Marks and Standards for Programmes Leading to QQI Awards

POLICY CONTROL SHEET

Policy Title	**Marks and Standards for Programmes Leading to QQI Awards**
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Revision History

Revision	Approval Date	Revision Description	Originator	Approved By
New Publication	Sept 2018	New publication to concisely document the academic regulations and assessment procedures documented in the QA Manual, as applicable to CCT programmes leading to QQI awards.	Academic Council	Academic Council
Version 1.1	Sept 2019	Edits to reflects updates to policies following annual review of QA. Specifically, capping of overall module mark at 40% for any learner who fails a module at first attempt, except where PMC approved.	QA Committee	Academic Council

Contents

Introduction

The CCT College Dublin Marks and Standards document is based upon QQI's *Assessment and Standards, Revised 2013,* and specifically reflects QQI's Sectoral Conventions for Assessment.

The Marks and Standards document is intended to provide a concise account of the application of QQI's Assessment and Standards into assessment regulations and academic procedures implemented by CCT for all programmes leading to QQI awards. The Marks and Standards document is informed by and reflects the detailed policies and procedures recorded in CCT's Quality Assurance Manual, available at www.cct.ie/quality. The Marks and Standards document does not replace the QA manual or policies and procedures relating to assessment but moreover complements them. Examiners and learners are advised to familiarise themselves with the Marks and Standards and the QA Manual.

The Marks and Standards document was approved by Academic Council in September 2018 and applies to all programmes leading to QQI awards from September 2018 until such a time as the Academic Council determines otherwise. The document is subject to review and, from time to time, may be revised and updated with the approval of Academic Council.

PART A. PROCEDURES FOR ASSESSMENT

1 Applicability

These Marks and Standards shall apply to all assessments on CCT programmes leading to awards of QQI, from the date of approval until such a time as the Academic Council amends or replaces them.

2 Responsibility for Assessment

The Dean of Academic Affairs shall have overall responsibility for the conduct of assessments in the College and shall, in particular, ensure:

- the proper conduct of assessments, including invigilation, moderation and external examining
- security in all matters pertaining to examinations
- that assessment briefs / examination paper's, solutions and appropriate marking schemes are prepared by Internal Examiners, sent in good time for approval by External Examiners and finalised, including printed where applicable, in good time for distribution to learners
- that appropriate reasonable accommodation arrangements are made for learners entitled to such supports
- that appropriate accommodation arrangements are made for each learner for examinations
- that assessments are reviewed by Internal and External Examiners and that results for each learner are made available for meetings of Boards of Examiners
- that accurate records in regard to assessment are maintained and made available to External Examiners
- proper arrangements for the holding of meetings of Boards of Examiners
- that learners are provided with the information relevant to them with regard to the conduct and regulation of assessments
- that minutes of meetings of Boards of Examiners are maintained
- that appropriate arrangements are in place for the safe and accurate uploading of results to QQI
- the integrity of the assessment process.

3 Internal Examiners

3.1 Academic staff of the College who undertake the assessment of learners are considered internal examiners.

3.2 The role of Internal Examiners shall be as follows:

- to ensure the questions set are meeting module learning outcomes and the assessment is fair and transparent, and consistent with the level being examined.
- to ensure questions included, along with any combination of how they may be answered where there are options, allow the learner to demonstrate attainment of learning outcomes and that the paper isn't requiring the learner to address questions that are not aligned to the learning outcomes.
- To ensure the examination is in accordance with CCT guidelines:

- Examinations for assessments where the weighted credit value is equivalent to up to 5 ECTS at levels 6 – 8 on the NFQ will be a maximum of 2 hours
- Examinations for assessments where the weighted credit value is equivalent to over 5 and up to 10 ECTS at level 6 – 8 on the NFQ will be 3 hours duration
- Examinations for assessments at level 9 on the NFQ will normally be 3 hours duration.
  - To ensure the examination is realistic for the duration of the examination.
  - Ensure that where a previously used question is proposed in an examination, modifications are made to prevent it being identical, and advise the QA Officer of the existence of a previously used question, including which paper it was from.
  - To forward the proposed paper, and its repeat, and correlating marking scheme for moderation.
  - To liaise with the moderator to discuss the paper and any potential changes required.
  - To complete any actions following moderation and ensure timely submission for review by the external examiner in a timely manner
  - To take account of all suggestions, criticisms, deletions, additions and amendments proposed by the External Examiner(s).
  - To complete the marking of assessments, and submission of results, and make them available for internal moderation and external examiner sampling within the specified timeframes.
  - To agree marks to be proposed for each learner, in consultation with the moderator and external examiner.
  - To attend meetings of the Board of Examiners.

