IADT

Learning, Teaching and Assessment Strategy 2014 – 2019

Teaching and Learning Committee

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Purpose	The Learning Teaching and Assessment Strategy provides a foundation and framework for learning in IADT.
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Who needs to know about this document	Registrar, Heads of School, Heads of Department, Programme Co-ordinators, all staff, all students
Revision History	Revision of IADT Learning Teaching and Assessment Strategy 2010 – 2012/Version 2
Policy Author	Registrar
Policy Owner	Registrar/Teaching and Learning Committee

Learning, Teaching and Assessment Strategy

Overview

This is the Learning, Teaching and Assessment Strategy 2014-2019. It supports and enhances learning, teaching and assessment across the Institute. It considers IADT's mission and places it in the context of higher education. It embodies the values that are fundamental to IADT and critically reflects the three pillars of creativity, enterprise and technology. The strategy outlines the philosophy of learning, teaching and assessment at IADT. This is the third iteration of the strategy, the first Learning, Teaching and Assessment Strategy was developed and adopted in 2008 and revised in 2010. The strategy is supported by a glossary at the end of the document.

Context

Learning, teaching and assessment in IADT take place in the national and international context of higher education. It embodies principles of fairness, equity and natural justice. The learning, teaching and assessment strategy links to IADT's Strategic Plan. It embodies the principles stated in the IADT Learner Charter. IADT aims to be a research-informed higher education institution and research is required to enable the Institute's teaching programmes to be excellent and relevant.

The national context for higher education is that of the agenda for quality in teaching and learning, flexible provision, knowledge gain, enhancing social inclusion, raising skills levels and promoting economic regional and cultural development. The international context is that of mobility, international and Erasmus exchanges.

The legal obligations are those stated in the Qualifications and Quality Assurance (Education and Training) Act (2012) for programmes that meet the standards of the National Framework of Qualifications (2003) and have 'procedures which are fair and consistent for the assessment of . . . learners' (2012, p. 36). The emphases on programme learning outcomes, assessment and flexible modes of delivery for the learner have been reflected in the programmes through the Programmatic Reviews undertaken by each Faculty.

The Teaching and Learning Committee aims to enhance the quality of learning, teaching and assessment across the Institute by providing academic leadership for the continued development of excellence in academic practice. The strategy has informed and been

informed by both the Institute's mission-based performance compact with the HEA (IADT, 2014a) and the Institute's Strategic Plan 2014-2018 (IADT, 2014b).

Teaching and Learning Mission Statement

IADT is committed in principle and practice to the achievement of equity of access, increased participation and improved retention and progression rates for all our learners. The Institute aims to help students to reach their potential through the provision of a supportive, vibrant and challenging learning environment. All staff is involved in the construction of this learning environment. All students are valued equally during their learning journey with IADT. Accordingly the curriculum, teaching and learning and assessment at IADT are centred on the student. Policies are pursued in the area of learning and teaching which promote the increasingly international and culturally diverse nature of all studying at IADT.

Aim 1. *Developing knowledge, skills and competencies*

This is the 'what' we do.

- IADT develops programmes that link clearly to the National Framework of Qualifications http://www.nfq.ie/nfq/en/.
- The programme learning outcomes are practical and focused on enabling students to develop knowledge, skills and competencies in their discipline/practice.
- Programmes have clear programme assessment strategies i.e. assessment plans, that are communicated to students.
- Assessment is aligned to learning outcomes. A wide range of assessment methods reflects the variety of learning outcomes.
- Reasonable accommodation is part of our assessment approach.
- Programme boards and programme teams work together.
- Teaching, learning and assessment strategies are student focused.
- Cross-institute and interdisciplinary activities and study are encouraged and supported.
- Technology enhanced learning is used to facilitate student achievement of learning outcomes.
- Students are encouraged and supported to become independent learners and entrepreneurial in their approach.
- Learning how to learn is a key approach to student learning.

Aim 2. *Supporting student learning*

This is the 'how' we do it. This approach supports and enhances the *IADT Equal Access and Participation Policy.*

- Student engagement is critical to learning.
- Class size appropriate to the learning strategy e.g. class size varies to allow for active learning or combined lectures and seminars to explore cross-disciplinary areas.
- Learning focuses on the student experience and the practical application of learning.
- Collaborative learning and team work is part of student learning.
- Feedback on learning is provided as needed. Formative assessment is built into the programme assessment strategy: feedback is a vital part of the student learning experience.
- Assessment is fair, consistent and appropriate to the learning outcomes. Summative assessment is designed to assess the learning outcomes, add to the student experience and be within the European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System (ECTS) student workload guidelines. It is diverse, challenging and enables the student to become an independent learner.
- Ongoing development of the curriculum, teaching & learning, and assessment practices to reflect best practice is supported through staff development.
- Reaching out in new and innovative ways to learners from all backgrounds, identities and abilities.
- Equality and diversity is celebrated through the curriculum, teaching and learning and assessment
- Resources and accommodation for learning are appropriate to both student need and programme requirements and capable of reasonable accommodation.
- Student support for learning is multi-faceted.
- Employability is a focus of student learning and assessment.

