

1 Governance & Management

Version	Description of Amendments	Approval Date	Implementation Date
1.0	Original Draft copy of QA Guidelines	18/05/2018	18/05/2018
2.0	Re-engagement process		
2.0	Organisation chart updated	10/4/23	25/4/23
2.0	Quality Assurance structure chart updated	10/4/23	10/4/23
2.1	Addition of table to track changes made to individual policies and procedures. `	01/05/2023	01/06/2023
2.2	1.3 SMG - Added item 7 for Blended Learning	16/10/2023	3/11/2023
	1.5 Academic Council. TOR Added item 8	16/10/2023	3/11/2023
	1.14 Dean of AA Duties Added blended learning points	16/10/2023	3/11/2023

Policy Title: **Governance & Management of Quality**

Date Approved 17/12/2018

Effective From 02/01/2020

Summary: This policy details the quality assurance structure of the College. This structure has been devised to ensure transparency and clarity in the academic management, administration and operations of the College, and to allow for checks-and-balances within this system.

Related Policies

Revision History & Commencement Date & Date of Next Review Version 1.1– 2020

Commencement Date (Version 1): 02/01/2020

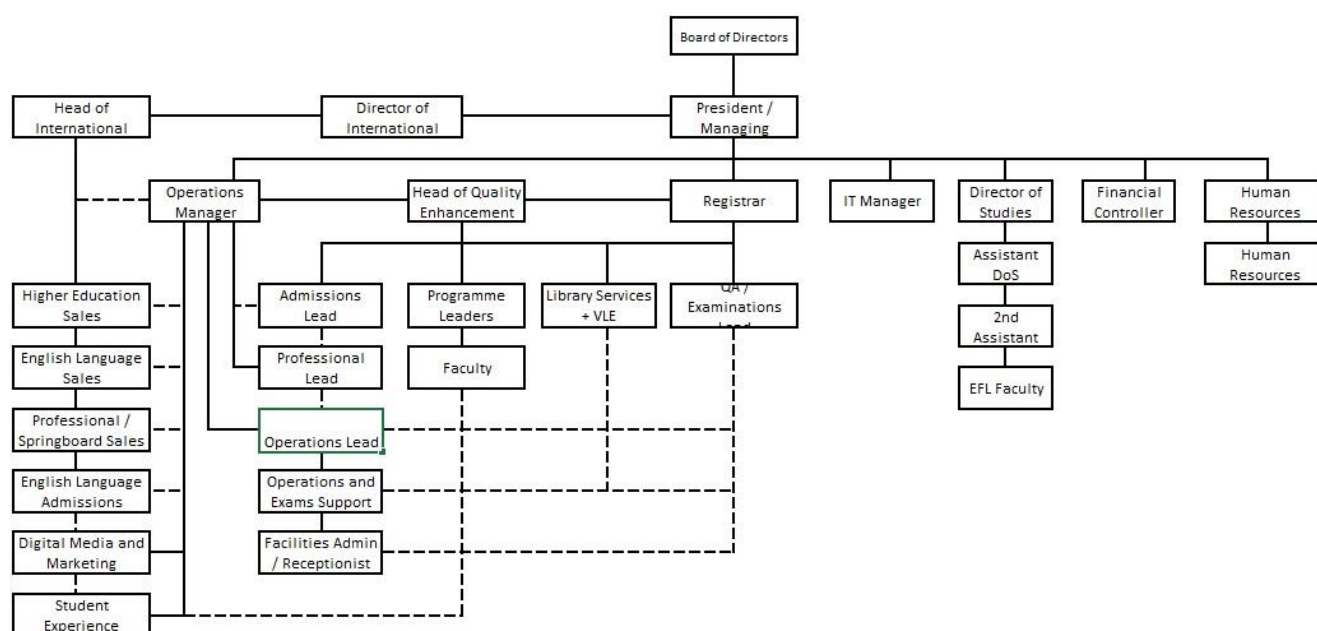
Date of Next Review: Following Independent Assessment from Re-engagement process

Purpose The purpose of this policy is to outline the quality assurance structure of the College. This structure has sought to ensure the academic independence and authority of the academic functioning of the College, and to protect the integrity of processes and standards. This structure of committees and groups is also embedded throughout the other quality assurance policy areas.

