
Assessment and Awards Policy

1. Policy Overview

The purpose of this policy is to outline the awards standards and assessment approaches relating to the Level 5 Specific Purpose Certificate in International Foundation Studies programme (“the programme”) as a Level 5 Specific Purpose Certificate in International Foundation Studies Award.

2. Policy Statement

The College runs a single programme that is subject to QQI’s programme validation criteria for programmes of this type. Students who successfully complete the programme are provided with QQI awards that are recognised nationally on the National Framework of Qualifications (NFQ). The NFQ is a system of ten levels used to describe the Irish qualifications system and is mapped to the UK and European equivalents and describes what students should know, understand and be able to do at a given qualification and level. QQI has set out the relevant award criteria for foundation programmes for international students that, as pre-undergraduate foundation programmes, are classified as a Level 5 Specific Purpose Certificate in International Foundation Studies award¹.

In respect to assessment strategy, the key aim of the College is to support the development of students in becoming self-directed autonomous learners who are responsible for making judgements on their learning so that they may progress to higher education institution (HEI) degree programmes. The College strives to enhance student’s ability to self-monitor and self-evaluate their work to a high level such that they will successfully complete the programme with a sense of shared responsibility for their learning. The independent learner is valued by

¹ QQI Awards Standards for Pre-Higher Education Foundation Awards for International Students (2015)



HEIs in Ireland and overseas and so it is in the student's interest and the College interest as a pathway provider to ensure that students will progress to HEI partners and succeed with their degree studies when there.

College assessment strategies are formed at programme and module stages in line with QQI assessment requirements² as follows:

- Learners are responsible for demonstrating their learning achievement.
- Assessment supports standards based on learning outcomes.
- Assessment promotes and supports both effective learning and teaching.
- Assessment procedures are credible.
- Assessment methods are reviewed and renewed as necessary to adapt to evolving requirements.
- Learners are well informed about how and why they are assessed.
- Learners are involved in the periodic review of assessment procedures³.
- The programme has sound assessment strategies.⁴

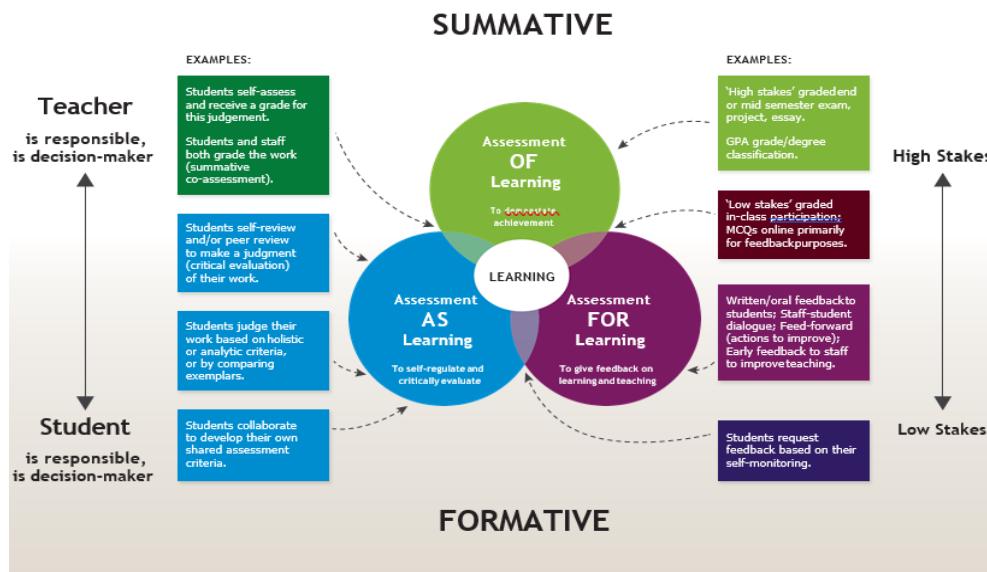
The below schematic taken from the National Forum for the Enhancement of Teaching and Learning in Higher Education⁵ as one that the College subscribes to.

² Assessment and Standards, Revised 2013, section 2.1

³ Statutory Quality Assurance Guidelines developed by QQI for use by all Providers (2016), section 6.1

⁴ QQI Policies and Criteria for the Validation of Programmes of Education and Training (2017), section 17.10

⁵ <https://www.teachingandlearning.ie/our-priorities/student-success/assessment-of-for-as-learning/>



Taken from "Expanding our Understanding of Assessment and Feedback in Irish Higher Education", National Forum for the Enhancement of Teaching and Learning in Higher Education (2017)

Figure 1. Assessment and Feedback Terminology and Examples

Summative assessment is also termed Assessment OF Learning, to emphasise its nature as an assessment of an activity that has occurred (i.e., after a period of learning). However, the term also emphasises a numeral aspect and it is often associated with a number or letter grade. Assessment of learning can help students to take a high level of ownership for their learning by facilitating student feedback that results in the form of both the grade itself and the Teacher feedback that accompanies it. The teacher is most responsible for summative assessment, s/he is the key decision-maker. The College expects teachers and academic management to be conscious that the power in this context is not abused and that they are sensitive to the needs of the student while ensuring that the assessment process is equitable, fair, and evenly applied throughout the cohort of students studying the programme.

Formative assessment is related to the concept of 'feedback' on learning. The importance of learning because of feedback to students has led to the use in some contexts of the term Assessment FOR Learning, which emphasised the learning aspect. Assessment FOR Learning also includes the idea of feedback to staff on their teaching. It emphasises the importance of



a dialogue between teachers and students. Feedback needs to be timely, actionable, and understandable. In formative assessment as Assessment AS Learning, it is the student who becomes more empowered, is more responsible and can become the key decision-maker. This growth of student self-confidence and student self-esteem is critical to the aims of the College as one that provides autonomous, self-directed, critically-thinking, and well-prepared students that are ready to begin university degree studies on completing their programme.

It is these two types of assessment that are most used in UniHaven.

3. Roles and Responsibilities

This policy applies to all stakeholders and staff in that it outlines the core awards and marks standards for use in the College, sets out how the programme and modules should be assessed to meet awards standards, and aims to give clear guidance to academic staff and students about all assessment matters. Concerning the assessment regulations, this policy will be implemented by College academic staff for the benefit of students with the Programme Manager taking the lead, supported by Teachers. Programme Board will have formal responsibility for the review and improvement of this policy. All assessment recommendations will be included in its Annual Programme Report that will be forwarded to AC for consideration and approval as part of the full module and programme reviews.

