

Quality Assurance Manual

Governance & Management



Governance & Management



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Foreword

The 2019 revision of the Dorset College Quality Assurance Handbook (QAH) is in line with the Statutory Quality Assurance Guidelines developed by QQI for use by all Providers[1] and the Sector Specific Statutory Quality Assurance Guidelines developed by QQI for Independent/Private Providers coming to QQI on a Voluntary basis[2], as well as the Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area, May 2015[3]. This revision also takes into consideration the evolving scope of Dorset College encompassing policies and procedures applicable to higher, further and English language education. The revision is within the context of overall governance and management structures in place to support the delivery of such programmes and specifically encompassing policies and procedures applicable to our current suite of programmes (Level 5 to Level 8) and in the future up to level 9 on the National Framework of Qualifications (NFQ).

This edition of the QAH was informed by consultation with key stakeholders of the College including but not limited to learners, staff and faculty and wider engagement with the further and higher educational community as well as external stakeholders for approval by Dorset College Academic Quality Committee upon review by an independent QQI panel.

[1] QQI's Core Statutory QA Guidelines

<https://www.qqi.ie/Downloads/Core%20Statutory%20Quality%20Assurance%20Guidelines.pdf>

[2] QQI's Sector Specific QA Guidelines

<https://www.qqi.ie/Downloads/Sector%20Specific%20Quality%20Assurance%20Guidelines%20V2.pdf>

[3] European Standards and Guidelines (ESG)