Scope This policy covers all quality assurance related areas of the College.

Policy Statement

The College must ensure the independence and authority of its academic provision and ensure the management, administration and operations of this provision is not unduly influenced by other considerations. Therefore, the intention with this policy is to articulate the quality assurance structure of the College. This structure is then embedded in the other policies and procedures outlined in the other quality assurance sections.



1.1 College Mission & Values

Dorset College promotes excellence through life-long learning by providing a high quality, comprehensive range of learning opportunities that will equip learners with skills which are internationally recognised, relevant to the workplace, and cognisant of the future needs of business and society.

Central to our educational ethos is our desire to assist learners in developing positive attitudes to personal study, high standards and high expectations in fulfilling their potential in their careers and personal development. Our learner-focused approach recognises the learners' needs and interests and seeks to enhance their inherent skills and potential and to encourage self-reliance and autonomy in life-long learning.

This revised Quality Assurance Manual (QAM) ensures that Dorset College continues to provide quality assured higher, further and English language education as well as professional non-accredited courses. Furthermore, this revised QAM ensures Dorset College is in line with their competitors and within the overall context of the Irish Government's strategy on internationalisation as part of our learner centric approach to the delivery of education.

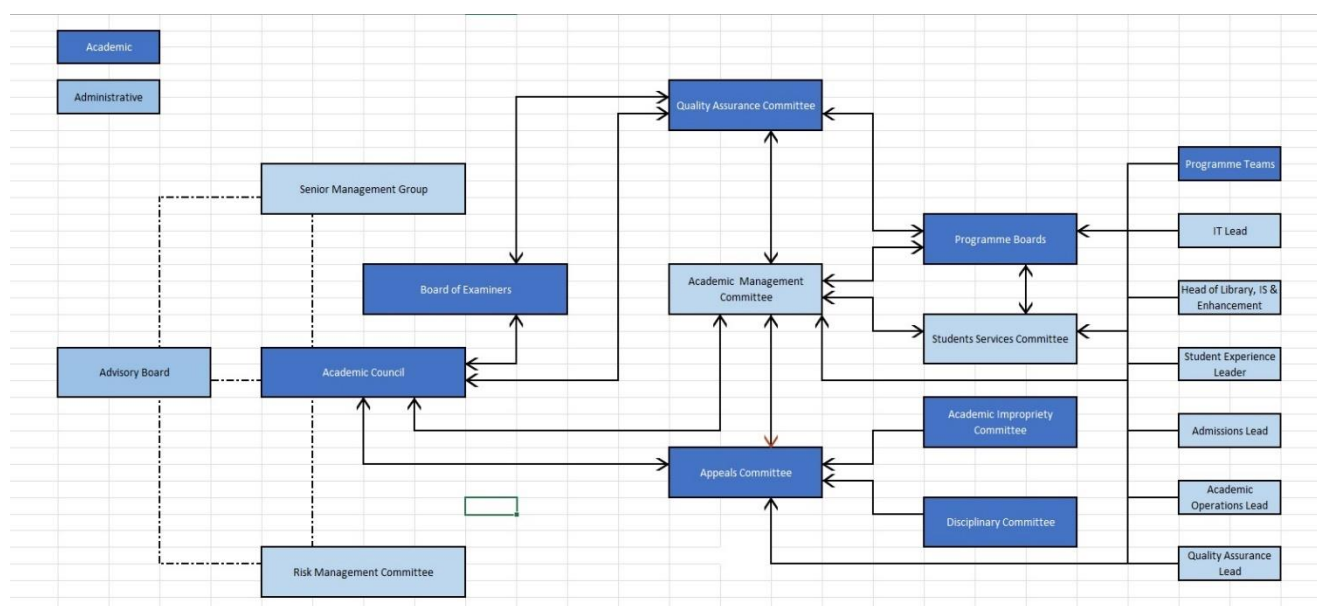
Effective and efficient quality assurance procedures are at the core of what Dorset College offers to their learners and the QAM is in line with consistent and superior delivery of education and training and related academic support services.

