

**Policy name: Academic Assessment and Progression Policy and Procedure**

**Approved: 25th November 2016**

**Revision 1 approved 10th March 2017**

**Revision 2 approved 9th November 2018**

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## 1. Context

- 1.1 Undergraduate and postgraduate programmes offered by the Royal Irish Academy of Music, hereinafter referred to as RIAM or the Academy, are delivered by RIAM and validated by the Designated Awarding Body, Trinity College Dublin, the University of Dublin, hereinafter referred to as Trinity. RIAM is committed to ensuring that the assessment of its students is trustworthy and transparent. Effective assessment systems are essential for academic progress and in upholding the integrity of academic standards and awards. RIAM assesses students at all levels against published programme learning outcomes through an array of written and practical examinations towards credits which contribute to awards.

## 2. Purpose

- 2.1 This policy sets out the general regulations for RIAM assessments and examinations to ensure that students are informed of relevant details about examinations in a timely manner.
- 2.2 This policy assures students and RIAM's awarding body, Trinity, that the examination methods deployed by RIAM are fair and equitable.

## 3. Scope

- 3.1 This policy applies to all formal assessments and examinations for taught Programmes delivered by RIAM and validated by Trinity. Research dissertations within postgraduate programmes, are subject to separate arrangements (see Overview of Regulations Pertaining to Doctoral Studies: Policy and Procedure, section 6.4, and the Programme Handbook for Doctoral Studies for details).
- 3.2 This policy applies to all RIAM examinations for full-time students, and is relevant to administration staff and heads of faculty involved in arranging and setting up examinations, as well as teachers (both instrumental teachers and teachers of academic subjects) and students.
- 3.3 This policy does not set out the aims, learning outcomes or requirements of examinations, which are set out in each Programme's Handbook, where full information on the requirements of assessment may be found, including information on assessment penalties.
- 3.4 Foreign exchange students, such as those on Erasmus exchange to RIAM, are subject to the assessment criteria of RIAM.
- 3.5 RIAM students on foreign exchanges, such as Erasmus, are excluded, as they are subject to the assessment criteria of the institution they are visiting.
- 3.6 RIAM and Trinity in accordance with the Records Management and Retention Policy, in line with the General Data Protection Regulation, will retain assessment data.

## 4. Benefits

- 4.1 Ensures the equitable conduct of examinations and assessment at the Academy and upholds the integrity of degrees awarded by Trinity.
- 4.2 Ensures that RIAM examination procedures are implemented in a fair and consistent manner.
- 4.3 Provides students with a positive examination experience which is subject to regular review and monitoring.

## 5. Principles

- 5.1 Assessment promotes effective learning by engaging students in the process with the provision of appropriate feedback.
- 5.2 Assessment informs teaching through monitoring and review.
- 5.3 RIAM is committed to the highest standards in its academic programmes and assures that standards meet or exceed, those outlined in the National Framework of Qualifications (NFQ).
- 5.4 The successful completion of assessment is essential for any student wishing to obtain an Academy qualifications awarded by itself or by Trinity. Students are responsible for demonstrating their learning achievement through examinations/portfolio assessment.
- 5.5 Students should be fully informed about assessment criteria in advance of assessments to enhance their performance potential.
- 5.6 Timely feedback is an integral part of the assessment process and RIAM will provide assessment feedback in accordance with the RIAM Return of Coursework Feedback Policy.
- 5.7 Assessment methods are reviewed and renewed as necessary to adapt to evolving academic and artistic requirements by the periodic review of programmes.

## 6. Definitions

- 6.1 **Assessment:** The act of judging the achievement of students along agreed criteria and learning outcomes.
- 6.2 **Examination:** refers to a written or oral examination, and may involve other forms such as assessment of performances, coursework, project work, portfolio assessment, examination of dissertations or any such similar activity or academic exercise which may be approved or prescribed by Board of Studies in respect of any programme of study.

## 7. Policy

- 7.1 Assessment Policy
  - 7.1.1 Students must meet the academic, progression and graduation requirements of their programme of study and satisfy the rules and regulations of RIAM relating to assessment.
  - 7.1.2 Assessment forms an integral part of programme design and relates to programme aims and learning outcomes.

