

Quality Assurance Mitigation Policy

Developed in response to the COVID-19 Crisis and its potential impact on student performance.

Introduction

The COVID-19 pandemic and the measures introduced by the Irish government have impacted each student at GMIT in various ways. It is recognised that:

- Many students depend on Institute facilities to successfully engage with their learning and assessment.
- Lack of access to the Institute has left many students bereft of a suitable learning environment, including access to WiFi, specialist software and IT equipment.
- Students may be exposed to and caring for sick family members.
- The environment students now find themselves in to complete assessments/assignments may not be conducive to achieving their true potential.
- With the conversion of many modules to continuous assessment based grading and online assessments, many students may not have the resources they require to achieve the grade they deserve, or to maintain their current grade.

As a student-centred organisation, GMIT is committed to ensuring no student is disadvantaged as a result of this crisis and that each student is given an opportunity to reach their true potential. This Mitigation Policy is developed from the foregoing guiding principle as a response to GMIT's duty of care to its students.

GMIT's academic codes provide for a range of measures outlined below which will be utilised as appropriate to mitigate against student disadvantage as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. The provisions outlined below are available to students in all programme stages, unless otherwise specified.

The accommodations listed hereunder, reflect the Institute's Quality Assurance Framework and amendments to it, which have been approved for the 2020/21 academic year.

Student Progression

The QAF states:

"A student is entitled to progress from one stage to the next once they have fulfilled all conditions specified on the Approved Programme Schedule and has been awarded the requisite number of credits at the stage."

PABs have discretion to allow students progress and carry with a greater deficit than currently provided for in the QAF. This accommodation to be employed with a particular focus on Placement modules.

Borderline Performance

The QAF states:

"A borderline performance arises where a student's mark in a module lies close to the pass mark, or the student's overall result lies close to the transition point between pass and fail or between classifications of awards.

The Progression and Awards Board will have discretion on a case-by-case basis to consider the totality of the student's overall performance in the stage, and on this basis to recommend that a borderline mark or marks be amended to allow the candidate to pass the stage or to re-classify an award."

This principle is enshrined in the LTA Continuity Framework Guiding Principles.

The QAF further states:

"In reviewing the totality of student performance for purposes of determining an award classification, the Progression and Awards Board will normally exercise its discretion and consider either of the following guidelines:

- i. The student is within one percentage point on their overall average of the next grade classification.
- ii. The student has marks over the new threshold in at least 50% of the credits."

The PAB has discretion in how it conducts its business and in the context of the current Covid19 crisis will exercise such discretion in a fair, equitable, consistent and reasonable manner, applying the concept of 'reasonable accommodation' with prudence.

Impaired Performance

The QAF states:

"Impaired examination performance refers to circumstances which may have adversely affected a student's performance and results in a particular examination/assessment. It may arise as a result of bereavement, accident or injury, illness or other personal circumstances, but not as a result of personal culpability. A Progression and Awards Board will have the discretion to consider impaired performance on a case-by-case basis. The Board will consider such cases in a fair, equitable, consistent and reasonable manner, applying the concept of 'reasonable accommodation' with prudence."

GMIT recognises and acknowledges that the COVID-19 pandemic may have an adverse effect on student's performance and results. Potentially, all students are considered to have impaired performance as a result of this crisis. PABs will consider Personal Circumstances Forms outlining specific disadvantages.

In addition, the following facility is to be afforded to students in year 3 and in award years who deem that their performance has been impaired by the crisis:

- Following the issuing of results, students will have the option of voiding the attempt and opt to re-sit the examination/assessment of any/all modules at the next available sitting. This applies equally to modules that have been passed as well as modules that have been failed. A defer is granted, and therefore an attempt is not lost.
- A defer will normally be granted for failed modules in award years, allowing the student the opportunity to retake the examination/assessment at the next available opportunity. A defer is granted, and therefore an attempt is not lost.

Pass by Compensation

The QAF states, inter alia:

"Performance at the first attempt in modules in a given stage may be used to compensate in the same stage, provided no module in the stage has been failed outright. A pass earned in this way is referred to as a pass by compensation and is credit bearing."

- Refer to the section on 'Impaired Performance' for details on the additional defer facility available to award year students.

Exceptional Circumstances

The QAF states:

"The Progression and Awards Board (PAB) has discretion to consider student performance in the context of exceptional circumstance on a case-by-case basis. The determination of what constitutes exceptional circumstance is a matter for the PAB."

GMIT accepts that the COVID-19 pandemic is an exceptional circumstance.

Examination Deferral

The QAF states:

"A student encountering a problem during the academic year, or during an examination session, preventing them from taking an examination may apply for an examination deferral. The student should complete an Examination Deferral Form and submit it to the relevant Head of Department, together with any relevant supporting documentation."

- This statement facilitates students making a defer application at any point during the academic year, i.e. before, during or after an examination/assessment period.
- All defer requests will be automatically approved and will not require further analysis by the HoD.
- Refer to the section on 'Impaired Performance' for details on the additional defer facility available to award year students.

Failed Elements

The QAF states:

"(i) In relation to 'failed elements' or 'must-pass' components: If a student fails a 'must-pass' component of a module, then the module is deemed to be failed.
(ii) An attempt is lost, meaning the candidate is not eligible to be considered for compensation."

- Refer to the section on 'Impaired Performance' for details on the additional defer facility available to award year students.

Repeat Exam Only Fees

- The Institute will waive fees for repeat exam only re-sits during the period of this crisis.

Hold on Results

All financial holds on student access to systems were released at the start of this crisis. Students will be given access to their results irrespective of their financial standing. This will continue for the duration of the crisis. Deficits must be cleared prior to a student being considered for Graduation. Students are required to engage with the Fees Office to address any financial deficits. Failure to do so may result in access to systems being removed.