The College's Mission Statement attempts to capture the essence and ethos of the Institution. It states that Dorset College is committed to:

- Maintaining the highest standards of quality, internationally recognised leading-edge programmes in the areas of Montessori Education, Childcare, Business, ICT, Accounting and Finance, Administration and English Language Studies.
- Identifying the needs of all our stakeholders and providing accessible third-level opportunities in full-time and part-time modes to cater for the needs of society, business, school leavers, graduates, international learners and mature learners.
- Servicing learners' educational and personal development needs in a structured and stimulating environment and providing a learning environment conducive to the promotion, support and continuance of learning opportunities for all learners.
- Striving to put care for learners, teamwork, and excellence at the core of all our activities.
- Internationalisation of all our educational and training activities.
- Organising an extensive range of tailored education and training to meet the specific requirements of society, the economy and the unemployed.
- Nurturing the individuality of all our learners through our pedagogical methods and using such induction and support processes as will maximise self-concept, confidence, learning and career potential.

1.2 Quality Assurance Structure

The College's QA structure has been designed to provide a clear, robust and transparent structure to ensure the College functions to the highest educational standards and is well managed. This structure has been designed with a commitment to quality education provision to all learners. Central to this is efforts from the College to ensure a robust structure for decision-making and, importantly, a separation of responsibilities between those who make decisions and those who approve them. This QA structure ensures rigour, transparency and avoids conflict of interest(s).



1.3 Senior Management Group

The Senior Management Group (SMG) has overall responsibility for the commercial viability of the College.

Membership	<p>The membership of the SMG comprises of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Managing Director (Chair) • Academic Registrar (Secretary) • Financial Manager • Director of Sales & Marketing
Frequency of Meetings	The SMG meets once per quarter.
Quorum	<p>The Quorum shall consist of at least two members of the SMG and if a matter is related to or impacts an academic matter the quorum shall be as follows:</p> <p>At least one of the following persons: Managing Director;</p> <p>And</p> <p>Dean of Academic Affairs, Director of Sales & Marketing, Financial Manager</p>
Terms of Reference	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Assess the financial viability of the College's programmes. This is done through review and discussion of income and expenditure data on programmes/cost based analysis prepared by the College's Financial Manager. 2. Develop and implement the strategic direction and goals of the College. 3. Review the current level of staffing of the College and consider what is the appropriate level of staffing for the College's strategic interests. 4. Review the College's premises, facilities and resources and assess if they are fit-for-purpose. This review may be informed by recommendations from other groups/committees within the College's Quality Assurance structure. 5. Review data and reports pertinent to the operations of the College and assess where improvements can be made in light of this. 6. Approve and/or prioritise capital investment decisions of the College. 7. Support and facilitate the implementation of Blended Learning Policy, building shared platforms and technology infrastructure.

1.4 Advisory Board

The College Advisory Board is a non-executive external group comprising:

Membership	<p>The membership of the SMG comprises of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Senior Management Group member (Chair) • Academic Registrar (Secretary) • Industry Expert(s) • Academic Leader in the relevant field of learning (external) • Senior Academic or Programme Leader in the relevant field of learning (internal) • Dorset College Alumni (at least one)
Frequency of Meetings	Twice per year
Quorum	The Quorum shall consist of at least two members of the Advisory Board with at least one external member present (3 in total), with the external member providing a written report which the Chair will read into the minutes should he/she not be in a position to attend in person.
Terms of Reference	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Helps inform and shape the strategic development of the college and approves the Strategic Plan for the College. 2. Contributes to the improvement of the student experience. 3. Strategically contributes to the development of industry relevant, high standard academic programmes and recommends programmes prior to submission for validation to QQI or another recognised body. 4. Advises and assists the college in building and sustaining relationships between the college, its graduates and the wider community. 5. Contributes to the enhancement of public confidence in Dorset College.

1.5 Academic Council

Academic Council has overall responsibility for quality assurance of and in academic provision and is the final arbiter of all quality assurance decisions for Dorset College. All quality committees, and sub-committees report to the Academic Council namely; the Quality Assurance Committee, the academic Management Group, Appeals Committee.

