

INSTITUT D'ENSEIGNEMENT SUPÉRIEUR DE RUHENGARI

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Scientia et Lux

EXTERNAL MODERATION POLICY



Musanze, February 2025

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External Examination Policy Guidelines of Taught Programmes

1. Policy statement

This External Moderation Policy provides the mechanism through which to perform and manage INES external moderation function as delegated by the Quality Assurance. An effective external moderation system requires a clear understanding of the assessment processes, practices, principles, and responsibilities.

1.1. Philosophy of INES-Ruhengeri

Three core complementary pillars constitute the philosophical backbone of INES endeavour: to build signs of hope, to contribute to unity and reconciliation, to contribute to sustainable development. These pillars are anchored with Christian ethical values and constructive critical thinking.

1.2. Moto of INES-Ruhengeri

Scientia et lux / shifting from paper to people

1.3. Vision statement of INES-Ruhengeri

The vision of INES-Ruhengeri is reflected in the following statement:

*“Universality in every individual;
Knowing in order to better serve the world”*

INES-Ruhengeri as a private Institute for Higher Education orients its academic services towards applied sciences. In the vision of INES-Ruhengeri this means that all taught sciences are applied to the population daily problems, seeking to propose and answer to them.

1.4. Mission statement of INES-Ruhengeri

According to the statutes of INES-Ruhengeri the mission is expressed as follows:

“To contribute through interactive junction between civil society, private sector and public sector to the national and regional development, by providing specialized university education enhanced by research, in order to create competitive enterprises and well paid employment”.

INES' mission focuses on the relevancy and quality of education and the employability of graduates through collaboration with stakeholders in the whole spectrum of academic services. The mission statement refers to the above mentioned ambitions of INES and guides the Quality Management System (QMS)



1.5. INES-Ruhengeri' Core qualities

The following core qualities lie at the basis of the current performance of INES-Ruhengeri:

<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Quality• Scientific excellence• Professional consciousness• Flexibility• Innovation• Entrepreneurship• Team spirit• Determination and perseverance• Courage and responsibility	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Collaboration (among staff and with students)• Architectural concept• Accessibility (geographical and financial)• Receptivity to local need• Relation with the Catholic Church• Culture of Transparency• Integration of Social Sciences and Communication
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2. Objectives and purpose

2.1. Policy Objectives

The primary objectives of this Policy are to:

- Provide fair, consistent, and reliable moderation of assessments across all INES-Ruhengeri programmes in line with the requirements of the National Qualification Framework.
- Independently validate through external moderation accredited programmes development assessment and moderation practices and outcomes thereby promoting consistency and fairness.
- Facilitate readiness on the part of accredited programmes development for External Moderation by setting out minimum requirements.
- Identify deficiencies in assessment, internal moderation and outcomes and make recommendations for remedial action.
- Ensure credibility of outcomes and certification.

2.2. Policy Purpose

External moderation is designed to ensure the quality and consistency of assessment processes by having external experts review assessments to meet academic standards. Its goal is to guarantee fairness in grading and alignment with national or international benchmarks, enhancing the integrity of academic evaluations.

In addition, the purpose of this policy is to clarify the requirements for external moderation at INES-Ruhengeri and ensure adherence to key assessment principles, including validity, authenticity, currency, sufficiency, and reliability.



The policy also comprises the procedures for the review of new and existing academic programs by external experts.

3. The scope

The scope of external moderation policy focuses on ensuring that assessment tasks are of an appropriate standard and aligned with the learning objectives of each module, that the marking process is conducted rigorously, fairly, and without personal bias. In addition, the scope of this policy extends to the validation and review of curriculum design and programme development.

4. Definitions of key concepts

- **External moderation** is the process through which internal assessment is monitored to ensure that it meets required standards and through which adjustments to marks are made where required to compensate for any differences in standards that are encountered.
- **Moderation:** The process of scrutiny of examination papers to ensure error free standard question papers
- **Moderator:** The appointed Academic staff who does the scrutiny of examination papers. A moderator is an academic staff who is competent (academically, or experience wise, or both) in the field in which he/she is called upon to moderate. As a moderator, he/she is supposed to step in the shoes of the Examiners to be able to provide a balanced and unbiased point of view.