Aim 3. *Preparing students for life after IADT*

This is the 'why' we do it.

- Students are prepared for work through evolving practical teaching, learning and assessment strategies, they are employable on graduation.
- Programmes aim to develop a sense of entrepreneurship and creativity in students.
- Students are enabled to develop the skills of independent learning and a sense of responsibility for their present and future learning.

- Students are given the opportunity to experience technology enhanced learning environments which encourage and promote self-study.
- Students are enabled to be active citizens working in the global economy and society.
- Programmes foster life-long learning and a professional attitude to practice.
- Programmes link to industry, society and community and professional bodies.

Learning, Teaching and Assessment at IADT

Learning, teaching and assessment at IADT is guided by the following principles and practices.

Programme Development – designing the curriculum

Curriculum development is based on the following principles

- Programme development is research-informed and research-based. It is based on collaboration, relevant industry feedback and review of practice.
- The principle of constructive alignment (Biggs, 2003) where learning outcomes are matched with appropriate learning and teaching strategies and assessed appropriately.
- Learning outcomes (at programme level) are related to the appropriate level on the National Framework of Qualifications and meet the required award standards.
- Student workload is within the ECTS guidelines.
- Programmes meet the demands of students, industry and society and fit with the Institute's mission as outlined in the strategic plan.
- Programmes may anticipate future demands of students, industry and society.
- Programmes are supported by discipline/practice expertise in staff and supporting organisations.
- Programmes have elements of practice e.g. work-based learning, community learning, projects as appropriate to the discipline/practice.
- Programme structure is modular.
- Programmes provide a level of choice for students in relation to learning and assessment. This could be through electives in the programme or through negotiated assessment, particularly projects.

Implementing the curriculum – learning, teaching, assessing and management of learning

Learning, teaching and assessment is

- Student-centred, enquiry-based, relevant to the curriculum and to the discipline/practice.
- Programme teams work to implement the curriculum and manage learning.

- Assessment is part of the learning experience and communicated through the programme assessment strategy. Formative assessment is provided appropriately to enable student learning. Summative assessment is fair, consistent and fit for purpose. It is criterion-referenced. There is an appropriate cycle for summative assessment from assignment/project issue to feedback and grades in a timely fashion. Student workload is within the ECTS guidelines.

- Assessment methods range from continuous assessment tasks through assignments and research projects to formal examinations as appropriate to the discipline and practice.

- Staff assessment practice is such that the principles of this document can be put in place through the module assessment strategies.

- External examiners play a vital part in the enhancement of the quality of the assessment process. External examiners are involved in assessment processes to ensure that standards maintain parity with best practice nationally and internationally.

Learning teaching and assessment is supported by all staff and in particular by:

- Ongoing staff development for quality teaching and learning. Staff development takes place at individual, programme, department, faculty, Institute and national level.

- There are IADT accredited academic professional programmes for teaching and learning.

- Staff development takes place through reading, attending conferences, courses, presenting papers, researching the discipline/practice and teaching and learning. Other scholarly activities enable staff to review and develop the knowledge and skills needed for teaching.

- Space for learning – a range of teaching and learning spaces to support student learning both individually and in groups.

- Library and ICT resources to enable access to learning materials and the means to work and develop ideas.

- Programme teams and boards through the development of the programmes and co-ordination of the teaching, learning and assessment.

- Supporting students appropriately.

Learning, teaching and assessment is maintained through various modes including:

- Flexible modes of teaching including seminars, lectures, workshops, tutorials and technology enhanced learning as well as service learning. Learning on campus is complemented by field trips off campus.

- Flexible modes of assessment including continuous assessment, project based work, collaborative work, exhibitions, examinations etc.
- Various methods of student feedback.
- Evaluation of teaching, learning and assessment.
- Programme Boards held three times a year enabling programme evaluation, curriculum development and student feedback.
- Institutional, Faculty and programme review.
- Teaching and Learning sub-committee of Academic Council.
- Writing and Research Support Service.

Evaluation of learning, teaching and assessment

Learning, teaching and assessment is reviewed in various ways including

- Individual confidential student feedback through the nationally agreed processes.
- Evaluation of learning, teaching and assessment strategies, and programme implementation by staff at module level and programme teams at programme level annually and during programmatic review.
- Programme Boards held each year enabling programme evaluation, curriculum development and student feedback.
- Institutional, Faculty and Departmental review on a regular five year cycle. These review the curriculum, teaching and learning, assessment, students' experience and the facilities and support for learning.