Membership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Academic Registrar (Chair) • Quality Assurance Lead (Secretary) • IT Lead • Director of Studies (English language education) • Admissions Lead • Operations Manager • Programme Leaders • Two academic faculty members (Further Education and Higher Education) • Student Experience Leader • 1 current learner representative
Frequency of Meetings	The Academic Council meets twice per annum and additionally when and as required.
Quorum	The Quorum shall consist of at least three members of the Academic Council and at least one learner representative (3 persons in total).
Terms of Reference	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Establish, maintain, develop and monitor the strategy and effectiveness of quality assurance and standards of academic provision in the College within the overall context of the Academic Strategy of Dorset College acting as the final arbiter of all quality related decisions. 2. Approve the development of new academic programmes in the College. This approval will be cognisant of potential learner numbers and the capability of the College to accommodate such a programme within its facilities and available resources. 3. Review and approve decision-making that has been taken by other College groups, and committees and subcommittees. 4. Review the operations of other groups and committees in the College. 5. Assign responsibility for quality assurance tasks, such as an owner for a new programme development, programme review and all accreditation applications.

6. Consider conditions and recommendations from quality assurance reviews and action and/or prioritise work to be implemented based on these recommendations.
7. Approve any monitor revisions and updates to the College's quality assurance policies and procedures including the overall Quality Assurance Manual.
8. Determine how Blended Learning fits within the stated goals and priorities of the college.

1.6 Risk Management Committee

The Risk Management Committee (RMC) has overall responsibility to identify and mitigate, in as much as is possible, risks within the College and to ensure that the Risk Register is updated and accurate.

Membership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dean of Academic Affairs (Chair) • Financial Manager (Secretary) • Managing Director • Director of Sales & Marketing
Frequency of Meetings	The RMC meets twice per annum.
Quorum	The Quorum shall consist of at least two members of the RMC.
Terms of Reference	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Identify areas of risk or potential risk for the College. 2. Classify those areas of risk into either high/medium/low risk. 3. Propose strategies that could be adopted to avoid or mitigate identified risk areas. 4. Develop and maintain a risk register. 5. Review the financial performance of the College's programmes to mitigate/avoid financial risk. 6. Update the Academic Council and the Senior Management Group as to risk clusters when requested.

1.7 Academic Management Committee

The Academic Management Committee (AMC) is the decision-making body for academic operational issues. The AMC facilitates greater communication flow within the College's various departments and ensures that operational issues are resolved in a effective and efficient manner. The remit of the AMC is broader than solely academic issues and also incorporates pastoral, facilities, admissions and HR issues. It also allows for updates of various College activities and ensures they are communicated appropriately.

Membership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Academic Operations Lead (Chair) • Quality Assurance Lead (Secretary) • Operations Lead • Admissions Lead • IT Lead • Head of Library, Information Systems and Enhancement • Financial Manager • Director of Studies (English Language/EFL) • Academic(s)- at least one from Further and Higher Education respectively • Student Experience Leader
Frequency of Meetings	The AMC meets once per month but can meet more frequently should it be required.
Quorum	The Quorum shall consist of at least three members of the AMC.
Terms of Reference	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Report and resolve operational (academic and non-academic but which have an impact on the academic for example capacity planning) issues in a timely and efficient manner. 2. Consider pastoral issues of learners and agree support mechanisms where necessary. 3. Confirm the order of priority for planned operational activity within the College. 4. Approve resources for the operational activities of the College's programmes. 5. Make the relevant operational decisions in support of the College's academic and strategic priorities. 7. Set deadlines for work tasks to be complete and to monitor their progress. 8. Assess learner participation through monitoring and review of attendance reports. 6. Communicate pertinent operational developments to the College's staff and reports to the Senior Management Group (operational issues) and the Academic Council (academic issues).

1.8 Quality Assurance Committee

The Quality Assurance Committee (QAC) provides oversight, review and sign-off for the College's quality assurance policies and procedures.