https://enqa.eu/wp-content/uploads/2015/11/ESG_2015.pdf

Policy Title **Governance & Management of Quality**

Date Approved 17/12/2018

Effective From 02/01/2019

Monitor Registrar / QA Department

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

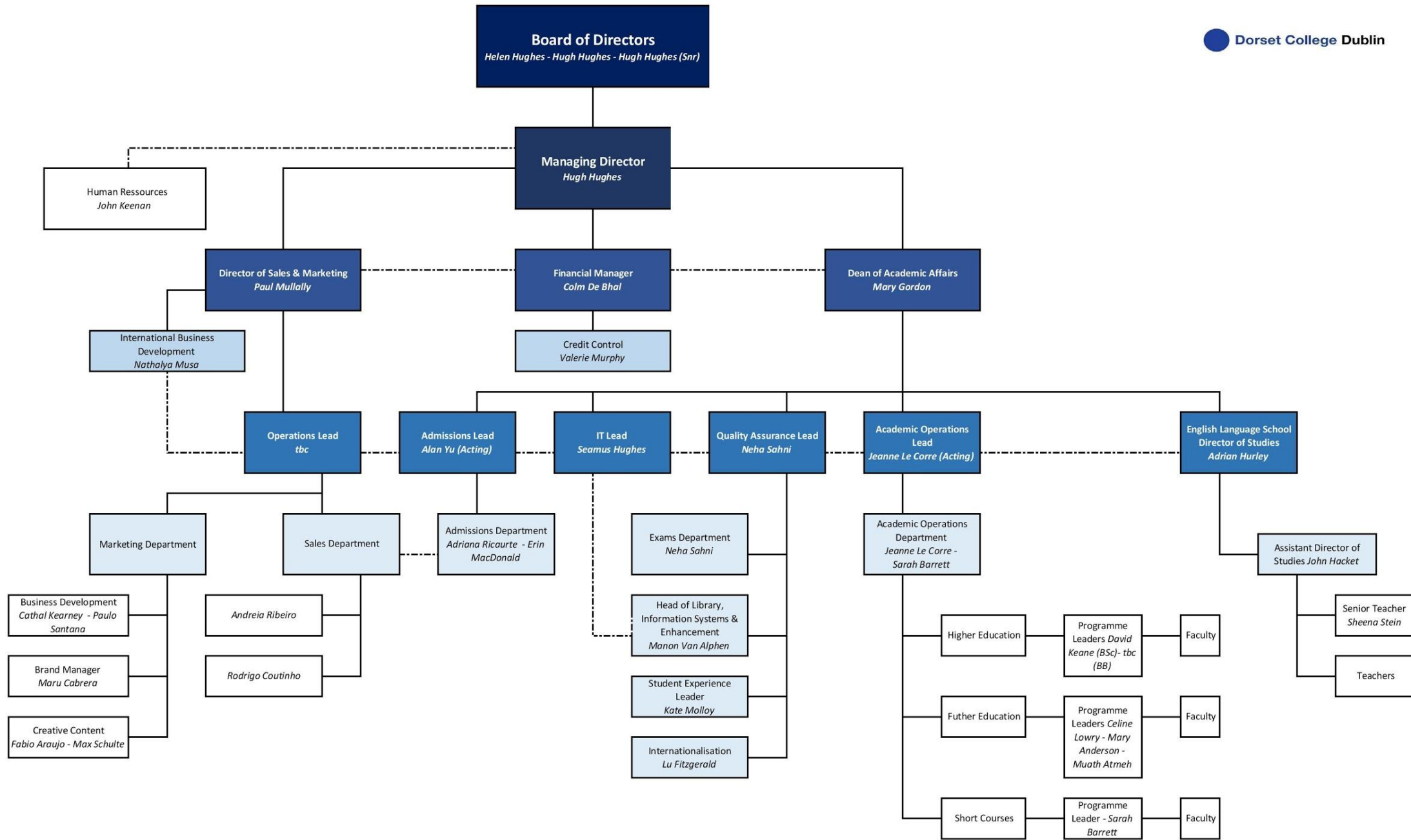
Revision History & Version 1 – 2019

Commencement Date &

Date of Next Review

Commencement Date (Version 1): 02/01/2019

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 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 QAH 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 QAH 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 QAH is in line with consistent and superior delivery of education and training and related academic support services.



College Mission & Values

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.