- 7.1.3 The Academy has adopted the European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System (ECTS), under which each year of full-time undergraduate study carries 60 credits.
- 7.1.4 *Classification:* Institutional marking scales have been adopted for Undergraduate, Postgraduate and diploma courses, which may be found in the relevant Programme Handbooks.
- 7.1.5 RIAM has processes in place to ensure fairness and transparency in the marking systems, which include co-marking of formal performance examinations with specialist extern and double marking of examination scripts and academic portfolios.
- 7.1.6 RIAM appoints External Examiners (approved by Trinity) for all its programmes to minimise the risk of bias and error in the marking process. Their role is to ensure that assessment processes are being followed, that the academic standards of the programmes are benchmarked against the sector and aligned with the NFQ.
- 7.1.7 Examination and assessment processes are regularly reviewed for their effectiveness, drawing on the recommendations of external examiners and other relevant sources.
- 7.1.8 RIAM has approved the practice of anonymous marking for undergraduate examinations. This does not apply to continuous assessment, performance examinations and term tests. All undergraduate examination results are published anonymously, by reference to student number, on school, department or course office notice-boards, as appropriate.
- 7.1.9 Where an examination/assessment has been completed, subsequent withdrawal is not permitted. Students who have successfully completed an examination and are qualified to rise with their year are not permitted to repeat the examination.
- 7.1.10 Plagiarism or other dishonest academic activities are considered fraudulent and a serious breach of academic integrity. Breaches are subject to the RIAM Plagiarism Policy.
- 7.1.11 The decision of the examiners is final and students may not question the academic judgement of those charged with the responsibility for assessing academic or professional competence. However, this does not preclude a student from making an appeal where they perceive that procedural irregularities in the examination process have taken place, or where there is evidence of prejudice or bias. All appeals in relation to assessment and examination results which have been approved by the Board of Examiners are dealt with in the Appeals Policy and Procedure.
- 7.1.12 RIAM's policy regarding reasonable accommodation for students with disabilities is detailed in the RIAM Disability Support Service Code of Practice.

## 7.2 General Regulations

- 7.2.1 Only registered students who have satisfactorily attended or otherwise pursued a programme of study approved by Board of Studies and who have completed satisfactorily all programme requirements, including performing group attendance, shall be admitted as students to the examinations or other tests of attainment.
- 7.2.2 The award of any access, diploma, degree or postgraduate qualification shall be

based on a student's performance in such examinations, or other tests of learning or ability, which have been approved by Board of Studies for the programme of study and award concerned.

- 7.2.3 It is the responsibility of individual students to ensure that they are familiar with all relevant module and programme regulations and examination requirements, as set out in the Definitive Course Document and the Course Syllabus.

### 7.3 Retention of examination materials

All examination materials relevant to the performance of any student must be retained by RIAM for 13 months from the date of the meeting of the final Board of Examiners. Examination scripts and other complete written materials related to the work done in an earlier year that have not been finally marked and/ or moderated should be retained until the work of the final Board of Examiners has been completed and in accordance with the EU- General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) and the Records Management and Retention Policy.

- 7.4 The Academy reserves the right to record performance examinations solely for the purposes of moderation, staff training and/ or Quality Assurance, and students will not be able to request a copy of the recording.

### 7.5 Re-check regulations

Requests for a re-check or re-mark should be made as soon as possible after discussion of results and performance and no later than ten working days from the date of the meeting of the Board of Examiners which moderated the marks in question.

### 7.6 Publication of results

Once an examination result has been published it cannot be amended without the permission of the Director. Students who wish to appeal the result of the examination must follow the RIAM Appeals Procedure.

### 7.7 Termination of studentship

Students who fail to meet the minimum learning outcomes, when all reassessment opportunities are exhausted, will have their studentship terminated by the Board of Examiners.

## 8. Procedures

### 8.1 Procedure for Registering for Examinations

- 8.1.1 All students who are duly registered with the General Office of the Academy or with Trinity, who are in good financial standing with the Academy, who are not debarred from examinations for any reason and who fulfil the requirements set out in 7.1.1 above are automatically registered as students for their examinations each year.
- 8.1.2 Students who are unsuccessful in their examinations in any year and who are permitted by the relevant Board of Examiners to present for repeat examinations in that year are required to inform the Administrative Officer, Registry of their intention to present for the repeat examinations and pay any associated fees. Students should normally repeat failed modules at the next available opportunity.

8.1.3 The Academy does not accept any responsibility for the sending or receiving of any communications through the post. It is the formal responsibility of individual students to ensure that they are registered, where necessary, for repeat examinations. It is recommended that students use registered post, or email, when returning repeat examination entry forms and fees to the General Office.