Membership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quality Assurance Lead (Chair) • Academic Operations Lead (Secretary) • Programme Leader (s)(from each of the following sectors: Further Education, Higher Education and English Language (EFL) to ensure the alignment of policies/procedures with and within programmes) • A staff member/member of faculty that has significant operational duties in a specific policy area (rotating member dependent on specific policy) • Student Experience Leader • 1 current learner
Frequency of Meetings	The QAC shall meet twice per annum or additionally when required for example during a period of programme review and/or revalidation.
Quorum	The Quorum shall consist of at least three members of the QAC and shall consist of one academic, one operational member of staff and one learner.
Terms of Reference	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Oversee of the development of quality assurance policies and procedures across the Quality Assurance Structure. 2. Support the College's goal of enhancing and continually improving its quality assurance structures across the Quality Assurance Structure. 3. Review draft policies and procedures in line with best practice. 4. Agree on the appointment of external advisors, should they be needed for specific policy areas. 5. Sign-off on finalised quality assurance policies and procedures with a reporting function to the Academic Council. 6. Monitor the implementation of established quality assurance policies and procedures across the Quality Assurance Structure. 7. Report bi-annually to the Academic Council.

1.9 Programme Board

A Programme Board (which could also be referred to as a formal and documented Programme Team Meeting) is central to the organisation and management of an academic programme. A Programme Board is a decision-making body for academic and operational issues (should the latter have an affect on academic issues) of a programme. It also reviews how the programme has been performing and operating and plans the operations of a programme in the future.

Membership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Programme Leader (Chair) • Academic Operations Lead (Secretary) • Quality Assurance Lead • Lecturing Faculty (at least one member of faculty from a relevant field of learning • i.e. Further Education and/or Higher Education as appropriate) • 2 current learner (Further and Higher Education and will comprise of the Head Class Representative from each sector as elected by their peer group i.e. the full body of class reps throughout the College)
Frequency of Meetings	A Programme Board meets four times per year, once prior to the commencement of the academic year, once per semester and once at the end of the academic year (circa 4 times per year and additionally if and when required)
Quorum	The Quorum shall consist of at least two members of the Programme Board and one current learner
Terms of Reference	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Make programme related decisions based on supporting evidence derived by the College. An example of such supporting evidence would be quantitative data related to learner performance or attendance and/or completion rates, certification rates and satisfaction rates (faculty, learners etc.) with the programme content etc. 2. Identify, and seek to address opportunities and challenges that are deemed to have been critical in the programme's delivery and to ensure full visibility which will require liaising with the various college boards including the Academic Management Committee, Quality Assurance Committee etc. 3. Critique the delivery, relevance, and effectiveness of the programme looking at stakeholder feedback. 4. Suggest any pertinent changes that should be made to the programme. This could include, but is not limited to: programme schedule, assessment strategy, teaching and learning approaches.

5. Demonstrate how recommendations raised by periodic reviews of the programme, such as that from an external examiner or External Authenticator in Further Education, have been addressed.
6. Determine how issues raised by learners' through either formal or informal feedback have been addressed, or discuss why they should or should not be addressed.
7. Report on the actions that were undertaken as a result of previous Programme Board meetings.
8. Provide recommendations to be actioned, where appropriate, for the future operations of the programme by reviewing; numbers per programme, learner profiles, completion rates, staff development etc.
9. Report to and action relevant items that arise from the Academic Management Committee, the Board of Examiners meeting or from the Academic Council for example.
10. Review the assessment performance of learners (through a grade analysis) and reflect on how it compares with relevant benchmarks. Use this information to inform teaching, learning and assessment strategy.

1.10 Academic Impropriety Committee

The Academic Impropriety Committee coordinates, investigates and is the decision-making body for academic impropriety in assessment and examinations.

Membership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Programme Leader/Senior Academic (Chair) • Academic Operations Lead (Secretary) • Head of Library, Information Systems and Enhancement • Academic (relevant to the field of learning but unconnected to the assessment or allegation of academic impropriety) • Student Experience Leader
Frequency of Meetings	The Academic Impropriety committee meets at least twice per academic semester, typically prior to an examination board, with full membership present. This board may also sit as required throughout the academic year.
Quorum	The Quorum shall consist of at least two members of the AI Committee with at least one academic present.
Terms of Reference	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Consider allegations of indiscipline and/or indiscipline. 2. Consider and assess all evidence put forward. 3. Decide on the appropriate outcome based on the evidence put forward. 4. Ensure any penalty is proportionate to the level of indiscipline. 5. Ensure the learner is aware of their right of appeal to the Appeals Committee within 5 working days of the decision of the Disciplinary Committee.

