate knowledge displayed relative to the question posed with serious/significant omissions/errors/inaccuracies ▪ Random and undisciplined development - poorly structured answer or answer left incomplete ▪ Very poor analytical skills, with an absence of argument ▪ Confused expression, poor spelling
<p>Low Fail</p>	<p><25</p>	<p><u>Wholly unacceptable</u> performance with complete failure to address the question resulting in an irrelevant answer including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Little or no understanding of the question displayed ▪ Extremely poor demonstration of knowledge relative to the question posed with very serious omissions/errors/inaccuracies ▪ No structure or development in answer or answer left incomplete ▪ Extremely poor analytical skills with an absence of argument ▪ Confused expression, poor spelling

6 Release of Marks to Students

6.1 Availability of Results

- 6.1.1 Examination results must be agreed by internal and external examiners at an Examination Board meeting, and then signed by the chairperson, secretary, internal examiners and external examiners and, where possible, by a representative from the Awarding Body.
- 6.1.2 Results agreed by the Examination Board will be posted to the student's correspondence address following the Examination Board meeting. If, for unknown reasons, students have not received their results within seven days, results may be given by email.
- 6.1.3 Under no circumstances should lecturers, administrative staff or any other employee involved in the examination process release results to a student, formally or informally, or to any unauthorised third party, in advance of the Examination Board meeting.
- 6.1.4 Results will not be released to a student who has outstanding fees to pay.
- 6.1.5 Results will not be released to a third party without the prior permission of the student. This should come in writing.

6.2 Presentation of Results

- 6.2.1 The results letter should give actual percentages obtained in each subject and an overall award classification for the year.
- 6.2.2 Results should be considered as provisional until they are ratified by the Awarding Body. Results letters should state that the results are provisional.

6.3 Procedures for Discussion of Results

- 6.3.1 The Institute shall arrange a specific date or dates, to fall within 10 working days of the notification of examination results, on which students may discuss their examination results with the Education Division.

7 Supplementary Examinations

- 7.1 Information on the availability and date of supplementary examinations for specific programmes will be contained in the student guide for that programme.
- 7.2 Only students who have registered for the main examinations, or who in special circumstances have secured the permission of the Registrar, will be allowed to take the supplementary examinations.

- 7.3 Students retaking modules in a semesterised programme may do so at the next sitting of that module. In cases where the student has yet to complete another module or semester, they may proceed on the understanding that the subject outstanding must be sat before they can qualify for entry to the next stage of the programme.
- 7.4 In the case of a candidate repeating an examination, marks awarded on the basis of continuous assessments, shall, normally, be carried forward from the original examination to the repeat examination and aggregated with the marks scored in the latter to determine the total marks to be awarded in respect of the repeat examination.
- 7.5 In the case of a candidate whose results at a repeat examination are liable to be jeopardised by the carry-forward of poor marks awarded in respect of continuous assessment, the Institute reserves the right, in exceptional circumstances, to devise alternative assessment arrangements.
- 7.6 A student is permitted to attempt the same examination four times only. Any further attempts will be at the absolute discretion of the Head of Education.
- 7.7 Students retaking examinations will take responsibility for completing registration processes in line with relevant course requirements.

8 Monitoring Student Progression

8.1 Results Statistics

- 8.1.1 Annual statistics relating to student pass and fail rates will be compiled for each year of each programme after the final examination sessions and made available to programme co-ordinators.
- 8.1.2 Co-ordinators will identify patterns of concern and take action to remedy underlying causes as early as is practicable in conjunction with annual reviews.

8.2 Student Exam Support

- 8.2.1 All registered continuing and repeat students have the option of securing advice or assistance from the assistant registrar or relevant subject or programme co-ordinator.
- 8.2.2 Academic problems identified should be treated with sensitivity, and measures put in place by the programme co-ordinator to offer the student appropriate help (study advice, guidance from the lecturer etc.).
- 8.2.3 Personal problems may be accommodated by offering flexible study modes – subject accumulation, leave of absence.

9 Role of IPA Examiner/ Extern Examiner/ Exam Board

9.1 Role of IPA Examiners

9.1.1 IPA examiners must be clearly identified at the top of each examination paper.

9.1.2 The IPA Examiner is responsible for (1) setting continuous assessment exercises; (2) setting exam papers for the principal and supplementary examinations; (3) submitting model answers/solutions and marking schemes for relevant exam papers; (4) correction and grading of continuous assessment, dissertations and examination scripts; and (5) submission of examiner reports.