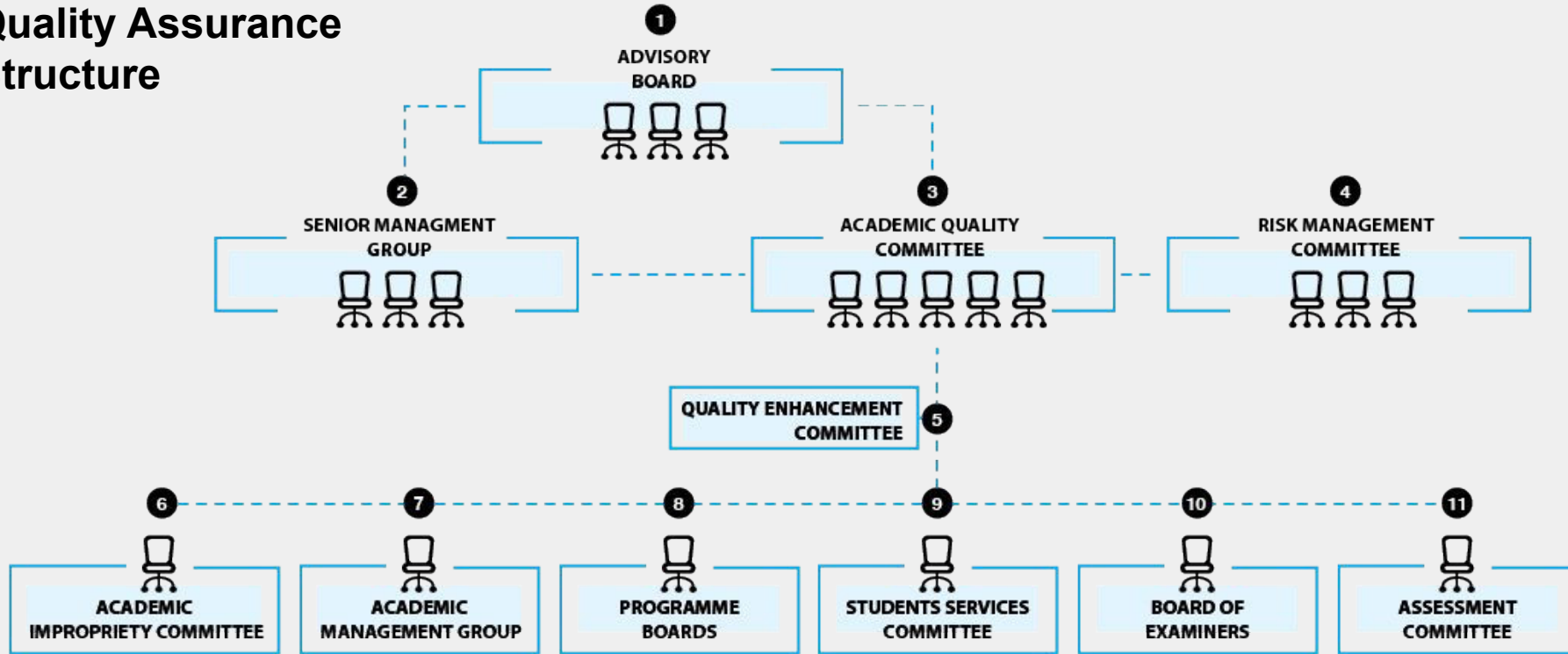


1.2

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).

Quality Assurance Structure



- | | | | | | |
|---|--|--|---|---|--|
| <p>1 _Senior Management Group member (chair) _Industry Expert _Academic Leader (external) _Senior Academic or Programme Manager in the relevant field of learning (internal) _Dorset College Alumni (at least one)</p> | <p>2 _Director of Academic Operations _Managing Director (chair) _Financial Controller _Sales & Marketing Director _Registrar</p> | <p>3 _Director of Academic Operations _Registrar (chair) _ICT Manager _Director of Studies (English language education) _Admissions _QA Officer (secretary) _Programme Manager/Academic Operations _Two academic faculty members _Student Experience (one member) _One current learner representative</p> | <p>4 _Director of Academic Operations (chair) _Managing Director _Financial Controller _Sales & Marketing Director _Registrar</p> | <p>5 _Director of Academic Operations (chair) _Registrar (Policy Owner) _Programme Manager/Academic Operations (ensure the alignment of policies/procedures with programmes) _A staff member that has significant operational duties in a specific policy area (rotating member dependent on specific policy) _Student Experience _One current learner</p> | <p>6 _QA Officer (chair) _College Librarian _Academic (relevant to the field of learning) _Student Experience</p> |
| <p>7 _Director of Academic Operations _Registrar (Chair) _Programme Manager/Academic Operations _ICT Manager _College Librarian _Financial Controller _Director of Studies _Student Experience _QA Officer (secretary)</p> | <p>8 _Director of Academic Operations or designated nominee (chair) _Registrar _Examinations Officer _Programme Manager _Lecturing Faculty (at least one member of faculty form a relevant field of learning)</p> | <p>9 _QA Officer (chair) _Student Experience _College Librarian _Programme Manager/Academic Operations _2-4 learners (across all relevant fields of learning)</p> | <p>10 _Director of Academic Operations _Registrar (Chair) _QA Officer _Examinations Officer _Programme Manager/Academic Operations _Internal Examiners (faculty) _External Examiner(s)</p> | <p>11 _QA Officer (chair) _Examinations Officer _Member of College management (not involved in original assessment decision)</p> | |



Academic Council

Membership


The Academic Council has overall operational responsibilities for quality assurance of academic provision.

Membership of the Academic Council comprises of:

- _ Dean of Academic Affairs (Chair)**
- _ Quality Assurance Lead (Secretary)**
- _ IT Lead**
- _ Director of Studies (English language education)**
- _ Admissions Lead**
- _ Academic Operations Lead**
- _ Programme Leader(s)**
- _ Two academic faculty members**
- _ Student Experience Leader**
- _ 1 current learner representative**

Frequency of Meetings

The Academic Council meets twice per annum and additionally as required.



Academic Quality Committee

Terms of Reference

The functions of the Academic Council are to:

1. Establish, maintain, develop and monitor the strategy and effectiveness of quality assurance and standards of academic provision in the College.
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 sub-committees.
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. Monitor, revise and update the College's quality assurance policies and procedures.



Senior Management Group

Membership

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

The membership of the SMG comprises of:

- Managing Director (Chair)**
- Dean of Academic Affairs**
- Financial Manager**
- Director of Sales & Marketing**

Frequency of Meetings

The SMG meets once per quarter.



