

ASSESSMENT POLICY

POLICY & PROCEDURE DOCUMENT	
QMS DOCUMENT CODE	iQA-HET/AS1
VERSION NUMBER	3
NUMBER OF PAGES	9

	IQ ACADEMY-HET DIVISION/FACULTY	DATE
COMPILED BY	Quality and Regulatory Compliance Division	2013
AMENDMENT/REVISION HISTORY	Office of the Registrar	05/2022
APPROVAL AUTHORITY	Faculty Management Committee	12/2025
DATE OF NEXT REVIEW	Head: Faculty	12/2027

This policy should be read with the examination, moderation, and appeals policies.

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1. POLICY PURPOSE

This policy aims to establish a clear, consistent, and transparent framework for designing, implementing, evaluating, and continuously improving assessment practices within the institution. It ensures that all assessments align with the institution's academic standards and programme learning outcomes. It promotes fairness, inclusivity, and academic integrity while fostering meaningful learning and student development.

2. POLICY SCOPE

This policy applies to all short courses and higher certificate programmes offered by IQ Academy. It outlines the principles, guidelines, and processes governing assessments within these programmes to ensure consistency, fairness, and academic integrity.

3. TERMINOLOGY

The following terminology is defined:

- Assessment is **structured** a process of collecting, evaluating, and interpreting evidence to determine how students have achieved specific learning outcomes, competencies or educational goals.
- Formative assessment focuses on learning improvement during the process to build skills and understanding.
- Summative assessment evaluates overall achievement at the end of a module or course and contributes to the final mark.
- Learning Outcomes are clear, concise statements that describe what learners are expected to know, understand or be able to do upon successful completion of a unit, module, or programme.
- An External Moderator is a qualified, independent individual external to the institution who is appointed to oversee, review, and verify the quality, fairness, and consistency of assessment practices, processes, and outcomes within a module/programme.
- The class mark is the weighted average of results achieved for any number of prescribed class assignments. A sub-minimum is prescribed for each formative assessment – this being 50%, and

as a result, students will have achieved a minimum of 50% as a class mark by the time they reach the summative assessment.

- The final summative mark is the mark obtained in the summative assessment of the module/course.
- The final module mark is the mark calculated according to a prescribed ratio of the module class mark and the summative mark.
- A pass mark is a mark of at least 50%.
- Leave of absence from the summative assessment/s does not apply to iQ Academy students, given the continuous enrolment process. Students can elect to complete their summative assessment as soon as they qualify. Access to the summative will occur (at least) 5 full months after commencing with the module. There will, therefore, not be a requirement for leave of absence applications.
- Supplementary assessment opportunity is granted/made available to a student immediately after attempting the summative assessment if its attempt results in a mark between 40-49%.

4. FAIRNESS, VALIDITY & RELIABILITY

Assessment practices should be:

- **Reliable**—This refers to the consistency of assessment. Consistency refers to the same relative judgements being made in the same or relatively similar contexts each time an assessment is conducted. It refers to how an assessment task will elicit consistent student responses without being influenced by extraneous factors such as misinterpretations or guessing.
- **Valid**—This refers to the assessment measuring what it is supposed to measure. Judgements showing results of irrelevant variables are invalid. The assessment must assess the student's ability to perform designated tasks. It focuses on the specified requirements, so it should be purposeful.
- **Transparent**—This refers to the extent to which the purpose of the assessment is clear to the students being assessed. Students should contribute to the planning and accumulating evidence and clearly understand the assessment process.
- **Fair**—This refers to how students are treated equally. The assessment method should not present any barrier to any student's achievement.
- **Timeous** refers to administering assessments at the appropriate time in the student's journey.

5. ASSESSMENT DESIGN AND CRITERIA

The assessment design and criteria at iQ Academy are structured to ensure that assessments are valid, reliable, fair, and aligned with the intended learning outcomes of short courses and higher certificate programmes. The assessment process supports student learning, measures performance effectively, and maintains academic integrity.