His/her primary concern is to check the accuracy of the Question Papers; and to ensure that the questions that have been set are suitable, appropriate and relevant for the level for which they are intended to be addressed.

- **First Examiner:** The person who does the marking of answer scripts for the first time. Most often this activity is done by the primary facilitator of the course.
- **Second examiner:** The person who does the marking of answer scripts for the second time. Most often this activity is done by the person who performed the role of Moderator.





5. Policy statement

This procedure details the processes of moderation in place at INES-Ruhengeri to assure the quality of the assessment process, to support the continuous improvement of assessment of modules in its modules and to review new and existing academic programs.

6. Procedures

External moderation must apply to a selected sample of exam papers that were used in a given period. The moderator must be presented with the complete examination paper, including all instructions and associated materials (including solutions and marking rubrics where applicable and assessment criteria), and the Module Outline. The external moderator must provide the detailed report after assessment with comments.

6.1. The appointment of external moderator

6.1.1. Criteria for the appointment of External Examiners

External examiner shall normally:

- Be competent in assessing students' knowledge and skills at higher educational level
- Possess relevant academic and/or professional qualifications and expertise above the level of the qualification being examined
- Possess appropriate levels of expertise and experience in relation to the programme/courses to be examined
- Have sufficient standing, credibility and breadth of experience within the discipline to be able to command authority in the field and the respect of colleagues
- Be independent and impartial in judgement (must not be any way connected to the course to be examined or research/dissertation)
- Be knowledgeable about the standards expected of students at the level of study
- Have sufficient recent examining experience, or have comparable related experience, to indicate competence in assessing students in the specialist area (s) they will examine
- Not have any conflict of interest with the Institution arising from personal or family relationships or from other direct ties to members of staff or students
- Not have been a member of staff or a student of the institution in the past five years



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- Not concurrently act as consultants to a course team on course design or be a member of a panel established to review the course they examine, in order to protect their independence

External examiners may be appointed from outside the field of tertiary education particularly from vocational or professional programmes.

6.1.2. Undertaking of the Institution

In normal circumstances the University will ensure that:

- All assessment products at both undergraduate and graduate are sent to the External Examiner except in exceptional cases;
- There are no existing links between the propose external examiner and the programme/subject area (conflict of interest)
- Examiners are properly briefed on their role, the course, and the Department's requirements;
- A new external examiner shall not normally be from the same institution as the out-going examiners.

6.1.3. Conditions for the appointment of External Examiners

- i. All appointments of external examiners shall be approved by the Academic senate in accordance with arrangements which the Academic senate make from time to time.
- ii. The appointments of external examiners shall be made within the limits imposed by the budget.
- iii. Nominees for external examiners posts should normally be at senior lecturer level and above (or at an appropriate level of seniority in relevant academic area)
- iv. For consideration by Faculty Council, the **Head of Department must complete an external examiner nomination form (Annex A)**, available in INES-Ruhengeri Website. The form gives guidance on the factors to consider when making the nomination. The form should be signed by the Head of Department and then forwarded to the Faculty Office for consideration by Faculty Council. When the Faculty Council has approved the appointment, the Dean or Vice



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Dean of Faculty must counter-sign the Nomination Form and forward it to the Directorate of Academic Quality.

- v. All nominations for external examiner posts must be accompanied by the nominee's curriculum vitae which will be posted on the external examiners data base.
- vi. The Dean should ensure that a sufficient number of external examiners are appointed to ensure that adequate expertise is made available to cover all the major areas of the programme(s) being examined.
- vii. The Dean should ensure an appropriate match between the numbers of external examiners and the quantity of material being examined.
- viii. External examiners shall normally be appointed for examining level 8 and above.
- ix. An external examiner shall normally be appointed for all degree awards.
- x. At least one external examiner is appointed for each Degree programme, subject or group of subjects forming part of a programme.
- xi. An external examiner shall only be appointed if he/she is not concurrently engaged as external examiner in more than three institutions.
- xii. An external examiner will normally be an academic from another Rwandan HEI if such institutions have staff with the required expertise. If not, an external examiner will be appointed from an accredited and recognized HEI where possible.
- xiii. Reciprocal arrangements for external examiners are not allowed. Former members of staff and students shall not be invited to become external examiners before a lapse of at least three years or in the case of former members of staff, sufficient time for students taught by that member to have passed through the system, whichever is longer.
- xiv. The Directorate of Academic Quality will ensure the lists are up to date through regular contact with Faculties.
- xv. The normal period of appointment of external examiners for undergraduate and postgraduate taught programmes is three years. This may be exceptionally extended to four years on recommendation from the Faculty Council. An



