

Quality Assurance Manual

Programmes of Education & Training





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

4. Programmes of Education & Training



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Policy Title	Programmes of Education & Training Policy
Date Approved	17/12/2018
Effective From	02/01/2019
Monitor	Registrar / QA Department
Summary	This policy provides an overview of the policies directly related to the programmes of study offered at Dorset College. This policy will be inclusive of the various stages of a programme, from its inception and initial development, to its monitoring and review.
Related Policies	
Revision History & Commencement Date & Date of Next Review	<p>Version 1 – 2019</p> <p>Commencement Date (Version 1): 02/01/2019</p> <p>Date of Next Review: Following Independent Assessment from Re-engagement process</p>



Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to provide structure and process in the administration and management of the programmes offered at Dorset College. This inclusive policy will provide structure to the programme development, transparency to programme access, transfer and progression, and ensure that programmes are monitored and reviewed to ensure their continued relevancy.

Scope

This policy applies to all Further and Higher as well as English Language education programmes that Dorset College has devised and will devise with the intention of validation with QQI and other relevant validating bodies.

Policy Statement

Dorset College recognises the importance of underpinning the administration and management of its programmes with quality structures and processes. It also acknowledges that this ethos of quality does not start and end with the operations of a programme, but should be inclusive of programme development, programme monitoring and review.

Therefore, the Programmes of Education & Training policies at Dorset College are devised to provide this overarching structure that is inclusive of the holistic development, operation, and monitoring of its programmes.




4.1

Programme Development

Dorset College follows a systematic programme development process for the programmes that it considers developing. Any potential programme is required to present a compelling case for development. Furthermore, all internally developed programmes must be internally approved by the College, before it is submitted to an external body, such as QQI, for its consideration.

To be approved for development, a programme proposal is submitted for the consideration of the Academic Quality Committee. A proposal must:

- _Outline the programme's rationale and coherency with the strategy of Dorset College.
- _Have clearly defined programme aim(s), objectives, and MIPLOs.
- _State the intended NFQ level of the programme and provide a clear rationale for the level chosen.
- _Outline the stakeholder consultation that has taken place as well as outlining all consultations with the College's Advisory Board (see page 11 Quality Assurance Structure) to ensure industry engagement with the proposed programme.
- _State the intended delivery method, the teaching & learning strategies of the programme, and its assessment strategy



Programme Development

__Outline the resources that the proposed programme would require.

__Timeframe for the development of the programme, should the Proposal be successful

The development of a potential programme will culminate in a programme document being produced. This programme document will follow any template provided by QQI, or the relevant accrediting body, and will be informed by engagement with a variety of stakeholders as outlined below:

The Development of programmes at Dorset College will:

__Be informed of stakeholders' views and expertise.

__Ensure learners are fully informed of their access, transfer, and progression opportunities.

__Consult with professional bodies, where applicable. Also, if possible, programmes at Dorset College will seek membership, exemptions etc., for graduates of the programme.

__Be written using learning outcomes and aligned to the appropriate award standards.

__Be internally considered before being put forward for consideration to QQI.

__Meet the criteria for **Preparing an Application for Validation**, as detailed in section 5 of QQI's *Policies and criteria for the validation of programmes of education and training*. This will ensure that the preliminary matters for any validation are in place, that the programme is appropriately documented in the template provided by QQI, and that the programme has been evaluated against the validation criteria.

Programme Proposal Procedure

	Procedure Stage	Responsibility	Evidence
1.	Development of Programme Proposal: A programme proposal is developed by a member of the College's staff. A proposal should include the elements stated in the Programme Development Policy which is developed in line with the QAH Policy on Policy (see page 36).	Programme Proposer(s)	Programme Proposal
2.	Consideration by Academic Quality Committee: The College's Academic Quality Committee will consider the programme proposal. The AQC can consider a proposal at a scheduled meeting or at a special meeting for the purposes of considering a Proposal. A special meeting of the AQC must consist of 50% of its membership. The decision of the special meeting of the AQC is then circulated to all AQC members. Should a member of the AQC who was not present.	Academic Quality Committee	Minutes of the Academic Quality Committee

Programme Proposal Procedure

	Procedure Stage	Responsibility	Evidence
	<p>at the special meeting object to the decision taken at the special meeting, a full session of the AQC will be held to agree an outcome.</p> <p>Whether a proposal is considered at a scheduled AQC meeting or a special meeting of the AQC, a proposal must be approved by a ratio of 2:1.</p> <p>Where the proposer(s) of the programme proposal is also a member of the AQC, they will be exempt from the AQC's deliberation of the proposal.</p>		
3.	<p>Notification of the Academic Quality Committee's decision:</p> <p>The proposer(s) of the programme will be notified within 3 working days of the decision of the AQC, should</p>	<p>Academic Quality Committee</p> <p>Programme Proposer(s)</p>	<p>Notification of Academic Quality Committee's decision on the Programme Proposal</p>