## 8.2 Examination Regulations

### 8.2.1 Examination Timetable

- (i) The Examination Timetables will be displayed on the third-level noticeboard [located outside the third level common room].
- (ii) It is individual students' responsibility to ensure that they are aware of the date, time and location of their examinations.
- (iii) The Examination Timetables will normally be displayed approximately three weeks in advance of the relevant examinations.

### 8.2.2 Admission to Examination Hall

- (i) Each student should be present fifteen minutes before the commencement time of an examination but should not enter the Examination Hall until requested to do so by the Invigilator.
- (ii) No student will be admitted to the Examination Hall more than one hour after the start of the examination. In exceptional circumstances, however, and provided that no other student has withdrawn and left the examination room, a student may be admitted later, at the discretion of the Senior Invigilator. Extra time will not normally be allowed.

### 8.2.3 Conduct during Examinations

- (i) Students are not permitted to have any items on their desk, other than items which have been expressly approved for use during the examination.
- (ii) Students must not turn over the examination paper on the desk until requested to do so by the Invigilator.
- (iii) Students are advised to read the instructions at the head of the question paper before starting work.
- (iv) Students may not use extra materials except as expressly approved by the relevant lecturer. A list of such approved texts will be advised in advance. Manuscripts will be supplied, if required, and these are the property of the Academy and, under no circumstances should they be removed from the examination hall. Students found in possession of these manuscripts outside the examination hall will be deemed to be in breach of the Examination Regulations. Students may not bring their own manuscripts into the examination room.
- (v) It is the responsibility of individual students to ensure that they have an adequate supply of pens, pencils, ink, etc., required for an examination. The borrowing of such materials will not be permitted during an examination. Students may not bring blank paper into the examination hall. All paper will be supplied by the

Invigilators.

- (vi) Students are not permitted to bring mobile phones into the Examination Hall. The use of electronic equipment is not permitted without prior approval, e.g. for reasonable adjustments.
- (vii) Students wishing to leave the Examination Hall temporarily may not do so unless accompanied by an Invigilator. In any event, no person may enter or leave the Examination Hall without the Invigilator's permission.
- (viii) A student must not, on any pretext whatsoever speak to or have any communication with any other students; such communications will be regarded as a breach of the Examinations Regulations. If a student needs to ask a question or obtain an extra answer booklet, they should raise their hand for the attention of one of the Invigilators.
- (ix) It is the responsibility of each student to ensure that their answer booklet(s) are handed to the Invigilator.
- (x) For all examinations, the regulations contained in the Definitive Course Document and the Course Syllabus will be followed. Particular attention should be given to deadlines, supplying copies of the music to be performed and use of scores [or not].

### 8.3 Procedures for Absence, Illness, Extenuating Circumstance and Provisions for Disability

#### 8.3.1 Absence

- (i) If a student is absent from an examination or assessment, a detailed explanation must be submitted to the Administrative Officer, Registry immediately, together with a medical certificate if the absence was due to illness.
- (ii) Details of all such absences shall be reported to the relevant Board of Examiners.

#### 8.3.2 Illness during an Examination

- (i) A distressed or ill student may be permitted to leave the Examination Hall temporarily during an examination, accompanied by an Invigilator, and subsequently return to complete the examination, provided the continuity and quality of supervision is not affected.
- (ii) The Senior Invigilator may, following consultation with the Administrative Officer, Registry, and the relevant Head of Faculty, if deemed necessary, give a time extension to such a student at the end of the examination equal to the period of absence, or arrange for such a student to complete the examination in a separate room under separate supervision.

#### 8.3.3 Extenuating Circumstances

- (i) In respect of their performance in any assessment or part of an examination (including deferred examinations), students shall bring to the attention of the Administrative Officer, Registry, any extenuating circumstances which may have affected their performance.

- (ii) These circumstances will be treated in the strictest confidence. Information about student circumstances will only ever be communicated to other lecturers or to the Board of Examiners, where necessary to inform a decision..
- (iii) Extenuating Circumstances must be submitted in writing to the Administrative Officer, Registry at least seven days prior to the relevant Board of Examiners meeting.
- (iv) The Administrative Officer, Registry shall inform the Board of Examiners which will consider the circumstances in arriving at a decision for that student.
- (v) Students should note that failure to notify the Board of Examiners of extenuating circumstances, which could have been brought to the attention of the Board of Examiners prior to reaching its decision, may prejudice any subsequent appeal.