The Academic Director is the overall guardian of our QA infrastructure and is the de-facto owner of this policy and its implementation. Teachers, internal assessors, and external examiners together with members of the Exam Board and Appeals Board will implement this policy. The Academic Director is responsible for ensuring that policies are developed and maintained, that they remain fit for purpose, that they remain in compliance with QQI guidelines, that they are updated as per agreed timetables, and that they are being implemented as intended. In the latter context, the Academic Director will inspect a sample of policies each year to check for the correct implementation and bring the findings to AC as part of the annual QA/QQI review and reporting process.



4. Policy

Academic staff will work to ensure that the programme provides students with sufficient opportunity for formative feedback that is individualised and regular⁶. Each programme will measure the degree to which students do engage with such support when it is available. This will be done using the learning management system (LMS), from staff and student feedback fora, and through formal Programme Board reviews in which student representatives partake.

The College is committed to the provision of a learning environment that supports students to fulfil their academic potential. The rights of students with disabilities to avail of reasonable accommodations is recognised...see UPOL018 UniHaven QQI Learner Disability Policy Rev 1. There is recognition that some students can be late or miss assessments through no fault of their own. This policy includes how such situations are dealt with.

⁶ QQI Policies and Criteria for the Validation of Programmes of Education and Training (2017), section 17.9



Assessment Guidelines

Academic staff should ensure that the following guides to assessment are employed⁷:

- Assessment tasks should be based upon the intended learning outcomes of modules and programme and should provide students with an opportunity to demonstrate their level of achievement in each.
- The amount, type and timing of assessment should be designed to facilitate student learning and students should acquire experience of a range of assessment methods. Valid and reliable assessment techniques or methods for QQI awards are grouped into the following six broad categories⁸:
 - Assignment.
 - Project.
 - Portfolio.
 - Skills Demonstration/Presentation (e.g., laboratory skills, oral language skills).
 - Examination.
 - Learner Record.
- There should be an appropriate (and coherent) mix of assessment tasks undertaken by students on each programme and the overall amount of assessment should not be excessive.
- Students will be provided with opportunities for formative assessment, and a strategy for balancing formative and summative assessment may be built around a process of integrative assessment.
- Opportunities for peer assessment and self-assessment (to enable students to make judgements about their level of progress) will be made available where possible and appropriate.
- Assignments should be designed to ensure that the principles of academic integrity (e.g., proper referencing of source materials, the avoidance of plagiarism, absence of cheating) are maintained and that students are fully aware of the appropriate practice

⁷ Quality Assuring Assessment Guidelines for Providers Revised 2013 (Version 2 - revised 2018)

⁸ Quality Assuring Assessment Guidelines for Providers Revised 2013 (Version 2 - revised 2018), section 3.3.1

in this regard. Submission of written summative assignments will be required to be uploaded onto the LMS after which it will be checked with anti-plagiarism software.

- Care is taken to ensure that any forms of online assessment are sufficiently secure, robust, and reliable to maintain confidence in the grading of individual students and the integrity of the module/programme.
- New assessment types will be assessed formally via Programme Board.
- More details regarding assessment types can be found in UDOC012 UniHaven Teaching, Learning and Assessment Strategy Rev 0.

Management of Assessment

Programme Board has oversight and responsibility for managing the assessment process⁹ and should ensure that the following requirements are in place as delegated to the Programme Manager. The Programme Board will periodically review the assessment methods used to ensure their level of validity and reliability and to determine the extent to which they are effective at demonstrating the achievement of the learning outcomes. Their findings will be fed into Programme Board for formalising recommendations to AC where relevant. The roles and responsibilities concerning assessment are presented in the table below.

Role	Responsibilities
Teacher	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Communicate to students the nature, format, and grading criteria of assessment tasks, as well as if the assessment is in class or online in terms of completion and/or submission and the mandatory nature of all assessments and exams that students are expected to complete.• Invigilate examinations or other assessment types where necessary.• Collect scripts from venues where applicable.

⁹ Assessment and Standards, Revised 2013, section 4.5



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Grade student assessment under agreed marking schemes and regulations. The workload associated with grading and assessing students will also be addressed by managing alternative, efficient approaches (in some cases, for example, using technology, or increased use of self and peer assessment). UPOL011 UniHaven Academic Staff Workload Allocation Policy Rev 1 will take account of marking and grading of student assignments and examinations and seek to ensure that there is a realistic and sustainable distribution of activity and responsibility among teachers. • Provide mentoring and guidance to students completing assessments and provide ongoing feedback in a timely (within 2 weeks) and formative manner. • Track, monitor, and record learner progress. • Note and report possible cases of plagiarism or misconduct. Suspected breaches of the disciplinary code, examination security, plagiarism or other aspects related to academic honesty will be formally pursued as per UPRO008 UniHaven Misconduct Procedure Rev 1.
<p>Programme Manager</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support the development of assignment briefs and associated marking schemes as appropriate. • Suggest revision of assessment methodologies when necessary. • Coordinate and approve venues for assessment. • Coordinate assessment tasks to facilitate an appropriate assessment schedule. • Coordinate invigilation. • Securely print and distribute examination papers. • Collect scripts from venues and log them • Maintain records of attendance • Securely transfer the scripts to internal assessors.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make arrangements for learners requiring special accommodation. • Process, upload, and manage marks and grades according to the relevant College policies and procedures. Any specific requirements or changes to these processes will be communicated by the Programme Manager to all academic and administrative staff. • Communicate provisional results to students.
Academic Director	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure security in all matters about assessment. • Ensure all student data is gathered, protected and used as per UPOL020 UniHaven Data Protection Policy Rev 1, UPOL023 UniHaven Data Retention Policy Rev 1, UPOL024 UniHaven Data Security Policy Rev 1 and UPOL025 UniHaven Learning Analytics Policy Rev 1. • Maintain all records of student assessment. • Investigate possible cases of plagiarism or misconduct concerning assessment. • Communicate final results to students. • Administration of student appeals, rechecks and reviews. • Provide administrative support to the external examining process. • Ensure that accurate results, assessment material and other data are available for the External Examiners. • Act as a point of contact for all QQI.
External Examiners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communicate all sensitive information via the agreed form of secure correspondence. • Review and moderate representative samples of assessment material. • Meet and discuss findings with Academic Director and/or Programme Manager • Complete and submit a comprehensive External Examiner report (see QQI template in the Appendix).