Programme Proposal Procedure

	Procedure Stage	Responsibility	Evidence
	they not have been present at the AQC's meeting.		
4.	<p>Commercial Assessment: Should the AQC approve a programme proposal, it will then send the Proposal to the College's Managing Director, who will assess whether the College can facilitate this programme (in terms of resources) and consider the commercial viability (utilising a cost/benefit approach) of the proposed programme.</p> <p>A commercial viability assessment will consider:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> __ The anticipated demand of the programme. __ Cost of the resources (human and physical) required to develop and operate the programme. __ Infrastructure and support services. 	<p>Managing Director</p> <p>Programme Proposer(s)</p>	Notification of Commercial Viability Assessment

Programme Proposal Procedure

	Procedure Stage	Responsibility	Evidence
	<p>Any other related costs to the programme development.</p> <p>The College's Managing Director will inform the Registrar and the Programme Proposer(s) of the outcome of the commercial viability assessment.</p>		
5.	<p>Programme Development:</p> <p>If the commercial viability of the proposal is approved, then the proposal moves into programme development stage.</p>	Programme Proposer(s)	

Programme Development Procedure

	Procedure Stage	Responsibility	Evidence
1.	<p>Initial Meeting: A Programme Development team is convened, and the scope of work required for the development of the programme is outlined. Ordinarily, the Programme Proposer will lead the Programme Development team.</p> <p>Where there are multiple Programme Proposer(s), the Programme Development team will agree on which of the proposers shall lead the Programme Development team.</p> <p>The composition of the Programme Development team will be determined by the required expertise. This would typically include, but is not limited to:</p>	Programme Development Team	<p>Minutes of the Programme</p> <p>Development team meeting</p>

Programme Development Procedure

	Procedure Stage	Responsibility	Evidence
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> _Members of the College Faculty _External stakeholder(s) _Programme Proposer(s) [Chair] <p>The inclusion of external stakeholder(s) is dependent on the availability of the requisite expertise internally in the College.</p>		
2.	<p>Consultation: The Programme Development team determines the extent of stakeholder engagement required to assist the development of the programme.</p> <p>This would ordinarily include, but is not limited to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> _Dorset College Advisory Board as well as any necessary additional industry consultation on knowledge, skills and competencies they desire of graduates of the programme being developed. 	<p>Programme Development Team</p> <p>External Stakeholders</p>	<p>Notes on Consultation with External Stakeholders</p>



Programme Development Procedure

	Procedure Stage	Responsibility	Evidence
	<p>__Learner engagement – with internal learners who are already enrolled on similar programmes in the College or learners external to the College.</p> <p>__Consultation with content experts to assist with the appropriate structure, syllabus and content of the programme being developed.</p> <p>__Consultation with Professional Bodies to ascertain any potential for membership, accreditation, exemptions and any potential learner pathways.</p>		
3.	Agreement on Programme Details: The Programme Development team will review the programme details that were originally suggested in the Proposal, and review the following:	Programme Development team	Programme Details

Programme Development Procedure

	Procedure Stage	Responsibility	Evidence
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Teaching & Learning strategy Assessment strategy Award Standards (where applicable) NFQ level of the programme Programme aim(s), objectives, and MIPLOs Access, Transfer, and Progression options/criteria 		
4.	Agreement on Programme Curriculum: The Programme Development team will outline the agreed programme curriculum, the formation of which will be informed by the stakeholder consultation, the chosen	Programme Development team	Outline of Programme Curriculum

Programme Development Procedure

	Procedure Stage	Responsibility	Evidence
	award standards (where applicable), the teaching & learning and the assessment strategy of the programme.		
5.	<p>Development of Programme Curriculum: Once the programme's curriculum is agreed, the Programme Development team will initiate the development of the curriculum.</p> <p>This will include the assigning of module leaders and the production of the module details, following the QQI template.</p> <p>The Programme Development team will ensure the overall coherency of the curriculum, through liaising with the module leaders both collectively and individually to ensure their modules are cognisant of the overarching programme.</p>	<p>Programme Development team</p> <p>Module leader(s)</p>	Full Programme Curriculum

