Quality Assurance Manual 2025 V. 3.0

Contents

FOREWORD

The 2025 revision of the Dorset College Quality Assurance Manual (QAM) 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], the Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area, May 2015[3] as well as the Quality Assurance Guidelines for Provider Access to Initial Validation of Programmes Leading to QQI Awards - Further Education and Training [4]. 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). 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) and awards thereto.

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 Council upon review by an independent QQI panel.

[1] QQI's Core Statutory QA Guidelines, April 2016

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

[2] QQI's Sector Specific QA Guidelines, April 2016

https://www.qqi.ie/sites/default/files/2021-11/qg-2-sector-specific-qa-guidelines-for-private-and-independent-providers.pdf

[3] European Standards and Guidelines (ESG)

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

[4] Statutory QA G

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
2.2	1.5 Academic Council. TOR Added item 8	16/10/2023	3/11/2023
2.2	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.
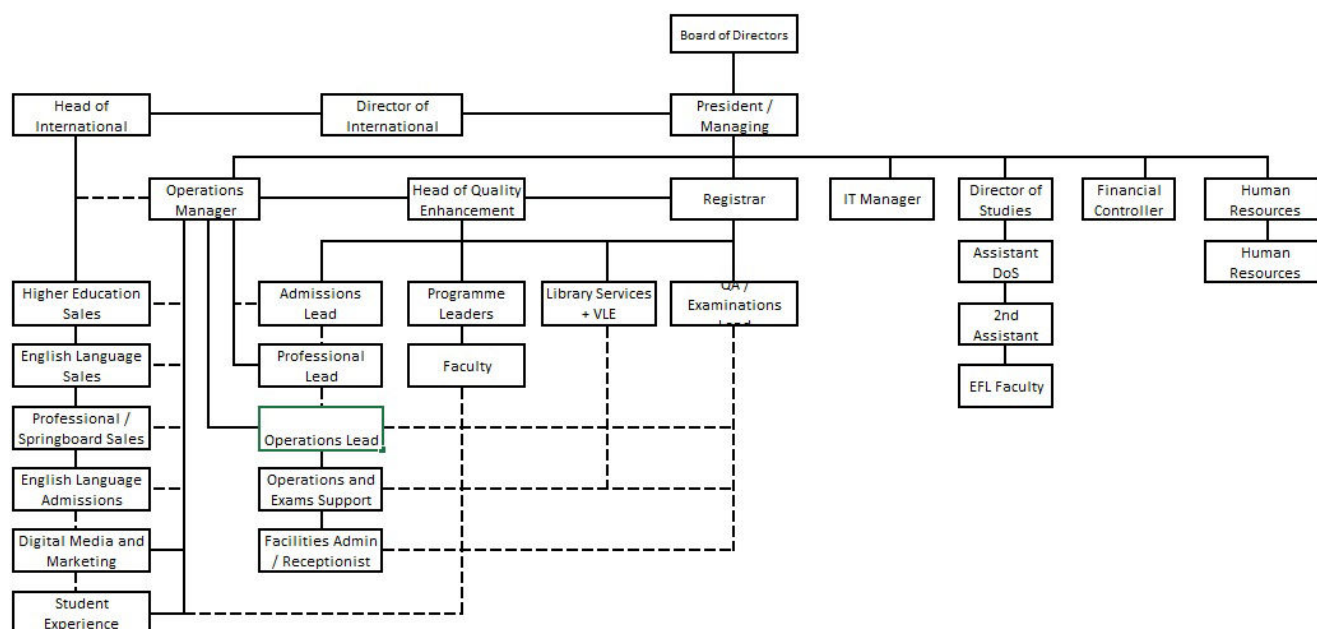
1.1 College Mission & Values

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).
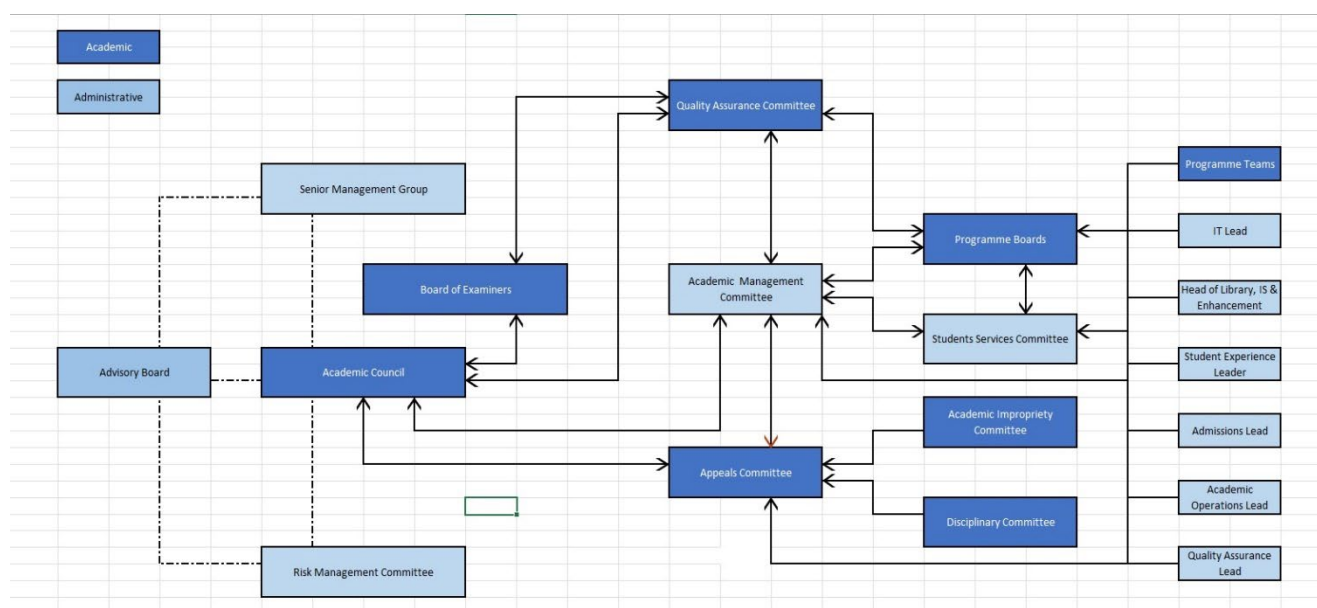
1.3 Senior Management Group

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

Membership	The membership of the SMG comprises of: • Managing Director (Chair) • Academic Registrar (Secretary) • Financial Manager • Director of Sales & Marketing
Frequency of Meetings	The SMG meets once per quarter.
Quorum	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: At least one of the following persons: Managing Director; And Dean of Academic Affairs, Director of Sales & Marketing, Financial Manager
Terms of Reference	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	The membership of the SMG comprises of: • 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	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	• 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	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	- 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	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	• 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	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	• 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	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	- 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 learners (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	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	• 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	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	• 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	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	• 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	• 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	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.

1.13 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	• Quality Assurance Lead (Chair) • Senior Academic/Programme Leader (not involved in original decision) • Student Experience Leader
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.
Terms of Reference	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.

1.14 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:
  - o Ensure the reliability of the technology used and confirm that appropriate technical support and contingency plans are in place.
  - o Ensure that the tools are appropriate to the programme and updated as necessary.
  - o 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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1.15 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. |

1.16 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.

1.17 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

2.1 Policy on Policy

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		
2.1	Addition of table to track changes made to individual policies and procedures. `	01/05/2023	01/06/2023

Title	**Policy on Making Policy**
Date Approved	17/05/2018
Effective From	18/05/2018
Monitor	Dean of Academic Affairs / QA Committee
Summary	Dorset College devises policies and procedures to meet all statutory areas set out by QQI, and other awarding bodies. This policy and its associated procedures are intended to confirm that commitment, and to outline how policies and procedures will be devised, agreed, and maintained. It will also give transparency to this process, and ensure rigour of the policies and procedures that are ultimately introduced.
Related Policies	**All QA Policies**
Purpose	The purpose of this policy is to provide guidance and structure on the formulation of quality assurance (QA) policies and procedures in Dorset College.
	The adoption of this policy will help ensure that the QA policies of Dorset College are:
	• Developed through reflection and consultation.
	• Agreed and signed off by a College committee.
	• Accessible to all stakeholders in an understandable format.
	• Compliant with the required national standards.
Scope	This policy applies to all QA policies and procedures of Dorset College.
Policy Statement	Dorset College recognises the importance of providing clarity and structure to the formation of quality assurance policies and procedures. Therefore, this policy provides a structure and transparency on policy development and implementation in the College.

The College also recognises that how it formulates these policies and procedures requires a similar level of attention as is given to the implementation of such policies and procedures. The formulation of policy, and associated procedures should be structured, rigorous, and transparent. This Policy on Policy is intended to provide this.

The policies of Dorset College shall be:

1. Developed in line with the process outlined in this policy.
2. Presented in the standard template.
3. Formally approved by the Quality Assurance Committee.
4. Accessible to all College stakeholders.
5. Regularly reviewed and updated as required.

2.2 Policy Development Procedure

	Procedure Stage	Responsibility	Evidence
1	**Policy Development**: The Policy Owner shall be responsible for the drafting of new or revised College policies. The Policy Owner will ensure that the policy is managed, from its initial development to its ratification, whilst seeking the necessary input from College staff and ensuring the policy goes through the appropriate College committee. Ordinarily, this will be the Dean of Academic Affairs. However, if appropriate, the Dean can delegate policy ownership to an appropriate staff member, who will then have the policy ownership responsibility.	Dean of Academic Affairs (or nominee) as Policy Owner College personnel relevant to a policy area	Note on Policy overview and structure
2	**Policy Template:** The development of the College's QA policies must adhere to the agreed template attached to this policy. The Policy Owner should avoid amending the template in order to maintain consistency. The only instances envisaged where the template should be amended by a Policy Owner is if it is inappropriate for a policy being developed, in which case the global template should be reviewed, or if additional clarity is required of	Dean of Academic Affairs (or nominee) as Policy Owner College personnel relevant to a policy area	Draft Policy and Associated procedure(s)

a policy. Each policy should be accompanied by a supporting procedure(s). Each procedure should fit in its respective policy.

3	**Policy Consideration**	Quality Assurance Committee	Minutes of Quality Assurance Committee
	Each QA policy and procedure(s) of the College will be reviewed and approved by the Quality Assurance Committee (QAC), which will serve as a sub-committee of the Academic Council. The QAC can decide to reject a policy on the grounds that its development has not followed this policy, that it is not aligned to national standards, or it is not fit for its specific purpose. In such instances the QAC may request the policy be redeveloped or that it be reviewed under specific areas and re-submitted for its consideration. Where the QAC decides to approve a policy, it will determine the date for which it will come into effect and agree on the regularity of its monitoring.	College personnel relevant to a policy area	
4	**Accessibility of Policy:**	Dean of Academic Affairs(or nominee) as Policy Owner IT Lead	QA section on website
	As a general rule, the QA policies of the College will be made available through the College's website, unless there is a reason for a policy not to be (for example: confidential policies that are solely for College staff).		
5	**Review of Policy:**	Dean of Academic Affairs (or nominee) as Policy Owner	Updated Policy and associated procedure(s)
	The Policy Owner for each policy will be responsible for ensuring its continued relevancy and maintenance through regular review. The specific review period shall be determined by the QEC and specified in each policy. Where a policy is to be amended during such a review, this amendment must also be approved through the College's QEC.	Quality Assurance Committee	Minutes of Quality Assurance Committee

3   Staff Recruitment, Management & Development

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		
2.1	Addition of table to track changes made to individual policies and procedures. `	01/05/2023	01/06/2023
2.2	Section 3.10.1 added	16/10/2023	3/11/2023

Policy Title	**Staff Recruitment, Management & Development**
Date Approved	17/12/2018
Effective From	02/01/2019
Monitor	Dean of Academic Affairs / QA Committee
Summary	This policy provides an overview of the policies directly related to the human resources involved in the management and operation of the College's programmes.
Related Policies	
Revision History & Commencement Date & Date of Next Review	Version 1 – 2019

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 provide consistency and transparency in how the College recruits, manages and develops its staff. This policy is holistic in its scope, covering staffing issues from prior to appointment through to development of existing staff. The importance of consistency and transparency is to ensure that no individual is discriminated against and that all potential and current staff are fully aware of what the College expects from them in the areas covered by this policy.
Scope	This policy applies to all staff who are involved in the management, administration and delivery of FET and HET programmes of Dorset College and supports staff members' contract(s) of employment and the Dorset College Employee Handbook.
Policy Statement	Dorset College recognises that its staff are intrinsic to ensuring that it delivers a quality education experience for its learners. This is inclusive of its management and administration staff, as well as its lecturers and tutors. Therefore, these policies for recruiting, managing and developing its staff are integral to ensuring that staff are sufficiently qualified,

supported and capable to deliver the quality education that it endeavours to provide for its learners.

3.1 Staff Recruitment

Dorset College recognises both the importance of recruiting individuals with the appropriate level of experience, competency and capability, as well as ensuring that there is transparency in its recruitment process.

During a staff recruitment process, the College will:

- Ensure a rationale is provided if the recruitment is for a new position.

  If the new position is an academic appointment, this rationale must be approved by the Dean of Academic Affairs and ensure the College has the financial resources to support the appointment of the new position.

  If the new position is a non-academic appointment the Managing Director must approve recruitment for the new position and ensure the College has the financial resources to support the appointment of the new position.

- Devise a job description that will be approved by the Senior Management Group and if the recruitment is intended to fill a vacancy in a current position, the job description will be reviewed to assess if it requires updating.

The job description will include:

- Position title as well as essential skills, qualifications, and experience necessary of someone to be eligible to fill the position.
- Desired skills, qualifications, and experience of someone in the position.
- Key roles and responsibilities of the position.
- A summary of the work activities that the position will be expected to perform.
- The duration and terms of employment of the position
- Ensure that all applicants are treated fairly and without bias or prejudice during the recruitment process.
- Advertise a position both internally and externally to ensure that the best candidate is chosen for the job.
- Use a national recruitment media, typically a recruitment website, when advertising a position externally. The information provided of the position on these recruitment media must be approved by the member of the College management who approved the rationale for the recruitment.
- Screen all applicants for the position based on the stated essential criteria detailed in the job description. Where the number of applications is large, the applicants will also be screened based on the desired criteria.
- After the screening process, shortlist a minimum of two candidates for the advertised position.

- Ensure that a member of the Senior Management Group will appoint the interview panel for the position being advertised. This will ordinarily be the same member of the College management who approved the rationale for the recruitment of this position. Any interview panel must contain at least two people, which must include the line manager of the new appointee.
- Conduct a second-round interview should the position require it. If a second-round is scheduled, some members of the interview panel from the first round may be included.
- Inform the interviewee with sufficient notice if they will be required to do a presentation as part of the interview.
- Use a criteria-based rating system to score each interviewee, based on previously agreed criteria. These will be linked to the job description.
- Ensure that the interview panel will collectively make a decision about which candidate is most suited to the advertised job. This decision should be unanimous. Where it is not, another round of interview will be required, where the interview panel will be comprised of three people. The selection decision after this round of interviews requires a 2:1 majority in favour of an interviewee.
- Check the references provided of the interviewee, who is being considered for the position. A reference check may be by email or phone.
- Notify the successful candidate that they have been offered a job, subject to verification of references. Upon acceptance, all other interviewees will be notified of the outcome of the interview process.
- Provide the successful candidate with pertinent detail of the role that they will occupy with the College.

3.2 Staff Recruitment Procedure

	Procedure Stage	Responsibility	Evidence
1	**Rationale for position (if it is a new position):**	Proposer of the position	Rationale for new position
	If a position is new to the College, the proposer of the position must provide a rationale for its need. This rationale will then be reviewed by the member of the Senior Management Group who the position will report to (or a deputy in the event that the proposer is the person the position will report to), and the Managing Director. Such a rationale should link to the College's management, operations and/or administration of its academic provision or commercial activities.	Member of the Senior Management Group Managing Director	

No.	Description	Responsible	Output
2	**Job Description:** If the position is new to the College, a job description should be prepared to include detail stated in the staff recruitment policy. If it is an existing position within the College, the existing job description should be reviewed to ensure it is current and relevant.	Proposer of the position Member of the Senior Management Group HR Personnel	Job Description
3	**Advertise position:** It should be determined by a member of the Senior Management Group and the Managing Director where and how the position should be advertised. When this is determined, the advertisement should be conducted as per the staff recruitment policy.	Member of the Senior Management Group Interview panel	Job Advertisement
4	**Shortlisting and Interviewing:** Applicants are shortlisted based on the stated essential (and possibly the recommended) criteria. Those selected for interview are contacted by a member of the Senior Management Group. Interviews are conducted as per the staff recruitment policy.	Member of the Senior Management Group Interview panel	Notification to candidates shortlisted for interview
5	**Second, and subsequent, round of interviews (if necessary):** Candidates are notified of details of second, or subsequent, rounds of interviews, should it be determined by the College as necessary.	Interview panel Member of the Senior Management Group	Notification to candidates of second, or subsequent, round of interviews
6	**Selection of successful candidate:** The interview panel will determine the successful candidate, as per the criteria outlined in the staff recruitment policy. References are verified and upon the successful candidate accepting the position,	Member of the Senior Management Group Interview panel	Notification of job offer

other candidates are notified of the outcome
of the interview.

7	**Details of role:**	Member of the Senior Management Group	Contract of Employment
	The successful candidate will be provided with pertinent detail of their role and their contract of employment.		

3.3 Staff Management

Dorset College views the appropriate management of its staff as integral to ensuring that the academic, professional and technical standards of staff, as well as the pedagogical standards of our teaching staff, are maintained and enhanced. This requires the College to regularly review the performance of its staff and to support their development. This ensures that staff are aware of what is expected of them, that the College operates as it is intended, and that staff receive the necessary supports. Every member of staff is provided with a contract of employment and an Employee Handbook on or before the commencement of their employment. (See Appendix)

To ensure that the academic, professional and technical standards of staff are maintained and enhanced, the College will:

- Review all job descriptions on an annual basis as part of employee appraisals to ensure their continued relevancy and currency. Such reviews will be particularly cognisant of developments within the area of the job. This review will be conducted by the line manager responsible for the person occupying a role.
- Encourage staff to join professional bodies that are related or relevant to their job. The College will also pay any associated membership fee for a professional body, where this is previously agreed and there is a demonstrable benefit to the College's activities. Joining a professional body may be done at the request of the employee or suggested by their line manager. Where it is at the request of an employee, it must be approved by their line manager. The Managing Director must also approve it from a financial perspective.
- Encourage staff to attend academic conferences where the topic of the conference is of relevance to their job role. The College will also pay for any cost of attending the conference and any associated travel expenses. These should be agreed prior to registration for the conference. Attending a conference may be done at the request of the employee or suggested by their line manager. Where it is at the request of an employee, it must be approved by their line manager. The Managing Director must also approve it from a financial perspective.
- Hold staff training sessions at least twice per year, but more often if necessary, on a topic identified as benefiting a cross-section of staff. These sessions may be conducted by internal staff members or external personnel, depending on whether the College has the requisite expertise internally to conduct the session. These sessions will be scheduled by a member of the College management.

- To ensure the pedagogical standards of teaching staff are maintained and enhanced, the College focuses the staff development of its faculty on the topic of Teaching and Learning. The mechanisms it has to achieve this are outlined in the policy on Staff Development.

3.4 Nature of Employment

- All new staff hired by the College will serve an initial probationary period of 6 months, at the end of which time the performance of the individual will be reviewed by their line manager. Depending on the performance of the individual during this probationary period, the line manager may:
  - Allow the probationary period to end and inform the individual of this. The individual will be informed that they have successfully completed their probationary period. In practice, the individual's role will not change.
  - Extend the period of probation for a further 5 months.

Due process will be followed if the decision is to terminate the employment of the individual due to roles and responsibilities of the job not been met (other terminable offences are outlined in the Code of Conduct policy). This would be an untypical outcome and would only occur after repeated notifications to the employee that their job performance has not met the expected standard.

- The tenure of each staff member is clearly stated on their respective job descriptions and contracts. For management and administration staff, the College ordinarily appoints staff member for full-time or part-time permanent contracts. However, should there be a need, the College may appoint a staff member to a fixed term contract for a defined purpose, such as when an individual joins the College's lecturing faculty for the purpose of teaching a programme or module or administrative support at particular times of the year for example Summer examination period. However, this does not negate the legal employment rights that are afforded to staff on fixed-term contracts, which the College fully abides by.

3.5 Appraisal & Staff Development system

Dorset College is committed to supporting its staff to fulfil their job responsibilities to the best of their abilities through its Appraisal and Staff development system. The key elements to this system are:

- An annual appraisal of all staff by their line manager.
- Review the work performance of the staff member in the previous year and set goals for the staff.
- To ensure coherence between staff training and development activities and the strategy of the College. To ensure the learner voice is considered through review of the learner feedback of staff. The College commits to the development of its staff and the importance of the concept of staff development. However, it also acknowledges that the resources that it has to commit to staff development are finite. Therefore, the College must review

applications for continuous professional development (CPD) and determine which applications merit commitment of resources. The College makes this decision with regard to the following criteria:

- An application for CPD must be made as part of the annual appraisal. This can be requested from the staff member prior to the appraisal meeting, mutually agreed between the staff member and their line manager during the appraisal meeting, or within 5 working days of the appraisal meeting.
- The College's Senior Management Group will assess all CPD applications, and determine outcomes of all applications, within one month of the date of the final appraisal.
- All CPD applications will be assessed under the following criteria:
- Relevancy to the staff member's job role with the College.
- Relevancy to the College strategy including academic strategy.
- Relevancy to the career progression of the member.
- Cost of the requested CPD activity.
- All of the above criteria should be graded between 1-5 (5 being the most positive score).
- The grading will be done by at least 2 members of the senior management team, who will grade each application independently.
- Where the cost of the requested CPD programmes exceeds the previously agreed CPD budget, only those who have scored highest will be approved for funding.
- Where the cost of the requested CPD programmes does not exceed the previously agreed CPD budget, the College will only fund those programmes that receive an average score of at least 12 out of 20.

3.6 Staff Code of Conduct

The Staff Code of Conduct at Dorset College is intended to support high-quality education provision which the College espouses to deliver. Furthermore, it facilitates ethical treatment of staff and a harmonious learning environment for learners in a collaborative and positive atmosphere.

The central pillars of the Staff Code of Conduct are:

1. Integrity	- Staff should act with honesty and integrity in all aspects of their work. Staff will respect the privacy of colleagues and stakeholders, unless there is a legal or ethical imperative necessitating disclosure to a relevant person and/or authority. - Staff must avoid conflicts of interest that could arise between their role with the College and their private interests. Where there may be such a conflict, it is the staff members responsibility to notify their line manager of this. - Staff will not accept gifts from external individuals, stakeholders or learners without the consent of their line manager. All gifts received will be accounted for with College Management. - Cash gifts are not acceptable in any circumstances.

2. Values And Relationships	• Staff will be fair, reasonable and honest in their interactions with peers, learners, management, and stakeholders. • Staff will be committed to equality and inclusion and respect the diversity of peers, learners, management, and stakeholders.
3. Conduct	• Staff will uphold the reputation of the College and not bring its name into disrepute. • Staff will act in a manner that helps ensure the health and safety of peers, learners, management, and stakeholders. • Staff will not intentionally act or behave in a manner that infringes upon legislation or regulations that govern their job role. • Staff will report any incident they witness where the welfare of a peer, learner, management or stakeholder is put at risk. • Staff will be professional, courteous and respectful in all communications with peers, learners, management and stakeholders. • Staff will not intentionally have in their position material, in any format, that is inappropriate or offensive to others. • Staff will not present to work in a manner that impedes their ability to perform their role as expected. • Staff will respect the confidentiality of information that they may receive during the course of their duties with the College. • Staff are encouraged to be open and transparent in sharing their opinions of the management, operations and governance of the College. Such opinions shall be discussed in a collegial, respectful and professional manner, and can be made by the staff member without fear of reprisal.
4. Practice	• Staff will fulfil the duties assigned to them to their best of their ability. • Staff will communicate to the relevant person in a timely manner if their availability for a scheduled task/duty/event has changed. • Staff will work in a collaborative and collegial manner, when required, to effectively meet the goals of the College. • Staff will support the College, in as much as is reasonable, in improving and enhancing its education provision. • Staff will act in the best interest of the College.

Where an aspect(s) of this Code of Conduct is not fulfilled, the staff member may avail of the grievance procedure or be sanctioned under the College's disciplinary process. The College's grievance and disciplinary process is designed to protect the interests of both the College and its staff, learners, and stakeholders.