9.1.3 Examiners must be prepared to work within tight deadlines according to the relevant assessment schedule issued by the IPA.

9.1.4 To ensure uniformity of standards across subjects and programmes, marks awarded by an Examiner must be a fair and accurate assessment of the student's performance and must conform with the marking schemes and solutions provided in advance by the Examiner to the IPA and the grade descriptors in use by the IPA.

9.2 Role of Extern Examiners

9.2.1 Extern Examiners play a vital role in the wider context of quality assurance. Whether they are reviewing the standard of examination papers or monitoring the academic standards achieved within subjects or courses, they ensure fairness and provide guarantees to students and stakeholders that the Institute compares favourably with the highest national and international academic standards.

9.2.2 The appointment of Extern Examiners within the IPA remains a function of NUI. Guidelines and information about the role of Extern Examiners and documentation available to assist Externs can be accessed in the NUI Senate Policy Document on Extern Examiners at: http://www.nui.ie/about/pdf/policy/NUI_Extern_Examiners_Colleges.pdf

9.2.3 The IPA must establish that the Extern Examiners they recommend for appointment have the academic and professional expertise to act as Externs for relevant programmes.

9.2.4 Extern Examiners must not be employed by the IPA as a lecturer or consultant and must not be acting on any of its boards of governance.

9.2.5 In general, a period of appointment of not more than three years at any one constituent university is envisaged for extern examiners. The re-appointment of an extern examiner who has completed

a three-year term will be considered by NUI only after at least three years have elapsed from their previous appointment.

- 9.2.6 In the event that an Extern Examiner must withdraw their services during the three-year period of appointment due to professional or personal reasons, the IPA will identify a suitable replacement and liaise with NUI to secure emergency approval for the new appointee.
- 9.2.7 Extern Examiners exercise a traditional dual role of (i) monitoring the academic standards achieved within a subject or course and providing guarantees that these correspond with the highest academic standards, nationally and internationally; and (ii) ensuring fairness in the results of examinations.
- 9.2.8 Where an Extern Examiner is appointed to act, either concurrently or consecutively, at more than one third-level institution within the NUI family, he/she will assess the comparability of awards in those institutions. In addition, there is the potential for externs to be drawn on by constituent universities for peer reviews, as part of quality assurance procedures.
- 9.2.9 The IPA will send the appointed Extern Examiners full information on the subjects which are to be examined including: (i) course aims, objectives, syllabi and requirements; (ii) details of methods of assessment, including the way in which the results of individual papers or other units of assessment are aggregated to produce an overall result; (iii) approved assessment procedures; (iv) proposed dates for meetings of the Board(s) of Examiners; (v) copies of proposed examination papers for review; (vi) samples of student assessed work for review; (vii) assessment marks for the entire cohort taking that subject; (viii) any other course material or assessment material considered appropriate in accordance with the guiding principle that an Extern Examiner should receive sufficient evidence to enable them to ascertain academic standards and determine that internal marking has been fair and consistent.
- 9.2.10 Extern Examiners may propose changes to a result/set of results. In such cases, it is expected that the IPA will make the necessary adjustments.
- 9.2.11 Extern examiners will be invited to attend the Examination Board Meeting and submit an Extern Examiner Report to the Awarding Body to confirm that they are satisfied with (i) the fairness and consistency of marking, (ii) the comparability of results with other institutions familiar to them and (iii) the administration of assessment.
- 9.2.12 Extern Examiners may be consulted in relation to matters arising from examination appeals.