Programme Development Procedure

	Procedure Stage	Responsibility	Evidence
6.	<p>Production of Programme Document: The full programme document is produced. Ownership of this is with an individual, although the content will have been prepared by multiple people. The rationale for an individual producing the programme document is to ensure an overall coherency of the document for the reader.</p> <p>This person will ordinarily be the Programme Development leader, although another individual may be designated this responsibility at the discretion of the Programme Development team.</p> <p>The Programme document will follow the guidelines set out in QQI's Policies and criteria for the validation of programmes of education and training</p>	<p>Proposer of the Programme Document</p> <p>Programme Development team</p>	Programme document



Programme Development Procedure

	Procedure Stage	Responsibility	Evidence
7.	Review of Programme Document against Validation criteria: Prior to submission for consideration to QQI, the programme document will be internally reviewed against QQI's validation criteria. The programme development team will document the initial assessment of the programme against the validation criteria (which will be documented in the Programme Document). This initial assessment will then be considered by the Registrar.	Programme Development team Registrar	Reviewed Programme document

4.2

Learner Admission, Progression and Recognition of Prior Learning

Admission

All QQI programmes are offered by Dorset College on an academic year basis are on or are formally aligned to the National Framework of Qualifications (NFQ).

Applicants can access Dorset College programmes through the following:

1. Central Applications Office (CAO) and as mature students (Please see individual programme admissions criteria);
2. Transfer from or progress to Dorset College programmes after completing programmes delivered by other providers through recognition of prior academic learning (RPL) and/or Recognised Prior Experiential Learning (RPEL).

Dorset College ensures the following:

1. admission to all programmes on the NFQ and validated by QQI are in accordance with QQI '*Policy and Criteria for Access, Transfer and Progression in Relation to Learners for Providers of Further and Higher Education*' (QQI, Restated 2015); and
2. European Credit Transfer System (ECTS) and RPL as well as RPEL is consistent with QQI '*Assessment and Standards*' (Revised, 2013).

4.2.1

Access & Admission

Access

Dorset College provides transparent, fair and consistent entry requirements to programmes through:

1. Marketing Brochures;
2. School Website www.dorset-college.ie
3. Programme Documents(s) which contain
 - a. Minimum Intended Programme Learning Outcomes (MIPLOs);
 - b. Award which will be attained upon achieving the relevant MIPLOs.

Admission

1. CAO Applicants
 - a. Leaving Certificate results;
 - b. QQI Award transcripts (where applicable);
 - c. Transcripts of any relevant completed study;
 - d. IELTS 6.0.
2. Direct Entry
 - a. Through our Admissions Office in person or via our website;
 - b. Leaving Certificate results equivalent as certified by NARIC Ireland;
 - c. IELTS 6.0.
3. Non-native speakers of English
 - a. IELTS 6.0
4. Mature Applicants
 - a. RPL and APEL will be considered by the Admissions Lead

If a prospective learner's access to a programme is rejected the individual will be afforded a mechanism to appeal in writing stating the grounds of appeal to the Dean of Academic Affairs.

4.2.1

Admission, Transfer & Progression

Procedures for Admission

Each application is assessed by the Admissions Department which the Admissions Lead oversees and ensures the following:

1. If the applicant meets all the specified entry criteria for access onto the relevant programme, the applicant is notified by email;
2. If an applicant is considered as an RPL or RPEL application, it then follows that the appropriate procedures outlined below in Section 4.2.2 will apply.

Where the successful applicant accepts a place on a particular programme, in line with GDPR obligations, their personal details are recorded on our student information system, CLASS and they are advised of the relevant fees and GNIB obligations.

Transfer and Progression

Dorset College facilitates transfer and progression inwards and outwards from its programmes in line with our validated programmes and as stated on our website. Progression inwards and internal transfers require an assessment of suitability by the Admissions Lead who appraise: MIPLOs, Award Standard, Level and potential exemptions.

Outward progression is outside the control of Dorset College and rests with the receiving institutions but Dorset College will endeavour to support such students by providing in a timely manner; transcripts and any other relevant documentation.

4.2.1

Admission & Induction

Induction

Prior to the commencement of each academic year successful applicants will be invited to induction and will be provided with the following:

1. Academic Operations
 - a. Calendar;
 - b. Timetable; and
 - c. Contact information for the programme.
2. Facilities
 - a. Facilities;
 - b. Library;
 - c. EBSCO;
 - d. Moodle; and
 - e. Office 365.
3. Office 365: all students are provided with an Office 365 account to which the college will communicate.
4. Learner Handbook which contains relevant information such as attendance, academic and non-academic support.
5. Programme Handbook which looks to curriculum structure etc.