#### 8.3.4 Provision for Students with a Permanent or Temporary Disability

- (i) The Academy in conjunction with the General Office offers reasonable accommodation for students with disabilities during examinations, where required.
- (ii) Students who have a disability that will require additional services during their studies or examinations should register with the Administrative Officer, Registry at the beginning of the Academic Year.
- (iii) Students who have a temporary disability at the time of an examination should contact the Administrative Officer [Registry] directly, if possible, at least seven days before their examinations commence.
- (iv) A student's request for additional provision must be supported by appropriate medical certification.

#### 8.4 Procedure for Breaches of Examination Regulations

- 8.4.1 A student who is found to have unauthorised materials in their possession during an assessment shall be deemed to be in breach of the Examination Regulations.
- 8.4.2 Any written or printed materials not written on official answer books or electronic devices containing text shall be considered to be unauthorised materials.
- 8.4.3 The unauthorised materials shall be removed and retained by the Invigilator who shall make a written report to the Administrative Officer, Registry, who will report the matter to the Disciplinary Committee. The student shall be allowed to complete the examination.
- 8.4.4 The same procedure will be followed where a student is considered by the Invigilator to have copied or to have attempted to copy any material from another student.
- 8.4.5 Each student alleged to be in breach of the Examination Regulations shall be referred to the Disciplinary Committee in advance of the relevant Board of Examiners meeting and a report from the Disciplinary Committee shall be placed before the Board of Examiners. The report shall include the decision of the Disciplinary Committee which shall be implemented in full by the Board of Examiners.

- 8.4.6 The Disciplinary Committee shall include two members of the Board of Studies and a student member.
- 8.4.7 The student under investigation shall be entitled to attend a meeting of the Disciplinary Committee with a representative of their choice in attendance.
- 8.4.8 In the event that the student wishes to appeal the decision of the Disciplinary Committee, they may do so by using the Appeals Policy and Procedure.
- 8.4.9 In the event that it is impossible to arrange a meeting of the Disciplinary Committee before the relevant Board of Examiners, the student's results shall be deferred until a Disciplinary Committee meeting has heard the case and made its decision.

## 8.5 Procedure for Communication of Results

- 8.5.1 All examination results are subject to final confirmation by the relevant Board of Examiners.
- 8.5.2 Results are formally communicated to students, after the relevant meetings of the Board of Examiners. Students will be advised individually of their results following each examination period.
- 8.5.3 An individual transcript of results will be issued to students by the General Office following final approval by Board of Examiners.
- 8.5.4 The official date for promulgation of results will be displayed on the notice board after the Board of Examiners has convened
- 8.5.5 Students who are in default of financial obligations will be referred to the Administrative Officer, Registry.
- 8.5.6 No information regarding pass/fail results may be given by telephone.
- 8.5.7 Relevant staff will normally be present during the Board of Examiners and available for consultation by the Extern.
- 8.5.8 This meeting will not prejudice students' rights under the Freedom of Information Act.

## 9. Responsibility

- 9.1 The Chair of Board of Studies is responsible for overseeing this policy and its review every three years. The Administrative Officer, Registry is responsible for its operating procedures in relation to all undergraduate and postgraduate programmes. Programme Examination and assessment processes are reviewed at point of validation and re-approval by Trinity.

## 10. Legislation and Regulation

- 10.1 [Qualifications and Quality Assurance \(Education and Training\) Act 2012.](#)
- 10.2 [Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area \(2005\).](#)
- 10.3 [Code of Practice for Provision of Education and Training to International Learners \(2015\).](#)
- 10.4 [National Framework of Qualifications \(NFQ\).](#)

10.5 [QQI Access Transfer and Progression - QQI Policy Restatement 2015.](#)

## 11. Related Documents

- 11.1 Appeals Policy and Procedure.
- 11.2 Student Code of Conduct.
- 11.3 Disability Support Service and Reasonable Accommodations Policy.
- 11.4 Overall External Examiners and Specialist External Examiners Policy.
- 11.5 Overview of Regulations Pertaining to Doctoral Studies: Policy and Procedure.
- 11.6 Programme Handbook for Doctoral Studies.
- 11.7 Plagiarism Policy.
- 11.8 Return of Coursework Feedback Policy.
- 11.9 Records Management and Retention Policy
- 11.10 Trinity Assessment and Academic Progression Policy.

## 12. Document Control

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