4 External Examiners

4.1 Role of External Examiners

CCT implements QQI's *Effective Practice Guidelines for External Examining*. External Examiners are proposed, appointed and inducted in accordance with the CCT Policy on External Examining.

4.2 Duties

The primary role of an external examiner is to verify the academic standards achieved and ensure the programme and provider's assessment regulations and practices are fit for purpose. As per QQI guidelines, the main functions of the external examiner (or external examiner team) are as follows:

- Review the appropriateness of the minimum intended programme learning outcomes (i.e. the programme's basic educational goal) and other programme objectives.
- Probe the actual attainment of students (actual programme learning outcomes) using information agreed with and supplied by the College.
- Compare and contrast both the minimum intended programme learning outcomes and the actual attainment of students with the relevant awards standards with the National Framework of Qualifications (NFQ) and with corresponding data from other programmes in the same discipline in other higher education institutions in Ireland and beyond.
- Determine whether the applied procedures for assessment are valid, reliable, fair and consistent.

- Review the appropriateness of the programme assessment strategy and the assessment procedures and, flowing from this, consider subsidiary module assessment strategies.
- Review key assessment tasks prior to their assignment in light of the programme and module assessment strategies and students' prerequisite (prior) learning. Where key tasks include key continuous assessment tasks, it might not be feasible to review them prior to assignment, but they should still be reviewed by the external examiner.
- Report findings and recommendations to the provider.

The external examiner will review the drafts of all examination question papers, marking schemes, worked solutions, etc. before the question papers are sent for printing, and the assessment briefs and marking schemes for all key continuous assessments. External examiners shall have the right to make suggestions, criticisms, deletions, additions, and amendments as they deem appropriate.

4.3 Sampling

CCT requires that External Examiners shall be provided with a representative sample of graded student work for all key assessments (approximately 10-20%), including all borderline cases. The sample, which should be drawn on a basis agreed between the Internal and the External (examiners), should include sufficient material to enable the External Examiner to form a judgement as to the appropriateness of the marking at all levels of classifications. External Examining of Masters capstone assessments requires the External Examiner to review each assessment.

4.4 Attendance

All External Examiners will be required to visit the institutions for at least ONE Board of Examiners in each academic year.

4.5 Reporting

After each cohort is assessed the External Examiner is required to submit a written report to the College within 3 weeks of the final Board of Examiners for the Academic Year, utilising the template provided by the College.

The report should be submitted to the named Programme Leader or School Manager who will forward a copy to the QA Officer, Dean of School and Dean of Academic Affairs.

External Examiner reports are retained by the QA Office and utilised to inform the annual review of the programme, programme review and revalidation, and for consideration by the QE Committee to identify any institution level matters and inform the development of QA procedures.

 4.6 Response

The School Manager / Programme Leader is responsible for drafting a response to the External Examiner Report. This should be considered by the Dean of School and Dean of Academic Affairs in advance of issuing to the External Examiner.

5 Meeting of Boards of Examiners

5.1 A meeting of Internal and External Examiners to consider the assessment performance of students on a programme is termed a Board of Examiners.

5.2 A Board of Examiners meeting is normally established after each examination period or semester end to consider all assessment findings and determine assessment results for each of the learners presented.

5.3 Responsibilities

The responsibilities of the Board may include consideration of:

- grades for assessment tasks
- grades for modules
- eligibility to progress from one stage in a programme to the next
- eligibility for awards, and
- award classification, where applicable.

5.4 Accountability

In CCT College the Board of Examiners is accountable to, and a sub-committee of, Academic Council. Academic Council receives a report of each Board of Examiners, External Examiner Reports and Assessment Trend Analysis for each programme.