Extenuating Circumstances

The College is committed to a policy of reasonable accommodation¹⁰ to meet individual needs and enable full access and participation for all students with specific needs or where exceptional mitigating circumstances temporarily prevent them from participating in the academic and/or assessment process. See UFORM024 Extenuating Circumstances Application Form Rev 1 in the Appendix.

Disability

In the case of specific learning challenges or an ongoing issue for students that may affect their academic performance, the issue must be declared to the Student Support Office as soon as practicable if it has not already been declared at the enrolment stage...see UPOL007 UniHaven Student Recruitment and Admissions Policy Rev 2. The Student Support Officer will liaise with the student and the Academic Director. Appropriate mitigation will be considered in consultation with the Academic Director. All students granted reasonable accommodations on the grounds of disability will be dealt with as per UPOL018 UniHaven Learner Disability Policy Rev 1. The Student Support Officer is responsible for liaising with academic staff to ensure agreed support in respect of teaching, learning and assessment is made available. Adaptations of assessment for a student may be implemented and may include the following and/or other reasonable adaptations¹¹:

- Modified presentation of assignments/examination papers e.g., enlargements.
- Scribes/readers.

¹⁰ Quality Assuring Assessment Guidelines for Providers Revised 2013 (Version 2 - revised 2018), section 3.2.8

¹¹ Quality Assuring Assessment Guidelines for Providers Revised 2013 (Version 2 - revised 2018), section 3.2.8



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- Use of sign language.
 - Practical assistants.
 - Rest periods.
 - Adaptive equipment/software.
 - Use of assistive technology.
 - Extra time.

Compassionate Consideration

Students should seek advice and support offered by the College via the Student Support Officer in circumstances where an assessment is missed, or their performance may have been adversely affected. The following are examples of circumstances under which compassionate consideration may be given¹²:

- A physical injury or emotional trauma during a period four to six weeks previously
- A physical disability or chronic or disabling condition such as epilepsy, glandular fever, or other incapacitating illness of the student.
- Recent bereavement of a close family member or friend
- Severe accident
- Domestic crisis
- Terminal illness of a close family member
- Other extenuating circumstances.

In the case of missing an assessment deadline, the student must notify the Teacher who will direct them to the Programme Manager who may arrange for an extension or advise the student to apply for consideration of mitigating circumstances using UFORM024 Extenuating Circumstances Application Form Rev 1 in the Appendix. Where a student has not

¹² Quality Assuring Assessment Guidelines for Providers Revised 2013 (Version 2 - revised 2018), section 3.2.9



communicated with College staff at all a late penalty will be applied as described below.

In the case of an exam where a student knows in advance that they are going to miss the examination, they must apply to the Academic Director's office for authorised absence from the examination via a formal application for compassionate consideration using UFORM024 Extenuating Circumstances Application Form Rev 1.

In the case of missing an examination due to an unforeseen circumstance or being taken ill during an examination, then the student must apply for compassionate consideration using UFORM024 Extenuating Circumstances Application Form Rev 1 as soon as they are well enough to return to the College.

In cases of an ongoing issue, a student may apply for a leave of absence, a deferral or an alternative assessment or additional support in cases involving disability. An alternative assessment will be aligned to the same learning outcomes and be of the same standard as the original assessment. Leave of absence and deferrals will be handled using the Deferral Procedure in UPOL007 UniHaven Student Recruitment and Admissions Policy Rev 2.

To apply for consideration, the student is required to fill out UFORM024 Extenuating Circumstances Application Form Rev 1 available from the Academic Director's office or on the College website and submit it to the Academic Director with all supporting documentation. The form is screened for eligibility by the Academic Director who will make an adjudication as



to its merits. The Academic Director and Programme Manager will meet to consider those applications that the Academic Director has approved for compassionate consideration. They determine:

- If the circumstances presented were exceptional and may have affected performance.
- The degree to which the performance may have been affected.
- The actions are taken to mitigate the effect on performance.

The typical outcomes where a case is upheld are:

- The student can defer the examination.
- Penalties for late submission may be lifted or reduced - see Extensions and Late Submissions Section below.
- Consideration will be made in respect of borderline cases, where there is other evidence the learning outcomes have been achieved.

If it is an eligible request, the form will be passed to the Exam Board. Where there is a suite of examinations at the same time, a student may not select to take some and present mitigation for others unless there were special circumstances.

In all cases the nature of the compassionate consideration is confidential, and the Exam Board is provided with sufficient information to discharge their duty. The Programme Manager will note the decision and liaise with the Academic Director to update the student records on the College IT Systems/Servers. All applications for reasonable accommodations and compassionate consideration are recorded and an overall, anonymised, analysis is included in the Academic Director's Exam Report to AC. Deferrals are not indefinite, students who defer an examination must take that examination at the next available sitting or apply to renew the



deferral. The student's registration status must also be taken into consideration.

Where a student is taken ill just before or during an examination the invigilator should be notified, and the circumstance recorded in the Invigilator's Report. The student may fill out UFORM024 Extenuating Circumstances Application Form Rev 1 on their return. In all cases medical certification will normally be required – such certification must be issued by recognised practitioners and dated at the time of the illness and not be retrospective. When a student presents at an examination, they have deemed themselves fit to take that examination.

Extensions and Late Submission of Assessed Coursework

A student may apply for an extension to the deadline for an element of continuous assessment under the college's policy for extenuating circumstances. Extensions are considered only where the written application is submitted to the Programme Manager in advance of the deadline with supporting evidence as to why the extension is warranted (e.g., medical certificate). Extensions to coursework may be approved by the Programme Manager who will consult with the Academic Director as appropriate. Technical problems, such as computer failure or viruses, are not deemed legitimate reasons for late submission or non-submission of work. The only exception is if the assessment is to be submitted via the LMS (for formative assessments only) is not operating and in those cases, a report will be sent from the Programme Manager to the Academic Director to ensure students are not disadvantaged. If an extension has not been granted and work is submitted after the extended due date, late submission of assignments is penalised as follows:

- 10% penalty for assignments submitted within three calendar days of the submission deadline.