- A disciplinary process will ensure that a staff member is treated fairly and without prejudice.
- A staff member has an assumption of innocence until definitively proven otherwise.
- A staff member will be given full opportunity to provide their version of events, with any extenuating circumstances taken into account.

Where misconduct has been identified from a staff member, but is deemed minor, a staff member may be reprimanded, but the nature of this reprimand will be informal and done verbally by their line manager.

Where misconduct has been identified in relation to a staff member, and is deemed to major, a staff member will be reprimanded through the disciplinary process outlined below. Ordinarily, staff will progress through the stages of the disciplinary process in order unless there is justifiable reason to skip a stage(s).

Where an employee believes any part of their Contract of Employment and/or Employee Handbook or the central pillars of The Code of Conduct have been breached in any way they are entitled to avail of the Grievance Procedure. The Grievance Procedure ensures their interests as well as the College's interests and those of the other staff, learners and stakeholders are protected and respected.

The College deploys both an informal and a formal Grievance Procedure to ensure staff can raise a grievance as regards any conduct, decision or action taken by the College or any person thereto to which they believe is unfair or deem to be unfairly applied.

3.7 Informal Grievance

- Staff are encouraged to approach their line manager in the first instance to arrange a meeting to discuss and attempt to resolve any issues in a timely manner.
- Should the grievance be with the member of staff's line manager they are entitled to make an informal complaint to any member of the Senior Management Group in an attempt to resolve any issues in a timely manner.
Should a member of staff be dissatisfied with the process or outcome of the informal grievance procedure they may proceed to the formal grievance procedure.
- Should a member of staff not wish to avail of the grievance procedure they can proceed straight to the formal grievance procedure.

3.8 Grievance Procedure (formal)

	Procedure Stage	Responsibility	Evidence
1	**Formal Notification :** At the first stage of this process a member of staff will be required to set their formal complaint out in writing to their line manager unless their grievance is with their line	Line Manager/Senior Manager	Record of Written Grievance on file

manager whereupon they are entitled to make a formal grievance to any member of the Senior Management Group.

2	**Meeting:** The member of staff will be invited to a meeting where the issue will be discussed and a reasonable timeframe set out for resolution. The staff member is entitled to be accompanied by a colleague at this meeting. This meeting shall be minuted.	Line Manager/Senior Manager	Record of Meeting and Outcomes
3	**Investigation:** The staff member's line manager or Senior Management Group member (as appropriate) will investigate the grievance as appropriate; for example calling a meeting with any other relevant party (to which they are entitled to have a colleague accompany them and this meeting shall also be minuted) and will gather any relevant information and/or documentation.	Line Manager/Senior Management Group member	Record of Investigation
4	**Outcome:** The member of staff will be invited to a meeting where they will be issued with an outcome. The staff member is entitled to be accompanied by a colleague at this meeting. This meeting shall be minuted. The member of staff is entitled to appeal this outcome to the Managing Director and should they be dissatisfied with this decision the member of staff may then choose to seek recourse through external bodies.	Line Manager/Senior Management Group member	Record of Meeting and Outcomes

3.9 Disciplinary Process

	Procedure Stage	Responsibility	Evidence
1	**Verbal Warning:** At the first stage of this process a verbal warning will be issued. A record of this verbal warning will be kept on the employee's personnel file for a twelve-month period and will be disregarded after this period, if no further stages of the disciplinary process have been issued against the staff member.	Senior Manager	Record of Verbal Warning on staff file
2	**First Written Warning:** Failure to improve on the previously issued verbal warning within the agreed period outlined at the verbal warning stage, or an additional failure of a staff member to fulfil their duties as set out in their job description, or a staff member found in breach of the stated staff code of conduct, will result in a first written warning being issued. A record of this written warning will be kept on the employee's personnel file for a twelve-month period and will be disregarded after this period, if no further stages of the disciplinary process have been issued against the staff member. Additionally, the issuing of a first written warning will also result in the record of the verbal warning being retained for the duration of the note of the first written warning being retained on the employee's personnel file.	Senior Manager	Record of First Written Warning on staff file
3	**Final Written Warning:** If the staff member fails to rectify the issues that lead to either the verbal warning or first written warning, or if there is an additional failure to fulfil their duties as set out in their job description, or the staff member found in breach of the stated staff code of conduct, will result in a final written warning being issued. A record of this written warning will be kept on the employee's personnel file for	Senior Manager	Final Written Warning on File

a twelve-month period and will be disregarded after this period, if no further stages of the disciplinary process have been issued against the staff member.

Additionally, the issuing of a final written warning will also result in the record of the verbal warning and first written warning being retained for the duration of the note of the final written warning being retained on the employee's file.

4	**Suspension:** If a staff member fails to improve on any of the previous warnings or if an additional failure to fulfil their duties as set out in their job description, or the staff member found in breach of the stated staff code of conduct, the staff member will be suspended. It is at the discretion of the College whether this suspension is with or without pay. The duration of the suspension will normally be for a period of 1-2 weeks. A record of the suspension will be kept on the employee's personnel file for a twelve-month period and will be disregarded after this period, if no further stages of the disciplinary process have been issued against the staff member. Additionally, the issuing of a suspension will also result in the record of the verbal warning, first written warning and final written warning being retained for the duration of the note of the suspension on the employee's personnel file.	Senior Manager / Managing Director	Notification of Suspension
5	**Dismissal:** Failure to improve on any of the previous warnings or suspension, or a further failure to fulfil their duties as set out in their job description, or the staff member found in breach of the stated staff code of conduct, the staff member will be dismissed by the College.	Managing Director	Notification of Dismissal

If a decision is taken to dismiss, the staff member will be provided with written notification as to the reason of the dismissal. This letter will include details of the staff members right to appeal the dismissal.

6 Appeal (if applicable): Should a staff member feel that they have been unfairly disciplined by the College, they have the right to appeal the discipline decision that they are not in agreement with.	Staff Member	Appeal application with supporting reasons
Any appeal should ordinarily be made to the staff member's line manager, or alternatively to another member of the College's Senior Management Group should the original decision-maker be their line manager, within 5 working days of the issuance of the disciplinary action.	Senior Manager	

Any appeal should state the grounds on which the appeal is being made and exclude all previously involved decision makers.

Should there be grounds for an appeal, the College will arrange for an appeal hearing to be facilitated. This hearing will be attended by two members of the College's Senior Management Group, the appellant and a person invited at the discretion of the appellant. The hearing will note the argument by the appellant and will consider the documented reasons for the disciplinary action.

The notes for the hearing will then be considered by a meeting of the College's senior management, which must consist of at least 3 members. They will determine a decision that must be agreed by at least a 2:1 ratio.

The possible outcomes that they can determine are:

- Uphold the original disciplinary decision.

- Overturn the original disciplinary decision.
- Amend the original disciplinary decision.

If the decision taken is to uphold the original decision, the appellant will be notified of this in writing and informed of the reasons for upholding the decision.

If the decision is to overturn the original decision, the appellant will be notified of this in writing and informed as to the reasons for this decision. Any note of the disciplinary action will also be removed from the staff member's file. Should the overturned disciplinary decision have been the dismissal, the staff member will be offered their original job back. Should they decline this, the staff member and the College will agree a compensatory outcome.

If the decision is to amend the original disciplinary decision, the appellant will be notified of this in writing and informed of the reasons for this decision.

The options for amendment available to

the College are:

- a different disciplinary action at a higher or lower stage of the disciplinary procedure.
- an informal rather than formal disciplinary action taken.

As stated, ordinarily a staff member will move sequentially through the disciplinary process outlined above. However, there may be instances that warrant a stage(s) to be skipped.

This will typically be in the event of the staff member committing an act that could be defined as gross misconduct. Gross misconduct is anything that:

- can be defined as a serious dereliction of duty.
- causes intentional harm to someone else.
- intentionally brings the College's name and/or reputation into disrepute.
- causes intentional damage to the College's facilities.
- deliberately misrepresents the reality of the College's operations.

3.10 Staff Development

The College offers opportunities for staff development primarily through its Appraisal and Staff Development system outlined in the Staff Management policy. This policy also outlines the process and criteria that staff members should follow when they wish to avail of the College's assistance in their Staff Development. The College is committed to the goals established by the National Forum for the Enhancement of Teaching and Learning and the National Professional Development Framework and is currently undertaking staff surveys around formal, non-formal and informal professional development opportunities to further enhance professional development in Dorset College.

To complement its Appraisal and Staff Development system, the College also has its own goals for its staff development initiatives. These are:

- to improve the learner experience.
- to support the pedagogical approaches used by its teaching faculty.
- to support the use of new technology in its teaching and learning methodology.
- to support innovation in teaching methods.
- to improve the efficiency of its management and administration functions.
- to support research activity that contributes to the teaching and learning activities in the College.

For new members of staff the college commits to:

- assigning that staff member with a mentor to assist them.
- review their performance within 1 month of the staff member commencing work with the
- College to provide feedback to the staff member on their performance to date.
- expediate and prioritise CPD funding and training for such staff members. Such applications will be considered outside the structure outlined in the Appraisal and Staff Development System.

3.10.1 Staff Professional Development in Blended Teaching and Learning

The college provides ongoing training and additional support initiatives required by academic staff to build their digital literacy skills and adapt to the blended learning environment. The core training includes:

- A comprehensive range of staff training sessions in the use of VLE for online teaching and learning
- One-to-one guidance and consultation with staff on identifying tools and resources for their teaching and learning requirements and on developing their skills.
- creating champions of different technological tools for team sharing and development
- dissemination of best practice by facilitating engagement through the Staff Sharepoint group as well as national and international developments in online and blended teaching and learning
- Training will be provided on matters of copyright, intellectual property, copyright, and data protection.

3.11 Review of Staff Recruitment, Management & Development Policies and Procedures

- Managing Director
- Director of Sales & Marketing
- Dean of Academic Affairs
- HR Personnel
- 1 Lecturer
- 1 Learner

4 Programmes of Education & Training

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		
2.1	Addition of table to track changes made to individual policies and procedures. `	01/05/2023	01/06/2023
2.2	4.1 Addition of blended learning considerations	16/10/2023	3/11/2023
2.2	4.2.1 Addition of New programme proposal for Blended Learning	16/10/2023	3/11/2023

Policy Title	**Programmes of Education & Training Policy**
Date Approved	17/12/2018
Effective From	02/01/2019
Monitor	Dean of Academic Affairs/ QA Committee
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	Version 1 – 2019 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 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 Council. A proposal must:

- Outline the programme's rationale and coherency with the strategy of Dorset College.
- Have clearly defined programme aim(s), objectives, and Minimum Intended Programme

Learning Outcomes (MIPLOs).

- State the intended National Framework of Qualifications (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 to ensure industry engagement with the proposed programme.
- State the intended delivery method, the teaching & learning strategies of the programme, and its assessment strategy.
- 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, including a mock panel, 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.

The design of all Blended Learning programmes leading to an award or programme components leading to credit towards an award must ensure the following:

- The teaching, learning and assessment strategies and delivery mechanisms adopted are specifically designed for blended contexts.
- Blended learning developments are learner-centred and subject-led rather than technology-led.
- Teaching, learning, and assessment practices are accessible, consistent and fair for all learners.
- The security and reliability of its online learning and support systems are ensured.

4.2 Programme Proposal Procedure

This procedure covers all new programmes, face to face, blended and online.

	Procedure Stage	Responsibility	Evidence
1	**Development of Programme Proposal:** An initial programme proposal report is developed by a member of the College's staff/programme team. A proposal should include the elements stated in the Programme Development Policy which is developed in line with the QAM Policy on Policy with appropriate and sufficient stakeholder engagement.	Programme Proposer(s) / Programme Team	Programme Proposal
2	**Consideration by Academic Council:** The Senior Management Group will consider the initial programme proposal at a scheduled meeting or at a special meeting for the purposes of considering a Proposal. This decision is than circulated to the Academic Council.	Senior Management Group	Minutes of the Senior Management Group
3	**Notification by Academic Council regarding Programme Proposal:** The Programme Proposal is rejected: the programme must be revised and resubmitted back to Step 1. The Programme Proposal is accepted as having academic merit and the Programme team is notified.	Programme Team Academic Council	Minutes of the Academic Council
4	**Development by the Programme Team:** The Programme Development Team will then prepare an Interim Programme	Programme Team Academic Council	Minutes of the Academic Council

Proposal and present this to the

Academic Council which will be in line

with the following:

- QQI Programme Validation Manual
- Self Assessment Programme Report

5	**Academic Council Decision:** The Academic Council will then review the Interim Programme Proposal to ensure it meets all the QQI criteria for Programme Validation and can either: 1. Reject - Programme Team must revise and resubmit 2. Accept - the Interim Programme Proposal will be sent to the Advisory Board for recommendation in line the following: A commercial viability assessment will be undertaken by the Programme Team and the Financial Manager and considered by the Senior Management Group and the Academic Council to see: - The anticipated demand of the programme. - Cost of the resources (human and physical) required to develop and operate the programme. - Infrastructure and support services. - Any other related costs to the programme development.	Academic Council Programme Proposer(s) Advisory Board	Notification of Commercial Viability Assessment
6	**Programme Development:** If the commercial viability of the proposal is approved, then the proposal moves into programme development stage. The Programme is developed and presented to a Mock Panel who will either:	Programme Development Team	

- Approve - submit to QQI; or
- Reject - revise and resubmit

4.2.1 New Programme Proposal for Blended Learning

For the purpose of blended learning programmes, the programme proposer is responsible for defining the resources and infrastructure requirements of the programme and identifying any special hardware or software requirements as well as identifying any training gaps. This is established in the curriculum planning stages when the nature of the blended approach is determined. Programme development teams are required to be mindful of the potential for overload in blended learning programmes.

At a programme level, the following issues are pertinent:
- the programme design should be informed by best practices in curriculum design.
- The learning experience should be learner-centred and include active and self-directed learning.
- where appropriate, strategies which focus on the development and assessment of soft skills during online components should be included.
- the learning resources and delivery mechanisms should be of high quality and appropriate to the programme content and context.
- the validated programme document should contain:
  - Completed tables mapping module content and assessment to delivery mode.
  - Details of the delivery and assessment modes for online components with any specific resources or delivery requirements – with specified costs.
  - A schedule of key assessment deadlines (including all e-activities and continuous assessments).
  - The detailed specification of the time required for online discussion, forums, and e-activities.
  - An account of how online components of the programme are evaluated and provision of opportunities for feedback, review and monitoring.
  - Details of specific requirements for assessment implementation with particular reference to the verification of each learners' identity and the authenticity of assessment submission.
  - Online components should be equal to any face-to-face components and that appropriate measures for verifying assessment validity are followed.

Programme resourcing issues should be specified such as time for facilitating, moderating, and assessing online activities.

The resources and time required for the development of course content for blended and online modules will vary depending on the range of learning resources, including online interactive components, collaborative tasks, delivery mode and assessment types. These elements form an essential part of the programme and module design process. Careful consideration at the design and planning phase will ensure the provision of a pedagogically sound, interactive, and engaging learning experience and help to determine the detailed time required for development and delivery.

The development of learning objects and resources can involve audio, video, text, animation, gametion among others and can be time-intensive depending on the nature of the activity. The structure, layout and delivery mode may vary for each blended and online module. It is important that the provision of online learning experiences involve delivering content efficiently using available tools effectively.

In addition to the traditional time required for the development and delivery of course content, consideration should also be given to the time required for online activities such as online discussion forums and e-activities.

In summary, adding in e-activities, group work and learning objects are important ways enhancing student engagement in class and helps to ensure they are active participants and not just observers. Dorset college supports the application of the pedagogy first approach to blended learning whereby the module content and learning outcomes inform the choice of tools and technologies used.

4.2.2 Programme Development Procedure for Blended Learning

Procedure Stage	Responsibility	Evidence
Assessment and Consultation Conduct consultations with internal academic staff, learners, industry partners, and alumni to determine the demand and appropriateness of blended delivery. Compile a report identifying programme rationale, digital readiness of the learner profile, and delivery modality justification.	Dean of Academic Affairs/Programme Board	Meeting minutes
Design Learning Framework Apply a structured learning design model (e.g. ADDIE or Constructive Alignment). Identify which elements will be delivered online vs in-person, ensuring each learning outcome is appropriately addressed.	Programme Board	Meetings and minutes
Module and Content Development Subject expert (lecturer) works with programme team and online content delivery designer to create module delivery. Ensure each module has a corresponding digital content plan, reviewed by the Programme Leader for coherence and quality.	Lecturer, Programme Leader, Content Delivery Designer	Programme Document (Teaching & Learning)
Technology Platform Selection Moodle and Zoom are our selected VLE and online class platforms. The content delivery designer is responsible for ensuring that all online delivery is compatible with these platforms.	Programme Team, Content Delivery Designer	Programme Board meeting minutes

| **Mock Panel Review** | Programme Board | Panel Review Report |

Create a mock panel to review the proposed programme.

| **Internal Review and Approval** | Academic Council | AC meeting minutes |

Submit programme documents (syllabi, module descriptors, content plan, assessment map) to Academic Council.

Record minutes, feedback, and final sign-off in accordance with internal QA procedures.

4.3 Programme Development

Programme Development
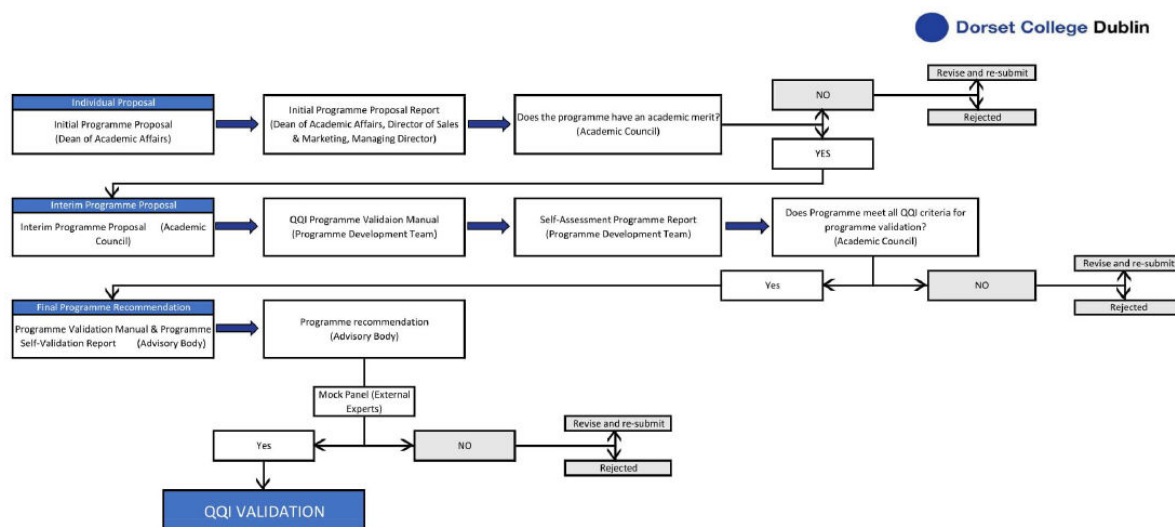
5 Learner Access, Transfer and Progression - Access & Admission

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		
2.1	Addition of table to track changes made to individual policies and procedures. `	01/05/2023	01/06/2023
2.2	Add technical requirements to admission process for blended courses 5.2.1	16/10/2023	3/11/2023

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) and awards thereto.

Applicants can access Dorset College programmes through the following:

1. Central Applications Office (CAO) and as mature students/learners (Please see individual programme admissions criteria);
2. Direct Applications;
3. 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' (QQI, Revised, 2013).

5.1 Access & Admission Higher Education

5.1.1 Access

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

1. Marketing Brochures;
2. Dorset College 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.

5.1.2 Admission

Dorset College has a variety of means of admitting applicants to programmes such as:

1. CAO Applicants (Standard and Non-standard);
    a. Leaving Certificate results appropriate to the programme applied for;
    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 equivalency as certified by NARIC Ireland;
    c. IELTS 6.0.
3. Non-native speakers of English
    a. IELTS 6.0 is required for all applicants including non-native speakers of English.
4. Mature Applicants
    a. RPL and RPEL will be considered by the Admissions Lead.

5.1.3 Appeal

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 within 5 working days.

5.2 Access & Admission Further Education

5.2.1 Access

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

1. Marketing Brochures;
2. Dorset College 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.

Before being accepted into a blended or online learning course, applicants are informed about the technical and physical requirements needed to participate. This ensures they have the necessary tools and resources to access all lectures, materials, and interactive components essential for successful course engagement.

5.2.2 Admission

Dorset College has a variety of means of admitting applicants to programmes such as:

1. Direct Entry*
        Through our Admissions Office in person or via our website;
2. Non-native speakers of English
        IELTS 5.0 is required for all applicants including non-native speakers of English.
3. Under 21

Leaving Certificate standard or appropriate QQI Qualification or equivalent for example Level 4 to gain entry to a Level 5 Further Education Programme with all details available on the Dorset College website and brochures.

4. Mature Applicants
    RPL and RPEL will be considered by the Admissions Lead. Experience in a related field will be of particular relevance, for example healthcare.

5.2.3 Appeal

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 within 5 working days.

*Leaving Certificate: Grade O6 is required for entry to Irish Nursing Degree Programmes and O5 for the UK.

5.3 Admission, Transfer & Progression – Higher Education

5.3.1 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 of their conditional offer via email;
2. If an applicant is considered as an RPL or RPEL application, it then follows that the appropriate procedures outlined below 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 Garda National Immigration Bureau (GNIB) obligations and/or requirements.

5.3.2 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 appraises: Minimum Intended Programme Learning Outcomes (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 learners by providing in a timely manner; transcripts and any other relevant documentation.

5.4 Admission, Transfer & Progression - Further Education

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

For courses such as Pre-Nursing Studies and International Studies (Pre-Masters) for example there are established pathways to Institutes of Technology, Universities, as well as Degrees through UCAS in the UK.

Full details of progression and pathways is provided in Dorset College Brochures and on the College website.

5.5 Admission & Induction

5.5.1 Induction

Prior to the commencement of each academic year successful applicants who have accepted their conditional offer will be invited to induction and will be provided with the following:

1. Academic Operations
   a. Academic Calendar;
   b. Timetable; and
   c. Contact information for the programme management;
   d. Moodle account; and
   e. Office 365 - all learners are provided with an Office 365 account and learners e-mail to which the college will communicate directly with.
2. Facilities
   a. General Facilities such as the canteen;
   b. Library;
   c. EBSCO;
3. Learner Handbook which contains relevant information on matters such as attendance, academic and non-academic support as well as the information above.
4. Programme Handbook which looks to curriculum structure, assessment schedule, award etc.

5.6 Recognition of Prior Learning General Principles

General Principles for Recognised Prior Learning 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 recognise 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.

5.6.1 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.

5.6.2 Recognition of Prior Learning Eligibility

Dorset College recognises academic and non-academic prior learning.

- Recognised Prior Learning (RPL): academic and certified by an awarding body such as QQI, state recognised colleges or institutes or comparable foreign qualification which is certified;
- 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. RPEL: Applicants must be over 23 years of age at the date of the application to be eligible for consideration;
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 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 and where appropriate the Quality Assurance 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.

5.6.2.1 Appeal

If an RPL application is rejected an 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.

5.7 Recognition of Prior Learning Guidelines

When an applicant or learner presents prior certified learning the Admissions Team, who report to and are monitored by the Admissions Lead or to Quality Assurance Lead if an active learner, the decision will be based on the following:

1. Level of Prior Award on the NFQ
    a. 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
    a. 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
    a. The Prior Certified Learning must have been achieved in a comparatively appropriate timeframe for example for computing within the past 3 years or in business within the past 5 years.

Note: a decision on RPL or APEL is subject to an appeal to the Dean of Academic Affairs within 5 days of the respective decision (Admissions Lead/Quality Assurance Lead)

5.8 Recognised Prior Learning Process

1. Applicants/Learners must submit their application on the appropriate form (found in the Learner Handbook, College website and Dorset College VLE Moodle);
2. Applications must be forwarded to the Admissions Department or if they are an active/current learner to the Quality Assurance Lead. Each application for assessment will include an assessment, as required, by an appropriate academic or Programme Leader.
3. Applicants must provide the following in support of their application;
    a. Certificates;
    b. Official 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 to Admissions Lead or Quality Assurance Lead.
5. The Admission Lead or Quality Assurance Lead, as appropriate, will deliver an outcome within 10 working days from the application and if necessary the applicant/learner must attend class pending the outcome of the application to ensure no detriment is suffered if the application is refused and they need to undertake the module.
6. Possible Outcomes include:
    a. Approval;
    b. Approval with conditions;
    c. Refusal;

d. Exemption- no % or grade shall be awarded and EX will be reflected on the learner's transcript. Note: Dorset College policy on Award Stage Exemptions;

5.8.1 Appeal

If an RPL or RPEL 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.