1.11 Student Services Committee

The Student Services Committee coordinates and is the decision-making body for the support services that the College provides its learners. This committee will also facilitate interaction between College staff and learners on how the College's learner support provision could be improved and further developed and is driven by a commitment to the student experience.

Membership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Head of Library, Information Systems and Enhancement (Chair) • Student Experience Leader (Secretary) • Academic Operations Lead • Quality Assurance Lead • Programme Leader(s) • 2-4 learners (across all relevant fields of learning)
Frequency of Meetings	The Student Services committee meets at least once per academic semester
Quorum	The Quorum shall consist of at least two members of the Student Services Committee with at least one learner present.
Terms of Reference	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Consider feedback from learners on the learner supports offered by the College. 2. Coordinate the collection and collation of surveys of the learner body. 3. Assess the effectiveness and usage of the learner supports offered by the College 4. Coordinate training activities for class representatives. 5. Ensure that learners are fully informed of the support services offered to them by the College. 6. Liaise various committees within the college such as the Quality Assurance Committee. 7. Report to the Academic Management Committee.

1.12 Board of Examiners

A Board of Examiners is an approval body of the assessment results of learners on academic programmes. It acts as the oversight body of individual assessor's assessment grading decisions.

Membership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Programme Leader(s) (Chair) • Quality Assurance Lead (Secretary) • Examinations Officer • Academic Operations Lead • Internal Examiners (faculty) • External Examiner(s)
Frequency of Meetings	An Examination Board meets at least once per semester
Quorum	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Programme Leader or nominee who shall act as Chair in place of the PL when required. • Examinations Officer or Academic Operations Lead (either individual can act as Secretary in place of the QA Lead (if and when required). • Two internal examiners per programme. • External Examiner.
Terms of Reference	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Approve the provisional results of each individual module. 2. Approve the award of each learner, where appropriate. 3. Approve whether each learner has progressed or not, where appropriate. 4. Agree on borderline results where they may affect if a learner passes or fails, or if it affects a learner's overall award classification. 5. Approve decisions made regarding mitigating circumstances and academic impropriety.
Procedure for Chair's Action	Where issues arise between meeting of a Board of Examiners, the Chair is empowered to make decisions within the Terms of Reference of the Board of Examiners (see above), and after gaining the approval of the External Examiner(s). Such decisions will be reported to the next meeting of a Board of Examiners.

Re-check, Review and Appeal

Once official results are released a learner can re-check, review or appeal their marks.

Appeals Committee

The Appeals Committee is a review body that decides the following:

1. Reviews and appeals that learners may wish to make with regards a component of their original assessment prior to marks being put forward to the Board of Examiners. Once an application for an appeal is received the Appeals Committee will appoint an independent assessor (Review) to provide them with a report; and
2. Appeals from a decision from the Disciplinary Committee or Academic Impropriety Committee.

The Appeals Committee will ordinarily meet after the issuance of provisional results for a particular programme or level thereto. The Appeals Committee looks at appeals from a re-check or review of a component of their assessment (an internal process please see Section 6.10 of this QAM) or pursuant to an appeal from the Disciplinary or Academic Impropriety Committee.

Membership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quality Assurance Lead (Chair) • Senior Academic/Programme Leader (not involved in original decision) • Student Experience Leader
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Frequency of Meetings

Quorum	The full membership is required to constitute the Appeals Committee. Should a member be unavailable they shall advise the Dean of Academic Affairs of their nominee and rationale for such a nominee for Dean's approval.
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Terms of Reference	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Consider the recommendation put forth by the independent assessor pursuant to a recheck or review (which is a procedural process section 6.10 of this QAM). 2. Agree a formal response to all learners' appeals. 3. Ensure learners are notified of the outcome of their review or appeal.
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1.13 Dean of Academic Affairs

The Dean of Academic Affairs provides academic and administrative leadership to Dorset College, and has overall responsibility for the management of the programmes and related facilities and supports within Dorset College. This entails the management of a programme's academic staff, as well ensuring that a programme is delivered to the standard expected of the College.