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- 20% penalty for assignments submitted within one week (seven calendar days) of the submission deadline.

Later submissions, i.e., after one calendar week, will not normally be accepted. Students are expected to retain a copy of all submitted coursework.

General Grading Criteria

These grade descriptions are intended to provide guidelines for the marking of coursework and examinations in line with the standards relevant to an NFQ Level 5 Specific Purpose Certificate in International Foundation Studies programme (120 FET credits). They are not to be taken as rigid prescriptions, but as general indications of the qualities that are looked for at each level of classification. Markers should exercise their discretion in applying these guidelines and should not expect every criterion to be fulfilled in all cases for a particular grade to be awarded. For example, some criteria may be more applicable to coursework than to examination answers. In all cases, assessment criteria and marking schemes will be provided for all coursework and examinations.

The College shall adopt a percentage grading scheme, where the maximum mark attainable is 100. QQI Awards at level 4, level 5 and level 6 are classified as Pass, Merit or Distinction where a student has achieved the following standards for the award within the grading criteria¹³:

- A Pass is a grade awarded to a student who has attained the minimum standard. To be awarded a pass grade a student must have achieved a mark of between 50-64%.
- A Merit is a grade awarded to a student who has exceeded the minimum requirements. To be awarded a merit grade a student must have achieved a mark of between 65-79%.

¹³ Quality Assuring Assessment Guidelines for Providers Revised 2013 (Version 2 - revised 2018*), section 3.5



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- A Distinction is a grade awarded to a student who has substantially exceeded the minimum requirements. For a student to be awarded a distinction s/he is must have achieved a mark of 80% or over.

When a student has not achieved the minimum standards for an award the grade is recorded as Referred. Descriptors for each grade are as follows as directed by QQI¹⁴

1. Distinction (80% and over)

A Distinction indicates that the learner has:

- Achieved the learning outcomes as outlined in the minor award - a distinction implies that an excellent standard has been achieved.
- Used the language of the vocational/specialised area fluently and confidently.
- Demonstration-depth understanding of the subject matter.
- Demonstrated a high level of initiative, evaluation skills.
- Demonstrated analytical and reflective thinking.
- Expressed and developed ideas clearly, systematically and comprehensively.
- Presented coherent, detailed and focused evidence.

2. Merit (65-79%)

A Merit indicates that the learner has:

- Achieved the learning outcomes as outlined in the minor award - merit implies a good standard has been achieved.
- Used the language of the vocational/specialised area with a degree of fluency.
- Expressed and developed ideas.
- Demonstrated initiative, evaluation and analytical skills.
- Presented coherent and comprehensive evidence.

3. Pass (50-64%)

¹⁴ Quality Assuring Assessment Guidelines for Providers Revised 2013 (Version 2 - revised 2018*), section 3.6



A Pass indicates that the learner has:

- Achieved the learning outcomes as outlined in the minor award - a pass is the minimum acceptable standard
- Used the language of the vocational/specialised area competently.
- Attempted to apply the theory and concepts appropriately.
- Provided sufficient evidence which has relevance and clarity.

Academic Misconduct Policy

The College promotes academic integrity¹⁵ and is proactive in encouraging correct academic writing and research skills. All students are advised of the expectations concerning academic work submitted for assessment and are provided with access to services to support the development of appropriate academic skills. Also, the College will use plagiarism detection software.

Students are advised that the College takes cases of academic misconduct very seriously and will apply penalties up to and including expulsion from the college with no right to return or entitlement to a refund. It reserves the right to protect its reputation as an academic institution and will defend any legal challenge to the implementation of this policy and the outcomes of deliberations relating to academic misconduct. All assessment tasks are to be entirely the work of the individual submitting them unless stated otherwise. Any assessments found to contain work the same as, or like, that of another student, past or present, will also be considered academic misconduct and the appropriate procedure will be applied and penalties determined as appropriate.

All examiners are reminded that poor academic conduct or academic impoverishment is not to be confused with academic misconduct. Instances of academic impoverishment should be addressed through marking accordingly and providing the appropriate feedback to assist

¹⁵ Assessment and Standards, Revised 2013, section 4.11



academic development. Cases of suspected academic misconduct, i.e., the intention to secure an unfair advantage through dishonest academic practice in the assessment process, should be addressed through UPRO008 UniHaven Academic Misconduct Procedure Rev 1. To deter students from considering academic misconduct as a low-risk option in cases where they feel failure is likely, in considering the penalty to be imposed the Academic Misconduct Committee should normally ensure that any penalty is more significant than having made an honest attempt at assessment and failed. The following definitions will guide staff as to what a student is suspected of under the overall heading of academic misconduct:

- Cheating - examples of cheating include but are not restricted to:
 - Any form of communication with or copying from any other source during an examination/assessment.
 - Use of a third party for the completion or partial completion of an assessment e.g., a friend, family member or essay writing service.
 - Introducing any form of written or other material into an examination (including that stored electronically) other than that specified on an examination paper.
 - Use of mobile phone during an assessment or examination.
 - Forgery, alteration or misuse of College documents, records, or identity cards.
 - Submission of false claims of prior qualification, research, or experience to gain credit for prior learning.
- Plagiarism - Plagiarism is defined as the presentation of work, written or otherwise, of any other person, including another student, or institution, as the candidate's own. Plagiarism includes but is not restricted to:
 - Verbatim copying of another's work without clear identification and acknowledgement.
 - Close paraphrasing of another's work by simply changing a few words or altering the order of presentation without clear identification and acknowledgement.
 - Unidentified /unacknowledged presentation of another's concept as one's own.
- Collusion – is defined as the conscious collaboration, without official approval, between two or more students in the preparation and production of work which is ultimately



submitted by each in an identical or substantially similar form and/or is represented by each to be the product of his or her efforts. Collusion also occurs when there is unauthorised cooperation between a student and another person in the preparation and production of work, which is presented as the student's own.

The College operates based on fairness and transparency, promotes academic integrity and seeks to ensure the validity and reliability of the assessment process. As a result, this policy will be applied consistently and all instances of suspected academic misconduct will be managed through UPOL008 UniHaven Academic Misconduct Procedure Rev 1. The College will not condone or facilitate academic conduct that seeks to intentionally compromise our reputation as an academic institution and the standards of the programmes it offers. All students will be notified of the action to be taken in any instance of academic misconduct being suspected and the potential penalties that may be applied. This policy applies to all students in all our programmes regardless of location, mode of study or target award.