5.5 Authority

Academic Council receives a report from Board of Examiners for the ratification of results and recommendation of awards to QQI, subject to the Board satisfying the CCT College policy for the proper convening and conduct of a Board of Examiners. The Board of Examiners and the Appeals Board are the only body with the authority to make summative assessment decisions i.e. those decisions that determine a student's entitlement to progress or to an award. The Board is authorised to permit Chair's Action outside the formal Board. A Board of Examiners considers the marks achieved by individual learners registered for one or more specific programmes of study with a view to determining eligibility for progression or award. In making its decision on a learner's progress or award, a Board of Examiners shall take into account the recommendations of the Internal Exam Board, CCT policy, programme regulations, and QQI Assessment and Standards. A Board of Examiners can accept or reject the recommendations of an Internal Exam Board in respect of recommendations for progression or award.

5.6 Changing Marks

Notwithstanding instances of clerical / administrative error or borderlines, a Board of Examiners should not normally change any of the module marks awarded to a learner by the Internal Exam Board, except where personal mitigating circumstances have become known and in which case the examiner responsible must be involved in deliberation on the mark. Any dissent must be recorded.

5.7 Dissent

In the event of the Board of Examiners being unable to reach a consensus regarding an individual's mark, progression or award, the Chair of the Board, with the consent of the External Examiner(s) present, should determine the final result. Once confirmed, the secretary should formally read the decision of the Board and ask for any dissent to be communicated at that point. Non-disclosure of dissent at this stage will be deemed agreement. Any dissent must be recorded in the minutes and brought to the attention of the Dean of Academic Affairs and, subsequently the Academic Council. Where dissent is that of the External Examiner, this should also be included in the External Examiner's Report and communicated to QQI by the Dean of Academic Affairs or nominee.

Where dissent, anomalies, or errors are frequent in occurrence this should be formally recorded and drawn to the attention of the Academic Council as part of the Board of Examiners Report for corrective action.

5.8 Communication of Results

Examiners are required to delete any locally stored assessment records and cannot communicate results to students. Results from Board of Examiners meetings are published by the Faculty Coordinator only. Publication of results is normally within 5 working days of the Board of Examiners meeting, following ratification by Academic Council.

5.9 Chair's Action

Where full information is not available to the Board to enable a decision, but the information is due imminently, the Board may agree on actions that Chair may take post Board and the recommendations available to the Chair within specified parameters. These will be referred to as Chair's Actions.

Chair's Actions must be as specific as possible, detailing the Board's agreement to the Chair making a specific recommendation based upon particular circumstances e.g. where a pass mark is subsequently issued a recommendation for award or progression may be approved by the Chair.

Once the required information has become available by the specified the Chair will determine the final recommendation to Academic Council for ratification prior to publication to students.

5.10 Ratification of Results

Within 2 working days of the sign-off of Chair's Action or the Board of Examiners meeting, except where issues are identified, a Standing Committee of the Academic Council, comprising of the Chair and not less than two additional members of the Council, excluding the Chair of the Board of Examiners, will consider the Chair's sign-off or Board of Examiners' results and recommendations with a view to ratifying them. In the case of issues arising during Chair's Action, at the Board of Examiners meeting or identified by the Standing Committee, the Dean of Academic Affairs will convene a full meeting of the Academic Council. This will be held within 3 working days.

Where a full meeting of Academic Council is already scheduled within 3 working days of Chair's Actions sign-off or a Board of Examiners, a Standing Committee is not required and the Chair's Actions sign-off and Board of Examiners' results and recommendations will be considered by the Council at the scheduled meeting. Recommendations ratified by a Standing Committee will be formally recorded at the subsequent meeting of the Academic Council.

Meetings for the purpose of considering Board of Examiners' recommendations may be held virtually.

6 Internal Exam Board and Preparation for Board of Examiners' Meetings

6.1 Within CCT College, to ensure full and proper preparation for a Board of Examiners, an Internal Exam Board takes place. This is normally held not less than 1 week prior to the Board of Examiners to allow sufficient time for any corrective action, administration formalising of the minutes prior to the Board of Examiners' Meeting.

 6.2 Purpose

The purpose of the Internal Exam Board is to ensure the accuracy of the data to be presented to the Board of Examiners and to make recommendations to the Board of Examiners as appropriate.