5.8.2 Recognition of Prior Experiential Learning Assessment

Recognition of Prior Experiential 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.

5.8.3 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 the following:

- 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.

5.8.4 Assessment

The College Admission Team who report to 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

must be reviewed by the Admissions Lead if an advanced entry application or by the Quality Assurance Lead if an active learner.

The Admission Lead or Quality Assurance Lead, as appropriate, will deliver an outcome within 10 working days from the application and if necessary the applicant/learner must attend class pending the outcome of the application.

Possible Outcomes include:

    a. Approval;
    b. Approval with conditions;
    c. Refusal;
    d. Exemption- no % or grade shall be awarded and EX will be reflected on the learner's transcript. Note: Dorset College policy on Award Stage Exemptions;

5.8.5 Appeal

Every application is entitled to an appeal to the Dean of Academic Affairs within 5 working days of the outcome.

5.8.6 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/learner experience.

6 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 monthly.
- The College will review learner usage of its virtual learning environment each semester.

6.1 Procedure for Monitoring of Programmes

	Procedure Stage	Responsibility	Evidence
1	**Designation of individual responsible:** The College's Academic Council will appoint a staff member to co-ordinate the annual monitoring, typically the Academic Operations Lead and Quality Assurance Lead.	Academic Council Monitoring co-ordinator(s)	Minutes of Academic Council
2	**Collation of data:** The monitoring co-ordinator(s) will arrange for the collation of the relevant data for the Annual Monitoring Report.	Monitoring co-ordinator(s)	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(s)	Data collected from Stakeholders
4	**Preparation of the Monitoring Report:** The monitoring co-ordinator(s) will prepare the Annual Monitoring Report, and circulate to the members of the Academic Council, who will consider its Recommendations	Monitoring co-ordinator(s) Academic Council	Annual Monitoring Report
5	**Actioning of Recommendations:** The Academic Council will action any recommendations that arise from the Monitoring Report, and designate	Academic Council Academic Management Group	Minutes of Academic Council

responsible of these actions to the

Academic Management Group.

6.1.1.1 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 Council 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' (QQI November, 2017). 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 typically leading to an application by the College for re-validation.

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.

- 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).

6.1.1.2 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 and will typically involved the AMG constituting a Programme Review Team.	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
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**	Academic Council	The finalised

implementation plan and panel's final response: This stage will involve the College's Academic Council considering the Independent Programme Review Report and preparing a formal response and implementation plan. 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	Programme Review team Independent Panel	Provider's Programme Review Report
5 **Application for Revalidation:** This stage will involve the College formally applying to QQI for revalidation of the relevant programmes	Programme Review Team Dean of Academic Affairs	Application for Revalidation to QQI

6.2 Review of Programme of Education & Training Policies and Procedures

The College will review these Programme of Education & Training policies and 4.5 procedures on an annual basis. The following individual(s) will be involved in this review:

- Dean of Academic Affairs
- Academic Operations Lead
- 1 Lecturer
- Programme Leader
- 1 Learner

7 Teaching & Learning

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		
2.1	Addition of Blended Learning Policy 7.3	16/10/2023	3/11/2023
2.2	Amendments to 7.4.2 text added	16/10/2023	3/11/2023
2.2	Online Assessments added 7.4.4.1	16/10/2023	3/11/2023
2.2	Blended Learning Support added 7.7.1	16/10/2023	3/11/2023

Policy Title — **Teaching & Learning**

Date Approved — 17/12/2018

Effective From — 02/01/2019

Monitor — Dean of Academic Affairs / QA Committee

Summary — This policy provides an overview of the policies directly related to the teaching and learning activities of the College. This encapsulates both the learning experience and the learning environment offered by the College.

Related Policies

Revision History & — Version 1 – 2019

Commencement Date & Date of Next Review — 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 provide an overarching framework to ensure the quality of the learning experience offered by the College. The learning experience is inclusive of the learning facilitated in the classroom (and supplemented through the College's Virtual Learning Environment, Moodle), how programmes are taught and delivered by the College, as well as the learning environment offered by the College. This policy will also provide clarity of the College's provision to its learners.

Scope — This policy applies to all assessments as part of the Further Education and Higher Education programmes as well as English Language education at Dorset College.

Policy Statement — Dorset College recognises that the teaching & learning of its programmes is integral to its educational provision. Therefore, the College is cognisant of the need to ensure that it maintains a high standard of teaching and learning. It is also cognisant of the importance of its learning experience

and environment, which support the teaching and learning efforts of the College.

7.1 Monitoring the Learning Experience

The maintenance of the quality of the learning experience is central to the ethos of the College. To ensure this, the College recognises the need to continuously monitor and improve the learner experience that it offers.

The College will monitor its learning experience as follows:

- Quantitative feedback, by way of anonymous survey, from learners twice per semester; mid-way and at the end of each semester;
- Qualitative feedback from class representatives once per semester;
- Faculty feedback collected through Programme Boards and quantitative feedback for example an anonymous survey twice yearly;
- Technical assessment of the virtual learning environment twice per year;
- Feedback received in the External Examiner's Report(s);
- Review of the College's Teaching, Learning & Assessment strategy once per year. Furthermore, the College will ensure that it is kept abreast of developments in the area of teaching & learning by ensuring its staff interact with relevant communities of practice. This may entail one or more of the following on an annual basis:
- Staff and/or faculty attending conferences on teaching & learning. Such as those hosted by HECA, National Forum for the Enhancement of Teaching & Learning, and the International Conference on Engaging Pedagogy.Staff and/or faculty presenting papers at conferences on teaching & learning. Such as those hosted by HECA, National Forum for the Enhancement of Teaching & Learning, and the International Conference on Engaging Pedagogy.
- Staff and/or faculty reviewing contemporary literature on teaching & learning.
- The College facilitating a workshop on teaching & learning approaches for staff and faculty.

7.2 Teaching, Learning & Assessment Strategy

Dorset College engenders internal provider driven quality assurance in the provision of Higher Education Programmes as validated by QQI.

The College currently adopts a predominantly face-to-face teaching approach that is complemented by its virtual learning environment (VLE) MOODLE. The College is committed to the continuing adoption of technology to enhance its Teaching and Learning approach. Its current use of technology is largely confined to its VLE, which acts as a support mechanism for its face-to-face teaching approach.

Dorset College is committed to developing a strategy on digitally enhanced learning as part of the overall development of the College. The College will engage with relevant stakeholders to ensure

that any such development is appropriate and relevant to the particular field of learning and learner and is in line with College Mission and Values.

The College adopts a varied teaching and learning strategy that is intended to engage learners in a variety of ways, and adopt strategies that are level and programme appropriate. The College also views the assessment used for individual modules as a means to support the overarching teaching and learning strategy of the programme. The discussion hereunder provides an outline of the overarching teaching and learning strategy for a programme, and how the assessment strategy supports same. The teaching and learning strategy for each module will also be outlined in the individual module descriptors.

The College adopts a teaching, learning and assessment strategy which is reflective of the NFQ i.e. knowledge, know-how, skills and competencies and ensures teaching, learning and assessment is constructively aligned with Minimum Intended Module Learning Outcomes (MIMLOs), Minimum Intended Programme Learning Outcomes (MIPLOs) and Award Standards

The overarching Teaching, Learning, and Assessment (TLA) Strategy of the College is guided by four core areas:
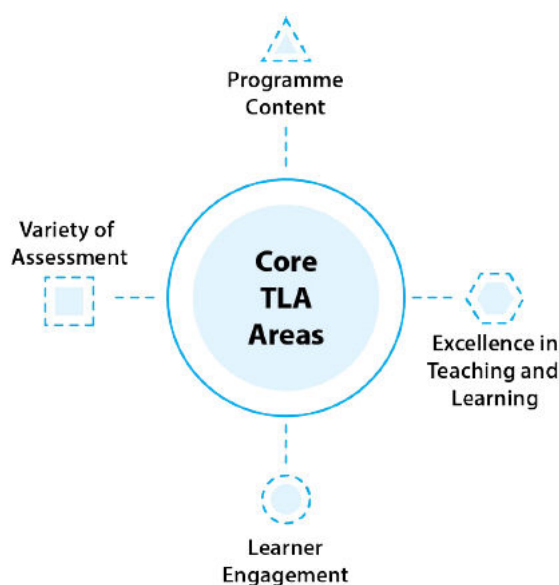
7.3 Blended Learning Policy

Version	Description of Amendments	Date	Approval Date
1.0	Draft policy	16/10/2023	1/01/2024
1.4	Updated policy	15/01/2025	30/01/2025
1.4	Approval of policy	30/01/2025	30/01/2025
1.4	Added to QA manual	10/02/2025	10/02/2025

7.3.1 Introduction

Blended learning involves the delivery of teaching, learning and assessment through both online and face to face synchronous and asynchronous learning approaches. Consideration is made for pedagogical teaching, learning and assessment strategies suitable for live online (or on-campus) classroom sessions, and for activities that can be carried out by the learner in their own time, and at their own pace. **Definition:** "blended learning is the thoughtful integration of classroom face-to-face learning experiences with online learning experiences" (Garrisson & Kanuak, 2004, p. 96) as adopted by QQI in Statutory Quality Assurance Guidelines for Blended Learning.

Our blended learning programme development initiatives consider the following:

a) The development of online learning material suitable for effective and engaging online and face to face synchronous and asynchronous delivery.
b) Consideration for access to new and existing learning technologies, and the development of existing platforms such as our Learning Management System.
c) Tools and resources to facilitate synchronous and asynchronous peer interaction and learning, for example, discussion forums and virtual group spaces.
d) Online tools to support, enable and deliver formative and summative assessment.

This policy was informed by the QQI Statutory Quality Assurance Guidelines for Providers of Blended Learning Programmes, September 2023/V3. This policy reflects the experience and developments in delivering blended learning programmes at Dorset College in response to the Pandemic event (2020 to 2022).

The guidelines specifically focus on quality assurance matters pertaining to blended learning provision.

1.1.1 Objective

The purpose of this policy is to provide an overarching framework to ensure the quality of the learning experience offered by the College using blended learning. This learning experience is inclusive of the learning facilitated in the classroom and Online through the College's Virtual Learning Environment, Zoom and Moodle, how programmes are taught and delivered by the College, as well as the learning environment offered by the College. This policy will also provide clarity of the College's provision of Blended Learning to its learners.

1.1.2 Scope

This policy applies to all delivery and assessments in Further Education, Professional and Higher Education programmes as well as English Language education at Dorset College.

1.1.3 Responsibility

The Dorset Senior Management Team is responsible for ensuring that all proposed developments are aligned with the strategic intentions of the College. This is articulated in our Strategic Plan, underpinned by appropriate investment plans, and specified timeframes for implementation. The strategic plan includes development of new programmes, including Blended Learning programmes. The Academic Council retains responsibility for academic oversight and governance of all programmes, proposed and current, including those delivered through blended learning.

Dorset College will strategically develop blended learning provision in line with best practice. The following procedures are in place to maintain and enhance our planning and development for blended learning:

   a) Dorset College will continue to invest in appropriate infrastructure and technology resources to support blended learning provision, including enhancements to our Virtual Learning Environment.
   b) Teaching staff are afforded professional development training for teaching and learning strategies specific to blended learning.
   c) Compliance with legal obligations are appropriately considered for blended learning contexts, including GDPR, professional and statutory body requirements, including the EU AI Act of March 2024.
   d) Resource implications are factored into all programme development initiatives and are subject to approval by Dorset College Academic Council and the Senior Leadership team.
   e) Academic integrity initiatives will be further developed to ensure that learners' work is properly attributed to them, particularly for assessment that is conducted through remote assessment means. We are members of the National Academic Integrity Network (NAIN) and adhere to the recommendations. Additionally, we actively engage with and learn from the experiences of other members.
   f) External consultants with expertise in blended learning provision are considered in all blended learning programme development initiatives.

1.1.4 Programme Development and Assessment

Programmes designed by Dorset College as blended learning programmes satisfy the QQI Statutory Quality Assurance Guidelines (For Providers of Blended and Fully Online Programmes. In doing so, they satisfy the academic quality and standards required of all Dorset College programmes leading to QQI awards. These programmes further reflect the underpinning concepts outlined within Dorset Colleges overarching Teaching, Learning and Assessment Strategy.

The use of technologies within programme delivery is determined by the Programme Development Team in the context of the best suited pedagogic approach for the discipline, programme level, award type, target learners and available technologies. The existing quality assurance policies and procedures of Dorset College, as approved by QQI, remain applicable in all instances.

To achieve effective blended learning provision, the Programme Development Team actively addresses the following:

a) Teaching and learning practices are grounded in the latest research, such as work from the National Forum and the Community of Inquiry framework (Garrison & Vaughan, 2008). This includes leveraging cognitive presence, social presence, and teaching presence to ensure robust learner engagement. Universal and instructional design principles ensure that blended learning environments are accessible and promote reflective, active learning.

b) Approval mechanisms for both synchronous and asynchronous elements are subject to internal review and continuous quality assurance processes. This includes oversight from the Academic Council and Governance teams to ensure programmes are aligned with the College's academic standards and policies, enhancing teaching presence and maintaining consistent quality.

c) Assessment strategies integrate both formative and summative assessments to support continuous learning. Formative assessments (e.g., quizzes, peer assessments, and reflective journals) provide opportunities for learners to engage with course content remotely, while summative assessments incorporate academic integrity principles to minimise academic impropriety. These assessments align with intended learning outcomes and foster cognitive presence.

d) Curriculum development prioritises learner-centred approaches, ensuring that technology serves pedagogy rather than driving it. Each module integrates synchronous and asynchronous learning experiences that promote interaction, reflection, and critical thinking. The design incorporates Universal Design for Learning (UDL) principles where reasonably possible to cater to a diverse student population, thus fostering inclusivity and accessibility

e) A variety of media delivery models are employed to enhance the learning experience and ensure accessibility for all learners. The team selects tools that not only support content delivery but also promote social presence through collaborative platforms, discussion boards, and group projects.

f) Learners receive clear information about the structure of blended learning within each module, including the technologies and tools to be used, expectations for attendance, and engagement requirements. This transparency helps learners understand the balance between online and in-person activities, fostering a shared learning culture that promotes teaching and social presence.

g) All learning activities, assessments, and instructional methods are closely aligned with the programme's learning outcomes. This ensures coherence between what is taught and what is assessed, with clear benchmarks for success across both synchronous and asynchronous modes of delivery. Assessment rubrics help learners understand how their work aligns with the intended outcomes, ensuring that both cognitive and teaching presence are actively supported.

h) Summative assessment design is guided by best practices in academic integrity, referencing the work of the National and Global Academic Integrity Network (GAIN). This ensures that assessments are fair, secure, and reflective of the learners' understanding and application of knowledge, particularly in online contexts.

All blended learning programme development complies with Dorset College's internal programme development policies, procedures, and approval mechanisms. This ensures that all programmes adhere to quality assurance standards and are in line with College governance frameworks.

1.1.5   Learner Experience

The learner experience is an integral focus for the provision of a learner-centred blended learning approach. Blended learning approaches may be new to some learners. It is therefore important to clearly highlight how blended learning may differ from previous learning experiences. This will ensure learners are prepared through a statement of motivation and engagement. The following procedures are put in place to ensure the learner is well supported and well informed.

a) Appropriate information is made available to the prospective learner at induction that adequately explains the blend of learning (synchronous and asynchronous), including how it aligns with the intended learning outcomes, and the realistic time commitment required of them to engage and succeed on the programme.

b) Clear prerequisite knowledge and technological skills required to participate on the programme is presented. Information on broadband, software and hardware specifications is outlined.

c) Learner monitoring and support mechanisms for blended learning provision remain in place since the pandemic, including appropriate interventions to identify learners who may be struggling with online/remote learning programme elements.

d) Regular learner feedback mechanisms are implemented to ensure continuous improvement based on student experiences, allowing the College to adapt and enhance support as needed.

e) Orientation is provided through a series of sessions to outline support and learning resources, for blended learning, including relevant key staff contact information.

f) Teaching and learning resources for online learning elements meet Dorset College specified expectations around equality of opportunity, interactivity, and autonomous learning. Resources are carefully designed to align with both formative and summative assessment strategies, ensuring that learner progress is effectively measured across all blended learning activities.

Summative assessments include clear guidelines and are designed to uphold academic integrity, using technologies such as plagiarism detection where appropriate. These assessments align with the programme's learning outcomes to ensure consistency across all delivery modes.

1.1.6   Evaluation

Evaluation of Blended Learning provision aligns to the already established Dorset College Evaluation, Feedback and Monitoring protocols. Feedback is sought from programme administration and support staff, teachers, and learners through on-going feedback processes (Programme Boards, Student Surveys etc.). In addition, feedback is sought from external examiners to ensure the integrity of assessment is maintained in an online environment. Evaluation outcomes feed back into new blended learning programme development initiatives led by the Programme Development Team.

1.1.7   Related Policies

Teaching & Learning

Programme Development

7.4 The Core Teaching, Learning, and Assessment areas

7.4.1 Programme Content

The College endeavours to ensure that the content of its programmes is both engaging and challenging, and also cognisant of the skills that will be of assistance to learners for employability upon graduation. To ensure that its programme content achieves this, the College initially develops its MIPLOs, which are informed by the appropriate awards standards. These MIPLOs then inform a programme's MIMLOs, which should align to the MIPLOs. The College is also conscious that the MIMLOs are both theoretically aware, and practically applied – that is, a programme's modules are built on a foundation of ensuring the learner is aware of the requisite theoretical arguments/perspectives within a disciplinary area, but also is exposed to how such theoretical perspectives are practically applied in work-based scenarios.

Programme Content Goals

1. To ensure that MIMLOs and MIPLOs are benchmarked against those of other leading educational institutions;
2. To ensure that modules are theoretically informed and practically applied in line with Award Standards and the NFQ; and
3. To facilitate stakeholder input: learner, employers, lead academics and graduates into the devising of a programme content.

7.4.2 Excellence in Teaching and Learning

The College recognises that its faculty should not only be well-informed in their disciplinary area, and thus, a module's content, but they should also be well-informed on best practice with regards the delivery of such content. Therefore, the College endeavours to ensure that its faculty are informed on Teaching and Learning theories, and on the variety of potentially effective teaching strategies. The College is also aware that ensuring that its faculty have the requisite knowledge in this area will involve staff professional development. Therefore, the College has committed to providing financial support for some of its faculty to undertake a Masters' in Teaching and Learning and facilitates members of its faculty to attain the digital badge in Teaching Strategies.

With the addition of Blended Learning programmes the college requires the Faculty to enhance their own knowledge, skills and competence in new digital technology. Support from the college is provided to help all staff train and learn the new technology.

Teaching and Learning Goals

1. To ensure that faculty are informed of teaching and learning theories, and effective teaching strategies.
2. To facilitate faculty in furthering their knowledge in this area, through providing continuous professional development opportunities.

7.4.3 Learner Engagement

The level of engagement from learners is key to ensuring that the educational experience that they have during their studies in the College is a fulfilling one. The transition from purely didactic to a more interactive learning environment has as a prerequisite, an engaged learner body. The College is keen to harness the potential of such a learning environment but facilitating as much engagement as possible with its learners.

In the blended learning environment attendance is very important, for student engagement and learning. The student handbook contains the Zoom Etiquette policy which specifies what is expected from students online. This handbook is given to each student at the beginning of their course.

7.4.3.1 Learner Engagement Goals

1. To provide an engaging and challenging programme content, delivered through engaging teaching and learning strategies.
2. To explore how technology can be used both inside and outside the classroom to enhance learner engagement.
3. To ensure an emphasis on employability skills, particularly in the award year of a programme.
4. To explore how a 'learner voice' could be further incorporated into various aspects of a programme, such as indicative syllabus and assessment to ensure collaborative learning.

7.4.4 Variety of Assessment

As educational programmes continue to move towards being structured through learning outcomes, a by-product of this has been the assessment of the learning outcomes. This has led to an increasing focus on the assessment instruments by learners, as performance in such instruments tend to be the key tangible outcome that is recognised from a programme of learning. Aside from the worthy debate as to whether this is appropriate, it has resulted in an increasing focus on assessment. The College is conscious to ensure that the assessment instruments that it uses on all programmes are appropriate at the module level, but also cohesive at the programme level. Further to these key considerations, the College is also conscious that the learner workload is appropriate but not overly arduous, and that a variety of assessment instruments are utilised. To ensure the former, the College is guided by the notional learning hours detailed within the ECTS credit system, and for the latter, the College is cognisant of not over-using some instruments and disregarding others – for example, the College recognises the value of the examination as an assessment instrument but is conscious of an over-reliance on examinations.

7.4.4.1 Online Assessment for Blended Learning Programmes

For Blended Learning programmes assessments will be online. These assessments may involve completing online exams, submitting files online via the VLE or completing a live assessment. Managing the process of validating learners' work and verifying their participation is key to ensuring the integrity of the assessment process and of the programme. Incorporating digital technology can facilitate faculty to implement an assessment strategy in line with Dorset College's current Assessment Policy.

Verifying Assessment Validity

The development of online assessments can be challenging in a blended programme because assessment is underpinned by the learning outcomes, academic policy, level of course, and available assessment resources. Using appropriate technologies and implementing strategies to validate online assessment is a critical component for the academic validity of a programme or module. It is necessary that assessment arrangements and instruments conducted through online learning are reliable, secure, effective, fair and provide learners with appropriate confidential feedback on their progress.

QQI's guidelines on blended learning programmes state the need to provide robust and consistent systems and processes across the organisation to manage the submission, receipt, marking and return of assessments. As part of the programme design process, lecturing staff need to consider which assessment type and digital technology is most effective and ensure that there are robust arrangements in place across the organisation to confirm the identity of remote learners and mitigate against fraudulent practices.

All exams in Dorset College are in person exams, and the learners have to show their identification.

To confirm that a learner's assessment work is their original work the following criteria for assessment will apply:

- clear and consistent statements about identity verification and fraud, and the responsibilities risks, and outcomes associated with any breaches of Academic Integrity & Plagiarism policies for a learner are included in each student programme handbook as well as being available on the VLE.
- online assignment submissions should incorporate the following:
  learners must confirm authenticity of own work by selecting an honesty and non-plagiarism box on each submission.
  o learners verify their identity by logging into Dorset College's VLE for the submission of assignments and for the completion of assessments.
  o learners work must be validated using Turnitin software to check for plagiarism and the use of AI.

7.4.4.2 Assessment Goals

- To ensure a variety of assessments are utilised at each stage of a programme;
- To recommend learners have a proportionate number of examinations within the overall context of the MIPLO's and the programme assessment strategy;
- To ensure the learner's assessment workload is both challenging and balanced at each stage of a programme;
- To encourage learners to attempt all elements of an individual module assessment strategy with a view to passing the module overall.

To ensure that its teaching and learning approach maintains its currency, the College will:

- monitor its teaching and learning approach on an annual basis. This monitoring will incorporate learner feedback and lecturer feedback on existing and new approaches to teaching and learning adopted by the College. It will also review assessment marks, attendance and participation at classes where a new teaching and learning approach is adopted.
- send a contingent of its staff to conferences on teaching and learning annually.
- facilitate at least one teaching and learning workshop for its faculty annually.

7.4.4.3 Assessment & Moderation - Assessment-Role of Examiners

A member of Dorset College faculty allocated responsibility for assessing learners shall be deemed to be an examiner. The Examiner is assisted by a second member of faculty, a moderator. The examiner's role is to:

- Prepare assessments in consultation with the Moderator (please see page 125), in accordance with the approved module descriptor, learning outcomes and aligned to the level and MIPLOs;
- Submit examination papers, solutions and marking schemes, in consultation with the Moderator, to the Examinations Office where they are forwarded to the External Examiner(s);
- Alongside the Programme Leader, take account of suggestions, deletions, additions or amendments proposed by the External Examiner (s) and implement as recommended or provide a rationale for non-implementation
- Mark the assessments and arrange for moderation within the College time-frames and submit marks to the Examinations Team via the means specified; Moodle;
- Prepare a sample of marked continuous assessment, in conjunction with the moderator, for the External Examiner and return to Examinations Team or ensure appropriate access to Moodle for review of course-work, grades and feedback;
- Return scripts and any associated forms to the Examinations Office;
- Receive feedback from the External Examiner(s) and, in conjunction with the Programme Leader agree the marks being awarded to each candidate (prior to the meeting of the Board of Examiners);
- Attend meetings of the Examination Board, to verify marks and contribute to the deliberation of grades and awards.