Senior Management Group Terms of Reference

The functions of the SMG are to:

1. Assess the financial viability of the College's programmes. This is done through review and discussion of income and expenditure data on programmes 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 QA 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.



Risk Management Committee

Membership

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

The membership of the RMC comprises of:

- Dean of Academic Affairs (Chair)
- Managing Director
- Financial Manager
- Director of Sales & Marketing

Frequency of Meetings

The RMC meets twice per annum.



Risk Management Committee

Terms
of Reference

The functions of the RMC are to:

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.



Academic Management Group

Membership


The Academic Management Group (AMG) is a decision-making body of academic operational issues. The AMG facilitates greater communication flow between the College's staff and ensures that operational issues are resolved in a timely manner. The remit of the AMG is broader than solely academic issues and also incorporates pastoral, facilities, admissions and HR issues. It also allows for updates of various College activities to be communicated to staff.

The membership of the AMG will comprise of:

- _Dean of Academic Affairs (Chair)**
- _Quality Assurance Lead(secretary)**
- _Academic Operations Lead**
- _Operations Lead**
- _Admissions Lead**
- _IT Lead**
- _Head of Library, Information Systems and Enhancement**
- _Financial Manager**
- _Director of Studies**
- _Student Experience Leader**

Frequency of Meetings

The AMG meets every two weeks but can meet more frequently should it be required.




Academic Management Group

Terms of Reference

The functions of the AMG are to:

1. Communicate pertinent operational developments to the College's staff.
2. Report and resolve operational issues in a timely and efficient manner.
3. Consider pastoral issues of learners and agree support mechanisms where necessary.
4. Confirm the order of priority for planned operational activity within the College.
5. Approve resources for the operational activities of the College's programmes.
6. Make the relevant operational decisions in support of the College's 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.



Quality Enhancement Committee

Membership

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

The membership of the QEC will comprise of:

- _ Quality Assurance Lead (Chair)**
- _ Academic Operations Lead (Secretary)**
- _ Programme Leader(ensure the alignment of policies/procedures with 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 QEC shall meet twice per annum or additionally when required.




Quality Enhancement Committee

Terms of Reference

The functions of the QEC are to:

1. Have oversight of the development of quality assurance policies and procedures.
2. Support the College's goal of enhancing and continually improving its quality assurance structures.
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.
6. Monitor the implementation of established quality assurance policies and procedures.



Programme Board

Membership


A Programme Board is central to the organisation and management of an academic programme. A Programme Board is a decision-making body for operational 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.

The membership of a Programme Board will comprise of:

- _ Programme Leader (Chair)**
- _ Academic Operations Lead**
- _ Quality Assurance Lead**
- _ Examinations Officer**
- _ Lecturing Faculty (at least one member of faculty form a relevant field of learning)**
- _ 1 current learner**

Frequency of Meetings

A Programme Board meets four per year, once prior to the commencement of the academic year, once per semester and once at the end of the academic year.




Programme Board

Terms of Reference

The functions of a Programme Board are to:

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 student performance in assessments.
2. Identify, and seek to address opportunities and challenges that are deemed to have been critical in the programme's delivery.
3. Critique the delivery, relevance, and effectiveness of the programme.
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, 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.
9. Action relevant items that arise from Board of Examiners meeting.
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.



Academic Impropriety Committee

Membership

The Academic Impropriety committee coordinates and is the decision-making body for academic impropriety in assessment and examinations. This committee will investigate allegations of academic impropriety.

The membership of the Academic Impropriety Committee will comprise of:

- _Quality Assurance Lead(Chair)**
- _Head of Library, Information Systems and Enhancement**
- _Academic (relevant to the field of learning)**
- _Student Experience Leader**

Frequency of Meetings

The Academic Impropriety committee meets at least once per academic semester with full membership present

The functions of the Academic Impropriety committee are to:

1. Consider allegations of academic impropriety.
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 academic impropriety.
5. Ensure the learner is aware of their right of appeal to the Academic Quality Committee within 5 working days of the decision of the Academic Impropriety Committee.

Student Services Committee

Membership

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.