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external examiner will not normally be re-appointed within three years following completion of his/her three, (or four years) contract.

xvi. When an external examiner is appointed, he/she shall be provided with:

- A letter of appointment
- The name of a contact person/normally the Head of Department
- A copy of external moderation policy
- A copy of INES-Ruhengeri assessment policy
- Information about the Institute's modulation guidelines
- Details of the programme(s) and modules on which the students are being assessed (including content, structure, for instance through the student handbook)
- The relevant materials for the selected unit (include the unit outline, Academic regulations).
- A selected sample of exam papers and the proposed marking scheme(s)

6.1.4. Confidentiality and Data Protection

- i. All personal data supplied by the external examiner for the purpose of their appointment and subsequently their employment as an external examiner will be held securely and for no longer than necessary
- ii. INES-Ruhengeri will use this data for communication about payment of fees and expenses and for any other necessary communications. This data may be shared, if necessary, with other Departments of INES-Ruhengeri. INES-Ruhengeri will not disclose external examiners' contact details or any other personal details to third parties (i.e. outside INES-Ruhengeri) without the consent of external examiners.

6.1.5. Role/duties of the External Examiner in assessing student work

- i. With regard to the programme of study, external examiners shall ensure that academic standards are maintained, that awards in similar subjects are comparable to nationally defined standards; that the assessment system is fair and fairly operated.
- ii. The external examiner will consider, comment on fairly, and approve all examination papers, in the context of the relevant programme specifications.



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- iii. The external examiner shall submit moderated examination papers and reports within stipulated deadlines.
- iv. The external examiner has the right to see all degree examination scripts and any other work that contributes to the degree results
- v. The external examiners are members of examination boards, they are expected to provide advice, guidance and external perspective, but shall not have the right to veto Board decisions.
- vi. The external examiner should act as a moderator of the decisions of internal examiners. Student's work will be marked in the first instance by internal examiners and some or all of the work should be made available to the external examiner for moderation. The external examiner should normally be asked to review the following:
 - Marginally ail marks
 - First class marks and/or Masters distinctions
 - Very low marks
 - A sample of work from both lower and upper second class divisions
 - Borderline marks and whether boundaries between classifications are set appropriately
- vii. The external examiner may also act as an adjudicator where there are disagreements between the internal examiners, although internal examiners should try to agree on marks where possible and only send irreconcilable conflicts to the external examiner.
- viii. Exceptionally, the external examiner may act as the second marker, where there is insufficient internal expertise for full internal moderation and where this has been agreed with the external examiner.
- ix. The external examiner may comment and advise on matters of course curriculum, balance and structure, in so far as these are revealed by the assessment process.
- x. If an external examiner considers that a candidate has engaged in an improper assessment practice, such as plagiarism or another form of cheating as per academic regulations, the examiner should, as soon as possible, report such cases to the Chair of the appropriate Board of examiners.



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6.1.6. Council of Examiners

- i. Where possible an external examiner may be required to be present at the meetings of the Faculty council of Examiners for the programme to which he or she has been appointed as external examiner.
- ii. External examiners shall be required to attend award council meetings wherever necessary.
- iii. In arriving at the degree classifications given to final year students, the view of the external examiner or examiners should be taken into consideration.
- iv. The Faculty should ensure that the external examiners are informed about the dates of the council of Examinations' meetings and other occasions on which they may be required to be present.