Formative Assessments

- Formative assessments are designed to support learning and are released progressively over five months, following the module's drip release plan.
- Students must achieve a minimum of 50% in each unit formative to access the next unit's assessment. This sequential structure ensures mastery of content before progression.
- Formative assessments are administered using practical/scenario-based multiple-choice questions. The focus is on providing questions on knowledge, foundational understanding, practical application, critical thinking and problem-solving.
- Each unit's formative questions are mapped to the learning outcomes using a specific naming convention in the learning management system, including tags to link questions to specific learning outcomes.
- Analytics monitor student performance, such as the number of attempts, highest/lowest marks and question difficulty. This data informs continuous improvement of assessment quality.
- Formative question banks are internally moderated. Each bank has at least 30 questions, with 10 randomly selected for each attempt. Answer options are also randomised to prevent memorisation, ensuring fairness and academic integrity.

Summative Assessment

- Summative assessments are conducted at the end of each module/programme and are designed to evaluate the overall achievement of learning outcomes.
- These assessments are also administered via learning management systems using multiple choice questions, mapped to the curriculum using naming conventions in the question bank and tagging questions to specific learning outcomes.
- Summative question banks are renewed every six months with additional questions to maintain quality. Each bank includes a minimum of 5 questions per unit. With a minimum of 50 questions for modules/programmes. For each summative attempt, 30 questions are randomly selected by the learning management system.

- Students must achieve a minimum of 50% in all unit formative assessments to qualify for the summative assessment.
- Summative assessments are internally moderated and quality-assured before being externally moderated by a subject matter expert to ensure alignment with programme standards and outcomes.
- The summative assessment contributes 60% to the final module mark.

Final Result Calculations

- Formative Assessments: Contribute a combined 40% to the final module mark.
- Summative Assessments: Contributes 60% to the final module mark.
- Students must achieve an overall module pass mark of 50%. A distinction is awarded for an average of 75% or higher across the programme and exit exit-level modules.

6. ASSESSMENT DATES AND SCHEDULING

Assessment Dates

- Each student's semester begins on their enrolment date, resulting in individualised assessment due dates.
- The module and programme pacer will guide students' monthly academic progress.
- Module lecturers will host regular live sessions to help students stay on track with their module pacer, especially within the continuous enrolment model.

Assessment Schedule

- Formative assessments are released on a time-bound, linear basis, linked to each student's enrolment date.
- Units or sets of units are released monthly.
- Students must pass the previous unit's formative assessment before accessing the next month's formative assessment.
- The learning management system communicates the formative and summative assessment schedule.

7. SUBMISSION OF ASSESSMENTS

General Principles

Assessment submission at iQ Academy is governed by the principles of fairness, validity, integrity, and appropriateness to the mode of delivery.

Assessment timeframes and attempt rules are determined by:

- the purpose of the assessment (formative or summative),
- the qualification type (short course or higher education qualification), and
- the need to balance accessibility with academic integrity in a distance learning environment.

Formative Assessments

- Formative assessments are designed to support learning progression and mastery of unit-level learning outcomes.
- Attempts are permitted only until the required competence (50%) is achieved. Once passed, no further attempts are allowed
- Feedback is structured to guide learning; however, correct and incorrect answers are not immediately disclosed to discourage trial-and-error behaviour and encourage preparation and engagement with learning materials.
- Students must achieve a minimum score of 50% in each unit's formative assessment before progressing to subsequent units, in accordance with the assessment-led progression model.

Summative Assessments

Higher Certificate Programmes (NQF Level 5)

- Students are permitted one summative assessment attempt.
- Summative assessments are time-bound, with students allocated three 3-hours to complete the assessment once it has been opened.
- The time-bound nature of the assessment supports academic integrity, comparability of assessment conditions, and alignment with higher education assessment standards in a distance learning environment.
- If the assessment is not submitted within the allocated time, the system will automatically close the attempt, and the submission will be recorded as final.
- A minimum score of 50% is required to pass the summative assessment.