4.2.2

Recognition of Prior Learning

General Principles for Recognised Prior Learning (Academic and Experiential)

Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) is the generic term for learning assessment mechanisms such as Accreditation of Prior Learning or Advanced Academic Standing, which are used within Higher Education to describe the awarding of credit and/or exemptions to learners on the basis of demonstrated learning which has occurred prior to admission.

Dorset College recognises Prior Learning for the following:

- Gain access to the programme;
- Direct Entry or Advanced Entry into a programme;
- Exemptions from some parts of a programme.

RPL ensures the EU policy widening access to qualifications and lifelong learning approach is adopted by Higher Education Institutes and is embraced by Dorset College in line with the Education and Training Act, 2012 and reflective of the national commitment to widening participation in education and to give equal recognition to all learning.

Prior Learning encompasses

1. Formal Learning: programmes of study or training that are delivered by validated education or training providers and which attract awards;
2. Non-formal learning: which may be assessed but does not normally lead to formal certification for example community based learning;
3. Informal Learning: life and work-experience (experiential learning) and contributes to a learner's knowledge, skills and competencies.

4.2.2

Recognition of Prior Learning

Dorset College recognises Prior Learning (RPL: academic and certified by an awarding body such as QQI, state recognised colleges or institutes or comparable foreign qualifications) which is certified and Recognised Prior Experiential Learning (RPEL: non-academic and non-certified, and can be non-formal and/or informal where the learning achieved, rather than the experience, is what is assessed by Dorset College).

Recognised Prior Learning Eligibility

1. Dorset College's Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL and RPEL) policy recognises the learning that programme applicants have completed prior to enrolment on a programme **OR** relevant stage of a programme;
2. Applicants must be over 23 years of age from the 1st of January of the year of admission to be eligible to apply for RPL or RPEL;
3. Prior learning encompasses: formal, non-formal and informal learning and will be consistent and maintain the rigour of the NFQ and its awards;
4. Dorset College's RPL/RPEL Policy and procedures should be clearly stated and documented and shall be available to all potential applicants via our website, brochures and related promotional materials;
5. Guidance and support will be provided by Dorset College Admissions Department and monitored by the Admissions Lead;
6. There is no limit placed on the maximum credits allowed to be achieved via RPL in the non-award stages;
7. At award stages a maximum of 10 credits can be achieved via RPL and this shall not normally apply to mandatory subjects.

Appeal

If an RPL application is rejected the individual will be afforded a mechanism to appeal in writing stating the grounds of appeal to the Dean of Academic Affairs within 5 working days of the relevant outcome.

4.2.2

Recognition of Prior Learning- Guidelines & Assessment

Recognised Prior Learning Guidelines

When an applicant or learner presents prior certified learning the Admissions Department, monitored by the Admissions Lead and the subject of an appeal to the Dean of Academic Affairs, will base their decision to grant this exemption, advanced entry etc. on the following:

1. Level of Prior Award on the NFQ
 - The prior certified learning upon which the application is based must be at the same level or at a higher level on the NFQ to which the learner is seeking an exemption in. For example if a learner is seeking an exemptions from a level 8 module their certified prior learning must be at level 8 or above to ensure the maintenance of standards and appropriate compliance with the NFQ and its award standards.
2. Comparison of Learning Outcomes
 - The learning outcomes must be sufficiently similar in nature to the module(s) the learner is seeking exemption from.
3. Currency of Prior Certified Learning
 - The Prior Certified Learning must have been achieved in a comparatively appropriate timeframe for example for computing within the past 3 years.

4.2.2

Recognition of Prior Learning- Guidelines & Assessment

Recognised Prior Learning Process

1. Applicants/Learners must submit their application on the appropriate form (found in the Learner Handbook) and on Dorset College VLE Moodle;
2. Submissions must be forwarded to the Admissions Department or if they are an active student to the Quality Assurance Lead for assessment which may, where necessary, involve an assessment by an appropriate academic/Programme Leader.
3. Applicants must provide the following in support of their application;
 - a. Certificates;
 - b. Transcript(s) of Results; and
 - c. Modules with Minimum Intended Learning Outcomes (MIMLOs)
4. The applicant/learner must submit their application at least 14 days prior to the commencement of the programme/module.
5. The assessor will deliver an outcome within 10 working days from the application and if necessary the applicant/student must attend class pending the outcome of the application.
6. Possible Outcomes include:
 - a. Exemption- no % or grade shall be awarded save if in award stage where any such exemption must be calculable and is subject to Dorset College eligibility i.e. a normally a maximum of 10 ECTS, in exceptional circumstances and subject to an appeal to Dean of Academic Affairs ;
 - b. Exemption with conditions for example attendance at workshops;
 - c. Refusal.