The Academic Director is responsible for the implementation of this policy in respect of all cases brought to his / her attention and is also responsible for ensuring all Teachers are aware of the policy, of their obligations within it and how to act in cases of suspected academic misconduct. The Academic Director is responsible for determining whether an identified case of suspected misconduct warrants further investigation. Where a suspicion of misconduct is identified the policy must be applied promptly to ensure the interests of the student concerned and consideration of Exam Board requirements. A student must be notified of any suspicion and of any proceedings where a matter is being investigated. Notification should be in writing and should normally be by email to the student's correspondence email address. The student should be notified of their rights and provided with a link to or copy of this policy and its corresponding procedure along with any source material identified in cases of suspected plagiarism.



Each student has a right to attend a formal deliberating committee in respect of a case brought against them. Should they choose not to attend or participate the committee is authorised to proceed regardless. The College strongly encourages the attendance of students at applicable hearings held by the Academic Misconduct Committee. Students are permitted to ask the Student Support Officer, their class representative or a support person (e.g. a close friend or family member) to attend the hearing with them. If students wish to have a legal representative attend, they must inform the College in advance and provide details such as name and relationship to the student.

Students are advised that the Academic Misconduct Committee is required to determine if, on the balance of probability, the misconduct occurred or not. In that regard, the College believes there is no justification for misconduct, and claims of stress, financial pressure, ill-health or other such instances will not be accepted as justification for academic misconduct. Equally, a lack of knowledge is not considered a suitable defence.

The College provides extensive information to all students on the regulations and their responsibilities within them. Dishonest conduct in the assessment will not be tolerated and students should look to alternative options in times of high pressure or uncertainty. Any student who believes they are subject to pressure that is impacting their studies and their ability to satisfy assessment requirements is advised to consult Student Services Officer or the Programme Manager or Teacher and request appropriate support or information on the options available to them. The College will retain a written record of each stage of proceedings. If it is found on the balance of probabilities that no offence has occurred, all records of the allegation will be removed and deleted from the student record.

Assessment Appeals

An assessment appeal is a request for a review of an assessment decision. The College is committed to providing excellent education and student experience. It supports improvement



in educational quality and academic decision-making. However, it recognises that from time-to-time situations arise when a student considers that they might have grounds for appeal against a decision related to the assessment of their academic work. The College is committed to resolving appeals as quickly as possible with an emphasis on the local resolution as outlined in the procedures for appeals, rechecks and reviews¹⁶ in section 5. Students have 21 days in which to submit an assessment appeal as outlined in section 5

Guidelines for Assessment Awards Standards

- Award standards are distributed to internal assessors and external examiners.
- Grade descriptors and guidelines for marking are issued to examiners.
- Award standards are made available to students on the LMS, and principal extracts are included in UDOC001 UniHaven Programme Handbook Rev 2.
- Comprehensive grade descriptors are provided to students in the Programme Handbook to outline what is expected of them in assessed work.
- Marking schemes are 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 external examiners are included.
- Teachers provide clear and timely assessment feedback to students on submitted work.
- Pre-Exam Board review meetings are run at the programme level to review marks, special cases, and mitigating circumstances.
- Samples of students' assessed work and model answers/marketing schemes are reviewed by external examiners.
- Clear procedures and guidelines concerning absence from examinations, the release of examination results, feedback on examination results, appeal of results, and re-assessment of material are communicated to staff and students via College policies and procedures and handbooks.

¹⁶ Assessment and Standards, Revised 2013, section 4.10



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- Internal assessor comments are returned with corrected scripts, providing commentary on the standard of student material, question choice etc, and identifying issues for further programme and assessment improvement that are considered at Programme Board.
 - Exam Board is convened to consider and approve examination results.
 - External examiner reports are submitted to QQI with AC endorsement assessing and approving the standard of examination questions, marking schemes, marking of student work, exam administration and Exam Board conduct.
 - External examiner reports and awarding body comments are made available to the Programme Manager for review and action.
 - Post-exam statistics are provided to assessors and examiners for review and action.
 - Administrative processes are in place to oversee the dissemination of marks and standards, grading schemes, results processing.

Requirements for Awards and Progression

- Progression standards are dictated by the College's Higher Education Institution (HEI) partners for the relevant programme stream, i.e., business, humanities, science, IT etc.
 - While QQI awards are achieved as relevant to the grading system and standards outlined in this policy, the progression to HEI partners will be dependent on the grades such partners need to satisfy entry to their undergraduate degree programmes. Such requirements are communicated to students before they enrol at the College as part of the programme entry requirements...see UPOL007 Student Recruitment and Admissions Policy Rev 2.
- Eligibility for Award
 - The Level 5 Specific Purpose Certificate in International Foundation Studies award may be made at Pass, Merit or Distinction as classified in this policy. These awards will be based on the aggregate percentage marks for the programme.
 - To be eligible for consideration for the award a candidate must:



- Undertake all modules listed in the course schedule for an award stage and satisfy all the assessment and other requirements set for the programme (e.g. attendance).
- Pass each module required for their pathway stream.
- Obtain an aggregate mark as per this policy.
- The aggregate mark shall be computed from the marks scored at the first attempt or a resit of an assessment component in the modules of the award stage. In other words, the marks scored in the second attempt would replace those of the first attempt.
- Where extenuating circumstances are relevant regarding a student's absence from an examination or concerning a candidate's performance at an examination or assessment, such scenarios will be dealt with as per this policy.
- A student who is granted a deferral from an examination will be permitted to hold any classification due based on their final aggregate.
- Where a student passes a module, they may not make a subsequent attempt at an assessment for that module to increase their mark.

Release of Awards to Students

- Availability of Results
 - Examination results must be agreed upon by internal assessors and external examiners at an Exam Board meeting, and then signed by the Chairperson and Secretary.
 - Results agreed by the Exam Board will be posted to the student's correspondence address following the Exam Board meeting. If for unknown reasons, students have not received their results within seven days, results may be given by email.
 - Under no circumstances should Teachers, administrative staff or any other staff or external member involved in the examination process release results to a student, formally or informally, or to any unauthorised third party, in advance of the Exam Board meeting.