6.3 Authority

An Internal Exam Board has the authority to amend individual assessment or module marks where there is clear justification for this in respect of a specific assessment or module. This is normally in response to feedback from External Examiners, in the case of incomplete marks, to correct an error, or where computation of marks requires further consideration. It should not be done for the sole purpose of raising a percentage point average to move a learner from an award borderline. The Internal Exam Board does not have the authority to:

- change borderline awards
- determine pass by compensation
- fail and withdraw a learner
- progress a learner to a subsequent stage
- permit progression with failed credit
- determine an award classification

In each of the scenarios above, the Internal Board should consider the individual cases and make a recommendation to the Board of Examiners.

6.4 Changing Marks

The Internal Exam Board cannot compel an examiner to change a mark. Responsibility for the marks awarded for an assessment / module remain with the examiner. A mark should not normally be changed without the agreement of the examiner concerned. In the case of the examiner being absent, arrangements should be in place to consult the examiner and take Chair's Action. Where agreement is not reached, the matter should be minuted and may be drawn to the attention of the Board of Examiners for further deliberation.

6.5 Broadsheet of Results

Following the Internal Exam Board, the secretary should amend the draft Broadsheet of Results being out forward to the Board Examiners to reflect any agreed changes and should prepare this, along with the minutes of the meeting for the Board of Examiners' Meeting.

PART B: GENERAL MARKS AND STANDARDS

1 General Requirements for Awards

1.1 All students who have satisfactorily followed a programme of study leading to a QQI award and who have met the programme requirements shall be admitted to the assessments of that programme.

1.2 The recommendation for award shall be based upon a learner's performance in all assessments, approved by External Examiners, appointed by Academic Council, and in accordance with the programme validation.

1.3 All assessment material must normally be made available for scrutiny by the external examiner(s) appointed by Academic Council. All award stage assessments must be reviewed by the External Examiner(s).

2 Approved Programme Schedule

2.1 The Approved Programme Schedule specifies the Modules, and combinations of Modules, validated by QQI in respect of each programme. Where specific programme pathways are validated these are documented in the programme document and the modules outlined on the approved programme schedule.

2.2 Where the Academic Council has adopted an Approved Programme Schedule and Programme Pathway in relation to an Approved Programme, the provisions of that Schedule are deemed to form part of the Marks and Standards applying to the programme.

3 Modules

The Approved Programme Schedule for each approved programme specifies the set of approved modules for the programme and the approved assessment methods and weightings. A module may consist of one or more component of assessment. Where a module consists of more than one component assessment, these are normally assessed independently, and the marks scored in the independent component parts are aggregated to determine the overall module mark.

4 Marking and Mark Allocation

4.1 The allocation of weighted marks for each component assessment within a module are determined by the approved programme schedule. The programme schedule also specifies the weighting of each module, communicated as ECTS.

4.2 The maximum marks available in each Module should be 100 marks and results and marks should be recorded as a percentage.

4.3 Independent component assessments shall be marked out of 100 and a weighted mark determined from this.

4.4 Where a module has been validated as being assessed as Pass or Fail only, this module cannot contribute to the award calculation.

4.5 Where a module is failed repeat marks are capped at 40%

4.6 Where a module is failed in the award stage modules, repeat marks are capped and the regulations relating to repeat for honours apply.

5 Minimum Pass Mark

5.1 The minimum pass mark in any module shall be 40% except where validation has determined otherwise. In all cases where the pass mark is not 40%, the minimum pass mark must be clearly documented on the Broadsheet of Results. In the absence of any documented deviation, the pass mark will be taken as 40%.

5.2 Where a learner fails to meet the minimum pass mark for the module, except where pass by compensation applies, they shall be required to recover that failure through repeat assessment or repeat assessment with attendance.

5.2.1 In the case of a learner repeating an assessed component within a module, pass marks awarded on the basis of other components within the module shall, normally, be carried forward from the original attempt. The repeat component mark will normally be aggregated with the previously attained pass marks from other assessed work within the module.

5.2.2 In the case of a learner repeating a module with attendance, the completion of the module in its entirety, including all assessments and examinations is required. Normally, only the marks from the repeat attempts shall be aggregated to determine the module mark. Notwithstanding this, the Board of Examiners has the discretion to consider and aggregate marks from a previous attempt, where that attempt resulted in a pass mark, when it is in the best interest of the student.