The membership of the Student Services Committee will comprise of:

- _Quality Assurance Lead(Chair)**
- _Student Experience Leader**
- _Head of Library, Information Systems and Enhancement**
- _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

The functions of the Student Services committee are to:

1. Consider feedback from learners on the learner supports offered by the College.
2. Co-ordinate 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.

Board of Examiners

Membership

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.

The membership of an Examination Board will comprise of:

- _ Programme Leader(s) (Chair)**
- _ Quality Assurance Lead (Secretary)**
- _ Examinations Officer**
- _ Internal Examiners (faculty)**
- _ External Examiner(s)**

Frequency of Meetings

An Examination Board meets at least once per semester

Quorum Requirements

The quorum shall consist of the following members:

- _ Programme Leader or nominee**
- _ Examinations Officer**
- _ Two internal examiners per programme**
- _ External Examiner**



Board of Examiners

Terms of Reference

The functions of a Board of Examiners are to:


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.

Appeal

A learner can appeal a decision of the Board of Examiners to the Dean of Academic Affairs within 5 working days of the relevant outcome. This decision is final.



Appeals Committee

Membership

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

1. Reviews and appeals that learners may wish to make with regards their original assessment. Once an application for a review or an appeal is received the Assessment Committee will appoint an independent examiner (Re-check) or an independent assessor (Review) to provide them with a report. The learner has a right of appeal (see Chapter 6);
2. Appeals from a decision from the Disciplinary Committee.

The membership of the Assessment Committee will comprise of:

Quality Assurance Lead (Chair)

Examinations Officer

Member of Faculty(not involved in original decision)

Frequency of Meetings

The Appeals Committee will ordinarily meet after the issuance of final results in the event that learner(s) apply for a review or appeal.

Terms of Reference

The functions of the Appeals Committee are to:

Consider the recommendation put forth by the independent assessor;

Agree a formal response to all learners' reviews or appeals;

Ensure learners are notified of the outcome of their review or appeal.

Advisory Board

Membership

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

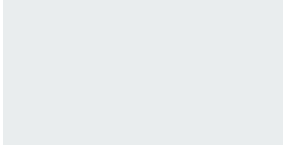
- _ **Senior Management Group member (Chair)**
- _ **Industry Expert(s)**
- _ **Academic Leader (external)**
- _ **Senior Academic or Programme Manager in the relevant field of learning (internal)**
- _ **Dorset College Alumni (at least one)**