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- Results will not be released to a student who has outstanding fees to pay.
 - Results will not be released to a third party without the prior written permission of the student. This must come in writing and be signed by the student.
 - Presentation of Results
 - Results are provided to students within 10 working days of the Exam Board meeting.
 - The results letter should give actual percentages obtained in each subject and an overall award classification for the year.
 - Results should be considered provisional until they are ratified by QQI and results letters should state this.
 - The College 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 teaching staff.
 - Supplementary Examinations
 - Information on the availability and date of supplementary examinations for specific programmes will be contained in the Student Handbook.
 - Only students who have registered for the main examinations, or who in special circumstances have secured the permission of the AD, will be allowed to take the supplementary examinations.
 - Students retaking modules may do so at the next sitting of that module. In cases where the student has yet to complete another module, they may proceed on the understanding that the subject outstanding must be sat before they can meet eligibility for the programme award.
 - In the case of a candidate repeating an examination, marks awarded based on 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.
 - 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 college reserves the right, in exceptional circumstances, to devise alternative assessment arrangements.

- A student is permitted to attempt the same examination two times only. Any further attempts will be at the absolute discretion of the Academic Director.
- Students retaking examinations will take responsibility for completing registration processes in line with relevant course requirements.

Internal Assessors¹⁷

- Internal assessors must be identified at the top of each examination paper.
- Internal assessors are responsible for
 - Setting continuous assessment exercises.
 - Setting exam papers for the principal and supplementary examinations
 - Submitting model answers/solutions and marking schemes for relevant exam papers. Correction and grading of continuous assessments, dissertations, and examination scripts.
 - Submission of examiner reports.
 - Internal assessors must be prepared to work within tight deadlines according to the relevant assessment schedule.
 - To ensure uniformity of standards across subjects and programmes, marks awarded by an internal assessor must be a fair and accurate assessment of the student's performance and must conform with the marking schemes and the grade descriptors in use.

¹⁷ Adapted from Assessment and Standards, Revised 2013, section 4.7



5. Procedures and Forms

Appeals, Reviews and Rechecks Procedure

This procedure is designed to benefit all students by affording them the right to due process on their dispute of assessment outcomes. All academic staff at the College, be it Teachers, Committee or Board members or academic management, have a duty to objectively process all student assessment grade disputes.

Correction of Error

Errors can be noticed internally even before a student appeals a grade process or decision. If following a meeting of the Exam Board, an error is discovered in the recording or calculation of a grade and/or in the recording of an overall result, a Correction of Error Form will be completed by the Programme Manager and signed by the Academic Director. This form will be submitted to the Appeals Board for noting & sign-off. An updated transcript will then be issued to the student by the Academic Director.



Grounds for an Assessment Appeal

A student who wishes to appeal may do so on a limited number of grounds to include administrative errors, material irregularity in assessment procedures or an appeal on medical, personal, or other extenuating circumstances. The student must identify the module(s) and the elements for which the appeal is being made. The application must also specify the grounds on which the appeal is sought and must contain all information that the student requires to have considered in the appeal.

- Appeal on administrative error or a material irregularity in assessment procedures. An appeal of an assessment result shall be considered only if any of the following minimum standards of programme delivery were not met by the College.
 - A student believes they were adversely affected by an irregularity in how the assessment was conducted, e.g., in written examinations, insufficient/inaccurate information on examination papers and continual assessments, or faulty IT equipment.
 - They believe they were adversely affected by an administrative error, resulting in an incorrect grade being recorded on the student database.
 - They believe that due process was not followed and seek verification that their work was assessed under the College's policies and procedures and that the process was fair and consistent. For example, were students informed of assessment requirements (modes, weightings), was appropriate feedback provided to students on assessment, and were the assessment processes reviewed by external examiners.
- An appeal on medical, personal, or extenuating circumstances. An appeal may be made on the grounds of medical, personal, or extenuating circumstances if a student believes they were adversely affected by factors that the Exam Board was unaware of when making its decision, e.g., personal, or medical reasons. However, these are not in themselves grounds for changing a grade. A student may at the discretion of the Appeals Board be allowed to resubmit at the next exam period as a first sitting. Appeals



are categorised as follows and need to be documented on UFORM013 UniHaven Assessment Appeals Request Form Rev 1 (see Appendix):

- Appeals on Medical Grounds: In the event of illness during an assessment period, a student may appeal. An appeal on medical grounds must be supported by appropriate, signed and dated medical certification on headed paper.
- Appeals on Personal Grounds: An appeal on personal grounds, e.g., relating to personal difficulties, must be supported by documentary evidence provided by a recognised professional (e.g., psychologist, counsellor, etc.). Documentary evidence provided must be legible and stamped by the relevant professional.
- Appeals on the Grounds of Extenuating Circumstances: A student seeking an appeal on the grounds of extenuating circumstances relating to other factors such as the death of a relative or other incident, must submit written evidence; for example, a death notification or Garda report.

Assessment Appeal Submission

After results have been published, students can discuss these with their Programme Manager or Teacher. The aim is to understand the results and provide guidance for students in the future. This early communication can provide useful clarification and feedback and may help to inform a student's decision on whether to proceed or not with an appeal. However, once an appeal is submitted to the Academic Director, it is no longer appropriate for a student to consult with staff about the appeal lodged.

A valid appeal requires submission to the Academic Director by a student of a completed UFORM013 UniHaven Assessment Appeals Request Form Rev 1 within 21 days of the publication of results as notified by the Academic Director together with evidential support for the appeal and the relevant fee (see UPOL008 UniHaven Fees and Refund Policy Rev 1). Requests received by post must be postmarked within this period. Only a signed written

request for an appeal from the student concerned will be considered. Third-party submissions will not be considered.

- **Written assessments:** In programmes where written examinations have been conducted a student may request the Programme Manager to view their scripts. To ensure applications to view scripts are processed within the appeal deadline date, three full days are set aside, commencing one day after the formal publication of results and ending the day before the appeal submission deadline. To organise a viewing of your script, please email a request to the Programme Manager. To view your files in our administration office, please contact the relevant office to organise a date/time, explaining that you wish to do this to appeal.
- **Practical assessments:** For practice-based programmes, students may decide to review their student assessment feedback sheets, these are available from student files retained in the Academic Director/Programme Manager's office.