Appeal

If an RPL application is rejected the individual will be afforded a mechanism to appeal in writing stating the grounds of appeal to the Dean of Academic Affairs within 5 working days of the relevant outcome. This decision is final.

4.2.2

Recognition of Prior Experiential Learning Assessment

Recognition Prior Experiential Learning Assessment

Recognition of Prior Learning involves the awarding of credit for learning experience which requires a demonstration that the learning experience has occurred for example by:

1. Submitting a Portfolio of Evidence; and/or
2. Attendance at an interview.

Portfolio of evidence

When applying for RPL, applicants are required to compile a portfolio of evidence demonstrating how they have achieved the learning outcomes of a module within a programme (if they are applying for an exemption) or how they meet the entry requirements of the programme. This can be presented using certified evidence of previous education (official transcripts of results etc.), case examples/ references from employers or co-workers, log books of work completed and any other documents deemed relevant. This may be followed by an interview where the portfolio is discussed and verification may be requested from employers etc. to ensure veracity and currency.

Assessment

The College Admission Team as monitored by the Admission Lead, will assess the presented evidence as follows:

- _for entry onto a programme, the evidence is assessed against the entry criteria;
- _for advanced entry onto a programme, the evidence is assessed against the appropriate level of the relevant award standards;
- _for module exemptions, the evidence is assessed against the MIMLOs of the module(s);
- _exemptions into Award stages shall only be considered in exceptional circumstances and will only be considered where a calculable mark is possible for Award calculation. All exemptions into Award stage must be reviewed by the Admissions Lead if an advanced entry application or by the Quality Assurance Lead if an active student and are subject to an appeal to the Dean of Academic Affairs.

Procedure for the Recognition of Prior Learning

	Procedure Stage	Responsibility	Evidence
1.	Initial Enquiry: Initial enquiries are referred to admissions staff. Applicants are advised on how to apply and the admissions criteria for entry onto a particular programme.	Admission	
2.	Portfolio: Each application who is seeking some form of RPL will be asked to submit a portfolio of supporting evidence. The exact contents of a portfolio will be dependent on the nature of the RPL that is being sought, but typical elements would include: _ A detailed Curriculum Vitae. _ A synopsis of how experiential learning links to the programme being applied for. _ Certificates of previous education. _ Transcripts and/or syllabi of previous education.	Applicant	Portfolio

Procedure for the Recognition of Prior Learning

	Procedure Stage	Responsibility	Evidence
3.	Assessment of Portfolio: A completed portfolio is assessed by the College Registrar by aligning the presented evidence against the entry criteria, MIMLOs, or award standards	Registrar	Alignment of evidence against appropriate criteria
4.	Interview (if appropriate): After the assessment of the submitted portfolio, the Registrar may request an interview with an applicant to seek further clarification on their previous education background and/or experiential learning.	Registrar (or appointed nominee)	Interview notes
5.	Communication of Outcome: The applicant will be notified of the outcome of the RPL application by email.	Registrar (or appointed nominee)	Email to applicant

4.3

Admission, Access, Transfer & Progression

Access

Dorset College endeavours to ensure that its programmes are as accessible as possible to potential learners whilst also ensuring that those who are admitted onto its programmes can achieve its MIPLOs in the time period of the programme.

_Each programme document, and related information material, will set out clear admissions criteria that must be met by each prospective learner.

_Each programme document, and related information material, will set out its MIPLOs.

_Each programme document, and related information material, will clearly state the award the learner will receive and the level of this award.

_The College will ensure that the size of its cohort will not exceed the limits of its physical resources.

_The entry requirements for each programme will be clearly stated to all prospective learners.

_The previous education/academic or professional experience of the learner will be recognised and considered through the College's RPL and RPEL Policy.



Access, Transfer & Progression

 If a prospective learner's access onto a programme is rejected, the individual will be afforded a mechanism to appeal this decision as follows:

- An appeal should be made in writing and sent to the Registrar.
- The grounds on which the learner is making an appeal should be clearly stated.
- The Registrar shall review the appeal. This may involve further discussions with the applicant and/or discussions with the admissions person responsible for their refusal. The Registrar will then decide on the admission based on the entry requirements specified for that programme.