Conclusion

This is the revised Learning, Teaching and Assessment Strategy for 2014-2019.

Supporting documents

- IADT Learner Charter and Student Handbook (issued annually)
- IADT Equal Access and Participation Policy 2009
- IADT Quality Manual 2009
- IADT Complaints Procedure 2013
- IADT External Examiner Policy 2013
- IADT Marks and Standards 2010
- IADT Library Charter 2009

- IADT Assessment Appeals Policy and Procedures
- IADT Policy for the Granting of Reasonable Accommodations in Examinations to Students with Disabilities 2014
- IADT Plagiarism Policy 2009
- IADT Strategic Plan 2014-2018
- IADT Mission-based Performance Compact 2014

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Glossary

Term	Description
Assessment	Assessment is any process that aims to judge the extent of students' learning. It is usually based on the evidence of students' work. All assessment is capable of reasonable accommodation.
Community learning (also service learning)	Learning in communities outside of educational institutions. This is often voluntary work but recognised and assessed for accreditation.
Competencies	Appropriate knowledge and skills for a purpose
Constructive alignment	The alignment of teaching and learning activities and assessment tasks with the learning outcomes.
Enquiry-based learning	Approaches to learning driven by enquiry. The term covers projects and research, small scale investigations as well as problem-based learning PBL.
Employability	A set of achievements – skills, understandings and personal attributes – that makes graduates more likely to gain employment and be successful in their chosen occupations, which benefits themselves, the workforce, the community and the economy (Yorke, 2006, p. 8).
Entrepreneurship	A process which starts with opportunity recognition, involves the acquisition of the resources to exploit an opportunity in terms of technology, finance and people and results in a new or more valuable venture. The basic assumption is that the knowledge and skills required to engage in this process can be taught and that the teaching of these skills has sound educational merit. (ACE, 2010).
Feedback	Feedback is an integral part of the teaching and learning strategy and requires the allocation of time to this process throughout the year as required. Feedback by the team can take place at module, stage or programme level.
Formative assessment	Assessment designed to provide information (feedback) to students so that they can improve their work (Freeman and Lewis, 1998, pp. 314-317).
Knowledge	The facts, principles, truths of a subject, discipline or practice.
Learning	Developing knowledge, skills, or competence through study, teaching, or experience
Learning environment	The physical or virtual space and resources in which students learning. It includes classrooms, studios, laboratories and libraries as well as the Institute virtual learning environments.
Learning outcomes	A statement of student performance/learning at the end of a programme (and module) e.g. On successful completion of the programme graduates/students will be able to . . . . On successful completion of the module students will be able to:

Natural justice	The principle of natural justice guarantees the fairness of procedures. It applies to employers and employees and the strategy extends this to learners and teachers. http://www.nuigalway.ie/hr/documents/natural_justice.pdf
Programme assessment strategy	This is a document for teachers, learners and assessors that outlines the principles and practices of assessment in the programme (HETAC, 2009, p. 13). The programme assessment strategy is developed at programme validation and revised regularly.
Programme document	This is the document prepared for the programme. It is validated and then reviewed every five years during programmatic review. Each IADT programme has a programme document.
Programme handbook	This is a document prepared and issued to students annually. There is one for each programme.
Research-based	As part of their learning students do research through projects and coursework (Hunt, 2011, p.54).
Research-informed	What is taught/learned is informed by enquiry into the discipline/practice and the process of teaching and learning (Hunt, 2011, p.54).
Reasonable accommodation	This is a means of adapting assessment to enable students to demonstrate achievement of learning outcomes (HETAC, 2009, p. 54).
Skills	Proficiency or dexterity acquired through training or experience.
Student-centred learning	Student-centred learning is focused on the student's needs, abilities, interests, and learning styles with the teacher as a facilitator of learning.
Summative assessment	Assessment that counts towards or constitutes a final grade or qualification (Freeman and Lewis, 1998, pp. 314-317).
Teaching	Teaching is contact with students where something of value takes place. It can be considered the act, process of imparting knowledge, developing skills and enabling student learning.
Teaching, learning and assessment strategies	The strategies used in teaching, learning and assessment.
Universal design	Universal design refers to the design and composition of an environment so that it can be accessed, understood and used to the greatest extent possible by all people, regardless of their age, size or disability. (Disability Act, 2005)
Work-based learning	Work-based learning is learning at higher education level derived from undertaking paid or unpaid work. It includes learning for work (e.g. work placements), learning at work (e.g. company in-house training programmes) and learning through work, linked to formally accredited further or higher education programmes.