9.3 Examination Board Meetings

- 9.3.1 At an agreed date after the examination period, the IPA Examiners and Extern Examiners shall meet together as a Board of Examiners under the chairmanship of the Head of Education or member of staff nominated for that purpose. At least one Extern Examiner must be present. The Board shall have a secretary. The Board shall be attended by a representative from the Awarding Body.
- 9.3.2 The Board of Examiners will be responsible for endorsing each set of results and for deciding on recommendations in relation to a module result or overall award.
- 9.3.3 Examiners can expect a copy of each student's result to be made available for review on a table or broadsheet with other students' results for the same course. Examiners should see clearly a student's aggregate result for each module (combined examination and continuous assessment score) and also an overall result for the stage with information indicating whether the student has (i) passed or (ii) passed with honours or (iii) has been granted exemptions or (iv) has failed or (v) has been recorded as absent/deferred. Each set of results will be arranged according to programme, stage and stream.
- 9.3.4 The Head of Education or his/her nominee will chair the meeting and lead the Examiners in a review of each set of results in a timely and efficient manner. Examiners are free to raise queries during the Meeting and also get an opportunity to make any comments after the completion of each set of results. The Awarding Body representative is also invited to make any comments they wish.
- 9.3.5 At the end of each set of results throughout the meeting, an official broadsheet of results is circulated showing the results just approved. These should be signed by the chairperson, secretary, Awarding Body representative and all Internal and Extern Examiners present. These sheets are usually available on white paper.
- 9.3.6 The Secretary to the Examination Board will keep a record of any comments for later user; for example, when reviewing programmes for the following year.
- 9.3.7 After the Board of Examiners, the signed broadsheets are forwarded to the Awarding Body on request.

10 Examiners' Reports

- 10.1 The Pro Forma Report Forms submitted by both IPA Examiners and Extern Examiners will be circulated to relevant academic staff when they become available.
- 10.2 The Head of Education or his/her nominee will address any issues raised by NUI in their review of Extern Examiner reports.
- 10.3 IPA Examiner and Extern Examiner reports and related correspondence will be used extensively as part of the IPA's annual course monitoring process and periodic programme reviews.
- 10.4 If necessary, the IPA shall liaise with an Extern Examiner to make appropriate adjustments to a course or assessment method or future examination paper recommended in an Extern Examiner Report.

11 Credit & Subject Accumulation

- 11.1 An academic credit system introduces crucial flexibility into the academic journey of professional learners. The IPA operates a system known as Subject Accumulation, which is based on the ECTS (European Credit Transfer System). IPA modules are allocated credits, and students collect credits on successful completion of each module. Students are permitted to progress to another stage or programme on the progression pathway once they have successfully completed the required credit load. The credit system permits students to take a phased approach to their studies – Subject Accumulation – a student-oriented means of accommodating work and family pressures.
- 11.2 Subject Accumulation students are bound by the same Marks & Standards and academic regulations as regular non-Subject Accumulation students.
- 11.3 The system is compatible with other ECTS credit systems in Ireland and the EU, and therefore facilitates student mobility.
- 11.4 There is a credit duration limit of 10 years, after which a student may be requested to re-take the module. Students are also expected to take the most up-to-date version of a programme available during the course of their studies.

12 Leave of Absence

- 12.1 Leave of absence means that a student can take leave from the course for the remainder of the academic year or for the next academic year (if an application is made after the exams but before the beginning of the next academic year).
- 12.2 Applications for a leave of absence must be made to the assistant registrar and should cite the extenuating circumstances (eg illness, bereavement, work/family pressures). Supporting documentation may also be required.
- 12.3 A leave of absence from studies extends for one academic year, but may be renewed annually depending on personal circumstances.
- 12.4 Tuition fees already paid will remain on credit for a period of one-year, as will academic requirements completed (provided there are no significant programme changes in the interim). The extension of such allowances for any subsequent leave of absence will be at the discretion of the IPA. Upon resumption of the programme, all remaining academic and fee requirements for a stage will need to be completed.
- 12.5 In cases where a programme has been revised, students returning from a leave of absence will be required to proceed with the most updated version of the programme. Students may also be required to complete modules newly introduced at a previous stage. Students returning from a leave of absence after a duration of greater than 10 years may be required to begin the programme from the beginning.
- 12.6 A student who is granted a leave of absence will be permitted to hold any honours classification due based on their final aggregate, provided they fulfil the requirements for honours, i.e. they must achieve a sufficient aggregate mark for honours computed from the marks scored at the *first* attempt in the modules of the award stage and, for regular mode students, in one sitting, and, for subject accumulation students, in multiple sittings as determined by the phased completion of individual modules.
- 12.7 Leave of absence will not be granted to any student who has discontinued the course and obtained a refund.
- 12.8 Administrative charges for students who take a leave of absence are outlined in the Programme guide.