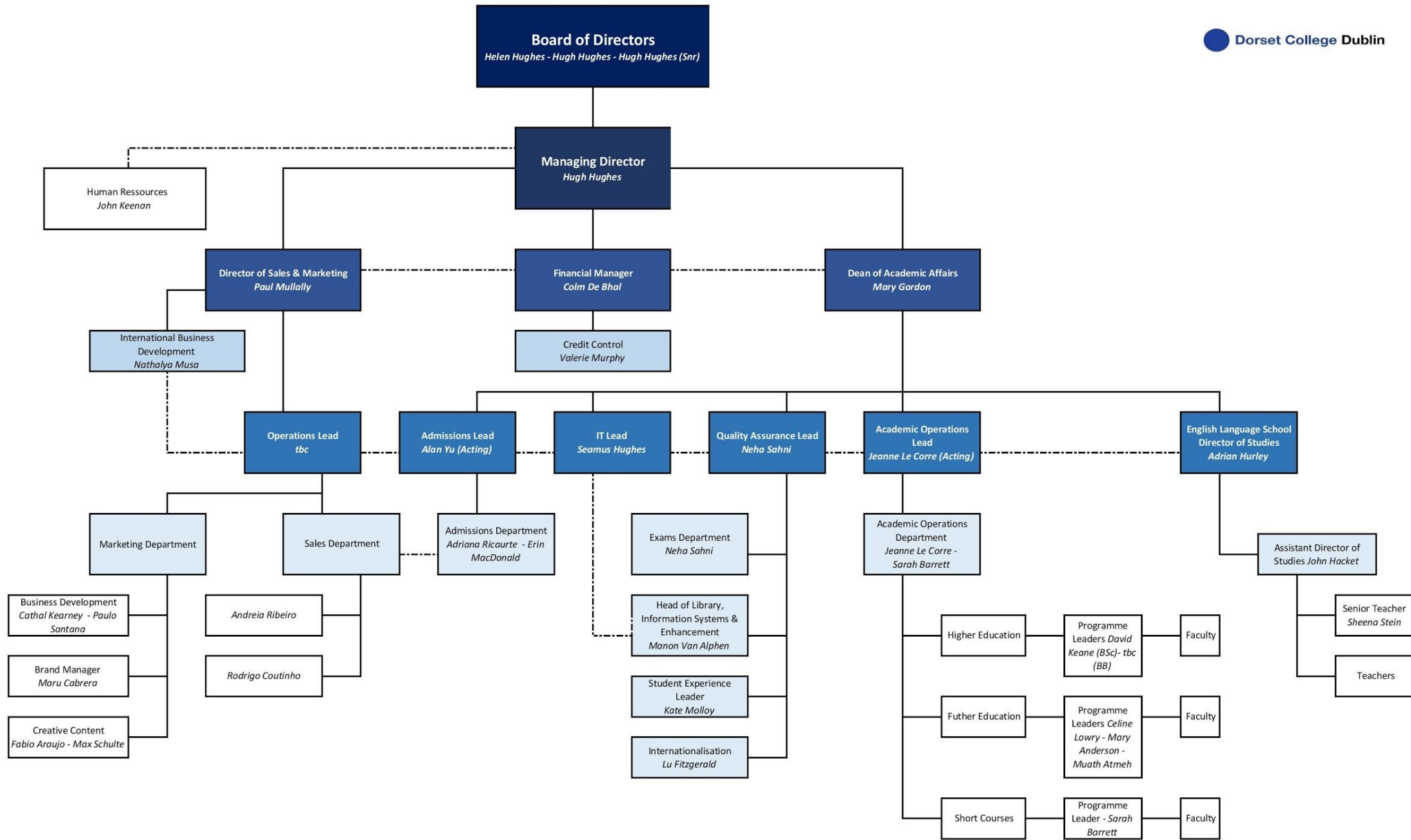
Frequency of Meetings & Quorum

Twice per year with at least one external member present.

Terms of Reference

- _ Helps shape the strategic development of the college.
- _ Contributes to the improvement of the student experience.
- _ Strategically contributes to the development of industry relevant, high standard academic programmes.
- _ Advises and assists the college in building and sustaining relationships between the college, its graduates and the wider community.
- _ Contributes to the enhancement of public confidence in Dorset College.





Dean of Academic Affairs

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

The key roles and responsibilities of the Academic Operations Director are to:

- _ Liaise with accreditation bodies.
- _ Ensure the academic objectives of the college are achieved.
- _ Manage the day-to-day operations of programmes under their remit.
- _ Manage 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 School's budget, as well as School and programme(s) infrastructure.
- _ Provide orientation and guidance to academic and non-academic staff in the School to ensure an understanding of their role and contribution to the College.
- _ Support the professional development of the School's 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 the College.
- _ Ensure services are delivered in a consistent and professional manner.




Registrar

The Registrar has overall responsibility for the quality and standards of academic provision and the support services for the programmes of the College. This entails the development of quality assurance policies and procedures, the enforcement of these policies and procedures, and their regular review. The Registrar also has responsibility to support the development of new programmes, and the review of existing programmes across the College.

The key roles and responsibilities of the Registrar are to:

- _ Support the development of new programmes under the terms agreed by the Academic Quality Committee.
- _ Implement and monitor the College's Quality Assurance system.
- _ Lead the College's Quality Enhancement efforts.
- _ Liaise with Accreditation Bodies.
- _ Oversee learner records.
- _ Manage the certification and graduation of learners.
- _ Advise the College on pertinent quality assurance matters.
- _ Chair the College's committees and boards, or designate a replacement in the event of absence.



Sales & Marketing Director

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 Registrar in line with the QAH.



Managing Director

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



1.3

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:

[Registrar](#)

[Director of Academic
Operations](#)

[QA Officer](#)

[1 Learner](#)



Thank you.