 Upon commencement of a programme, a learner will receive an induction session. This will ordinarily be on the first day of that programme. The induction will be complemented with further sessions throughout the programme. An induction will cover:

- Pertinent dates and contact information for that programme.
- Information about the College and its facilities including a presentation from the Head Librarian.
- Information about the structure and curriculum of the programme.
- Information about assessments, and the expectation of the learner with regard its assessments (for example: referencing, submission process).



Access, Transfer & Progression

- Demonstration of the College's Virtual Learning Environment MOODLE.
- Details of the library resources available at the College.
- Information on attendance requirements.
- Presentation from the Student Experience Manager relating to non-academic matters such as student accommodation.

Procedure for Admission onto a Programme

	Procedure Stage	Responsibility	Evidence
1.	Initial Application: Applications are received online, paper based, or through the CAO process. _If the application is either online or paper based, it must be made through through appropriate College application form. _Candidates who are deemed to not clearly meet the minimum requirements for this programme, are referred for further advice on alternative programmes, if applicable.	Prospective Learner Admissions	Application form
2.	Classification of Application type: Each application is assessed to determine if it is an application that clearly meets the specified entry requirements, or if it is to be considered an RPL application. If an application is deemed to meet the specified entry requirements, the candidate is to be notified accordingly.	Admissions	Notification sent to Prospective Learner

Procedure for Admission onto a Programme

	Procedure Stage	Responsibility	Evidence
	If an application is deemed to be an RPL or RPEL application, it then follows the appropriate procedure as per the QAH at page 95.		
3.	Completion of Accepted Applications: Where a successful applicant accepts a place on the programme, the details of that applicant are to be recorded on the College's student management database, and the necessary administrative work should be completed and they are not termed as a learner for the duration of their programme.	Admissions	Updated learner file on student management system
4.	Terms of Payment Agreed: When an applicant has been accepted onto a programme, they will be advised of the payment options available to them. The accrual of fees and potential payment options available to an applicant are dependent on the programme for example Springboard.	Admissions	

Procedure for Admission onto a Programme

	Procedure Stage	Responsibility	Evidence
	The applicant will be advised of the payment options available to them by Admissions.		
5.	Communication of Programme Details: The learner will be informed of the specific details of their programme, such as start date, room schedule etc., prior to the programme's commencement typically at induction.	Admissions	Communication to Learner
6.	Induction: The learner will receive an induction onto their programme either prior to or during their first session. This initial induction may be supplemented with further sessions throughout the programme.	Programme Manager/Academic Operations	

Procedure for Recognition of Prior Learning

	Procedure Stage	Responsibility	Evidence
1.	<p>Assess initial Eligibility Criteria: A prospective learner with the College needs to meet the initial eligibility criteria for their RPL application to be considered. This stage follows the following process:</p> <p>— The prospective learner makes an initial enquiry with the College's admissions/programme staff</p> <p>— The initial enquiry is assessed using the screening criteria outlined in the RPL policy</p>	Prospective Learner	
2.	<p>Submission of RPL application: If a prospective learner passes the initial screening phase, they can then submit a formal RPL application, which includes the following:</p>	<p>Prospective Learner</p> <p>Admissions</p>	RPL Application

Procedure for Recognition of Prior Learning

2.

Procedure Stage

Responsibility

Evidence

Submission of RPL application (cont.):

Prospective Learner

RPL Application

_The prospective learner submits a complete RPL application[1] to the College.

Admissions

_The application will be assessed by Admissions. Where necessary, other staff members may also be required to assess the application such as a member of faculty if an application contains information from a specific field of learning.

_The application is assessed in terms of completeness and that sufficient detail is provided.

3.

Consideration of RPL application:

Registrar

Complete RPL/RPEL applications are then progressed for consideration by the Registrar, who will make a decision to accept or reject the RPL application, after undertaking and considering the following:

Procedure for Recognition of Prior Learning

	Procedure Stage	Responsibility	Evidence
3.	Consideration of RPL application (cont): <p>_The application is assessed and the demonstrated learning is aligned to relevant QQI Award Standards and the appropriate level therein.</p> <p>_The Registrar may communicate with the applicant again if clarification is required.</p>	Registrar	
4.	Acceptance or Rejection of RPL application: <p>After considering the RPL application, the Registrar will determine whether to accept or reject the RPL application. In either case, the College will:</p> <p>_Inform the prospective learner of the decision.</p> <p>_Where the application is unsuccessful, the prospective learner will be provided with appropriate feedback, and also advised of programme application options, where appropriate.</p>	Registrar	Communication to prospective learner



Transfer & Progression

The College facilitates transfer and progression both into and onwards from its programmes and commits to ensuring that its learners are fully informed of their transfer and progression options. To ensure this, the College will clearly articulate the transfer and progression criteria in the information it provides regarding programmes offered.