5.2.3 Where the Board of Examiners, in considering progression and recommendation for awards, determines that a learner is required to repeat a module or components of it, the Board, may devise alternative assessment arrangements in agreement with the External Examiner and having due regard for the approved programme schedule. In determining the assessment arrangements, the Board must agree how the overall module mark will be determined.

5.2.4 Where a module is assessed entirely or predominantly through continuous assessment and the learner fails the module, the Board of Examiners will normally recommend repeat assessment of failed components. However, the Board retains the discretion to recommend the learner repeats the module with attendance.

6 Recording of Exemptions

6.1 Exemptions shall be recorded where a learner has completed the full assessments of a module, as detailed in the approved programme schedule, at an earlier sitting. In such cases the Broadsheet of Results should record "EXE module repeat" in the module result box.

Exemption may also be recorded where a learner has put forward evidence of prior learning (accredited and or non-accredited), before the commencement of a module, and the evidence has been evaluated against the module learning outcomes and deemed to have satisfied those learning outcomes. In this case "EXE" is entered onto the Broadsheet of Results. A mark shall only be assigned and recorded where a marking methodology has been applied with the approval of the Dean of Academic Affairs. Where a mark cannot be assigned, if the module contributes to the award classification, the award shall remain unclassified.

6.2 Modules exempted shall normally remain valid for the purpose of completing programme requirements for recommendation for an award, except in such cases where programme review and revalidation impacts on the continued relevance of the module for the programme and award.

6.3 Number of Attempts

6.3.1 The number of attempts at assessment is determined by validation. A learner is normally permitted a maximum of four attempts at the assessments to pass a module, however exceptions do apply and are noted on the approved programme schedule. The number of attempts includes the original and repeat attempts. Any learner not achieving a pass within the maximum opportunities, under normal circumstances, will be withdrawn from the programme of study. The Board of Examiners has the discretion to recommend that a learner repeat a module with attendance or an equivalent module and all the assessments of the module.

6.3.2 Where the College provides an assessment opportunity to a learner this shall constitute an assessment attempt, regardless of whether the learner avails of the opportunity. Where a learner fails to sit or submit, except where PMCs are approved, a mark of 0% will be awarded for the assessment and the attempt will be recorded.

6.3.3 A learner who has failed a module does not have an automatic entitlement to request a repeat assessment to be set for them. In cases where:

> a) the Programme Board determines the module is no longer relevant or current, or

> b) where the current programme is sufficiently different from the original approved programme taken by the learner

the Programme Board may require the learner to attend a more current equivalent module and to take the assessments and examinations related to that module in order to meet the Learning Outcomes for the current programme.

7 Requirements for Progression

7.1 Where programmes are organised in stages, a learner, to be eligible to progress to a particular stage, is normally required to demonstrate achievement of the minimum intended learning outcomes of all the preceding stages. The approved programme schedule summarises the allocation of credits and grades, as well as any special progression requirements.

Subject to any special conditions of the programme, there are three exceptions to the general requirement of passing all the required modules in order to progress to the next stage. These are:

A) pass by compensation
B) exemption from part of the programme (with or without the allocation of a grade and credit)
C) eligibility to progress carrying the failed modules to be passed during the subsequent stage

7.2 Discretion of the Board of Examiners

7.2.1 The Board of Examiners has the discretion, on a case by case basis, to amend an award classification, by taking into account the totality of the learner's performance and any formal recommendation for Mitigating Circumstances as advised by Office of the Dean of Academic Affairs at the Board.

7.2.2 Borderline cases

A Borderline case refers to a learner presenting for progression or award, who is close to the threshold between successive award grade bands. The Board of Examiners is required to give closer

perusal of cases near the classification boundaries, i.e. within ±1 percentage point of the percentage point average threshold.

CCT determines borderline cases to be any learner whose:

> a. average mark across all modules is within 1% of any of a grade band classification

> b. marks in modules accumulating to equal to or more than 45 ECTS are in the higher grade band.

7.2.3 The Board of Examiners shall hold full and frank discussion in respect of each borderline case, considering the learner's performance as a whole against the minimum intended learning outcomes. In the absence of bias, it is to be expected that as many borderline grades will be reduced as will be increased.