7.4.4.4 Assessment-Role of Moderator

A Moderator is appointed for each module by the Dean of Academic Affairs and the relevant Programme Leader.

Any such appointment is made on the basis of experience as an educator in the particular subject or a related area, normally including at least 2 years teaching and assessment or other curriculum-related experience within the last 5 years at the same level on the framework as the subject which is being moderated.

The moderation process is to ensure assessment practices and decisions are regularly sampled and evaluated, and findings are acted upon to ensure consistency and fairness to each learner.

The Moderator works closely with the Examiner in a monitoring/advisory role to ensure:

Assessment is appropriate, consistent, fair and transparent and does not discriminate against any learner;

- Assessment has been set in line with learning outcomes of the module;
- An assessment has been marked in line with the expressed aims and learning outcomes of the assignment/examination, and in terms of marking criteria fairness of marking and the equality of treatment of each learner;

- Internal consistency of assessment within a module;
- Comparability of standards across modules within a subject area;
- Assessment is appropriate to the level at which it is taught;
- A detailed guide to assessment and moderation is provided to each member of faculty

7.4.4.5   Teaching and Learning - Further Education

Dorset College engenders internal provider driven quality assurance in the provision of Further Education by ensuring our mechanisms and procedure adopted are quality assured and driven by our stakeholders (faculty, learner, employers, alumni and relevant work-based training entities) to achieve the appropriate learning outcomes through planning, expertise, resources and commitment by Dorset College to excellence in learning through continuous improvement Self-evaluation and careful monitoring of each programme and in this instance Further Education is crucial in ensuring the quality of such programmes as delivered by Dorset College is effective and embraces ongoing improvements to teaching, learning and assessment.

Dorset College monitors the learning experience of all learners by conducting the following;

- Learner surveys;
- Learner Focus Groups;
- Faculty/tutor feedback (Formal by way of anonymous survey, non-formal by way of Programme Team Meetings and informal by way of open communication with the Dean of Academic Affairs and the Programme Leader for a particular programme);

Surveys include questions which relate to:

- Programme Content;
- Delivery Modes;
- Teaching and Learning and Teaching Modes;
- Assessment;
- Information and Support Services.
- Learner Supports
- Learning Resources

All learners are provided, at induction, with a Learner Handbook and a bespoke Programme Handbook for a particular programme which includes the following information:

- Programme Content and resources
- Facilities; Library, Canteen, Printing
- Learner Support; Student Experience Leader, Exam supports etc.
- Programme Team and points of contact for example academic operations, librarian, programme leader
- Learners who undertake a course in Further Education are offered academic support by our Head of Library, IS and Enhancement through referencing classes and one-to-one sessions throughout the academic year.
- All learners are encouraged to develop their employability by partaking in Dorset College Jobs Club, Clubs and Societies as well as social trips.

7.4.4.6   Assessment & Verification - Further Education

Dorset College is committed to authentic, fair and transparent assessment of all learners and in this instance that of learners undertaking a course in Further Education in line with national standards to ensure learners are informed of the expected outcomes and their progress in achieving them.

Dorset College in an effort to ensure assessment is understood by staff and learners ensures that staff are trained on an ongoing basis and the learner is brought through the programme at the admission stage by way of interview, at induction and by the module leader in conjunction with the relevant programme leader.

Staff and learners will be familiarised by way of Programme Handbook, Learner Handbook provided at induction with the following:

- Assessment instruments and schedules;
- Expected Certification date specifically should the programme entitle a learner to apply for Higher Education through the CAO;
- Assessment Briefs and Grading Criteria;
- Appeals;
- Repeats;
- Learner Supports available;
- Assessment and Workplace Assessment;
- Award Classifications.

7.4.4.7   Assessment Verification & Authentication - Further Education

7.4.4.8   Internal Verification

Dorset College relies on a system of Internal Verification (IV) for all assessments which are undertaken as part of a module within a Further Education (FE) Programme and is completed prior to the submission of marks to QBS for provisional results and External Authentication. IV ensures fairness and consistency across the grade brackets and ensures the accuracy of assessment outcomes and marks reports are verified by a person other than the internal examiner/module leader.

Dorset College ensures the individual undertaking IV is appropriately trained and carries out the following checks prior to External Authentication;

- Missing assessments or part(s) thereof;
- Missing or inappropriate assessment briefs;
- Omissions, errors in relation to grades or learner data;
- Inaccuracies with regards to data entry such as award codes, results etc.
- Grading inconsistencies between assessors.

7.4.4.9 External Authentication

Dorset College ensures that all assessments and grades thereto are externally authenticated after the completion of IV by the College to ensure objective and authoritative confirmation of level appropriate, authentic, fair and consistent assessment for all learners across all modules comprising a programme.

Dorset College ensures the appropriate external authenticator has access to all IV reports and provisional results as generated by the Exams Officer prior to the EA visit to authenticate results.

7.4.4.10 Results Verification & Process - Further Education

7.4.4.11 Results Verification

Once External Authentication has taken place the results are formally approved by a results approval panel comprising;

- Exams Officer
- Programme Leader
- Module Leader
- Internal Verifier

Marks are then sent forward by the Exams Office to QQI via QBS for official certification. After each assessment period there is a programme team meeting to ensure the learner outcomes are in line with the Programme Learning Outcomes and Module Learning Outcomes and do a comparative grade analysis and to ensure appropriate feedback is provided to all learners.

7.4.4.12 Process

- Module Leader submits their assessments and marks sheets for IV at least four weeks
- prior to submission of marks to QQI;
- IV process takes place and is to be completed at least 10 days prior to EA;
- Provisional Results (PR) are generated by the Exams Officer and released to learners;
- Learners are advised of their right of appeal within 4 days of the release of PR;
- EA verifies the results pursuant to a site visit and review of coursework, IV Reports,
- Provisional Results and Authentication Reports
- Marks are put forward for Certification to QQI via QBS by the Exams Officer.

7.4.4.13 Group Work Policy

Group Work is a vital component of each programme engendering a cohesive and collaborative learning environment which ensures our learners acquire and self-direct their skills and competencies and acquire invaluable graduate attributes.

Group Work ensures competencies such as team-work, active learning and a reflective practice are an integrative part of module assessment ensuring the achievement and constructive alignment of assessment; in this instance group work, to Minimum Intended Module Learning Outcomes (MIMLOs) and Minimum Intended Programme Learning Outcomes (MIPLOs) within the overall context of the specific programme.

Each programme team, through team meetings, will ensure that the level of group work is level appropriate to the MIMLOs and respective MIPLOs and is achievable and supported by a clear assessment schedule which is to be made available to learners at induction and managed carefully by the Academic Operations Lead in conjunction with faculty.

Group Work refers to where two or more learners work together as part of formative and summative assessment. (Note: Only summative assessment is credit bearing as per Dorset College Policy on assessment).

Dorset College categorise Group Work as learner-led or lecturer-led, and whatever method is used, the learner should be advised of the rationale and how this relates to the level (for example Level 6) and the overall construct of the module and the related MIMLOs as aligned to the MIPLOs of the programme. The programme team will look at the advantages and disadvantages of each approach.

Teacher-Led		Learner-Led	
Advantages	Disadvantages	Advantages	Disadvantages
Closely aligned employment scenario	Feelings of loss and control	Increases motivation	May lead to different levels or perceptions regarding individual contributions
Stimulates diverse Groups and Learning Experiences	Lecturers may not be aware of Inter-Personal Issues	Creates friendships and alliances within a group	Learners may see power struggles emerging and learner exclusion

7.4.4.14 Assessment Goals
1. To achieve authentic, reliable and valid assessments at each stage of the programme.
2. To ensure a variety of assessments are utilised at each stage of a programme.
3. To require learners to attempt all elements of an individual module assessment strategy.

7.4.4.15 Grading
To ensure group-work is fair, authentic and consistent Dorset College requires the group, either self-selecting or selected by the lecturer as appropriate, to submit a single product or piece of work (artefact or report) but each group member also submits an individual piece that reflects on the process and their learning. Marks are typically a combination of the group work and individual piece.

7.4.4.16 Conflict
The programme team are mindful of learner conflict within a group and learners often provide formal (through class representative meetings) and informally to lecturers, academic operations or the Student Experience Leader, that they are having difficulty within a group and this is typically linked to contributions or engagement by one learner or another to the group.

The programme team endeavour to conciliate but advise the group that conflict is inherent in all group projects and it is part of the assessment to self-manage the group dynamic.

The programme or a particular member of faculty in conjunction with the Academic Team will exercise academic judgment should such conflict compromise the assessment and may intervene in a more formal way. Formal intervention may include but is not limited to the following:

1. Speaking with the particular learners;
2. Encouraging the learner to log such conflict in their learning journal in a professional manner;
3. Re-constituting a group if the conflict cannot be resolved.
4. Should a group's number fall below two the programme team will look to an alternative assessment which meets the MIMLOs of a particular module ensuring there is no disadvantage for the affected learner.

7.4.4.17 Learner Support

Dorset College aims to foster a diverse learning environment where the learner' is supported to ensure an equal learning environment without barriers with dignity and respect at the core of all teaching, learning and assessment.

Dorset College provides a number of opportunities to applicant's and learners to advise the college of any required learning supports from the application stage or indeed any any stage throughout the academic year to ensure appropriate progression from a particular programme for example;

- College Website
- Application form;
- Induction;
- Throughout the academic year to any one of the following persons
  - Student Experience Leader
  - Academic Operations Lead
  - Module Leader
  - Programme Leader
  - Examinations Officer
  - Quality Assurance Lead

7.5 Learner Support Application/ Admissions Process

7.5.1 Application/Admissions Process

Once the Admissions Team receives an application advising of the requirement of a learner support the following process will be followed;

The Admissions Lead will organise a meeting with the applicant and will ensure the following:

- specific educational supports will be discussed such as the requirement of readers in braille or a loop system in a classroom or indeed access requirements are discussed;
- Information is provided regarding facilities and supports available in the College during the Academic year and regarding examinations;
- An individual orientation of the College building(s) and in particular of the rooms the learner will be attending for example labs or traditional flat classrooms which may well involve a consultation with the Academic Operations Lead and/or Operations Lead as to suitability of rooms and evacuation processes etc;
- An appraisal by the Academic Lead of the programme, assessments and exams, which may require consultation with the examinations officer and/or Quality Assurance Lead, and to advise the applicant of accommodations which are available thereto;
- The Admissions Lead will then inform the Quality Assurance Lead and Academic Operations Lead of any specific learning supports needed to ensure a consistent and supportive approach from the college. The appropriate lead will advise the relevant Programme Leader (once the consent of the applicant is obtained) with the consent of the applicant. The applicant will then fill in a Learner Support Form which is available on the College website and the Learner Handbook.

7.5.2 Learner Supports

While the supports below are available to all learners – those with specific learning needs will be allocated designate support, Student Experience Leader, to ensure they are not hindered in their studies. Dorset College offers specific supports such as a Loop System but for support relating to Dyslexia there are also the following supports:

- Dorset College have a designated person, Head of Library Information Systems and Enhancement, who provides extra classes both general (Referencing etc.) and specific (Spelling and Grammar etc.) throughout the year. Details of this are available on our VLE Moodle and our Website as part of the Student Hub.
- Learners will have access to the Library and Computer Laboratories each week and there is WI-Fi throughout each building;
- Learners have access to the Virtual Learning Environment (VLE) Moodle for details of course content, timetables, examinations, course notes, contact details of further supports, advice, tips on taking exams, stress, presentations etc
- Learners have access to additional information through the Learner Handbook.
- Programme Leader(s), Academic Operations Lead, Quality Assurance Lead, teaching staff and administrative staff as well as the Student Experience Leader are available to talk to learners by appointment to deal with any issues relating to academic support
- Reception: Learners have access to a reception desk Monday – Thursday up to 9.30pm and Friday up to 5.00 pm where they can arrange language exchanges/classes where appropriate.

7.5.3 Academic Term Induction & Re-Induction

Induction is a vital part of the Academic Term and is led by our Student Experience Leader who brings the learners through the lay-out of the academic year, provides the learners with an induction pack and introduces each learner to the academic and management team.

At the beginning of each year including those who have progressed to another level (for example from Stage one to two) Dorset College Student Experience Leader ensures Induction and Re-induction takes place every September or in January if a January intake or when a programme starts if a Further Education Programme.

The induction pack contains the following;

- Learner Handbook which contains information on Learner Supports and related application forms such as examination supports;
- During induction the learners are informed of what constitutes plagiarism, and the importance of Academic Integrity in their academic career;
- Academic Team Profiles and Contact Details;
- Wi-Fi Codes for the respective Buildings;
- Facilites information such as Opening Hours for the Library and Canteen;
- Moodle and Office 365 Instructions;
- Programme Handbook specific to the relevant Programme which includes credits, module descriptors, Assessment Schedule and all programme relevant material.

7.5.4 Guidance and Pastoral Counselling

The pastoral care of learners is of utmost concern to all Dorset College staff. The College applies the Code of Practice and Guidelines for the Provision of Education to International Learners (published by the Irish Higher Education Quality Network, IHEQN). All programmes offered to international learners by Dorset College have been placed on the Interim List of Eligible Programmes (ILEP).

The Student Counsellor is available at designated times to offer confidential, impartial and supportive counselling to learners experiencing personal difficulties. For those presenting every effort shall be made to identify the appropriate professional help available.

7.5.5 Assignments

- Extension of deadlines must be negotiated and agreed in consultation with the appropriate member of faculty/tutor and agreed with the relevant Programme Leader. The Academic Operations Lead and Exams Officer ensure that any such extensions are recorded to ensure that an appropriate schedule of assignment submissions is maintained when making these arrangements.

7.5.6 Examination Provision

- Examinations are central to the academic process and learners are encouraged to advise any of the following persons if they require additional supports:
  - o Academic Operations Lead
  - o Quality Assurance Lead
  - o Student Experience Leader and specifically the
  - o Examinations Officer who takes charge of the process and ensures that the appropriate supports are in place to ensure the learners demonstrate their knowledge of the subject being examined.

7.5.6.1 Exam Supports

- Extra time/Rest-Periods:
  - o to complete each exam paper: the amount of time a candidate will be allowed will be assessed on a case-by-case basis and the Quality Assurance Lead and the Examinations Officer will ensure the assessment/examination is achievable in the time-frame;
- Dictation to an amanuensis:
  - o (someone to whom you can dictate the learner's exam answers). An amanuensis should have a good working knowledge of the subject matter being examined and be in no way connected personally or professionally to the learner;
- A reader:
  - o will read and re-read the entire or any part of the examination paper as well as any part of the candidate's text as requested.
- Enlarged print to A3 size/Paper:
  - o this is common for candidates who are partially sighted. Examination papers and other relevant documents are enlarged to a readable size or put onto yellow paper for example;
- Assistive Technology and/or a separate exam room:
  - o candidates may request the use of a computer etc. in conjunction with any of the other supports and such a request must be medically supported.
- Defer or an Extension of deadlines:
  - o must be negotiated and agreed in consultation with the Module Leader and the Quality Assurance Lead/Examinations Officer on a case-by-case basis and in line with the supports required and reasonably available to Dorset College;
- Other:
  - o some candidates may have specific requirements that are not known to the College. In this instance it is the responsibility of the learner to inform the Student Experience Leader and Examination Officer of these requirements well in advance of the exam.

7.6   Flexible Learning Pathways

As stated in policy 5.2 in this section, the College adopts a primarily face-to-face teaching approach, which is supported by technology through its VLE. However, the College is cognisant that this teaching approach is not appropriate or best suited to all learners.

Furthermore, the College also recognises the limits to the education provision that it can offer to the necessary quality standard.

Therefore, the College commits to:

- providing flexible learning pathways where it can. Ordinarily this would include allowing learners to defer part of a programme (subject to the mitigating circumstances being documented and accepted by the College), and providing learners with alternative assessment instruments where needed
- allowing learners to undertake a programme using an alternative teaching approach where that teaching approach has been validated by the College for the delivery of that programme
- providing learning material and/or resources that may be required to assist the learning experience
- utilise technology to assist the learning experience, such as interactive whiteboards, library services and laptops in the classroom
- having dedicated personnel in place to co-ordinate learning supports, such as supplementary academic writing classes, mathematics classes and assessment workshops.
- facilitating learners to meet with their lecturers outside of the scheduled classroom times (appointment only) which forms part of their contract of employment.

7.6.1   Blended Learning Support
Physical Resources
A range of physical resources is required to facilitate synchronous and asynchronous delivery of learning content and assessment.
These physical resources include the:
- Provision of technology tools to deliver online classes.
- Teaching and Learning resource folder in the Staff Hub on Moodle linked to national and international best practices to direct associated staff CPD and training.

Learning Resources
The Teaching and Learning resource folder in the Staff Hub on the VLE will contain a broad range of resources to support and facilitate blended and online programmes. These may include:
- a set of training resources including user guides and information guides on using VLE.
- best practice guides on learning design approach for the development of learning objects and the delivery of blended and online content
- best practice guides on delivering online classes and moderating online activities.

- best practice guides on assessment and the provision of assessment feedback for blended and online modules

8 Mutual Respect in Learner-Teacher Relationship

The College is committed to providing an educational provision that is learner-centred. This means that the operation and management of the College is ultimately influenced by first considering how the learner is best served. Being learner-centred, the College is conscious of ensuring that the learner is treated with dignity and respect during their studies with the College. However, the College also recognises the responsibilities of the learner. These responsibilities include developing an autonomy over their learning, being responsible for their learning, and having respect for those who are assisting them in their studies.

The learner-teacher relationship is arguably the most critical relationship in the learning experience. A harmonious relationship can greatly assist the learning process, and help the learner achieve their potential, but a fractious relationship can become a significant hindrance.

Therefore, the College will:

- Develop a charter of mutual respect between learners and teachers with input from both parties.
- Ensure that both learners and teachers are aware of the policy and charter of mutual respect that it insists upon. This will be achieved through reference in the Learner Handbook and Employee Handbook.
- Investigate all instances reported from either learners or teachers where the counterpart was not deemed to act in a mutually respectful manner. Where it is found that either the learner or the teacher infringed on the ideal of mutual respect, the College's disciplinary procedure will be followed.

8.1 Learner Complaints & Appeals

As previously stated, Dorset College is a learner centred educational institute. Hence, it tries to ensure learner involvement with the development and review of as much of its policies as is appropriate. The College also realises that there may be instances where its ideals of learner centric, mutual respect and inclusion are not met. For such instances, the College has procedures in place for Learner Complaints and Appeals.

8.1.1 Learner Complaint Procedure

	Procedure Stage	Responsibility	Evidence
1	**Written Complaint:**	Learner	Written Complaint
	If a learner wishes to make a formal complaint about their experience in the College, they will be advised that such complaints should be made in writing and sent to the Academic Operations Lead.	Academic Operations Lead	
	The appropriate form shall be found in the Learner Handbook, on the College website and the VLE, Moodle.		
	The complaint should include as much detail as possible as to the nature of the complaint. Where it is about College facilities, these should be specifically detailed, and their alleged inadequacies and/or deficiencies highlighted. Where a complaint relates to a member of the College's staff/faculty, the incident that is the focus of the complaint should be detailed, with the alleged behaviour of the staff/faculty member clearly outlined.		
2	**Investigation of complaint:**	Academic Management Committee	
	All complaints are investigated under the auspices of the AMC. The AMC will ordinarily assign an individual to co-ordinate this investigation. An investigation will explore the nature and details of the complaint.		
	If the complaint is in regard to College facilities, the investigator will review these facilities to assess if they are fit for purpose.		
	If the complaint is in regard to a member of the College's staff, the investigator may interview the staff member to whom the complaint has been made against and/or anyone else (learner or staff member) who may have witnessed the incident that provides the context for the complaint.		

3	**Report of investigation:**	Academic Management Committee
	The investigator shall submit their report of the investigation into the complaint to the AMC. Where a member of the AMC is the subject of the complaint, that person will be omitted from the circulation of the report.	
	The AMC will then consider the report at its next meeting. The report will have a recommended outcome that the AMC will consider, but not necessarily adopt. The AMC has the ultimate authority on how to respond to this complaint.	
4	**Outcome of investigation:**	Academic Management Committee
	The AMC must have a 2:1 majority for a valid decision. The AMG has discretion as to what potential outcomes they may decide. All decisions must be evidence based and supported by the investigative report. Typically there are 10 working days from a leaner complaint to the AMG decision which may be extended, on notice to the learner, if necessary due to the complexity of a complaint/availability of information.	

The evidence column for the above rows:

Evidence
Investigation Report
Minutes of AMG
Minutes of AMG

8.1.2 Learner Appeals Procedure

	Procedure Stage	**Responsibility**	**Evidence**
1	**Written Appeal:**	Appeals Committee	Written Appeal
	If a learner is not satisfied with the outcome of their compliant as determined by the AMC, they are entitled to appeal this outcome to the Appeals Committee within 5 working days from the decision of the AMC.		
	The appeal must detail the reason for the appeal. Specifically, it must state the reason for their dissatisfaction with the outcome from the AMC. If an appeal does not include this, it will not be considered by the Appeals Committee.		

2 Review of appeal:
 	
The Dean will give each appeal an initial screening to assess if it merits investigation. Where an appeal is made without sufficient evidence or support for why the learner believes the initial outcome was dissatisfactory, the appeal will not be progressed and the learner will be notified of this.
 	
If the Appeals Committee deems the appeal to have merit she/he will review the AMC decision and can:
 	
   1. Request additional information from the parties;
   2. Dismiss the Appeal; or
   3. Uphold the Appeal.
	Dean of Academic Affairs	

3 Uphold the Appeal: Where the appeal is upheld a fresh investigation will be conducted by the AMC. This investigation will be conducted by a different investigator who reports back to the Appeals Committee who ensures all such appeals and actions are reported to the Academic Council as part of annual reporting.	Appeals Committee	Review Report Minutes of AMC and interview parties.

8.2 Learning Environment

The College recognises learning environment as a descriptive term that encapsulates a broad array of its infrastructure and facilities. Its learning environment includes its physical infrastructure as well as that of any potential outreach centres owned by another party, or off-campus environments such as work placements.

The College will:

- Ensure all classrooms are fully equipped with the requisite hardware, such as a computer, projector and speakers, and furniture for learners.
- Ensure that Wifi is available throughout its buildings.
- Ensure that all programmes or modules that have an ICT component will be taught in a computer laboratory.
- Ensure that all of its computer laboratories are equipped with a sufficient number of computers for a class cohort. Thus, the ratio of computers to learners will be at least 1:1.
- Increase the e-resources available in its library to include more eBooks.

- Maintain the operational efficiency of its virtual learning environment and continue to improve the learner experience of this platform through adoption of plug-ins that will enhance the virtual learning environment.
- Have staff available to support its learning environment. This includes the College librarian, IT manager, and programme administration staff.
- Consult with learners on an annual basis to enquire as to the effectiveness of the learning environment. This will help inform the continued improvement of its environment.
- Review its learning environment on an annual basis to ensure they are maintained to an appropriate standard and that additional facilities and/or supports can be added to its learning environment.
- The College does not currently teach in outreach centres or engage in collaboration with other providers for the delivery of its awards. However, where the College to commence such arrangements, it would commit to the policy details outlined above that cover its learning environment.

The College currently offers work placement as an optional component on some of its programmes. Although the College does not foresee significant changes in its provision of work experience in the short-term (such as having work experience/placement as a larger component of a programme), it is still conscious of the need to ensure the appropriateness of the environment where existing learners may gain ECTS credit for learning acquired in the workplace.

Therefore, the College will:

- Ensure that each company that is facilitating work experience for a learner is fully informed on what is entailed. This would ordinarily entail an email communication to the appropriate person in the company with details of the requirements of the work experience.
- Visit the facilities of each company that is facilitating work experience to ensure they are appropriate and fit for purpose.
- Have a designated liaison person internally for the learner to contact with work placement queries.
- Request that the work placement provider informs the College and learner of a nominated contact in their organisation for work placement queries.