6.1.7. Reporting

- i. The external examiner's report should be completed on the **report form supplied with the appointment letter and attached as Annex B**. An electronic version of the report form can be found at INES-Ruhengeri website. Whereas electronic submission of reports is welcome, it will only be treated as an advanced copy. The report should be submitted in paper format to ensure that a signature is attached.
- ii. External examiners' reports should be addressed to the Vice Chancellor for onward transmission to the Deputy Vice Chancellor Academic and Research, and to the Directorate of Quality Assurance within one week of the last visit. The Directorate of Quality Assurance will log receipt of all reports and disseminate them to departments. If a report is not received within this period, then, the Vice Chancellor will write to the external examiner requesting receipt of the report.
- iii. When the external examiner is submitting a report for the final year of his/her period of appointment it is the opportunity for the external examiner to write an overview of his/her experience at the INES-Ruhengeri. It should, therefore, include comments on the Institute's academic standards in the relevant subject and in particular any significant changes in standards over the three or four year period.
- iv. Should external examiners encounter a particular problem during their term of office which they are unable to resolve with the appropriate academic staff and



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believe should be drawn to the attention of the Vice Chancellor, they may submit a special report to him/her.

- v. If the Vice Chancellor does not receive a report within a week of the reminder, a termination letter of request for the report shall be sent to the external examiner.
- vi. If the Vice Chancellor does not receive a report within a week of the second reminder, a termination letter of the appointment shall be sent to the external examiner.

6.1.8. Discontinuation of appointment

- i. Under certain circumstances, the appointment of an external examiner may be rescinded by the institute or the individual external examiner before the completion of his/her period of contract.
- ii. Where an external examiner resigns prior to the expiry of the appointed term, the concerned Department is responsible for obtaining written confirmation of the resignation, advising the Directorate of Quality Assurance and, where possible, nominating a replacement.
- iii. In the event of unsatisfactory performance by the external examiner, the Institute reserves the right to terminate contract at any time during the period of contract. The decision to discontinue shall be based on a statement detailing the proposed grounds for discontinuation and submitted to the Vice Chancellor by the Director of Quality Assurance though the Deputy Vice Chancellor Academic and Research for the final decision and action. The Faculty and the department shall be informed of the decision.

6.1.9. Fees and expenses

- i. External examiners shall be paid a fee and given a refund of their expenses in accordance with criteria, terms and conditions set in the contract and be signed before and approved by the institute.
- ii. External examiners shall be paid only on receipt of the report.

6.1.10 Institute procedure for the receipt of external examiners 'reports

- i. The Directorate of Quality Assurance will be responsible for sharing reports to: the Head(s) of Department, the programme leader(s) and the Dean(s) for the information and action.



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- ii. The reports received by the Head of Department will be accompanied by a pro forma (**annex C**) within which the Head of Department or nominee will note any issues, the actions required and any actions taken. The department responses to external examiner's form should be returned to the Directorate of Academic Quality, following discussion within the department.
- iii. When an external examiner has made suggestions that require a response, department should correspond with the external examiner to check that s/he is satisfied with that response.
- iv. The Directorate of Quality Assurance will submit the reports and correspondence to the Deputy Vice Chancellor for Academics and Research as chair of the Institute Academic Quality Committee with a note of any issue arising.
- v. The reports and all correspondences with the external examiners will be logged by the Directorate of Quality Assurance. External examiner's reports and departmental responses should be appended to annual Programme Review reports prepared by departments and sent to their Faculty Academic Quality Committee (FAQC) chair. The Directorate of Quality Assurance will provide FAQCs with a list of expected and received reports for each year.
- vi. If the Directorate of Quality Assurance does not receive the departmental response as part of the annual Programme Review papers, it notifies the relevant FAQC chair(s) so that the matter is included in the normal annual FAQC Procedures with reporting lines to the Dean of the Faculty.
- vii. The Directorate of Quality Assurance will prepare an annual report highlighting themes arising from the Institute's external examiner reports. This report will be received and discussed at a plenary meeting of the FAQAC Chairs and subsequently by the Institute Academic Quality Committee chaired by the Deputy Vice Chancellor for Academics and Research, who will address any Institute wide issues.

7. Policy Review

This policy shall be reviewed every two years or as and when necessary.

8. Relationship between existing policies

The External Moderation Policy is developed in line with the following.

- Quality Assurance Manual of INES-Ruhengeri



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- National qualification framework and Law
- INES-Ruhengeri General Academic Regulations
- Assessment Policy

Done at INES-Ruhengeri, on 20th February 2025



Dr. MAZARATI Jean Baptiste

Chairperson of INES-Ruhengeri Governing Body