B7.2.4 Following deliberations, the Progression and Award Board may recommend that a learner's GPA be increased or decreased and that a learner be granted a higher or lower overall award than the current modules marks would add up to.

Where the decision is made to change the overall grade (and award classification, where appropriate), the Board must agree the changes in module marks to reflect the overall grade or award classification.

7.2.5 The Board of Examiners shall only grant eligibility for progression, or recommend that an award be made, when it is satisfied, based on consideration of the necessary evidence, that the required learning outcomes have been attained.

7.2.6 In considering learners in non-award stages, the learner should, normally, be accorded the benefit of the doubt, given reasonable grounds, and the Board should endeavour to make a firm recommendation on the matter. Referral to Academic Council shall only occur where a fundamental question of principle is involved.

7.3 Progression with Credit Deficit

7.3.1 Before progressing to the next stage, learners are required to pass all modules identified as essential prerequisites for progression, as specified by the programme assessment strategy and approved programme schedule. The Board of Examiners may, however, allow learners to be permitted, on a case-by-case basis and under exceptional circumstances, to carry a failed module while progressing to the next stage, provided the module is not a prerequisite for any module in this stage and provided this is consistent with the requirements of the relevant programme assessment strategy.

7.3.2 The normal maximum missing credit shall be 16% of the credit for the stage, e.g. 10 credits per 60-credit stage.

7.3.3 A learner may not normally progress beyond one subsequent stage while carrying a failed module from stage 1 to stage 3.

7.3.3 Where the award classification is determined by performance in different stages of the programme, the award classification may not be considered until such a time as all contributing modules have been passed and all modules in the award influencing stages are passed or exempted.

7.3.4 Should the Board of Examiners deem a repeat assessment unacceptable or of the module learning outcomes cannot be satisfied through completion of the repeat assessment, the Board shall determine repeat with attendance is required.

8 Award Classifications and Standards

8.1 QQI's Sectoral Convention 1 on Award Classifications, stipulates classification of awards shall be criterion-referenced as distinct from norm-referenced.

The following tables describe the classifications available for major awards (made by QQI or by recognised institutions under delegated authority) in the National Framework of Qualifications (NFQ). They also specify the required boundary values for grade point average (GPA) and percentage point average (PPA). CCT operates the PPA grading scheme.

8.1.2 A 'Pass' classification of an award is a positive statement of achievement.

8.1.3 All awards — other than research degrees, minor awards and supplemental awards — shall be classified. However, in exceptional cases, where classification is not feasible, an award may be issued as an unclassified award. Special-purpose awards which have a volume of at least 60 credits and are comparable to a major award (at the same NFQ level) may be classified in accordance with the convention for the relevant major award. Otherwise, awards of this type shall be unclassified.

8.1.4 In accordance with QQI Sectoral Convention 3, calculation of the award classification shall be based on the credit-weighted mean value of the allowable grades (i.e. those that contribute to the classification) for modules of a specific programme which has been validated by.

8.1.5 A learner may claim exemption from a module whose grade would otherwise contribute to the award classification, provided that he or she can demonstrate the attainment of the relevant knowledge, skill and competence. In cases where the attainment cannot be graded fairly and consistently, only an unclassified award shall be available.

8.1.6 Honours classification, or any classification higher than 'Pass', shall be made based on first attempt grades. In cases where personal mitigating circumstances apply and are approved, the Board shall treat a repeat grade as a first attempt grade.

Classification of Higher Certificates (Level 6) and Ordinary Bachelor's Degrees (Level 7)	GPA boundary values	PPA boundary values	Description 2009-2010 and following
Distinction	3.25	70%	Indicative descriptor: Achievement includes that required for a Pass and in most respects is significantly and consistently beyond this
Merit Grade 1	3.0	60%	Indicative descriptor: Achievement includes that required for a Pass and in many respects is significantly beyond this
Merit Grade 2	2.5	50%	Indicative descriptor: Achievement includes that required for a Pass and

			in some respects is significantly beyond this
Pass	2.0	40%	Definitive descriptor: Attains all the minimum intended programme learning outcomes