8.3   Review of Teaching & Learning Policies and Procedures

The College will review these Teaching and Learning policies and procedures on an annual basis. The following individual(s) will be involved in this review:

- Dean of Academic Affairs
- Quality Assurance Lead
- Programme Leader
- 1 Lecturer
- 1 Learner

9 Assessment

Policy Title	**Assessment Policy**
Date Approved	17/12/2018
Effective From	02/01/2019
Monitor	Dean of Academic Affairs / QA Committee
Summary	This policy provides an overview of the guiding principles and regulations that govern the assessment practices of Dorset College. This policy will be inclusive of all the assessment instruments used for both the Further Education and Higher Education programmes of the College. It is also cognisant of the relevant regulations and guidelines set out by QQI.
Related Policies	
Revision History & Commencement Date & Date of Next Review	Version 1 – 2019 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 provide guidance and structure on the assessments conducted by the Dorset College as part of its Further Education and Higher Education programmes. The adoption of this policy will help ensure that the Assessments in Dorset College are: • Fair and transparent for learners. • Inclusive of feedback to ensure that the learner can learn from the assessment process. • Devised in a coherent and cohesive manner across a programme. • Conducted with academic honesty and integrity.
Scope	This policy applies to all assessments as part of the Further Education and Higher Education programmes at Dorset College.
Policy Statement	Dorset College recognises the importance of assessments as the key instrument in assessing whether the MIMLOs and MIPLOs have been met. It also acknowledges that the manner in which knowledge, skills or competencies are assessed has changed, as more diverse assessment instruments are becoming increasingly common – for example, work-based assessment. Furthermore, the College is cognisant that a 'one-size fits all' approach to assessments may not be appropriate as it neglects to take into account intricacies of an individual programme. Therefore, the assessments at Dorset College will have both an overarching structure that will guide the devising and implementing of its assessments, as well

as allowing for programme or module specific traits to be incorporated in the assessment strategy.

9.1   Award Classification - Higher Education

Dorset College shall adopt a percentage grading scheme rather than an alphabetic grading system. In practice, this will mean that learners will receive module results as a percentage, where the maximum mark attainable is 100. Also, the learner will receive a programme result based on a credit-weighted mean value of the results from their award stage modules.

Furthermore, Dorset College will adopt the following award classification:

Classifications of Honours Bachelor's degrees (Level 8) and Higher Diplomas (Level 8)

- First-class honours: >=70%
- Second-class honours Grade 1: 60-69%
- Second-class honours Grade 2: 50-59%
- Pass: 40-49%
- Fail: <40%

Classifications of Higher Certificate (Level 6) and Ordinary Bachelor's Degrees (Level 7)

- Distinction: >=70%
- Merit Grade 1: 60-69%
- Merit Grade 2: 50-59%
- Pass: 40-49%
- Fail: <40%

Special Purpose awards that have a volume of at least 60 ECTS credits will be classified in accordance with the convention for a major award that its level. Special Purpose Awards that have a volume of less than 60 ECTS credits shall be unclassified i.e. Pass/Fail.

Minor Awards and Supplemental Awards shall be unclassified.

Classifications of Further Education awards

- Distinction: 80%+
- Merit: 65-79%
- Pass: 50-64%
- Fail: <50%

9.2   Progression Eligibility - Higher Education

Ordinarily, a learner must demonstrate achievement of all MIMLOs of modules equivalent to 60 ECTS credits, including all mandatory modules if applicable, to be eligible to progress onto the next stage of a multi-year programme. However, there are 3 recognised exceptions to this:

1. Pass by compensation.

2. Exemption from part of the programme.
3. Progress carrying the failed modules to be passed during the subsequent stage (trailing a failed module).

9.2.1 Pass by Compensation

A pass by compensation allows a learner to progress to the next stage of a programme despite having not attained the 40% pass threshold in some modules. This means the learner can progress without the need to repeat such modules. This is also applicable at award stage and is credit bearing.

The following criteria must be met and followed for a learner to be eligible for pass by compensation:

- Grade must be greater than or equal to 35% but less than 40%.
- The results for all modules in the stage are from first attempts.
- The overall stage-aggregate of credit-weighted excesses of percentage marks (over 40) is greater than or equal to twice the stage-aggregate of credit-weighted deficits of marks (under 40).
- The potentially compensatable results account for no more than one-third of the credit for the stage: i.e. 20 credits in a 60-credit stage.
- No module can be failed outright (i.e. less than 35%).
- At award stage, a learner who passes by compensation remains eligible for honours.
- The mark of the module(s) that a learner compensates is not altered on their transcripts, i.e. the actual result is maintained.

A pass by compensation is awarded at the discretion of the Exam Board.

9.2.2 Exemption from part of a programme

In principle, exemptions are permitted at any stage of a programme in line with *QQI Assessment and Standards, 2013*. Exemptions into Award stage must be reviewed by the Dean of Academic Affairs. Where the result of the module is required for calculating an award classification, the College will utilise alternative assessing methods to ascertain the grade that should be given for an exempted module.

This will require the learner to produce an assessment that has been designed specifically for the grading of a module for exemption. The specific type of assessment will be specific to a module. Where the result of the module is not required for calculating an award classification, assessment is not required. However, the College must still be satisfied that the MIMLOs for the exempted module(s) have been achieved by the learner previously.

The process of granting exemptions, and the grounds for which exemptions can be granted, are covered in the College's Recognition of Prior Learning policy and procedures.

9.2.3 Carrying a Module

Dorset College may allow learners, under exceptional circumstances, to carry a failed module(s) while progressing to the next stage.

The following criteria must be met and followed for a learner to be eligible to carry a module:

- A prerequisite module cannot be carried unless there is extenuating circumstances. In such circumstances, the learner must defer the module follow-on module until the carried module is passed.
  The maximum missing credits that can be carried is 10 ECTS credits per 60 ECTS credit stage.
- Learners must get an overall pass in each module and an overall pass at each stage e.g. Level 6 (subject to compensation and carrying a module in exceptional circumstances).
- Learners can repeat any failed element of a module once module marks have been adjudicated by a Board of Examiners and are officially released.
- Learners can repeat failed exams at the next available opportunity but the overall grade will be capped at 40%.
- A failed module shall not be carried into an Award stage save in exceptional circumstances as adjudicated by the Dean of Academic Affairs pursuant to an official examination board.

Note: a fee applies to repeat components of a module namely; €20 for a continuous assessment and €40 for an exam and a learner must fill in a Module Repeat Form at least 14 days before the next repeat opportunity.

9.3 Progression Eligibility – Further Education

Learners undertaking Further Education Programmes must achieve a grade of 40% for module completion.

Once Marks are put forward for Certification the following applies to Further Education Programmes and component modules:

- Learners can repeat an assessment If they do not pass the overall component
- Learners cannot repeat after Certification;
- To improve their grade;
- If they have failed one of the assessments but passed the overall component. For example, if a learner fails an exam but because of the marks achieved in another assessment e.g. portfolio they achieve an overall pass grade for the component they cannot repeat the exam to achieve a higher overall grade.

9.3.1 Repeat Process

To repeat a module or component a learner must pay a fee of €40 and apply for such a repeat within 4 days of the release of marks and as such the marks will not be put forward for External Authentication or official certification.

9.4 External Examining

An external examiner is ordinarily appointed by the College for a period of 3 years. This can be extended for an additional year at the discretion of the College. The selection of an External Examiner is put forward by the Dean of Academic Affairs and is confirmed by the College's Academic Council.

- In selecting an External Examiner, the College will ensure that any individual nominated will have expertise in the cognate area. This is defined as someone with an education qualification at or above the level of the programme for which they are intended to be External Examiner and with at least three years' experience in academia.
- In addition to the selection criteria above, any potential External Examiner must also be free of any conflict of interest with the College.
- Where a number of candidates are put forward for consideration, the Academic Council will select a candidate.
- A nominee for External Examiner requires a 2:1 majority from the Academic Council for their nomination to be accepted.
- The Academic Council may extend the term of an External Examiner by one year at the end of the three-year appointment.
- The Academic Council can terminate the appointment of an External Examiner prior to the conclusion of the three-year term, should the External Examiner not adequately fulfil the main functions of an External Examiner, as set out in Section 1.4 of the Effective Practice Guidelines for External Examining (QQI, February 2015) for a HET External Examiner and Section 4.3 of the Quality Assuring Assessment – Guidelines for Providers (QQI, 2018) for a FET External Examiner
- Where the Academic Council sanctions the removal of an external examiner, the Dean of Academic Affairs shall write to the External Examiner and inform them of the reason(s) for their removal. The deliberation that informed their removal shall also be explained. The replacement External Examiner shall be sought without delay and will opt for someone previously considered in the first instance.
- Upon approval by the Academic Council, the External Examiner shall receive an induction about the College, the programmes for which they will act as External Examiner, and the duties expected of an External Examiner.
- The College and the External Examiner will agree time-frames for the External Examiner report after a Board of Examiners meeting.
- A HET External Examiner shall submit a report to the College that follows the template provided in the *Effective Practice Guidelines for External Examining* and a FET External Examiner shall follow the template provided in *Quality Assuring Assessment – Guidelines for Providers*.
- Upon receipt of the External Examiner's report, the Dean of Academic Affairs will ensure that the recommendations made in the report are disseminated and actioned as appropriate at the next scheduled Programme Board.

9.4.1 Procedure for External Examination

	Procedure Stage	Responsibility	Evidence
1	**Establishment Selection Criteria for External Examiner**: In proposing an individual(s) for appointment as an external examiner, the following essential criteria must be met: • The person(s) nominated should have the requisite academic experience in 'the broader community of practice within the programme's field of learning'. • The person(s) accomplishments should be sufficient for them to attest to them having the requisite authority to fulfil the responsibilities of the role. • The person(s) should be free of any conflict of interests' with the College to ensure objectivity and full independence in the role.	Dean of Academic Affairs	CV, or equivalent
2	**Appointment of External Examiner:** In order for an individual(s) to be appointed as an external examiner with the College, the following criteria must be met: • An individual(s) must meet the selection criteria outlined in Stage one. • An individual(s) must be nominated by a member of the College's Academic Council. • In the evident that there is multiple nominations put forth for an External Examiner vacancy, the Academic Council will select an individual based on the criteria outlined in the **External Examining policy**. • After selection of an individual by the Academic Council, formal notification will be made to the successful	Academic Council	Minutes of Academic Council. Communication to successful individual from the Dean of Academic Affairs.

individual(s) by the College's Dean of Academic Affairs.

3	**Induction of External Examiner:** Prior to commencing in the role of External Examiner, an individual(s) will undertake an induction to familiarise themselves with the College. The induction process will include the following: • The College's Quality Assurance Lead will send relevant QA and programme documentation to the External Examiner(s). • The Quality Assurance Lead will meet with the External Examiner(s) to clarify any queries and to ensure the External Examiner(s) have the requisite information about the College and its programmes. • The Quality Assurance Lead and the External Examiner(s) mutually agree that the External Examiner(s) are satisfied that they can fulfil the role.	Quality Assurance Lead External Examiner	Communication between Quality Assurance Lead and External Examiner
4	**Duties of External Examiner:** The College would anticipate that an External Examiner(s) would fulfil the following duties in their role with the College: • Review draft examination papers and their associated marking schemes. • Provide feedback, where appropriate, on the above. This may include suggested alterations to assessment content. • Inspection of the submitted assessment instruments, and evaluation of the marks attributed to these. • Attendance at External Examination meetings, and to provide verbal feedback on the inspection that had been conducted of the assessment instruments.	External Examiner	Minutes of Board of Examiners Meeting External Examiner's Report

	• A formal report to be submitted to the College, which follows the relevant template.		
5	**Response to External Examination:** After undergoing the External Examination process, and in receipt of the External Examiner's Report, the College will undertake the following actions: • The Dean of Academic Affairs will present the Report to the Academic Council, who will action any recommendations made through the College Committees for example the Academic Management Committee and Boards for example Programme Board(s).	Dean of Academic Affairs	Response to External Examiner Minutes of Academic Council

9.5   Notification of Assessment to Learners

The College will ensure that the learner receives notification of the assessment strategy for each module that they are studying and timely notice of any assessment deadline. An assessment schedule (continuous assessments) shall be provided to learners at the start of each semester and will form part of the Programme Handbook.

- Learners will be notified through the College's VLE on the first week of semester of the assessment strategy of a module as well as the module descriptor. This information will include the type(s) of assessment that the learner will have to undertake for that module, and the relative weighting of each of the assessment instruments.
- Learners will receive a minimum of 4 weeks' notice for the deadline of any assessment that they will undertake, unless there is a specified reason for them receiving a shorter deadline (e.g. that the assessment is intended to be done in a short time period).
- Learners will also be informed of assessment strategy and deadlines orally by the lecturer during class.

9.6 Assessment

Dorset College engages in both formative and summative assessment.

Formative assessment is a crucial part of the learning journey but is Dorset College sees formative assessment as non-credit bearing and takes place throughout the module as a means to engage the learner in active and participatory learning in preparation for summative assessment; continuous assessment, proctored examinations, supervised project(s) or final examination.

For grade bearing summative assessment(s), the following regulations apply:

- Feedback should be provided to learners within 4 weeks of submission of assessments and through Moodle
  The assessment deadline should be clearly articulated to all learners via Moodle. This may also be articulated in other ways, such as verbally in-class, but Moodle is the first point of communication
- Learners should be informed of the due date for assessments at the start of a semester in the Assessment Schedule in their Programme Handbook unless it is part of the assessment to give a shorter notification period – for example, an assessment is intentionally structured to be completed in a one or two week period
- If an extension is granted to an assessment, this should be communicated to all learners as soon as possible via Moodle
- Assessments will be accepted after the due date. However, if the learner does not have mitigating circumstances or if they have not been granted an extension, the assessment grade will be reduced by 10% for each day (24 hour period that starts from the submission deadline) that the assessment is late. This 10% penalty is in nominal terms and not relative to the grade received – for example, a 60% grade will be reduced to 50% and not 54% and assessments will not normally be accepted five days after the due date

- If a learner cannot submit an assessment by the given deadline for personal mitigating circumstances, the learner should inform the College of this at least 7 days before the original assessment submission date. Where this is not possible, the learner should communicate to the College as soon as possible after the original deadline and provide legitimate reason(s) as to why they could not inform the College sooner. To avail of special arrangements on the grounds of mitigating circumstances, the learner must complete the Personal Mitigating Circumstances Form with supporting documentation such as a medical certificate etc;
- If a learner cannot complete the requirements of an assessment for legitimate reason(s), the learner may be afforded the opportunity to being assessed for that module through an examination or alternative assessment instead.

If a learner is unsuccessful and needs to repeat a module, the arrangements for repeating are as follows:

- A learner must pass the module overall and if they have failed more than one component of a module they may have to repeat each failed element to achieve the learning outcomes and achieve an overall grade of 40%
- The failed components (only) will be capped at 40%
- If the module does not include an examination as part of its assessment strategy, the arrangements for repeating are that a single assessment is used to reach the learning outcomes and will be capped at 40%.
- If a learner fails more than 10 ECTS they may not proceed to the next stage and must make arrangements with the Examinations Officer to take their failed modules at the next available sitting.

9.7 Examinations

The College recognises the importance of ensuring the integrity, fairness and transparency of its examinations function.

9.7.1 Administrative Function

The administrative function for the examinations conducted in the College will ensure that the following requirements are met:

- Examinations will be printed no longer than 1 week prior to the date of the examination and securely locked until the date of the examination.
- The College will ensure that the learners are informed in a timely manner of the venues for examinations and that they are provided with details of how to get to an examination venue where it is external to the College campus.
- There will be one invigilator for every 15 candidates in an examination session.
- Attendance for each examinations session will be recorded.

- The number of examination scripts returned to the invigilators will be counted for each module and recorded. When an assessor collects the examination scripts from the examinations office, these will again be counted and signed.
- Examination scripts shall be securely transferred between the examination venue and stored centrally in the College until they are collected by the assessor.
- Should a learner require special accommodation for an examination sitting, the College will ensure the necessary provision is made available. The learner should inform the College of any such special accommodations at least 4 weeks in advance of as examinations session to allow the College sufficient time to make the necessary arrangements.
- All assessment results including examinations shall be released directly to the learner via the College VLE, Moodle.

9.8 Producing Assessments

The assessments for a module are typically produced by the module lecturer. This individual is also the assessor. When producing a module's assessments, the following requirements will be met:

- A criterion-referenced grading scheme for each assessment will be provided.
- Draft summative assessments and grading schemes for all stages should be submitted to the College. These will be internally reviewed by an appropriate moderator before seeking advice of an external examiner.
- The assessment instrument will be cross-referenced to the MIMLOs that it is intended to assess. This shall be explicitly stated on the assessment cover sheet. The internal review of the assessment shall adjudicate as to whether the assessment instrument sufficiently addresses the stated MIMLOs.
- A person participating in the internal moderation of assessment instruments will be free of any conflict with the assessor or the assessment instrument – for example, this would exclude learners from being a member of an internal moderation committee.
- All relevant assessments shall then be sent to the external examiner for their review
- The comments made by the external examiner will be communicated to the faculty lecturers, who will make any amendments to their assessments that are required.
- All assessments shall be password-protected until such a time as they are to be distributed to learners.
- An assessment instrument and its password will not be sent together in a single communication.
- The College will avoid, inasmuch as possible, producing hard copies of an assessment instrument before it is distributed to learners. However, where this is done, all hard copies of an assessment should be retained in a secure location only for as long as is necessary, and then securely shredded.

9.9 Recording of Assessment Marks

The College is cognisant of ensuring that the recording of assessment marks is an efficient and secure process. To ensure this, the College limits the number of people who have access to the recording of assessment marks. Also, the College ensures that the recording of assessment marks is password protected.

- Lecturers shall record the assessment marks for their module(s) in the first instance. This shall be done through the College's virtual learning environment (VLE). These recorded marks will have been subject to the internal moderation process of the College.
- Access to assessment mark input will be restricted to the module lecturers and appropriate College administration and management personnel.
- The Examinations Officer will export the assessment results into an appropriate format that allow for the production of broadsheets for the consideration of the Board of Examiners.
- The exported broadsheet will be saved on the College intranet, access to which is restricted to the administrative and management personnel who have direct involvement with the assessment function and will include password protection.
- All assessments shall be uploaded by the due date to the College VLE, Moodle
- If the assessments are submitted in hard copy, these scripts are retained for the duration specified in the College's Data Protection policy. These scripts are retained in labelled boxes, and securely stored in the designated storage areas in the College. Access to these storage areas is restricted to staff personnel directly related to the administration and management of assessments.

9.10 Board of Examiners

- Meetings of the Board of Examiners will consider, amongst other things:
  - Grades for assessment tasks
  - Grades for modules
  - Eligibility to progress from one stage to the next stage
  - Eligibility for awards
  - Classification of such awards, where applicable
- The minutes of the Board of Examiners will be sent to the College's Academic Council, who have oversight of the Board of Examiners.
- The Terms of Reference of the Board of Examiners is set out in Policy 1: Governance and Management of Quality.
- A Board of Examiners will be comprised of a
  - Programme Leader (Chair)
  - Examinations Officer
  - Academic Operations Lead
  - Inernal Examiners (faculty)
  - External Examiner(s)

- For a meeting of a Board of Examiners to proceed, a quorum of participants is required. The quorum for a meeting is as follows:
    o Programme Leader of their nominee (Chair)
    o Quality Assurance Lead (Secretary)
    o One internal examiner from each stage of a programme
    o External Examiner (where learners are being considered for awards)
    o If an External Examiner cannot attend a meeting of a Board of Examiners, they will have visited the College, examined the assessments, agree with the recommendations on the draft broadsheet of results and provide a written report that will be read out at the Board of Examiners meeting. The External Examiner can then be represented at the Board of Examiners meeting by a nominated deputy who is independent to the proceedings.
- Ordinarily, a Board of Examiners will meet 2 times a year, but can meet more regularly if required.
- All proceedings of a Board of Examiners shall remain confidential and all participants are bound by this confidentiality.
- Decisions of a Board of Examiners should ordinarily be reached by consensus. In instances where consensus cannot be reached, a Board must agree by a ratio of 2:1.
- In the event of an irresolvable disagreement between Internal Examiner(s) and an External Examiner, the Board of Examiners' decision is final. However, the disagreement should be formally recorded in the minutes of the meeting and in the External Examiner's report.
- Where a systematic error is discovered any necessary adjustments to marks/grades should be applied to all learners affected. The decision to make such adjustments and the supporting rationale should be recorded in the minutes so that the Academic Council is informed.
- Borderline results will be dealt with as follows:
    o A module result at 39% shall be brought to 40% unless there is a compelling reason not to do so (for example: if the learner was found guilty of academic impropriety).
    o A module result at 36%, 37% or 38% shall be considered for an increase to 40%.
    o However, the increase is not automatic and must be supported with a justifiable reason for doing so. If such a reason is not forthcoming, then the result is maintained.
    o An award stage result that is 1% below a grade band (i.e: 39%; 49%; 59%; 69%) shall be brought up to the next grade band unless there is a compelling reason not to do so.
    o When considering the borderline results at module and stage level, such as those outlined above, a Board of Examiners does have the authority to reduce grades as well as increase them. This is important as it can allow a counterbalance to potential grade inflation.

9.11 Appeals, Re-checks and Reviews

The College recognises that the learner has the right to query the result of their assessment(s) should they have legitimate grounds.

To facilitate this, the College has an 'Inspection Day', once assessment results are issued by the College, to allow learners to discuss their results with their lecturers. In the event of a lecturer not being available, the College will nominate another individual to meet with the learner on the Inspection Day typically the Quality Assurance Lead or Examinations Officer. The learner will be advised of the day and time of this feedback session. This feedback is distinct from the formal mechanisms available to learners for querying a module grade.

The formal mechanisms for querying a module grade consist of Re-check, Reviews and Appeals. The Review and Appeals procedures will be coordinated by the Quality Assurance Lead.

Each of these mechanisms is set out below:

9.11.1 Re-check

- A Re-check is an administrative procedure facilitated by the Quality Assurance Lead that further checks the recording and combination of component marks for a module or stage and involves the learner checking their script facilitated by the Quality Assurance Lead.
- This is designed as an initial assessment querying mechanism. However, learners are not required to start at this stage. They can proceed directly to the Review stage should they so wish.
- The fee for a re-check is €50, which will be refunded to the learner should a module or stage mark be increased as a result of the re-check. Typically a mark will only be changed pursuant to a re-check which highlights a mis-calculation of marks for example. That is to say a re-check is for an administrative error.
- The learner will have at least 3 working days from the issuance of marks to apply for a re-check (typically 3 working days from the Feedback Day).

9.11.2 Review

- A Review is the reconsideration of an assessment decision, either by the original assessor or by another competent person (from an appropriate discipline) nominated by the Dean of Academic Affairs and this process is facilitated by the Quality Assurance Lead.
- Learners must state the grounds on which they would like the requested review to take place. It is anticipated that the learner will have some ground to suspect that the assessment mark was erroneous in some respect. A review is substantive review of the marks allocated.
- The review of module marks shall be overseen by the Quality Assurance Lead.
- The fee for a Review is €50, which will be refunded to the learner should a module or stage mark be increased as a result of the review.
- A learner does not need to have undertaken a re-check prior to applying for a review. However, a learner cannot skip the review stage and go straight to appeal stage if they wish to query an assessment mark.
- Review must be applied for within 5 working days of the issuance of marks

The only permissible grounds for review are:

- The learner believes there was a substantive irregularity win the College's procedures and/or in the manner in which those procedures were executed.
- The learner believes there was a substantive irregularity in the Assignment Brief or Examination Paper of the assessment process.

- The learner believes that there were circumstances known to the College that the decision making committee was not aware of when its decision was taken.
- Disagreement with a decision, including an assessment decision is not considered grounds for review. Reviews which question academic judgment of examiners shall no be admissible; disagreement with the judgment of the Examination Board does not constitute grounds for review.
- The Quality Assurance Lead will receive all review applications and ensures appeals that the learner has complied with submission requirements in order to be forwarded for review.

Note:

Should a learner be dissatisfied with the outcome of the review they can appeal the outcome of the review to the Appeals Committee.

9.12 Appeal

- An appeal is a formal request to the Appeals Committee based on the outcome of the review and has a fee of €50. The Appeal form is available in the Learner Handbook and on Moodle.
- An appeal is a formal request to the Appeals Committee based on the outcome of the review and has a fee of €50. The Appeal form is available in th Learner Handbook and on Moodle.
- An appeal should only be made in an instance where the learner deems that the decision taken in the review process was erroneous or unfair.
- A learner must have already gone through the review process before applying for an appeal.
- A learner is required to clearly outline the reason for their appeal when making an application. This should include reasons as to why the learner deems the review process to have not yielded a desirable outcome for them.
- An appeal must be applied for within 10 working days of the issuance of results.