Appeals Board

An Appeals Board is set up. The Board is made up of the Academic Director (Chair) or a nominee, and at least three members, all of which are external independent members with appropriate senior academic experience and with no conflict of interest in relation to the matters for deliberation and the applicants or students involved. Where there is a conflict of interest an alternative person may be substituted. An external member will be appointed Chair in situations where the Academic Director will have been a part of the process that led to the appeal. The membership must be independent of those that dealt with the original case or any Teacher/Manager who was responsible for marking the original assessment. The Appeals Board and its members are appointed by AC. Other relevant staff, such as the Programme Manager, or a Teacher, may only be present to respond to the Board's queries. The Academic Director will provide a recording secretary for the Appeals Board meetings. See UniHaven Quality Assurance Manual, chapter 2, for full Appeals Board terms of reference. The Appeals Board conducts the formal appeals process and will convene as often as is necessary after



assessment periods scheduled in the academic calendar. The Appeals Board will arrive at one of the following decisions:

- To uphold the appeal.
- To reject the appeal.

Appeals Process

Once the appeal has been lodged with the Appeals Board, it may request further information from the relevant programme unit including a call for reviews and/or rechecks to be done. A review means the re-consideration of the assessment decision by the Exam Board in consultation with the Teacher(s) concerned. A review will automatically include a recheck. A recheck means the administrative operation of checking (again) the recording and combination of component scores for a module and/or stage. The process normally involves establishing that all answers, part answers and/or other assessment materials have been assessed and totalled correctly. This involves checking the script again, re-calculating the final scores, and where appropriate, modifying the results accordingly. Marks allocated can be increased or decreased. There is no appeal process for a re-check. The review and recheck process may result in one of the following outcomes:

a) Grade remains unchanged b) Grade is increased c) Grade is decreased

The Appeals Board will review all documentation relating to the appeal, including a review and/or recheck response from academic staff, and will decide on their findings. The decision of the Appeals Board will be conveyed in writing by the Academic Director to the student within five working days of the outcome of the Appeals Board, informing them of the appeal decision. If the appeal is successful, the appeal fee is refunded via the student's bank account as per UPOL008 UniHaven Fees and Refund Policy Rev 1. The decisions of the Board are recorded in Minutes that are circulated to the Programme Manager. Copies of the Minutes and letters to the students are stored in a restricted access folder on the College IT Systems/Servers. The Appeals Board does not attempt to replicate the assessment functions of an Exam Board and, therefore, does not involve itself in re-assessing any assessment



elements of a student's work. Therefore, it is requested that students do not include any assessment materials such as dissertations, essays, programmes, or reports, with an appeal submission, as they will not be considered.



APPENDIX

UFORM013 Assessment Appeals Request Form Rev 1

Students appealing an assessment result must complete Section A and Section B only.

A: Details of the appellant			
Contact information			
Student Name		Student ID	
E-mail Address		Phone Number	
Programme		Stage	
Attempt at resolution – provide details			
Have you attempted to resolve your difficulties through the Programme Manager	Yes	No	
Please give details of what steps you have taken to resolve your difficulties			
Support to Appeal			
If called, would you wish to present your case in person to the Assessment Appeals Committee?	Yes	No	
If called, would you wish to be accompanied by a member of the College community?	Yes	No	
IF YES, please state name:			
List any witnesses from the College community you may wish to Committee to call in support of your appeal.			



B: Details of your appeal	
Grounds for appeal	
Please indicate which one of the only two grounds upon which your appeal is made:	
Procedural irregularity: Substantive irregularity in the conduct of the assessment process, or where the Academic Regulations have not been properly implemented.	<input type="checkbox"/>
There were extenuating circumstances of which the Exam Board was aware but had rejected because the application was late and the Exam Board did not consider the reason why the application was late to be valid, or a prior circumstance emerged of which the Exam Board was not aware.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Please give details of why you consider you have grounds for an appeal.	
Additional information and documentation	
Please provide any additional information, and list any items attached to this appeal form, such as a medical certificate or other supporting documents.	
Outcome sought	
What outcome do you seek because of submitting your appeal?	
Declaration	
I have read the Assessment Appeals Policy, and I wish to submit my appeal on the grounds indicated above.	
Appellant's signature	Date



C: Appeal Administration		
Received by Academic Director		
Date received by Academic Director	Date	
Supporting documentation included	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Academic Director accepts the appeal	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Signature of Academic Director		Date:
Appeals Board		
Date of Appeals Board Decision	Date	
Decision of Appeals Board		
Name of Appeals Board Chair		
Signature of Appeals Board Chair		



UFORM014 Correction of Error Form Rev 1

Signed by Programme Manager: _____

Approved by Academic Director: _____

Specify the nature of the error to be corrected	Grade Recording Grade Calculation Result Recording
Specify the proposed correction to be implemented	Grade Recording From: _____ To: _____ Grade Calculation From: _____ To: _____ Result Recording From: _____ To: _____
Approved by Appeals Board	Date: _____
Corrected by/on	Signature: _____ Correction Date: _____



UFORM024 Extenuating Circumstances Application Form Rev1

This form should be used if you wish to submit medical documentation or highlight any personal circumstances (such as bereavement or other difficulties) to be considered by the relevant staff of the College, which may then be brought to the attention of the Exam Board.

Personal Details

First Name	
Surname	
Email Address	
Phone Number	
Course Title	

Details of Extenuating Circumstance

Any information given will be held in the strictest confidence.

Dates affected by the circumstance.

From: _____ To: _____

Please identify each of the assessments/ examinations which have been affected by the extenuating circumstance. Use a separate row in the table below for each module affected.

Module	Assessment Type	Due Date



Have you already made the College aware of these special circumstances?

Yes

No

If yes, please explain what action they have taken or suggested in relation to each module:

Module	Suggested action/ action taken

Please outline the nature of the extenuating circumstance and how it has impacted on your performance, ability to meet deadlines or your attendance at an assessment/examination.



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Supporting Evidence

Supporting evidence from a competent professional is essential to the submission of this form. Please attached any medical certificates or relevant documentation as appropriate.

Submitted evidence is non-returnable. Where appropriate, please ask the professional providing supporting evidence to be as specific as possible in outlining the impact of your circumstances on your ability to meet the demands of your academic programme.