Classification of Honours Bachelor's degrees (Level 8) and Higher Diplomas (Level 8)	GPA boundary values	PPA boundary values	Description 2009 - 2010 and following
First-class honours	3.25	70%	Indicative descriptor: Achievement includes that required for a Pass and in most respects is significantly and consistently beyond this
Second-class honours Grade 1	3.0	60%	Indicative descriptor: Achievement includes that required for a Pass and in many respects is significantly beyond this
Second-class honours Grade 2	2.5	50%	Indicative descriptor: Achievement includes that required for a Pass and in some respects is significantly beyond this
Pass	2.0	40%	Definitive descriptor: Attains all the minimum intended programme learning outcomes

Classification of Postgraduate Diploma (Level 9)	GPA boundary values	PPA boundary values	Description 2009 - 2010 and following
Distinction	3.25	70%	Indicative descriptor: Achievement includes that required for a Pass and in most respects is significantly and consistently beyond this
Merit	3.0	60%	Indicative descriptor: Achievement includes that required for a Pass and in many respects is significantly beyond this
Pass	2.0	40%	Definitive descriptor: Attains all the minimum intended programme learning outcomes

Classification of Taught Master's degrees (Level 9)	GPA boundary values	PPA boundary values	Description 2009 - 2010 and following
First-class honours	3.25	70%	Indicative descriptor: Achievement includes that required for a Pass and in most respects is significantly and consistently beyond this

Second-class honours	3.0	60%	Indicative descriptor: Achievement includes that required for a Pass and in many respects is significantly beyond this
Pass	2.0	40%	Definitive descriptor: Attains all the minimum intended programme learning outcomes

8.2 General Conditions

8.2.1 To be eligible for recommendation for an NFQ award at Pass classification, a learner must:

1) satisfy all assessments for modules at the same NFQ Level as the award and any other requirements specified in the Approved Programme Schedule for the programme,

2) successfully complete the programme and all component modules and assessment as a whole in accordance with these Marks and Standards and QQI Assessment and Standards (upon which these Marks and Standards are based), and

3) Attain an average overall assessment mark (based on the total marks available as specified in the Approved Programme Schedule), as shown in the relevant tables above.

8.2.2 To be eligible for an Award at Merit or Distinction or Honours classification the learner must have satisfied the assessment requirements of the programme, as outlined in the approved programme schedule, and achieved a PPA equal to or greater than the minimum standard specified in the classification tables, at the first attempt in the award stage, or in all award bearing modules, where weighted contributions from previous years' assessments are specified in the Approved Programme Schedule,

8.2.3 A learner's performance at a non-award stage is normally unclassified and recorded as a pass where the pass standard has been attained or exceeded.

8.2.4 In cases where a validated programme includes embedded awards, the Board of Examiners shall confirm the entitlement to the embedded award for those learners who have completed the applicable modules or stage(s) within the parent programme should a learner wishes to exit at that point.

9 Post Award Achievement

9.1 QQI's Sectoral Convention number 5 addresses post-award achievement and stipulates that, subject to the following conditions, a graduate holding a higher education and training award may present for and, if successful, achieve a further major award at the same level within the same generic area of study. This must involve the attainment of new learning outcomes (i.e. post-award achievement). If the area of specialisation of the post-award achievement is not substantially different, and/or if the associated credit is insufficient for granting a new major award, the applicant may be granted a minor, special-purpose or supplemental award or a Single Subject Certificate (issued by QQI).

The following table sets out the minimum volume of newly certified learning required of a learner who is seeking to qualify for an additional major award at the same level within the same generic area of study. Note that repeating learning that is substantially equivalent to previously certified learning is not included in the calculation of post-award credit in the following table.

Award Currently Held	Additional Award Sought	Post-award Credit for Newly Certified Learning
Higher Certificate	Higher Certificate	A minimum of 60 credits at level 6
Ordinary Bachelor's Degree	Ordinary Bachelor's Degree	A minimum of 60 credits at level 7
Honours Bachelor's Degree	Honours Bachelor's Degree	A minimum of 120 credits, at least 60 of which are at level 8
Master's Degree	Master's Degree	A complete programme

Glossary of Terms

ACADEMIC COUNCIL: The Academic Council is the governing body for academic matters within CCT College Dublin, as appointed by the Board of Directors.