Note:

- An appeal should only be made in an instance where the learner deems that the decision taken in the review process was erroneous or unfair.
- A learner must have already gone through the review process before applying for an appeal.

The only permissible grounds for appeal are:

- The learner believes there was a substantive irregularity win the College's procedures and/or in the manner in which those procedures were executed.
- The learner believes there was a substantive irregularity in the Assignment Brief or Examination Paper of the assessment process.
- The learner believes that there were circumstances known to the College that the decision making committee was not aware of when its decision was taken.
- Disagreement with a decision, including an assessment decision is not considered grounds for review or appeal. Reviews and/or appeals which question academic judgment of

examiners shall no be admissible; disagreement with the judgment of the Examination Board does not constitute grounds for review or appeal.

- The Quality Assurance Lead will receive all appeals applications and ensure that the learner has complied with submission requirements in order to be forwarded to the Appeals Committee who will consider the appeal and the grounds on which it is sought.

9.13 Procedure for Re-checking a Module or Stage mark

	Procedure Stage	Responsibility	Evidence
1	**Written request:** The learner is required to submit a written request for a re-check within 3 working days of formal issuance of assessment results and typically after the Feedback Day.	Learner	Module/Stage Re-check form
2	**Pay fee:** Prior to the re-check being conducted, the learner is required to pay a €50 fee (which is refundable if the module or stage mark is changed.	Learner Quality Assurance Lead	Receipt of re-check fee
3	**Re-check of assessment:** An internal examiner is selected, who will consider the assessment under the re-check criteria.	Quality Assurance Lead Internal examiner	Confirmation from internal examiner that the assessment mark was correct/incorrect
4	**Adjustment of mark (if necessary):** Should the internal examiner find that the assessment mark was incorrect, this will be amended.	Quality Assurance Lead	Amended mark on broadsheet (if necessary) Module/Stage Re-check form
5	**Communication to learner:** The College will communicate the outcome of the re-check to the learner in writing.	Quality Assurance Lead	Communication to learner of outcome of re-check
6	**Review procedure (if necessary):** Should the learner not be satisfied with the outcome of the re-check, they can escalate their query to the review process.		

9.14 Procedure for Reviewing a Module or Stage mark

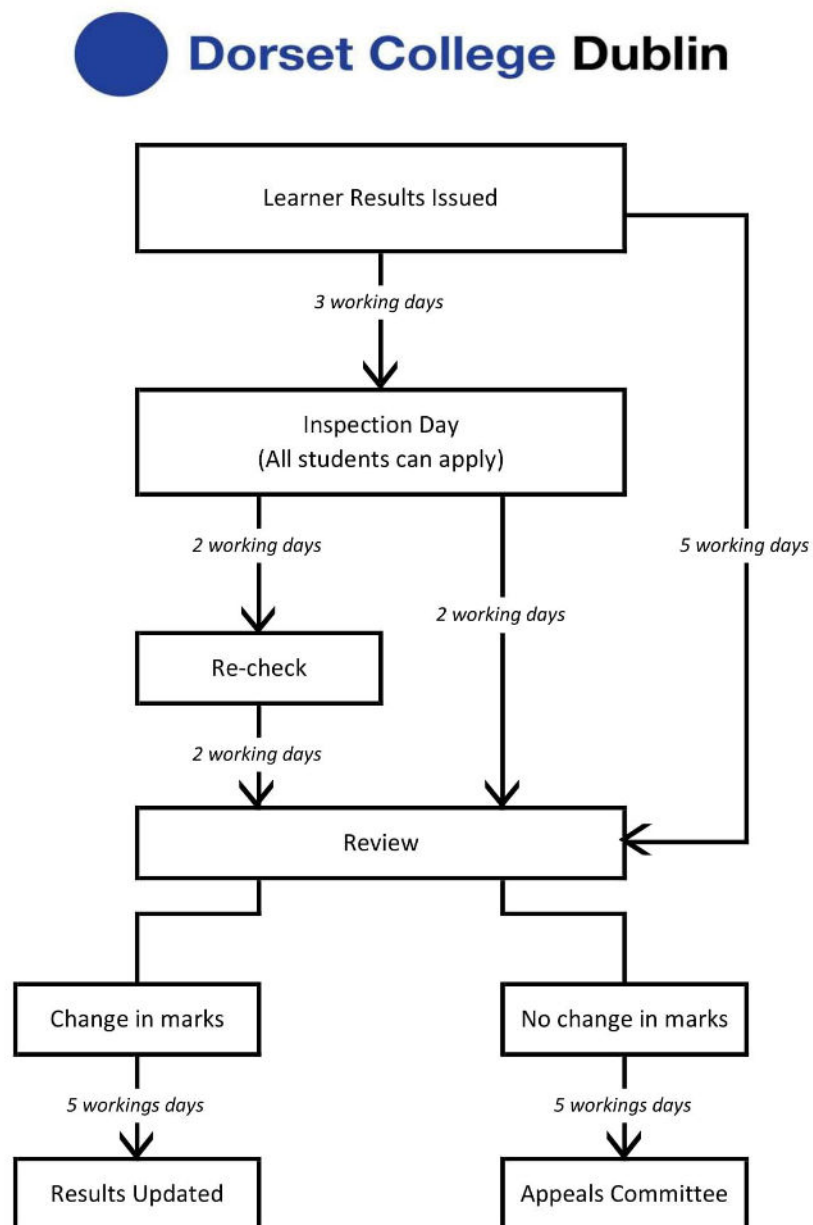|	Procedure Stage	Responsibility	Evidence
1	**Written request:** The learner is required to submit a written request for a review within 5 working days of the issuance of formal assessment results. Also, if the learner has opted for a re-check before applying for a review, the application for a review should be made within 2 working days of the learner being issued with the outcome of the re-check. (there should be 5 working days in total from issuing results to Review).	Learner	Module/Stage Review Form
2	**Pay fee:** Prior to the review being conducted, the learner is required to pay a €50 fee (which is refundable if the module or stage mark is changed).	Learner Quality Assurance Lead	Receipt of review fee
3	**Appointment of assessor:** The College will appoint an assessor who is independent of the initial grading of the assessment to conduct the review.	Examinations Officer Independent Assessor	Communication to assessor regarding the assessment under review
4	**Review of assessment:** The independent assessor reviews the assessment and provides Quality Assurance Lead with their assessment. This will contain their recommendation as to whether the mark should be reviewed up, reviewed down, or maintained as is. The Quality Assurance Lead advises the learner of this outcome and of their right to appeal.	Quality Assurance Lead Independent Assessor	Report on Review of assessment
5	**Communication to learner:** The College will communicate the outcome of the review to the learner in writing.	Quality Assurance Lead	Communication to learner of outcome of review
6	**Appeal procedure (if necessary):** Should the learner not be satisfied with the outcome of the re-check, they can escalate their query to the appeals committee for a fee of €50.		

9.15 Procedure for Appeal

	Procedure Stage	Responsibility	Evidence
1	**Written request:** The learner is required to submit a written request for an appeal within 5 working days of notification of the review process. This request must also include supporting evidence for the appeal.	Learner	Appeal Application
2	**Pay fee:** Prior to the appeal being conducted, the learner is required to pay a €50 fee (which is refundable if the module or stage mark is changed).	Learner

Quality Assurance Lead | Receipt of appeal fee |
| 3 | **Interview with Learner** The Appeals Committee will review the appeal who has not had any direct involvement in the assessment that the learner is appealing. | Quality Assurance Lead

Appeals Committee | Scheduled interview with learner |
| 4 | **Consideration of Appeal:** The Appeals Committee shall collectively consider the evidence from stage 1 and 3, above, and any other pertinent evidence from the Review process.

The decision of the Appeals Committee shall ideally determine each appeal by consensus. However, should a consensus not be possible, the appeal must be accepted by a margin of at least 2:1 | Appeals Committee

Independent Assessor | Report on Appeal of Assessment

Minutes of Appeals Committee meeting |
| 5 | **Communication to learner:** The College will communicate the outcome of the appeal to the learner in writing. | Quality Assurance Lead | Communication to learner of outcome of appeal |

9.16 Recheck, Review & Appeal Process

Dorset College Dublin

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                    ┌─────────────────────────────┐
                    │   Learner Results Issued     │────────────┐
                    └─────────────────────────────┘            │
                                 │                              │
                          3 working days                        │
                                 ↓                              │
                    ┌─────────────────────────────┐            │
                    │      Inspection Day          │            │
                    │  (All students can apply)    │        5 working days
                    └─────────────────────────────┘            │
                         │              │                       │
                   2 working days   2 working days              │
                         ↓              │                       │
                  ┌──────────┐          │                       │
                  │ Re-check │          │                       │
                  └──────────┘          │                       │
                         │              │                       │
                   2 working days       ↓                       ↓
                         ↓       ┌─────────────────────────────┐
                         └──────→│          Review             │←──
                                 └─────────────────────────────┘
                            │                            │
                    ┌───────────────┐          ┌──────────────────┐
                    │ Change in marks│          │ No change in marks│
                    └───────────────┘          └──────────────────┘
                            │                            │
                     5 workings days             5 workings days
                            ↓                            ↓
                    ┌───────────────┐          ┌──────────────────┐
                    │ Results Updated│          │ Appeals Committee │
                    └───────────────┘          └──────────────────┘
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9.17 Work Placement

The College facilitates work placement as an optional component on some of its programmes. Where it does, the work placement is typically a small element of the overall weighting of an award.

The assessment of a work placement will:

- Be a collaborative effort between the College and the Work Placement provider.
- Be graded by the College as much as is possible. Therefore the assessment strategy for a work placement will be designed to allow for the College to be able to assess them even though faculty are not present at the learning site. This would include, for example, the use of appropriate assessment instruments such as Reflective Learning Journals.
- Incorporate as assessment by the workplace provider of the learner's performance. This element of the assessment will require a nominated individual within the workplace to assess the performance of the learner, provide feedback to the learner, and to grade the learner. The College will provide as much assistance as possible to the workplace providers with this assessment – for example: training how to assess learners.

10 Academic Integrity Policy

10.1 Academic Integrity Policy and Procedures

Version	Description of Amendments	Date	Approval Date
1.0	Draft policy	02/05/2025	
	Approval of policy		
	Added to QA manual		

10.2 Introduction

Dorset College is committed to the highest standards of academic integrity. Academic integrity is the foundation upon which the credibility and reputation of our institution rests. All members of the academic community, including learners, faculty, and staff, are expected to uphold these standards in their academic work and professional conduct. Academic misconduct, in any form, undermines the educational process, devalues the achievements of others, and compromises the trust placed in academic qualifications.

This policy establishes the standards and procedures to address academic misconduct, which includes a wide range of dishonest behaviours that compromise the integrity of academic assessment. Academic misconduct is defined not only by the act of presenting others' work as one's own (traditionally known as plagiarism) but also encompasses emerging forms of dishonesty, such as misuse of artificial intelligence (AI) tools, cheating in exams, collusion, impersonation, falsification of data, contract cheating, and other deceptive practices. Importantly, the definition of academic misconduct is based on the act itself, regardless of the intent behind it. Careless or accidental breaches of academic integrity are still considered misconduct if they result in misrepresentation of authorship or effort.

The aim of this policy is to provide clear guidance to learners and staff regarding what constitutes academic misconduct, how it is identified and managed, and the procedures for investigation and resolution. The policy also aims to promote a culture of integrity through preventative education and fair, transparent handling of breaches.

Importantly, academic misconduct is assessed based on the nature of the act, not the intent. This means that even accidental or careless actions, such as unintentional copying, improper referencing, or misuse of digital tools, may still constitute academic misconduct if they misrepresent authorship or effort.

10.3 Objectives

The purpose of this policy is to clarify how the College manages cases of academic impropriety and to provide an appropriate procedure to asses, manage and deter such behaviour in the student population.

In line with other policies consistency, transparency and fairness will be the cornerstone of this policy to ensure that no individual is discriminated against.

10.4 Scope

This policy applies to all learners enrolled in Further Education and Training (FET) and Higher Education and Training (HET) programmes at the College. It governs all forms of assessment, including but not limited to essays, projects, reports, exams, practical work, presentations, group work, dissertations, and online assessments. The policy also applies to any research activities conducted under the auspices of the College.

10.5 Definition and Types of Academic Misconduct

Academic misconduct is defined as any act that attempts to gain or provides an unfair academic advantage or misrepresents a learner's own academic work. Examples include, but are not limited to:

- **Plagiarism**: Using another person's work, ideas, or expressions—whether published or unpublished—without proper acknowledgment, including improper paraphrasing, copying, or using AI-generated text without disclosure.

- **Misuse of Artificial Intelligence Tools**: Submitting assessments or portions thereof that were produced using AI software (e.g., language models, paraphrasing tools, content generators) without explicit permission or without acknowledging such use, where the use of AI is not permitted by the assessment guidelines.

- **Cheating in Examinations**: Accessing an exam outside the proctored exam site. Using unauthorized materials, notes, devices, or communicating with others during an examination, or accessing exam questions in advance.

- **Collusion**: Unauthorized collaboration with others on individual assignments or enabling others to copy one's work.

- **Impersonation**: Having another individual complete an assessment or exam on one's behalf, or impersonating someone else.

- **Falsification**: Fabricating or altering data, references, or sources in any form of academic submission. Falsifying academic credentials to gain admission to the college.

- **Contract Cheating**: Procuring assessments from a third party, including online services or other individuals, for submission as one's own work.

- **Self-Plagiarism**: Re-submitting the same work or substantial parts of previously submitted work without appropriate citation or permission.

10.6 Responsibility for Implementation

- Lecturers
- Learners
- Invigilators
- Programme Leaders
- Quality Assurance Lead
- Academic Coordinator
- Student Experience Officer
- Head of Schools
- Dean of Academic Affairs

10.7 Preventive Measures and Learner Support

Dorset College is committed to proactively fostering academic integrity by implementing preventive education and providing learners with the tools and support necessary to avoid academic misconduct. These measures include:

- Integration of referencing and academic writing skills into programme modules.
- Clear guidelines on the use of AI technologies, with regular updates and workshops.
- Assessment briefings that clarify expectations and permitted resources.
- Use of plagiarism detection and AI detection software (e.g., Turnitin) as both a deterrent and educational tool.
- Academic integrity sessions during induction and throughout the academic year.
- Access to academic support services for help with study skills, citation practices, and time management.

10.8 Detection and Reporting

Academic misconduct may be identified by lecturers, examiners, invigilators, or other staff during the review or marking of assessments or in examination settings. Suspicion may arise from:

- Similarity reports exceeding acceptable thresholds (e.g., Turnitin scores above 20–30% without proper referencing).
- Marked inconsistencies in writing style or formatting.
- Evidence of third-party involvement or use of AI.
- Reports or witness statements from peers or staff.
- Observation during exams or practical assessments.
- Lecturers knowledge of students regarding English level, attendance, participation.

When suspected, the matter will be reviewed in accordance with the procedures outlined below.

10.9 Procedures for Addressing Academic Misconduct

Academic misconduct will be addressed through either an informal or formal process depending on the severity of the offense, the intention behind the act, and whether the learner has any prior record of misconduct.

10.9.1 Informal Procedure

This process is reserved for cases considered to be of minor severity, involving first-time offenders, and where the misconduct may have arisen from poor academic practice rather than intentional deceit.

Stage 1: Identification The lecturer identifies the issue and consults with the APM, or another lecture familiar with the subject matter. A joint decision is made as to whether the misconduct warrants an informal approach.

Stage 2: Learner Notification The learner is notified of the suspected misconduct and invited to discuss the issue. They are advised of the informal nature of the process and their right to respond. The faculty administrator is informed of the issue.

Stage 3: Evidence and Resolution The lecturer presents evidence of the misconduct. Following discussion, one of the following outcomes may occur:

- No action if the allegation is unfounded.

- Educational intervention (e.g., required referencing workshop).

- If the learner admits to misconduct, then they may be invited to resubmit with a capped grade. It will not go on their academic record, but will be recorded by operations. However, the instance is recorded as a first offence.

- Formal written warning recorded internally for the duration of the programme.

If the learner disputes the outcome or if the case is deemed too serious, the matter is escalated to the formal process.

The lecturer sends an email to the learner, with the faculty administrator copied, recording the outcome of the discussion. If the decision is made to withdraw the submission and resubmit, this must be recorded in the email.

10.9.2 Formal Procedure

Used for serious offenses, repeat misconduct, or where intention to deceive is evident.

Stage 1: Identification and Referral

The lecturer and APM refers the case to the Head of School. The evidence is reviewed and a decision is made.

Stage 2: Notification

The learner is formally notified of the allegations in writing, provided with details of the evidence, and informed of the hearing process.

Stage 2: Investigation Committee

A panel is convened, typically comprising:

- APM

- An independent lecturer who is familiar with the subject but unconnected
- Student Support Officer

The learner is invited to a hearing. They may bring a representative. The representative at a hearing may be a fellow learner, a relative, a friend, and adviser or an outside representative.

Stage 3: Hearing and Decision

The panel reviews all evidence and hears the learner's response. A decision is made on the balance of probabilities. Possible outcomes:

- No misconduct found; the assessment proceeds as normal.
- Misconduct found; penalties are applied based on severity.

Stage 4: Penalties
When academic misconduct is confirmed, penalties are applied based on the severity of the offense, the learner's intent, and any prior history. Sanctions may include one or more of the following:

- **Zero for the Assessment (No Resubmission Allowed)**
The learner receives a mark of zero for the affected assessment, with no opportunity to resubmit. If this results in failure of the module, the learner must repeat the assessment during the designated repeat examination period. The repeat attempt will be capped at the minimum passing mark.
- **Zero for the Entire Module**
In cases where misconduct affects multiple components or the integrity of the module as a whole, a zero may be awarded for the entire module. The learner may reattempt the module during the repeat examination period. The repeat attempt will be capped at the minimum passing mark.
- **Suspension from the Programme**

For serious or repeated cases of misconduct, the learner may be suspended from the programme for a defined period. During suspension, the learner is ineligible to attend classes or participate in assessments.

- **Expulsion from the Institution**

In the most severe cases—such as impersonation, contract cheating, or sustained misconduct— the learner may be permanently expelled from the College. Expulsion results in termination of enrolment and withdrawal from all registered modules.

All **formal outcomes** include a written decision and a formal warning recorded on the learner's file.

10.9.2.1 Penalty Framework

Misconduct Level	Description	Penalty (1st Instance)	Penalty (Repeat/Severe)
Minor	Inadvertent errors, poor referencing, minor use of AI tools	Zero for that element Capped resubmission Internal record	Zero for entire coursework Capped module marks Second internal record

Misconduct Level	Description	Penalty (1st Instance)	Penalty (Repeat/Severe)
Major	Intentional plagiarism, collusion, extensive AI use (over 35%)	Zero for all assessments in module Capped result on repeat sitting Record on file (removed at graduation if no repeat)	Suspension from programme for at least one semester Permanent record
Gross	Impersonation, contract cheating, AI-generated full assignments, Attending a proctored exam from an external location.	Immediate expulsion 5-year ban from re-enrolment Permanent record	Same as first instance; gross misconduct leads to automatic expulsion

10.9.3 Appeals

Learners have the right to appeal any formal decision within five working days of notification. Grounds for appeal include:

- Procedural irregularities
- New material evidence
- Disproportionate penalty

Appeals are reviewed by an independent Appeals Committee whose decision is final.

Appeals Committee

A panel is convened, typically comprising:

- APM
- Head of school
- Dean of Academic Affairs
- A member of the SMT
- An independent lecturer who is familiar with the subject but unconnected
- Student Support Officer

The appeals committee will be held within 10 working days of an appeal being submitted. A decision will be transmitted to the students within 5 working days.

10.9.4 Record Keeping and Confidentiality

Records of all academic misconduct cases are maintained securely by the Quality Assurance Office. Informal warnings are retained until the learner graduates. Formal records, especially those resulting in suspension or expulsion, are kept permanently. All proceedings and records are treated with strict confidentiality, accessible only to authorized personnel.

10.9.5 Policy Monitoring and Review

This policy is monitored annually by the Dean of Academic Affairs and the Quality Assurance Committee. Amendments are made in light of emerging practices, changes in technology (e.g., AI), and feedback from learners and staff.

10.10 Review of Assessment Policies and Procedures

The College will review these Assessment policies and procedures on an annual basis. The following individual(s) will be involved in this review:

- Dean of Academic Affairs
- Programme Lead
- Examinations Officer
- Quality Assurance Lead
- 1 Lecturer
- 1 Learner

11 Support for Learners

Policy Title	**Support for Learners**
Date Approved	17/12/2018
Effective From	02/01/2019
Monitor	Dean of Academic Affairs / QA Committee
Summary	This policy provides an overview of the policies directly related to the supports that the College has in place for its learners. These supports cover both academic and non-academic issues and are intended for a diverse learner body.
Related Policies	
Revision History &	Version 1 – 2019
Commencement Date & Date of Next Review	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 provide an overview of the learning supports that are made available by the College and the standards with which the College should maintain in this regard. It also is intended to outline how the learner perspective is incorporated in the College's management and operations, as well as the responsibilities of learners.
Scope	This policy applies to all learners on FET and HET programmes of Dorset College.
Policy Statement	Dorset College recognises that it has a duty to support its learners in a fair and reasonable manner. It also acknowledges that the College must ensure that its support provision is transparent, that learners are informed of these, and that the learner perspective is taken into account. Furthermore, the College also recognises the importance of outlining to learners how it expects its learners to conduct themselves. The policies in this section are intended to provide detail and clarity to these areas.

11.1 Academic Learning Supports

The College has in place a variety of academic learning supports for its learners to assist them during their programme(s). These academic learning supports include:

- Swift response to miscellaneous academic queries through liaison with the programme leader and/or Academic Operations Lead.
- Study support skills.
- English language support.
- Library services support.
- Work experience support.
- IT support.

Given the disperse nature of the supports on offer, the College recognises the importance of ensuring that the supports are integrated and that learners are regularly informed of these supports. To ensure this cohesion and information, the academic learning supports are coordinated by the QA Officer. Having a single person in charge of the coordination of these learning supports helps ensure a clarity for learners as to where to request any support and a cohesion of the supports that are offered. Furthermore, the College is committed to ensuring its learners are fully informed of these supports and will promote these through the College induction and VLE MOODLE, as well as through its learner handbook.

11.2 Study support skills

The College commits to the continued provision of study support sessions regularly during the academic year. These sessions are free for all learners to attend and cover areas such as: Academic Writing, Referencing, Essay writing, Research skills, in-class note taking, study skills, and examination preparation techniques. The provision of these sessions is coordinated by the College Librarian who ensures that learners are aware of these sessions and monitors who is attending them. They will also follow up with the attendees to assess if learners felt they benefited from the sessions and if learners would like other specific topics covered in future sessions.

11.3 English language support

The provision of English language support is facilitated by the College's English language school. However, should a learner wish to avail of such supports, they need to first discuss with the QA Officer who will liaise with the Director of Studies in the College's English Language School. These English language supports are not intended to compensate for learners who do not have the minimum required level of English language competency necessary for admission onto a programme – these must always be met. Instead, these support sessions are intended to provide specific supports that a non-native English speaker may need when undertaking an academic programme. These would include: an explanation of technical jargon specific to the cognate area of the programme being studied, clarification of assessment terminology, understanding of the meaning of examination questions.

11.4 Library services support

The library services support is facilitated by the College librarian, who provides regular information on the library facilities. These sessions cover: library resources available to learners, how to access information in the library, e-Resources available to learners. These sessions are open to all learners. The College Librarian will liaise with the QA Officer to assess attendance levels at sessions and with learners to get their feedback on sessions and what they would like in future sessions.

11.5 Work based learning support

The College will have a dedicated liaison person who will support learners who avail of the work-based learning modules, where they are offered on programmes. This will ordinarily be a member of the College's teaching faculty. This person will be the point of contact for the learner for any work-based learning queries they may have. They will also provide support for the learner during their work-based learning and will inform the Programme Manager if a learner is experiencing difficulty during their work-based learning experience.

11.6 IT Support

The College has dedicated ICT personnel who provide technical support for learners. This technical support is available as a drop-in service, or learners can make an appointment with the College's IT staff through Moodle. The IT support covers all aspects of how learners interact with their programme through the use of technology. This would include support for the use of IT hardware provided by the College, access issues that the learner may experience when trying to logon from their IT equipment to eResources provided by the College, downloading and use of software related to the programmes that they are studying in the College.