The stated transfer and progression options and criteria will not be exhaustive of every possible scenario. Instead, it will give broad-based transfer and progression options into and onwards of programmes at different NFQ levels that are typically available to learners. The College is also cognisant that the transfer and progression onwards options that are not within the College are subject to the admissions policies of other institutes.

 Learners will be informed of their inward and onward transfer and progression options in the programme information provided to them of its programmes.

 The College will assist learners who wish to transfer and progress both inwards and onwards from its programmes. This will be done regardless of whether the transfer or progression is with the College or another education institute.

 Assistance may take the form of providing transcripts of results, providing academic references when transferring outwards. When prospective learners are transferring inwards they will be provided with all relevant programme information such as Award standards, availability of exemptions where applicable, Minimum Intended Programme Learning Outcomes and the overall student experience.

4.4

Programme Monitoring and Review

The College recognises the importance of regularly reviewing the quality assurance operation of its programmes. Consequently, the College partakes in annual monitoring of its programmes, to allow for their continuous development, and for the continuous evolution of its quality assurance processes. The report that is completed as a result of this procedure is informed by Section 4.2(a) of QQI's *Policy on Monitoring* (December 2014).

The College will gather data from various stakeholders and mechanisms, as well as its own internal records and systems, to inform its programme monitoring and review:

- The College will undertake a quantitative analysis of progression and completion rates on an annual basis and benchmark this with comparable providers and programmes.

- The College will undertake a grade analysis of their learners' performance and benchmark this with comparable providers and programmes.

- The College will facilitate quantitative and qualitative feedback with learners at least once per semester.


- The College will facilitate quantitative and qualitative feedback of faculty at least once per academic year.

- The College will seek qualitative feedback from employers and/or industry personnel on an annual basis.

- The College will review its learner enrolments on an annual basis.

- The College will review the attendance of its learners at a programme level on an a monthly basis.

- The College will review learner usage of its virtual learning environment on a semesterised basis.



Programme Monitoring and Review

The goal of this monitoring and review is:

- _To improve the learner experience with the benefits of the experience of programme delivery.
- _To ensure its programmes remain relevant and current.
- _To inform College decisions on changing and/or improving its learning environment.
- _To assess whether learners are meeting the objectives and learning outcomes of its programmes in an efficient and effective manner.
- _To review a programme's teaching and learning strategies and ensure that they are appropriate and effective for its learners.
- _To review the assessment workload and procedures for assessment of its learners to ensure their appropriateness.
- _To review progression and completion rates.


The Programme Monitoring report will be produced by an individual selected by the Academic Quality Committee and will be reported back to the Academic Quality Committee on its completion. The AQC will action changes to be made as a result of the Programme Monitoring report and will delegate the management of the implementation of any change(s) to the Academic Management Group.

Procedure for Monitoring of Programmes

	Procedure Stage	Responsibility	Evidence
1.	Designation of individual responsible: The College's Academic Quality Committee will appoint a staff member to co-ordinate the annual monitoring.	Academic Quality Committee Monitoring co-ordinator	Minutes of Academic Quality Committee
2.	Collation of data: The monitoring co-ordinator will arrange for the collation of the relevant data for the Annual Monitoring Report.	Monitoring co-ordinator	Corpus of data to support annual monitoring report
3.	Consultation with stakeholders: The monitoring co-ordinator will engage with relevant stakeholders of the programme(s) to allow for their feedback to be incorporated in the Annual Monitoring Report.	Monitoring co-ordinator	Data collected from stakeholders

Procedure for Monitoring of Programmes

	Procedure Stage	Responsibility	Evidence
4.	Preparation of the Monitoring Report: The monitoring co-ordinator will prepare the Annual Monitoring Report, and circulate to the members of the Academic Quality Committee, who will consider its recommendations	Monitoring co-ordinator Academic Quality Committee	Monitoring Report
5.	Actioning of Recommendations: The Academic Quality Committee will action any recommendations that arise from the Monitoring Report, and designate responsible of these actions to the Academic Management Group.	Academic Quality Committee Academic Management Group	Minutes of Academic Quality Committee




Periodic Review of Programmes

In addition to the annual monitoring of its programmes, the College will also engage in a periodic Programme Review of its programmes as required for Revalidation applications to QQI. Every five years, or more frequently if the Academic Quality Committee or QQI deem it necessary, the College will conduct a Programme Review of its programmes. Such a review provides an opportunity for the Programme team to conduct a major critical evaluation of the programme and to make significant changes to the programme, if appropriate and in line with the Quality Assurance Structure and related structures and committees thereto.