Please indicate which best describes your extenuating circumstance:

Physical illness, injury, accident, or hospitalisation	Supporting original evidence must be supplied by a registered medical practitioner.	
Family Illness	Supporting original evidence must be supplied by a registered medical practitioner.	
Bereavement	Supporting original evidence must be supplied.	
Other personal or emotional circumstances	Supporting original evidence must be supplied by a registered medical practitioner.	
Victim of crime	Supporting original evidence must be supplied by An Garda Siochana/Police.	
Other	Supporting original evidence must be supplied.	

Declaration

I confirm the above information is accurate to the best of my knowledge.

Student signature _____

Date _____



Official Use Only

Extenuating circumstance form received:

Supporting Evidence received:

Academic Director signature _____

Date _____


Extenuating circumstance form approved:

Yes

No

Resolution agreed upon:

Date student was informed _____

 UNIHAVEN <small>The Gateway to Opportunity</small>		UFORM027 External Examiner's Report Rev 1				
<p><i>This report template is taken from QQI's Effective Practice Guideline for External Examining Revised 2015. Future revisions to QQI's guideline document should be used to revise this report template</i></p>						
Date						
Programme Details	Programme Reference					
	Award Title:					
	Area Of Specialisation (ISCED CODE):	02.3.1				
	Main Modes of Delivery Offered:					
	Stage (1,2,3,4,..., or Award Stage):					
	Semester (if applicable indicate whether first or second):					
Classification Distribution and Trend		Current Year	Previous Year	Previous Year	Previous Year	Previous Year
	% H1/D					
	% H21/M1					
	% H22/M2					
	% P					
Completion Rate Data	Number who started the programme					
	Number who started the stage					
	Number who completed the stage (i.e. attempted final stage examinations)					



External Examiner Details	Name	
	Main Employment	
	Email address	
	Other contact details	

Please consult the *Effective Practice Guideline for External Examining Revised 2015* and *Assessment and Standards Revised 2013* for more detailed information concerning expectations. If you require further guidance on completing the report please contact the Academic Director, via the following email address:

In presenting opinions under the following headings the external examiner should make national and international comparisons.

The text in red italics is explanatory material and may be deleted by the external examiner when completing the report.



1 The Evidence Considered

The purpose of this section is to indicate how well informed the external examiner is about the provider, the programme and its context. Summarise the documentary evidence considered (see Effective Practice Guideline for External Examining Revised 2015) and any visits, meetings and interviews with learners and academic staff and others.

2 Minimum Intended Programme Learning Outcomes

The purpose of this section is to comment on the educational objectives including their explicitness, appropriateness and consistency standards with the relevant awards standards and the National Framework of Qualifications. If there are gaps these should be identified. If the standard is too low this must be stated explicitly so that it can be addressed.

3 Actual Attainment of Learners

This section should present the external examiner's informed perception of the actual attainment of learners (knowledge, skill and competence). This is the most important finding of the external examining process. This should be based on consideration of:

- *The provider's assessment instruments (e.g. assessment strategies, examination papers, marking schemes), procedures and findings*
- *Representative samples of learner responses to assessment tasks (e.g. examination scripts, dissertations, etc.)*
- *Interviews with learners*
- *Benchmarking data prepared by the provider*
- *Any other appropriate evidence*

In presenting those perceptions the external examiner should make national and international comparisons. Opinions (e.g. satisfaction with the actual attainment) should be explained (e.g. by outlining the rationale and criteria).

4 The Programme

Often external examiners' experience of the programme might lead to suggestions about particular aspects of the programme. This might involve the curriculum or the approach to teaching and learning. This section should identify some notable strengths and areas for improvement. It is not intended that the external examiner would attempt to systematically review the programme.

5 Assessment Procedures

The external examiner plays a vital role in the ongoing quality assurance and enhancement of assessment. This section should address:



-
- *The quality of the assessment instruments (programme and module strategies, examination papers, dissertation guidelines, etc.) and scoring rubrics/schemes etc.*
 - *The fairness, consistency and fitness for purpose (valid, reliable, authentic, robust) of assessment procedures.*
 - *The reliability of the provider's benchmarking of its assessment procedures.*

6 Trends

Evidence concerning the extent to which teaching, learning and assessment arrangements have changed in response to the feedback provided by previous external examiner reports; and

Progress on recommendations in recent external examiner and other relevant reports on the programme.

7 Conclusions and Recommendations

External examiners' signature, date

Quality Assurance Manual (QAM) Chapter 7

Document Name	Assessment and Awards Policy
Procedure Document Number	UPOL015
Version Reference	Rev.2
Document Owner	Academic Director
Roles with Aligned Responsibility	Programme Manager, Teachers
Approved By	Academic Council (AC)
Approval Date	2.3.2023
Date Policy Becomes Active	1.4.2023
Revision Cycle	Annually
Revision History/Amalgamation History	Revised for text errors post programme validation and changed programme title to QQI title
Additional Information	N/A
References/ Supporting Documentation	<p>UDOC000 UniHaven Quality Assurance Manual Rev 2 Statutory Quality Assurance Guidelines developed by QQI for use by all Providers (2016) Statutory Quality Assurance Guidelines developed by QQI for Independent/Private Providers coming to QQI on a Voluntary Basis (2016) QQI Awards Standards for Pre-Higher Education Foundation Awards for International Students (2015) Quality Assuring Assessment Guidelines for Providers Revised 2013 (Version 2 - revised 2018) QQI Policies and Criteria for the Validation of Programmes of Education and Training (2017) Assessment and Standards, Revised 2013 QQI Effective Practice Guidelines for External Examining Revised February 2015 The National Forum for the Enhancement of Teaching and Learning in Higher Education: https://www.teachingandlearning.ie/publication/expanding-our-understanding-of-assessment-and-feedback-in-irish-higher-education/ UPOL008 UniHaven QQI Fees and Refund Policy Rev 1 UPOL014 UniHaven QQI Blended Learning Policy Rev 1 UPOL018 UniHaven Learner Disability Policy Rev 2 UPOL020 UniHaven Data Protection Policy Rev 1 UPOL023 UniHaven Data Retention Policy Rev 1 UPOL024 UniHaven Data Security Policy Rev 1 UPOL025 UniHaven Learning Analytics Policy Rev 1 UDOC012 UniHaven Teaching, Learning and Assessment Strategy Rev 0 UFORM027 External Examiner’s Report Rev 1</p>