12 Non-Academic Learning Supports

To supplement the Academic Learning Supports outlined previously, the College also has an array of Non-Academic Learning Supports. The College is committed to providing holistic support for each learner and through the Student Experience Leader ensures there is an array of academic and non-academic learning supports which are set out earlier in the QAM and include:

- Learning Enhancement
- Pastoral Care
- Counselling service
- Careers Support Service
- Learners with additional learning needs or disabilities
- Class Representative support
- International Learners
- Healthcare

Given the diverse nature of the supports on offer, the College recognises the importance of ensuring that the supports are integrated and that learners are regularly informed of these supports. To ensure this cohesion and information, the academic learning supports are co-ordinated by the Admissionas Lead and the Quality Assurance Lead. Having a single person in charge of the co-

ordination of these learning supports helps ensure a clarity for learners as to where to request any support and a cohesion of the supports that are offered. Furthermore, the College is committed to ensuring its learners are fully informed of these supports and will promote these through the College induction and VLE, as well as through its learner handbook.

12.1 Pastoral Care

The College is aware of the adjustment that learners can face in transitioning into a further or higher education programme, whether they are coming from secondary school, returning to education or transitioning to the Irish education system from another country.

Furthermore, learners may also struggle during their academic career as their coursework proves challenging or personal circumstances impede their ability to complete their academic tasks as competently as possible.

Therefore, the College has in place pastoral care support, which assists the learner with their transition to further or higher education, as well as supporting learners during their studies with the College.

12.2 Counselling Service

The College has a fully qualified counsellor on its staff who fulfils the role of learner counsellor, in addition to other roles. Should a learner wish to avail of this service, or if a member of staff recommends that a learner avail of the College's counselling service, they should liaise with the QA Officer who will arrange a session in conjunction with the learner.

The College provides up to four fully subsidised counselling sessions, and an additional four sessions are partially subsidised. Should a learner wish to avail of further counselling sessions, the College would consider further subsidising on a case-by-case basis.

12.3 Learners with Additional Learning Needs or Disabilities

The College is committed to ensuring access to its programmes are not restrictive to learners with additional learning needs or disabilities, and that all learners are supported during their studies. Therefore, once a learner has demonstrable evidence that minimum entry requirements have been met, the College will endeavour to provide reasonable accommodations to learners to support their achievement on their programme.

Central to how it facilitates learners is the College's adherence to the principles of Universal Design, as set out by Ahead. The College is committed to ensuring that these are embedded across its Teaching, Learning and Assessment.

The College is committed to enhancing the learning experience for all learners and to this end has appointed our Head Librarian as Head of Enhancement.

12.4 Teaching:
- The College will ensure that course notes are made available to learners in a format appropriate for them.
- The College will provide CPD training for faculty on teaching in accessible formats.
- The College will support faculty to integrate the 7 principles of universal design into their teaching methodology.

12.5 Learning:

- The College will provide study skills sessions for all learners including masterclasses on academic referencing and writing, and specific sessions on study skills for learners with disabilities.
- The College will encourage learners to bring any additional academic needs to their attention at the earliest possible instance (ideally at registration).

12.6 Assessment:

- The College will provide all reasonable accommodations required for the assessment of its learners.
- The College will provide clear information on the assessments, and expected criteria, that it will use.
- The College will facilitate, if possible, alternative assessment instruments to be used, where required.

As the College premises consists of listed buildings, the ability of the College to provide accessible infrastructure is limited. However, the College does try to ensure its premises are as accessible as possible, whilst working within these restrictions.

12.7 Class Representative Support

The College recognises the important role that class representatives perform in ensuring that the learner experience is as positive as possible. They can often act as a vital link between the College's management and administrative staff and its learners and ensure that issues that arise for learners can be resolved in a timely manner. Each year a class representative is elected by their peers and facilitated by the Student Experience Leader.

One meeting per semester is arranged with the relevant programme leader with the Student Experience Leader acting as Secretary.

The College recognises that class representatives need to be informed and supported in the role that they are undertaking. To support its class representatives, the College provides class representative training that is aligned to the NStEP programme. This covers the following areas:

- The Class Rep role
- The Student Learning Experience
- Gathering Learner Opinion
- Effective Feedback
- Developing Solutions
- Making Change Happen
- Closing the Loop

It is also the College's intention to become part of the NStEP programme.

12.8 Student Governance

Dorset College is committed to collaborating with the wider learning community and to this end has empowered the learners to set up a Student Council to discuss matters; academic and non-academic which impact on their learner journey and to work in partnership with the College. The Student

Council meets every six weeks and works to an agreed agenda and is in addition to the Class Representative System.

The Student Experience Leader facilitates this process and acts as secretary and administrative support for example booking rooms and minuting their meetings which are agreed by the Student Council.

12.8.1 Membership
- Chair
- Secretary (non-active)
- Head Representative
- Class Representatives

12.8.2 Terms of Reference
- A Head Representative is elected by a simple majority of all present.
- Representatives vote on the agreed issues; academic and non-academic.
- Issues which are voted on by majority are brought by the Head Representative to the Senior Management Group (facilitated by the Student Experience Leader) for actions to be agreed.

12.9 International Learners

The College recognises that international learners (For the purposes of this policy, international learners' refers to non-EEA learners) may need dedicated supports. It also recognises and commits fulfilling all of its obligations in line with QQI's Code of Practice for Provision of Programmes of Education and Training to International Learners. The College endeavours to follow the principles of learner integration, transparent and up-to-date information provision and facilitating feedback mechanisms that are embedded within the QQI Code of Conduct.

12.9.1 Protection of Enrolled Learners (PEL)

- Ensure Protection for Learners arrangements are in place for all programmes that International learners enrol on and that learners are aware of such arrangements.
- Publicise its refund policy and make this available to all learners and potential learners.
- Ensure that the information provided to international learners prior to enrolment, such as that in its marketing material, is clear, transparent and accurate. It will also provide details of who an international learner may contact for more information prior to enrolment, if they so wish.
- Provide programme specific information to international learners prior to the commencement of their programme, such as programme start dates, attendance policy etc.
- Ensure learners are aware of all costs associated with a programme prior to commencing on that programme. This would include medical insurance costs and other auxiliary costs.
- Ensure that learners are aware of how the College collects fees and the schedule for this.
- Engage in due diligence to ensure that it works with reputable international recruitment agencies.
- Provide clear details of the entry requirements for its programmes to international learners.

- Provide any necessary supports for international learners who may need assistance transitioning to Irish society or the Irish education system.

NOTE:

The list above is not intended as a replacement for the obligations of the College as set out in *QQI's Code of Practice for Provision of Programmes of Education and Training to International Learners*. The College is fully committed to the obligations of the Code of Practice.

12.10   Healthcare

Should a learner wish to avail of healthcare services, the College has an agreement in place with a local GP, who will provide their services to learners of Dorset College at a reduced rate. Information on this is made available to learners through a range of communications.

12.11   Personal Mitigating Circumstances Procedure

	Procedure Stage	Responsibility	Evidence
1	**Inform College:** If a learner foresees their absence from an assessment, they should inform the Quality Assurance Lead who will request the learner to complete a Personal Mitigating Circumstances (PMCs) form, and any supporting documentation. This form will be found in the Learner Handbook and on Moodle.	Learner Quality Assurance Lead	Personal Mitigating Circumstances form
2	**Review of Personal Mitigating Circumstances request:** All PMCs are reviewed by the Academic Management Committee, who will make a decision to grant or reject an extension or deferral based on the details of the PMC and the weight of supporting documentation supporting this. Ordinarily, a deferral will only be granted when there are significant personal circumstances that impede a learner from submitted, or sitting for, an assessment on the set date. Such circumstances may include, but are not limited to, the following:	Academic Management Group	Minutes of AMG

- Death of a family member.
- Illness to themselves or close family member where a doctor has recommended that the learner not attend, or is incapable of submitting, an assessment or sitting an exam.

3	Response to Learner:	Academic Management Committee	Email to learner
	The learner will be notified by email of the decision of the AMG, with reasons for the decision. Should a deferral be approved, the learner will be advised of a new assessment submission or sitting date.		
	If the deferral is not approved, the learner will be advised that they are required to submit or sit for the assessment at the previously agreed date.		

12.12   Attendance Policy

The College recognises the importance of attendance and the correlation that this is shown to have on assessment performance. It also recognises the obligations that it has with regards fulfilling the learner visa requirements of its non-EEA learners. Therefore, the College is committed to ensuring it maintains accurate and detailed records of the attendance of learners.

In the blended learning environment attendance is equally important, for student engagement and learning. The student handbook contains the Zoom Etiquette policy which specifies what is expected from students online. This handbook is given to each student at the beginning of their course.

The College uses its VLE to record attendance. It also records attendance through an attendance register that learners must also sign during class. This allows for a learner's attendance to be "live" and fully accessible to the learner when they login to Moodle. The signed attendance sheets allow for the College to be able to cross reference the validity of a learner's attendance.

- Learners may be allowed to enter the classroom up to 15 minutes after the starting time, if the lecturer permits. If a learner is regularly late, the lecturer can refuse entry to the class or ask the learner to wait until the break.
- Learners are responsible for all material covered in their absences, and they are responsible for the academic consequences of their absences. The lecturer does not have to save class material for a learner.

- If a learner is sick, they are expected to inform the College by phone or email in a timely manner and to present a sick certificate, if applicable, on their return. This sick certificate will be kept on the learner's file.
- If a learner knows that they will be absent for a foreseeable reason, such as a dentist or hospital appointment, they should inform the College beforehand.
- Learners who have student/learner visas are required by G.N.I.B. to attend a minimum of 85% of classes per semester and/or academic year.
- Any absences must be reported and explained to the College, if possible beforehand.
- The GNIB will be advised by the College about any learner who leaves before the end of their course.
- It is not possible for students/learners to change class times from those originally presented to the GNIB at the point of registration.
- Any learner who misses more than 50% of classes over a six-week period will get a warning from the College.
- If the learner continues to be absent they will get a second warning letter two weeks subsequent to the first warning letter.
- If attendance has not improved in in the subsequent 2 weeks, GNIB will be informed and the learner will be removed from the programme.
- Should a discrepancy be found in a learner's attendance, such as the learner being marked present when they are in fact absent, the College will treat this as a serious disciplinary matter and will follow the appropriate disciplinary process.

13 General Refund Policy

Course Fees are outlined on the Fee Schedule which is available on the College website and promotional materials. A deposit is required for all courses to register and is non-refundable. All course fees must be paid in full on or before the commencement date of the course unless otherwise agreed and fees are non-refundable.

In the event where the learner wishes to cancel an enrolment, notice of cancellation must be provided in writing and applies from the date it is received by Dorset College.

Days before commencement	Refundable fees
28+ days	Full paid fees, except €150 non-refundable deposit
14-27 days	Full fees paid, subject to a minimum total charge of €250
7-13 days	50% of fees paid, subject to a minimum total charge of €250

| Less than 7 days | 30% of fees paid, subject to a minimum total charge of €250 |
| On or after start date | No refund |

Note: for full terms and conditions see www.dorset.ie

13.1 Refund Policy International Learners

For international learners the General Refund Policy does not apply and whilst Dorset College does not ordinarily provide refunds after the imminent commencement of its courses, it also strives to offer support for learners or potential learners whose life circumstances change dramatically.

Course Fees are outlined on the Fee Schedule as provided to each applicant and as per the College website. Full fees are payable in advance and immigration documentation will only be released upon receipt of full payment of account as invoiced. As permission to travel (study visa) and permission to remain (GNIB registration stamp 2/2a) are at the discretion of the Irish government, the following refund policies will apply:

- **Refusal of Visa Application**: Dorset College will refund all monies less a standard deduction of €350, within 20 working days, upon production of a Letter of Refusal, or reference number, from the relevant visa office in respect of a Visa refusal or appeal.
- **Refusal of Renewal of GNIB Student Registration**: Dorset College will refund all monies, less a deduction of no more than €150, within 20 working days, upon production of documentary evidence from INIS/GNIB indicating that renewal of student status has been refused.
- **Registered student**: Once a student has received permission to travel/permission to remain, all course fees are non-refundable. No refunds will be made to students who fail to attend classes or do not finish their courses.
- **Currency policy**: We reserve the right to refund course fees at the same rate less administration charges in the original currency of sender.
- **Force Majeure**: In the case of force majeure situations refunds will be only considered on a case by case basis and this will be at the discretion of college management.
- **Medical Insurance**: Once purchased Medical Insurance is not refundable.
- **Credit / Debit Cards**: In the event of a refund, monies paid to the college by credit / debit card can only be refunded to that same card.

Note: Dorset College reserves the right to cancel or reschedule any course at any time. In the event that an application with fake or fraudulent documentation, we reserve the right not to refund fees. In the unlikely event of cancellation, your deposit/fees will be refunded, and the Irish National Immigration Service will be notified. Dorset College also reserves the right to reschedule the start dates of all courses and if necessary to vary the content. Except where expressly stated, all fees are non-refundable. See the College website for full terms and conditions.

Please visit our English language website for refund policy in relation to EFL courses. https://english.dorset-college.ie

13.2 Refund Procedure

	Procedure Stage	Responsibility	Evidence
1	**Submit Refund Request Form**: If a learner wishes to apply for a refund, and deems they are eligible for such a refund after review of the College's refund policy, they should make a formal request for this through one of the College's Admissions Department.	Learner Admissions Department	Refund request form
2	**Review of Refund request:** All Refund requests are reviewed by the Admissions Lead who can liaise with the Director of Sales and Marketing if necessary.	Admissions Lead Director of Sales & Marketing Financial Controller	
3	**Response to Learner:** The learner will be notified by email of the refund decision, with reasons for the decision. Should a refund be approved, details will be sent to the College's Financial Controller who will arrange the refund. Should a refund be refused the learner will be advised of their right to appeal to the Managing Director and the appropriate form will be provided which is also available on the College website.	Admissions Lead Financial Controller	Email to learner

13.3 Learner Feedback Policy

The College recognises the value of QA and `the importance of accommodating the learner perspectives in its management, operations and administration. Therefore, the College will:

- Survey its learners twice per semester (during and at the end) to ascertain their overall experience of the College through SurveyMonkey which is completely anonymous and facilitated by the Academic Operations Lead.
- Get qualitative feedback from its learners annually on their perspective of the sufficiency and quality of the learner resources and supports at their disposal. This will be achieved through focus groups with our Academic Operations Lead, Class Rep Meetings with the Programme Leader and Dorset College Student Council.
- Include learners in appropriate Groups and Committees in the College to allow for a learner perspective to be included in College decision-making to ensure partnership and collaboration to build an inclusive community of learning at each level specifically Academic Council.

The feedback obtained from the learners through these consultative processes will be considered, and any necessary follow-up actioned, by the College's Academic Management Group or the relevant Lead and/or Department.

The feedback loop will be closed by the Student Experience Leader and shared with the student body via their Class Representative and/or Student Council as appropriate and ultimately will form part of the Annual Monitoring Report to be signed off by Academic Council.

13.4 Learner Code of Conduct

The Learner Code of Conduct sets out the expectations that the College has for learner conduct and behaviour. It is intended to help facilitate a harmonious and collegial learning environment for all learners, and a positive work environment for College staff and faculty.

The Code of Conduct states:

- Learners will not be disruptive in class or the College environs and/or interfere with their peers, faculty or College staff.
- Learners will be respectful and courteous to their peers, College staff, faculty and other stakeholders at all times.
- Learners will not intentionally behave in a manner that may bring themselves, their peers or the College's name into disrepute.
- All College communication will be respectful and collegial. Communication that is confrontational in nature will not be tolerated.
- Learners are responsible to ensuring their regular and punctual attendance at their scheduled classes. Learners will not attempt to enter a class after the recommended time if the lecturer does not permit entrance to the classroom.
- Learners are responsible for proactively notifying the College if they are scheduled to be absent for a period of time.
- Learners will be respectful of the College's property and facilities.
- Learners should ensure that they are informed of the College's policies and procedures.

Note:

- Should a learner not abide by this Code of Conduct, they may be subject to the Learner Misconduct Procedures.
- Criminal Offences (including theft) shall be referred to the authorities and which may constitute Gross Misconduct.

13.5 Categories of misconduct

Dorset College categorises offences into Major or Minor incidents of misconduct as follows:

- Major misconduct includes but is not limited to the following:
  - Furnishing false information to the College with intent to deceive.

- o Forgery, alteration or misuse of College documents, records or student identity cards. This includes, but is not limited to, attendance records, reference letters, registration status letters, certificates, assessment results and transcripts.
  - o Physical or verbal harassment, bullying or abuse of any learner or member of staff of the College.
  - o Malicious destruction, damage or misuse of College property, including Library materials and computer equipment, or of private property on the campus (over €50 replacement cost).
  - o Unwarranted interference with College's safety equipment, fire-fighting equipment and alarm systems or failure to observe fire drill procedures.
  - o Use of alcohol or other substance use on the campus or the premises of any partner or organisation utilised for the completion of the programme of study.
  - o Forcible occupation of College buildings.
  - o Activities by learners outside the College while engaged in work experience, placement, cocurricular events, volunteer placement, study tours, assignments organised by the College or while representing the College, its Clubs or Societies, which would breach the regulations of the College.
  - o Incitement or encouragement of any other person or persons to do any of the above.
- Minor misconduct includes but is not limited to the following:
  - o Littering
  - o Disorderly Conduct
  - o Causing minor damage to College property or private property on the campus (involving up to €50 replacement cost).
  - o Being in unauthorized areas without permission
  - o Failing to establish identity on request.
  - o Conduct, which disrupts or is likely to disrupt lectures, research, study, examinations, use of College facilities or the administration of the College.
  - o Conduct which obstructs or is likely to obstruct a member of staff of the College, or a person authorized by the College to carry out specific tasks, in the performance of his or her duties.
  - o A reprimand from an authorised College official.

Note: Penalties for Minor Offences Where a learner is found guilty of the offence charged, the Disciplinary Committee is empowered to impose any of the following penalties, either separately or in combination

13.6 Learner Misconduct Procedure

	Procedure Stage	Responsibility	Evidence
1	**Complaint:** If a member of College staff, faculty, learner or other stakeholder wishes to make a complaint about a learner's behaviour, they should do so in writing to the Academic	Academic Operations	Written Complaint

	Operations Lead. The complaint should be supported with any documentary evidence to support the complaint, or details of others who may have witnessed an incident. A complaint form will be enclosed in the Learner Handbook, on our VLE Moodle and the College website.	Director of Academic Operations	
2	**Investigation:** The Academic Operations Lead will then arrange for the incident to be investigated. Ordinarily, the Academic Operations Lead will assign a member of the College's staff to lead the investigation. This person should have no involvement with the incident being investigated. The investigator will verify the validity of any supporting evidence submitted. The investigator may also interview the person who made the complaint, the person who the complaint has been made against, and/or any other person who was involved or witnessed the incident in question.	Staff member assigned as investigator	
3	**Investigation report:** The investigator will submit a report to the Disciplinary Committee who will determine if the complaint merits the following: - No misconduct - Minor misconduct - Major misconduct - Gross misconduct **Outcomes** - Should the Disciplinary Committee decide on No misconduct, no further action should be taken. - Should the Disciplinary Committee decide on Minor misconduct, the learner will receive a written warning and informed that three such instances of minor misconduct will result in a temporary suspension of the learner up to a maximum of one week and will amount to Minor misconduct. A fine of up to 50% of	Disciplinary Committee	Notification to Learner (if applicable)

the yearly fee may also be imposed relative and proportionate to the finding of Minor Misconduct. • Should the Disciplinary Committee decide on Major misconduct, the learner will be suspended from the College for a period of 1 week and this will be marked on their permanent record. If such Major Misconduct or another incident occur this may constitute Gross Misconduct. • During this time the learner's attendance will be counted as absent and the learner will not be allowed to sit or submit an assessment if an assessment date falls during the suspension. • A record of this misconduct will be kept on the learners file for the duration of their studies with the College, and the learner will be informed that two such instances of Major misconduct will result in their expulsion from the College. • Should the Disciplinary Committee decide on gross misconduct, the learner will be expelled from the College. • In making the decision, the Disciplinary Committee must use only the available evidence from the investigation and may ask to meet with the learner if any clarifications are needed. **Note**: all decisions can be appealed to the Appeals Committee within 10 days of the decision.	

13.7 Review of Support for Learners Policies and Procedures

The College will review these Support for Learners policies and procedures on an annual basis. This review will assess the adequacy and effectiveness of the support services offered, as well as the learning environment.

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

- Dean of Academic Affairs
- Academic Operations Lead
- Quality Assurance Lead
- 1 Lecturer Head of Library
- 1 Learner Information Systems and Enhancement
- Student Experience Leader

14 Information & Data Management

Policy Title	**Information and Data Management**
Date Approved	17/12/2018
Effective From	02/01/2019
Monitor	Dean of Academic Affairs / QA Committee
Summary	This policy details the information that the College retains on its staff and learners, the reasons for this and the duration that it retains such data. It also provides transparency as to how an individual can see what data the College retains about them and, at their request, give them a copy of such data.
Related Policies	
Revision History &	Version 1 – 2019
Commencement Date & Date of Next Review	Commencement Date (Version 1): 02/01/2020
	Date of Next Review: Following Independent Assessment from Re-engagement process
Purpose	The purpose of these policies is to provide information and transparency regarding the Data Protection obligations of the College. This includes obligations in dealing with personal data, in order to ensure that the organisation complies with the requirements of the relevant Irish legislation, namely the Data Protection Act(s) 1988 and the Data Protection (Amendment) Act (2003), The Data Protection Act 2018 and the e-Privacy Regulations 2011 and GDPR 2018.
Scope	This policy covers both personal and sensitive personal data held in relation to data subjects by the College. The policy applies equally to personal data held in manual and automated form.
Policy Statement	The College must comply with the Data Protection principles set out in the relevant legislation. This Policy applies to all Personal Data collected, processed and stored by the College in relation to its staff, service providers and clients in the course of its activities. The College makes no distinction between the rights of Data Subjects who are employees, and those who are not. All are treated equally under this Policy.

14.1 Information Systems

The College recognises the importance of collecting, and having ready access to, pertinent information about its operations to help inform its decision making and to allow it to review and improve how it operates. Central to this are the College's Learner Management System, CLASS, and Virtual Learning Environment Moodle, where much of the information that the College collects is either initially recorded or later stored.

The College will:

- Ensure that both its Learner Management System (LMS) (CLASS) and Virtual Learning Environment (VLE) Moodle are maintained securely, kept up-to-date and remain fit for purpose. Responsibility of this resides with the College's IT Lead (CLASS) and the Head of Library, Information Systems and enhancement (Moodle).
- Ensure that its LMS and/or VLE can produce pertinent statistics, or that these statistics can easily be derived from the LMS or VLE.
- Utilise data-driven reports to inform its decision-making.
- Utilise data-driven reports to inform reviews and improvement to its quality assurance policies and procedures.
- Produce annual data-driven reports (Annual Monitoring Reports) for each programme.

14.1.1 These reports will contain:
- Learner satisfaction rates.
- Learner progression/attrition/dropout rates.
- Learner completion rates.
- Learner graduation/certificate rates.
- Grade analysis of learner performance (benchmarked to best available national statistics)
- Career paths of graduates.
- Produce reports on learners as required by external regulatory bodies.

14.2 Management Information Systems

Although the ability to generate a breadth of learner data is important, the College is cognisant that without embedding the use of this data within its quality assurance structures, then its usefulness is limited.

Therefore, the College will embed the use of statistics and data-driven reports in the following ways:

- The Academic council will consider the Annual Monitoring Reports for each programme and will action follow-ups that arise from these. The Academic Council will also assign ownership to these actions.
- The Academic Management Group will consider, and action follow-ups that arise from, statistics related to the ongoing performance of learners and this will typically be in conjunction with the relevant Programme Board. This will include:
  - Learner attendance.

- o Learner assessment performance (to date).
- o Learner feedback.
- The College's Senior Management Group, Academic Council as well as the Risk Management Committee will consider, within their respective capacities, learner attendance, academic performance and learner attrition when forecasting its capacity for future academic years. This will inform decisions such as whether it should seek additional capacity and its minimum and maximum number of learners per programme.
- The statistics and reports outlined above will be monitored by the Dean of Academic Affairs and will be produced collaboratively by the Quality Lead, Admissions Lead, IT Lead, Academic Operations Lead and various departments if required.
- The Academic Council will annually review the usability of the College's LMS and VLE and how easily these facilitate the generation of relevant statistics and data-driven reports. The Academic Council will then determine whether these systems require further investment or if they should be replaced by a system that is more fit-for-purpose.

