

A Response to the Report of the External Review Panel on the Assessment Quality Review at the National College of Ireland

This report marks the culmination of the quality review of Assessment at the National College of Ireland and sets the scene for future development and the on-going review of Assessment into the future.

The process of continued review of Assessment began in 2012 and the initial stages of the process took the form of a reflective examination of the assessment process. In support of this reflective process, feedback was sought through staff and student workshops and surveys and through External Examiner reports. Following this, external site visits to other HEIs/bodies were carried out. Finally, this phase of the quality review of Assessments was finished through a review of all gathered evidence by an external panel of experts in the field of Assessment on the 7th February 2014.

The Assessment team would like to extend their gratitude to all members of the external review panel and for their time and thorough exploration of the Assessment function and its' performance with respect to best practice. In particular, our appreciation is extended to:

- Dr. Stephen Cassidy, Dean Quality Enhancement, Cork IT
- Dr. Brendan Ryder, Assistant Registrar, Dundalk IT
- Ms. Mary Jordan, Academic Administration and Student Services Manager, IT Carlow

Overall the review process has met and in many instances exceeded our expectations. The process and in particular the report of the external panel, has in many cases agreed with the outputs of the internal Assessment Review and Action Plan and in addition has identified many other areas and themes that the Assessment function should consider going forward.

We are extremely grateful to the review panel and are very pleased with the commendations made by the panel. The Assessment function is currently in a phase of implementation of the Action Plan that encompasses many of the recommendations outlined by the review.

The key areas that stand out to be addressed over the next three years are:

- The development of an assessment process that is consistent across the two schools, clarifying the roles of all stakeholders and addressing the issues of exam security. (see Recommendation item 1 under communication and training).

- The exploration and implementation of the use of new and existing IT systems to more effectively manage and systemise the process, and assist in addressing the issues of space in terms of examination venues. (See Recommendation item 5 under systems)
- Implement a high level approach for the external examining of coursework ensuring full module set are highlighted to external examiners on appointment.(see recommendation item 5 under communication and training and item 4 under Organisational).
- Investigate the impact of broadening assessment techniques on administrative support of assessment should be undertaken. (see recommendation item 4 under organisational and item 4 under systems)

Key to the delivery and completion of the many recommendations is the implementation of the Action Plan. This process has begun and is expected to be completed by end of Semester One 2015/2016.

The Assessment Quality Review would not have been possible without the hard work and dedication from the Steering Group, Examinations Office, Senior Academic Staff, Programme Coordinators, the IT Department, Disability Office, Premises/Commercial Office and the students. Finally, we would like to thank John McGarrigle, Registrar, Sinéad O’Sullivan, Director of Quality Assurance, Prof. Jimmy Hill, Vice President and all other colleagues at the National College of Ireland for their support through this process.

Niamh McAuley
Director of Student Services,
National College of Ireland,
IFSC, Dublin 1

Tel (Direct): +353 1 4498502
Email: niamh.mcauley@ncirl.ie