Duties

- Liaise with accreditation bodies.
- Lead Programme validation and revalidation on behalf of the College.
- Ensure the academic objectives of the college are achieved.
- Oversee the day-to-day operations of programmes under their remit including the scheduling of programmes through the College's Academic Calendar.
- Allocate duties and resources, including recruitment, required of a programme to ensure its optimal operation.
- Manage the staff (academic and non-academic) on programmes under their remit.
- Manage the budget, as well as Dorset College's programme(s) infrastructure.
- Provide orientation and guidance to academic and non-academic staff to ensure an understanding of their role and contribution to Dorset College.
- Support the professional development of academic staff.
- Ensure that the duty of care owed to learners and staff is fulfilled.
- Ensure the learner experience is of the standard expected of and by Dorset College.
- Ensure services are delivered in a consistent and professional manner.
- Support the development of new programmes under the terms agreed by the Academic Council.
- Implement and monitor the College's Quality Assurance Manual and related framework(s).
- Oversee the Assessment, Teaching and Learning Strategy of the College.
- Lead the College's Quality Enhancement efforts.
- Oversee the appropriate maintenance of learner records from admission to graduation.
- Oversee the certification and graduation of learners.
- Advise the College on pertinent quality assurance matters.
- Chair the Academic Council and ensure the College's committees and boards are appropriately chaired and/or designate a replacement in the event of absence.

- Provide technical expertise to faculty and learners for Blended Learning with the following actions:
 - Ensure the reliability of the technology used and confirm that appropriate technical support and contingency plans are in place.
 - Ensure that the tools are appropriate to the programme and updated as necessary.
 - Provide administration and technical support:
 - Orient and support learners in using technology in blended courses.
 - Ensure that both staff and learners are comfortable with the technology.
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1.14 Director of Sales & Marketing

The Sales & Marketing Director has overall responsibility for the management, operations and effectiveness of the College's Sales & Marketing activities. This role also oversees the necessary administration of applicants and maintaining relationships that the College develops with partner institutes. The Sales & Marketing Director ensures all learner recruitment policies compliment all academic admission requirements as identified by the Dean of Academic Affairs in line with the Quality Assurance Manual.

Duties

- The Sales & Marketing Director has overall responsibility for the management, operations and effectiveness of the College's Sales & Marketing activities. This role also oversees the necessary administration of applicants and maintaining relationships that the College develops with partner institutes. The Sales & Marketing Director ensures all learner recruitment policies compliment all academic admission requirements as identified by the Dean of Academic Affairs in line with the Quality Assurance Manual.

1.15 Managing Director

The Managing Director is the principal officer of the College and is responsible for all the College's activities. The Managing Director is the College representative with external groups and ensures the effective operations of the College.

1.16 Leadership Team

Dorset College has developed as part of its Quality Assurance Structure and due to operational needs, a leadership team, which comprises:

- Operations Lead
- Admissions Lead
- IT Lead
- Academic Operations Lead
- Quality Assurance Lead

Each respective Lead will work with the other Leads and Departments to ensure cohesive delivery of programmes from an application to graduation by ensuring the interface with the prospective learner, learner and graduate is integrated and learner centered at every stage.

The College have also ensured the learner experience is protected through the development of roles such as The Student Experience Leader, Head of Library, Information Systems and Enhancement as well as Programme Leaders for all accredited programmes in the College.

College satisfactions rates have improved with the creation of the Leadership Team and this team ensures quality is assured throughout the learner journey.

2 Review of Governance & Management of Quality Policies and Procedures

The College will review the Governance and Management of Quality policies and procedures on an annual basis. This review will assess the adequacy and effectiveness of the policies and procedures.

The following individual(s) will be involved in this review:

- Senior Management Group
- Academic Council
- Risk Management Committee
- Dean of Academic Affairs
- Academic Management Committee
- Quality Assurance Committee
- Learner