All programme reviews are conducted in compliance with QQI regulations as laid out in their document *Programme Review Manual* and Section 13 of *Policies and criteria for the validation of programmes of education and training*. The outcome of this review process is ultimately to determine whether the College should seek Revalidation of a programme, and if so, to inform any changes that should be made to that programme.


The distinction between annual monitoring and periodic monitoring is that the periodic monitoring allows for more substantive changes to be made to a programme, but also requires a more significant review of the performance and operation of programmes.



Periodic Review of Programmes

The College will undertake the programme review process with a view to determining:

- _What has been learned about the programme, as an evolving process (by which learners acquire knowledge, skill and competence), from the experience of providing it for the past five or so years?
- _What can be concluded from a quantitative analysis of admission data, attrition rates by stage, completion rates and grades achieved by module, stage and overall?
- _What reputation do the programme and provider have with stakeholders (learners, staff, funding agencies, regulatory bodies, professional bodies, communities of practice, employers, other education and training providers) and in particular what views do the stakeholders have about the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats concerning the programme's history and its future and the programmes currency in relation to employability.
- _What challenges and opportunities are likely to arise in the next five years and what modifications to the programme are required in light of these?
- _Whether the programme in light of its stated objectives and intended learning outcomes demonstrably addresses explicit learning needs of target learners and society within national and international parameters.
- _What modifications need to be made to the programme and its awards to improve or reorient it?



Periodic Review of Programmes

- Whether the programme (modified or unmodified) meets the current QQI validation criteria (and sub-criteria) or, if not, what modifications need to be made to the programme to meet the criteria when the programme is due for re-validation.
- Whether the provider continues to have the capacity and capability to provide the programme as planned (considering, for example, historical and projected enrolment numbers and profile, availability and adequacy of physical, financial and human resources) without risk of compromising educational standards or quality of provision in light of its other commitments (i.e. competing demands) and strategy?
- What is the justification (or otherwise) for the provider continuing to offer the programme (modified or unmodified)?
- What changes need to be made to related policies, criteria and procedures (including QA procedures)?

Procedure for Periodic Review of Programmes

	Procedure Stage	Responsibility	Evidence
1.	Planning: This stage will involve consultation with stakeholders who are familiar with the programme, its operating context, the discipline area and the provider's overall strategy.	Academic Management Group	Minutes of Academic Management Group Terms of Reference of Programme Review
2.	Conducting the review and preparing Provider's Programme Review Report: This will involve a comprehensive assessment of the programme to date, and involve programme review team, outlined below, considering how the programme has functioned to date, whether the programme should continue, and what changes, if any, need to be made to the programme.	Programme Stakeholders Programme Review team	Provider's Programme Review Report Programme document

Procedure for Periodic Review of Programmes

	Procedure Stage	Responsibility	Evidence
3.	Independent Programme Review Report: This stage will involve the College organising and facilitating a panel of evaluators who are completely independent of the provider. The chosen evaluators must be free of conflicting interests and possess the requisite expertise in the programme's discipline area and in generic areas including pedagogy, assessment, quality assurance. The purpose of this stage is for the College's review of its programme, and subsequent changes it will suggest as an outcome of the review, to be independently assessed.	Programme Review team Independent Panel	Independent Programme Review report
4.	Provider's response and implementation plan and panel's final response: This stage will involve the College's Academic Quality Committee considering	Academic Quality Committee Programme Review team	The finalised Provider's Programme Review Report

Procedure for Periodic Review of Programmes

	Procedure Stage	Responsibility	Evidence
	<p>the Independent Programme Review Report and preparing a formal response and implementation plan.</p> <p>The College's response to the Independent Panel, along with any modified programme documentation, will then be sent to the independent panel for their response</p>	Independent Panel	
5.	<p>Application for Revalidation: This stage will involve the College formally applying to QQI for revalidation of the relevant programmes</p>	Programme Review Team	Application for Revalidation to QQI

4.5

Review of Programme of Education & Training Policies and Procedures

The College will review these Programme of Education & Training policies and procedures on an annual basis. The following individual(s) will be involved in this review:

[Registrar](#)

[QA Officer](#)

[Director of Academic
Operations](#)

[1 Lecturer](#)

[Programme Manager](#)

[1 Learner](#)



Thank you.