Supplementary Assessments

- A single supplementary assessment is granted to students with a mark between 40% - 49% in the summative assessment to qualify for a supplementary assessment.
- Students with a mark below 40% will fail the summative and must redo the entire module.
- Supplementary assessments use the same question bank as summative assessments and are moderated before administration.

- The supplementary attempt mark will replace the summative mark and count as 100% of the module result.
- Students scoring below 50% on the supplementary attempt will fail the module and must retake all formative and summative assessments in accordance with institutional progression rules.

General Submission Guidelines

- All assessments are completed online via the learning management system.
- Students' progress through the module/programme at a defined pace, with units released monthly.
- Students failing to complete assessments within the specified timeframe remain enrolled in the module or programme until the end of the 36-month registration period.
- The second set of modules will only unlock after students pass at least one module during the first drip release.

8. FINAL MODULE MARK AND FAILING A MODULE

Final Module Mark

- Students must achieve a combined mark of 50% or more to pass the module.
- The final module mark is calculated as follows:
 - Formative Assessments: Contribute 40% to the final mark.
 - Summative Assessment: Contribute 60% to the final mark.

Failing a Module

- Students who fail both the summative and supplementary assessments will automatically re-register for the module.
- They must again complete all unit formative assessments and the final summative assessment.
- Students must submit all compulsory assessments for the module during re-registration.

9. ASSESSMENT RESULTS AND RECORDS

Results Availability

- Formative and summative assessment results are available immediately after submission due to automated electronic marking.
- Results are stored in the module gradebook for students to access anytime.
- If a student fails a formative assessment, the gradebook retains the result until the assessment is passed. The highest score is recorded.

Result Communication

- The learning management system's gradebook and automated email notifications communicate assessment results to students.
- Students must upload and verify their admission documents on the learning management systems to access summative results.
- If approved documents are not uploaded by month six, summative and final module results will be withheld until compliance is met.

10. ASSESSMENT RESULTS AND RECORDS

Feedback Mechanism

- Faculty ensures timely feedback on formative assessments.
- A feedback folder on the learning management system provides general guidance on assessment criteria.
- Automated emails direct students to the feedback folder after attempts.

Feedback Content

- Feedback focuses on the assessment criteria rather than specific answers to questions.
- This approach ensures students cannot memorise answers but instead focus on understanding the required competencies.

System Monitoring

- Faculty regularly monitors assessment systems to ensure smooth operation and prevent technical issues.
- Competent staff address any technical problems to avoid disadvantaging students during assessments.

11. DISHONESTY AND PLAGIARISM

For information regarding dishonesty and plagiarism during any assessment opportunity, refer to the Policy on Plagiarism. Alleged cases of plagiarism are managed in accordance with the *Plagiarism Policy* and are subject to institutional oversight by the Head: Faculty to ensure consistency and procedural fairness.

12. APPEALS PROCESS

Students dissatisfied with their marks' allocation may submit an appeal to the Head: Faculty. To initiate the appeal, students must complete the official Appeals Form and submit it to the institution within seven calendar days of the results being released.

The Head: Faculty will review the appeal and, at their discretion, may appoint an external arbitrator to re-assess the final examination. Students are required to pay a fee, as determined by the institution, for the arbitration process. The decision made by the Head: Faculty is final and binding.

Due to the rigorous moderation, testing, and systematic set-up of all assessments and the automated marking process, the institution does not anticipate appeals related to subjectivity in marking.

The institution ensures that all students are clearly informed about the appeals procedures.

13. SECURITY OF ASSESSMENT RECORDS

All electronic copies of assessment-related documentation, including memorandums, marks, and other materials, are securely stored on SharePoint with limited access rules in place.

14. ARCHIVING OF COMPLETED ASSESSMENT

All assessment-related documentation is retained for the duration of the module. Completed online assessments for the final examination are securely stored in the learning management system database for and archived every 5 years.