APPROVED PROGRAMME SCHEDULE: The approved programme schedule provides an overview of Schedule: the programme. The details provided include: the name of the programme, the name of award, the NFQ level of programme and the total number of credits. For each stage of the programme, the schedule lists the credit available for each of the modules and the contribution to the grade of each of the modules' components. It also specifies the requirements for learners to progress from one stage to another and to complete the programme successfully. The approved programme schedule is attached to the certificate of programme validation, and is deemed to form part of the assessment regulations applying to the programme. Any special assessment conditions (such as modules which cannot be passed by compensation) must be included in the approved programme schedule

ASSESSMENT: Assessment refers to all types of assessed activities which learners are required to complete to evidence their attainment of learning outcomes and inform their entitlement to progression or recommendation for an award. Assessment can take the form of, inter alia, individual or group work, essays, reports, projects, dissertations, theses, artefacts, practical, laboratory, or task-oriented activities.

AWARD: An award is conferred on a learner who has successfully completed the programme requirements as validated by the awarding body.

BOARD OF EXAMINERS: A Board of Examiners comprises internal and external examiners for a programme and is responsible for deliberating learner performance in any stage to determine entitlement to progress or make a recommendation for award.

COLLEGE: Any reference to College should be taken to mean CCT College Dublin.

EXAMINATION: The term "Examination" in these Marks and Standards should be construed to include reference, as appropriate, to written and oral examinations.

EXTERNAL EXAMINER: An external examiner is an independent expert who is a member of the broader community of practice within the programme's field of learning and whose accomplishments attest to his/her likelihood of having the authority necessary to fulfil the responsibilities of the role.

FACULTY: Faculty refers to the administrative units of the College responsible for academic programmes, collectively forming the School, managed by the School Manager.

LEARNING OUTCOME: A learner's knowledge, skill and competence change as a result of learning. Learning outcomes are documented as part of a programme development and approved through the validation process. Learners are assessed against documented learning outcomes. Programme learning outcomes reflect the minimum achievement (in terms of knowledge, skill and competence) that the learner is certified to have attained if he/she successfully completes a particular programme (i.e. passes all the required assessments).

MARKS AND STANDARDS: These Marks and Standards are governed by QQI's Assessment and Standards and the sectoral conventions for assessment contained therein. They shall come into operation on such a day as the Academic Council of the College shall determine and may be amended from time to time, approved by Academic Council.

MODULE: A module is a programme of education and training of small volume. It is designed to be capable of integration with other modules to form larger programmes. A module can be shared by different programmes.

PASS BY COMPENSATION: In certain conditions, a learner who has not failed outright a particular assessment task in a particular stage may be granted a pass by compensation for that task. The marginal result is compensated by a satisfactory performance in another assessment task or tasks in the same stage. A justification for compensation is that there is always the possibility of an assessment error in modules that are not failed outright. The likelihood of a false negative result is highest near grade boundaries. Compensation does not change the original result. Instead, it enables progression and allows the allocation of credit.

PROGRAMME: A programme is a programme of learning as validated by QQI. A programme of education and training refers to any process by which learners may acquire knowledge, skill or competence. It includes courses of study or instruction, apprenticeships, training and employment. A programme offers learners the learning opportunities by which they may attain particular educational goals (expressed as the intended programme learning outcome) by learning activities in a learning environment. A programme is normally comprised of modules.

PROGRAMME BOARD: A dedicated committee established by the College with overall responsibility for that programme, including the programme assessment strategy.

SECTORAL CONVENTION: A very small set of regulations and benchmarks which, in the interest of fairness and consistency, are agreed at the sectoral level by QQI and by all associated providers, and where any right to unilateral deviation is waived.

STAGE: Conceptually, a stage is a rung on a progression ladder. Many programmes are organised in either semester-based or year-based stages. However, other kinds of stages may be established.

SEMESTERS: The academic year is broken up into two terms of fifteen weeks duration, comprising of a combination of teaching weeks, assessment weeks and independent study / revision periods. These terms are known as Semesters.

STUDENT OR LEARNER: A Student or Learner is a person who has registered in the College on a programme leading to an award.

VALIDATION: Validation means the process by which an awarding body shall satisfy itself that a learner may attain knowledge, skill or competence for the purpose of an award made by the awarding body.