14.3 Records Maintenance and Retention

When determining the data retention periods, the College has been guided by employment and other law, as well as the statutory retention periods arising from these and associated laws. Furthermore, limitation periods, needs of the College, and the GDPR principles have been taken into account. The data retention periods implemented by Dorset College for HR data are as follows:

The data retention periods implemented by Dorset College for HR data are as follows:

Type of Personal Data	Duration
Annual Leave and Public Holiday records	6 years
Carer's Leave records	8 years
Parental Leave records and Force Majeure Leave records	8 years (Parental Leave Acts, section 27)
Hours Worked and related information such as breaks, annual leave and public	6 years (3 years required of The Organisation of Working Time Act, 1997, Section 25, and the Organisation of Working Time (Records) Prescribed Form and Exemptions, Regulations 2001). 6 years in line with College policy.
Payslips	6 years (3 year required of National Minimum Wage Act, Section 22). 6 years in line with College policy.
Employment Permit records	5 years or for the duration of the employment (whichever is the longer)
Employment records of young persons	6 years

under 18

Collective redundancy information	6 years
Taxation Records	6 years (Companies Acts and Taxes Consolidation Act)
Accidents	10 years from date of an accident (the Safety health and Welfare at Work; General Applications Regulation 1993, section 60)
Employee contract	6 years from the date of termination of the employment
CV and interview notes of unsuccessful interviewees	6 years (3 year required of National Minimum Wage Act, Section 22). 6 years in line with College policy.
Signed Documents	6 months
Other HR details (not included above)	1 year

The data retention periods implemented by Dorset College for learner data are as follows:

Type of Personal Data	Duration
Records relating to summative assessment results	Permanently retained – whether a reward has been recommended or not (level of detail of permanently retained data should be at least sufficient to facilitate the issue of a Europass Diploma Supplement (Assessments and Standards, 2013, section 4.5.2))
Records which contribute towards module Grade	Duration of Studies + 1 year after graduation (benchmarked to University of Limerick and cognisant of Assessment and Standards, 2013, section 4.6.2)
Research theses	Permanently retained
Broadsheets	Permanently retained
Records of successful student applicants	Duration of Studies + 3 years
Garda Vetting records	Duration of Studies + 1 year
External Examiners' reports	Permanently retained
Deferral, withdrawal and applications for	Duration of Studies + 1 year

Transfer

Board of Examiners meeting records	Permanently retained
Annual Monitoring Reports	Permanently retained

The data retention periods implemented by Dorset College for other forms of personal data not included above are as follows:

Type of Personal Data	Duration
Security – CCTV footage	6 months, unless specifically required for investigation/security/safety/legal purposes
Minutes of Academic Council meetings	Permanently retained
Record of amendments to Quality Assurance system	Permanently retained

14.4 Privacy Policy

Dorset College is an education institute, which offers programmes of Higher Education, Further Education, English Language, and Professional programmes. This privacy notice explains how the College uses any personal information it collects about learners.

The College collects information about individuals when they register as learners. It also collects information when learners voluntarily complete learner surveys, provide other forms of formal feedback, and participate in formal meetings or committees as part of the College's quality assurance structure. Furthermore, as part of the academic programmes provided, the College collects and collates information related to the performance of a learners on its programmes, such as assessment results and attendance. Finally, website usage information is collected using cookies.

The College collects information about learners for the following reasons:

- to ensure the effective operation of its academic programmes
- to fulfil its obligations with the awarding bodies (if applicable)
- to fulfil its legal obligations with the Garda National Immigration Bureau for the registration of non-EEA students (where applicable) and,
- if learners consent, to email learners about other programmes and services it thinks may be of interest to them.

The College uses cookies as part of its website maintenance.

The College will not share learner information with other companies for marketing purposes.

The College will share learner information with other bodies where it is obliged to do so and for legitimate reasons as per GDPR. The prime examples of this are with awarding bodies and GNIB, for applicable learners. Learners are made aware of this at registration.

14.5 Data Protection Policy

In the course of its daily organisational activities, Dorset College acquires, processes and stores personal data in relation to:

- Employees of Dorset College.
- Learners of Dorset College.
- Third party service providers engaged by Dorset College.

In accordance with the Irish Data Protection legislation, this data must be acquired and managed fairly. Not all staff members will be expected to be experts in Data Protection legislation. However, the College is committed to ensuring that its staff have sufficient awareness of the legislation in order to be able to anticipate and identify a Data Protection issue, should one arise. In such circumstances, staff must ensure that the designated staff member with responsibility for Data Protection is informed, in order to ensure that appropriate corrective action is taken.

Due to the nature of the services provided by the College, there is regular and active exchange of personal data between the College and its Data Subjects. In addition, the College exchanges personal data with Data Processors (e.g. external regulatory bodies) on the Data Subjects' (learners) behalf.

This is consistent with the College's obligations under the terms of its contract with its Data Processors.

This policy provides the guidelines for this exchange of information, as well as the procedure to follow in the event that a College staff member is unsure whether such data can be disclosed.

In general terms, the staff member should consult with the designated staff member with responsibility for Data Protection to seek clarification.

Dorset College operates within the education industry. Given the nature of the service it provides, the College collects significant amounts of personal data on learners and staff (its Data Subjects), including, but not limited to, names, email addresses, physical addresses, financial information and health information. Dorset College also interacts with other institutes as part of its processing of personal data.

The General Data Protection Regulation states that data must be processed in a lawful manner. Specifically, it outlines six criteria, one of which must apply for an organisation or institute to have a lawful basis to process data.

These six criteria for lawful data processing are:

1. Consent — Where students have given full, free and explicit consent.

2. Contract — Where processing is necessary to satisfy a contract with the student.

3. Legal Obligation — Where processing is required to comply with an EU or member state legal obligation to which the HEI is subject.

4. Vital Interests — Where processing is needed to protect the life of the data subject.

5. Public Interest — Where processing is necessary for the public interest or in the exercise of an official authority vested in the data controller.

6. Legitimate Interests — Where processing is necessary for the legitimate interests of the HEI, in other words where data processing is required to enable the HEI to carry out its core functions. This basis is only lawful if it does not override the fundamental rights and freedoms of the student.

To effectively provide its core functions, the College has a legitimate interest to process some personal information of its Data Subjects. For example, the College must process personal data relating to assessment results to ensure that it fulfils a core function of facilitating its learners with the opportunity to receive an official certificate, such as a Degree, with the evidence that the learner has successfully fulfilled the requirements of a validated programme.

The data processing activities for which the College can claim legitimate interest are:

- Processing of assessment information.
- Appeals of assessment results.
- Incidents of academic impropriety.
- Ensuring accessibility to course content.
- Informing students of developments relevant to their programme of study.
- Recording minutes of formal meetings that are specified within the College's quality assurance structures.
- Maintenance of the learner record (to provide insights on a student during the studies with Dorset College)

However, it is not sufficient to claim that legitimate interest can cover all aspects of the data processing done by the College. For example, the College may periodically use learner data for statistical analysis of academic performance, to alert them to other programmes of study that the College may think a learner might be interested in. This example would not be covered by the legitimate interest criteria and could not be considered critical to the effective provision of the College's core functions. In such instances, the College will seek consent for the processing of data from its data subjects.

The data processing activities for which the College can claim legitimate interest are:

- Use of personal, anonymised data for statistical analysis purposes.
- Use of personal data for communication purposes outside those that are core for the successful participation on an academic programme.
- Use of personal comments or feedback on the programmes or services provided by the College, with a view to using these in reports or as a basis for future improvements.

Furthermore, in certain instances, the College does process data in compliance with legal obligations. This is typically to ensure compliance with regulatory specifications, such as retention of data for specified periods, but is also required for its provision of international (non-EEA) students.

The data processing activities for which the College can claim legitimate interest are:

- Retention of personal information of staff in line with regulatory requirements (see Data Retention Periods document).
- Providing personal information of non-EEA learners (who require a student visa) as requested by Garda National Immigration Bureau.

14.6 Subject Access Requests Policy

The protection of one's personal data is an EU fundamental right for all individuals. Dorset College, as a data controller, is obliged to ensure that the data it collects is obtained in a fair and transparent manner, stored securely, and is not retained for any longer than is necessary for the purpose of its collection or than the period outlined in the College's data retention periods.

Complementing this fundamental right of individuals is their right of access of information that is a retained about them by a data controller. This allows an individual transparency regarding the kinds of data that is processed about them, and to verify that the information is accurate and up to date.

An individual is entitled to make a formal application to the College, asking if the College holds any personal information about them. This request is limited to just clarifying if data is held or not and a description of the personal data and does not include details of the type of scope of the data held, if that is the case. There is no fee for this request.

An individual is entitled to make a formal application to the College, asking to clarify if the College has personal data held about them and to request a copy of any personal data held about them. The outcome of this request is to provide a full copy of the personal data that the College retains about an individual. Specifically, the following will be provided to the individual:

- A copy of their personal data.
- The purposes for processing the data.
- The categories of personal data concerned.
- To whom the data has been or will be disclosed.

- Whether the data has been or will be transferred outside of the EU.
- The period for which the data will be stored, or the criteria to be used to determine retention periods.
- The right to make a complaint to the Data Protection Commissioner.
- The right to request rectification or deletion of the data.
- Whether the individual has been subject to automated decision making.

	Procedure Stage	Responsibility	Evidence
1	**Written Application:** Formal, written application is made to the designated person in charge of Data Protection. This form of this application can be either a typed document submitted in hard copy or sent via email.	Quality Assurance Lead	Written Application
2	**Response:** The College will respond in 21 days from the date it receives this request with confirmation and a description of the personal data held, if this is the case. If a subject access request is made thereafter the College has a further 28 days to respond. • The right to request rectification or deletion of the data. Whether the individual has been subject to automated decision making.	Quality Assurance Lead	Confirmation Communication
3	**Appeal** There shall be an appeal to the Dean of Academic Affairs.		

14.7 Review of Information and Data Management Policies and Procedures

The College will review these Information and Data Management policies and procedures on an annual basis. This review will assess the adequacy and effectiveness of the support services offered, as well as the learning environment.

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

- Dean of Academic Affairs
- Admissions Lead
- Operations Lead
- Quality Assurance Lead
- Academic Operations Lead
- IT Lead
- 1 Lecturer
- Head Librarian
- Information Systems and Enhancement
- 1 Learner

15 Public Information & Communication

Policy Title	**Public Information and Communication**
Date Approved	17/12/2018
Effective From	02/01/2019
Monitor	Dean of Academic Affairs / QA Committee
Summary	This policy details the information provision of the College and how it communicates publicly. Such information includes, but is not limited to, its quality assurance system, validated programme documentation and quality assurance reviews and evaluations.
Related Policies	
Revision History & Commencement Date & Date of Next Review	Version 1 – 2019 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 ensure that the public communications of the College is accurate, transparent and informative for College stakeholders.
Scope	This policy covers all public communications associated with the College's validated programmes.
Policy Statement	The College must ensure accuracy of its information provision that it puts in the public domain if it is to maintain its duty of care to its current and prospective learners. Therefore, this policy is intended to detail the how it will ensure the accuracy of its public information and the commitments that the College makes in its public communication.

15.1 Public Information

The College is responsible for the accuracy of the information that it puts into the public domain. Therefore, it must ensure the validity of such information to ensure transparency with its stakeholders.

For the purposes of this policy, Public Communication refers to 'information that providers communicate and publish about their activities'. The main platform that the College uses for such communication is its website.

The College will ensure its public communication is:

- Reflective of a programme as it was validated.
- Honest and transparent when detailing the College facilities, programmes, and its history of its quality assurance policies and procedures.
- Accessible and easy to navigate for stakeholders and published in full.
- Clear with regards the accreditation of a programme, or whether a programme is accredited at all.
- Clear with regards to access, transfer and progression for each programme (if applicable) is presented in a user-friendly manner.

When the public communication is specifically targeted at prospective and/or current learners, the College will ensure the following:

- transparency regarding whether a programme leads to an award.
- where a programme does lead to an award, that the name of the awarding body is clearly stated.
- that the title of the award, whether it is recognised on the NFQ, its NFQ level (if applicable) and award type (if applicable) are clearly outlined.
- that the access, transfer and progression procedures for each applicable programme are clearly stated.
- the PEL arrangements for a programme, should they be required, are clearly outlined.
- that this learner information is monitored and updated as required.

15.2 Procedure for approving Public Communications Content

	Procedure Stage	Responsibility	Evidence
1	**Draft Content:** The College's Director of Sales and Marketing will appoint an individual (typically the Brand Manager) to draft content for the public communication. This may be new content or a revision of existing content. This content will then be reviewed by the relevant Lead for example Admissions Lead and the Senior Management Group or a member where appropriate.	Director of Sales and Marketing Brand Manager Senior Management Group	Draft Content
2	**Review of Content:** Those nominated to review the content will do so within an agreed timeframe. Should the reviewers recommend any amendments these will be done within an agreed timeframe.	Director of Sales and Marketing Brand Manager Senior Management Group	Recommendations for changes to draft content

	Send it to the content writer with the attached recommendations. Ordinarily, the content writer will amend the public communications content as recommended by the reviewers. However, the content writer may not agree with all the recommendations. If this is the case, the content writer and the reviewer will subsequently meet to discuss these recommendations and come to an amicable agreement.		
3	**Updated Content (if required):** The draft content is updated by the content writer (if required) and sent to the reviewers for final sign-off.	Director of Sales and Marketing Brand Manager Senior Management Group	Final Content

15.3 Review of Public Information and Communication Policies and Procedures

The College will review the Public Information and Communication 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:

- Dean of Academic Affairs
- Director of Sales and Marketing - Brand Manager Lead(s):
- Admissions,
- IT
- Quality
- Operations
- Academic Operations
- Head Library
- Information Systems and Enhancement
- 1 Learner

16 Other Parties Involved in Education & Training

Policy Title	**Other Parties involved in Education & Training**
Date Approved	17/12/2018
Effective From	02/01/2019
Monitor	Dean of Academic Affairs / QA Committee
Summary	This policy details the overarching principles that dictate how the College engages with other parties involved in education and training outside its internal stakeholders.
Related Policies	
Revision History &	Version 1 – 2019
Commencement Date & Date of Next Review	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 ensure that the College critiques the role of outside parties in its education provision and assesses whether engaging such outside parties has merits.
Scope	This policy covers all engagements with outside parties with the exception of External Examiners, which is covered under the Assessment policies.
Policy Statement	The College must ensure accuracy of its information provision that it puts in the public domain if it is to maintain its duty of care to its current and prospective learners. Therefore, this policy is intended to detail the how it will ensure the accuracy of its public information and the commitments that the College makes in its public communication.

16.1 Other Accreditation Bodies

The College is engaged with other accreditation bodies than QQI. However, it does recognise following its policies and procedures for all programmes as good practice.

- It is College policy to ordinarily follow its overarching quality assurance policies and procedures for all the programmes it offers.
- It will supplement these policies and procedures with accreditation specific policies and procedures where these are required. In such instances, the College will follow these supplemented policies and procedures.

- Where policy areas do not require supplementing, the existing quality assurance policies and procedures will be used.

16.2 External partnerships and Second providers

The College's current scope of provision does not extend to external partnerships and second providers for the delivery of its programmes. However, the College recognises that should it wish to extend its current scope of provision, it must have appropriate policies and procedures in place to ensure that the learner experience is not diminished. In such an event, policies and procedures will be developed.

The College does currently engage in a collaborative agreement as a second provider for another institute's programme. In deciding whether it is appropriate, or not, to engage in a collaboration as a second provider, the College engages with all relevant stakeholders including the College Advisory Board and considers the following criteria:

- Is there a benefit in delivering another provider's programme rather than developing, and seeking validation, of a programme under its own validation?
- What input would the College have in the administration, management, and delivery of the collaborative programme? Does the College have the requisite experience and/or expertise to competently deliver the programme?
- Does the College foresee that it would have a positive working relationship with the principal provider of the collaborative programme?

If the College decides to enter a collaborative agreement as a second provider, it will:

- Agree a Memorandum of Understanding with the principal provider of the collaborative programme.
- Ordinarily adopt and work within the quality assurance of the principal provider for the management, administration and delivery of the collaborative programme.
- Ensure that it delivers at least 40 percent of the syllabus of collaborative programme. The reason for this is that the College wants to be a meaningful provider in the delivery of any programme it is associated with.
- Assign a liaison person who will be the primary communicator with the principal provider.

16.3 Expert Panellists

The College utilises an Advisory Board as well as external experts for various elements of its quality assurance processes. When it seeks out such expertise, the College will ensure the individual meets the following criteria:

- Have an established expertise (through academic, accreditation or experience) in the cognate area.

- Ensure the external expert has no conflict of interest. This would exclude family members of College staff personnel or individuals who are, or who have previously, worked in or with the College in any capacity.
- If the College is forming a panel of external experts, that this panel is reasonably gendered balanced (at least a ratio of 60:40).

16.4 Procedure for the Selection of External Expert(s)

	Procedure Stage	Responsibility	Evidence
1	**Shortlist of eligible individuals:** The Dean of Academic Affairs will prepare a shortlist of eligible individuals to fulfil the external expert role, based on the purpose for recruiting an external expert(s). This shortlist will be sent to the Academic Council for its consideration (either at a scheduled meeting or via email if a meeting is not imminently scheduled).	Dean of Academic Affairs Academic Council	Shortlist of Candidates
2	**Review & Selection of individuals:** The Academic Council will consider the shortlisted candidates based on the criteria outlined in the policy on Expert Panellists. The Academic Council will ideally be unanimous in their support of a candidate. However, if this does not happen, the agreed candidate must have the support of at least 2/3's of the Academic Council. The AQC will also rank the candidates in order of preference.	Dean of Academic Affairs	Communication with external expert(s)
3	**Communicate with agreed individual:** The Dean of Academic Affairs will communicate with the preferred candidate and enquire as to their interest in fulfilling the role required. If the preferred candidate does not wish to fulfil the role, the Dean of Academic Affairs will then contact the 2nd preferred candidate (and so on). Once a candidate agrees, the Dean of Academic Affairs will liaise with the individual to provide the necessary background information on the role required of the individual.	Dean of Academic Affairs	Communication with external expert(s)

16.5 Review of Other Parties Involved in Education and Training Policies and Procedures

The College will review the Other Parties Involved in Education and Training policies and procedures on an annual basis. This review will assess the adequacy and effectiveness of the policies and procedures.

- Senior Management Group
- Dean of Academic Affairs
- Quality Assurance Lead
- 1 Learner

17 Self-Evaluation, Monitoring & Review

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		
2.1	Addition of table to track changes made to individual policies and procedures. `	01/05/2023	01/06/2023
2.2	17.3 added Evaluation of Blended Learning Programmes	16/10/2023	3/11/2023
2.2	New section 17.3.1 description of evaluation of BL	16/10/2023	3/11/2023

Policy Title	**Self-Evaluation, Monitoring and Review**
Date Approved	17/12/2018
Effective From	02/01/2019
Monitor	Dean of Academic Affairs / QA Committee
Summary	This policy details how the College will review its provision of education programmes, both on an on-going basis and periodically.
Related Policies	
Revision History & Commencement Date & Date of Next Review	Version 1 – 2019 Version 2.2 - 2023 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 ensure that the College has structure to the review of its administration, operations and management of education and that the concept of reviewing what the College does is embedded in its structure.
Scope	This policy covers review of all validated programmes and their associated quality assurance of the College.
Policy Statement	The College recognises the importance of reviewing what it does and the need to ensure that such review mechanisms are embedded into its quality assurance structures. Therefore, this policy provides such structure and delineates between the ongoing review mechanisms and periodic reviews.

17.1 Internal Self-Monitoring

Internal Self-Monitoring in the College is an ongoing process that focuses on specific indicators. The data for this monitoring is collected on an ongoing basis. Preliminary or supplemental statistics or reports are derived from this data regularly, to inform day-to-day decisions of the College. The use of this data also culminates in the production of formal Annual Monitoring Reports.

The specific quality indicators that the College uses for its Internal Self-Monitoring are:

- Learner satisfaction ratings, derived from learner surveys.
- Learner services satisfaction ratings, derived from learner surveys.
- Completion/certification rates, derived from broadsheets.
- Grade analysis, derived from broadsheets.
- Attendance rates, derived from monitored attendance.
- Graduate employability, derived from graduate survey.
- Library usage, derived from annual library report.

17.2 Internal Self-Monitoring Report

These quality indicators culminate in the production of an Annual Monitoring Report for each programme. The production of these reports is led by the Dean of Academic Affairs, with information provided by the owner of each quality indicator.

An Annual Monitoring Report will:

- Assess the performance of the College against stated objectives (set out in the previous Annual Monitoring Report).
- Outline recommended objectives for the improvement of the College's quality assurance policies and procedures.
- Prioritise the stated recommendations.

The Dean of Academic Affairs presents the Annual Monitoring Reports to the Academic Council, who discusses the recommendations outlined in each. The AQC will then agree a Quality Improvement Plan, which sets out the areas of improvement for the College for the upcoming year. These areas of improvement will be derived from all the Annual Monitoring Reports, and each will have an assigned owner and schedule as to when the associated action should be complete.

17.3 Self-Evaluation

The College's Self-Evaluation is focused on the impact to learners rather than specifically on a review of policies and procedures. Self-Evaluation has a broader purview than Internal Self-Monitoring, as it requires the College to engage with external stakeholders and has a broader and more systematic

focus. The College will ordinarily engage in a self-evaluation every three years, or more frequently if requested by the Academic Council.

Self-Evaluation will also culminate in a report and improvement plan. However, the focus of the report and improvement plan will be more systematic. They will reflect on the College's operations and how the College should function going forward. The Academic Council will review and action appropriate recommendations from the Self-Evaluation Report.

The Self-Evaluation Report will consider, amongst other things, the following:

- The continued viability of the programmes that the College offers.
- The strategic direction of the College.
- New programme development of the College in line with the stated strategic direction.
- Evaluation of blended learning programmes
- Staffing of the College and areas for additional staffing needs.
- Investment in College facilities.
- The established industry links of the College.
- The learning environment for the learner.
- The teaching & learning philosophy of the College.

17.3.1 Self Evaluation of Blended Learning Programmes

Dorset College has identified additional requirements that must be included in the design, development, approval, monitoring and review of Blended Learning Programmes. The programmes must be regularly reviewed, updated, and improved using feedback from relevant stakeholders (e.g. learners, academic staff, and industry members). Specifically, Dorset College must review:

- The effectiveness of integration between online and face-to-face components
- The outcomes of programmes delivered by Blended Learning
- Learning resources, materials and delivery mechanisms delivered online or with an online component
- All materials and media used to deliver online learning
- Blended and online-specific learner support
- The effectiveness of the technology and technological infrastructure, including its ease of use and adequacy
- The effectiveness with which the programme actively engages learners with their lecturers, each other and with their learning

The criteria stipulated in this section must be considered during the 5-year cycle of programmatic review of Blended Learning Programmes or Programme components and included in the Programme Evaluation Report.

Similarly, during Dorset College's institutional review, consideration must be given to how Dorset College complies with regulatory requirements including QQI Policies and guidelines. Therefore, the Institutional review must include a review of the effectiveness of our Blended Learning Policy.

17.3.2 Procedure for Self Evaluation

	Procedure Stage	Responsibility	Evidence
1	**Purpose of Self-Evaluation:** The Academic Council will agree on the commencement of a Self-Evaluation and nominate an individual/team/Lead to lead this. The scope and purpose of the Self-Evaluation will also be agreed and specified by the Academic Council.	Academic Council	Scope and Purpose of Self-Evaluation
2	**Appointment of Self-Evaluation team:** The lead of the self-evaluation will coordinate a team to conduct the self-evaluation.	Coordinator of Self-Evaluation	
3	**Stakeholder Engagement:** The Self-Evaluation team will engage with an array of external and internal stakeholders to attain an holistic assessment of the College under the agreed scope and purpose.	Self-Evaluation Team	Notes on Stakeholder Engagement
4	**Review of Internal Reports:** The Self-Evaluation Team will review internal reports produced by the College for other purposes (e.g. Annual Monitoring) to help assess the performance of the College, learner feedback etc.	Self-Evaluation Team	Notes on Internal Reports
5	**Self-Evaluation Report:** The Self-Evaluation Team will then prepare the Self-Evaluation Report. Ordinarily, a single person will write the report to ensure consistency and coherence, although the team will collectively contribute. The report will consider its scope and purpose (which will be derived from the Self-Evaluation Policy), through data-informed assessment (derived from stakeholder engagement and review of the internal reports).	Self-Evaluation Team	Self-Evaluation Report
6	**Consideration of Recommendations:** The Self-Evaluation Report will be considered by the Academic Council, who will action items for development under its purview or recommend actions to the Senior Management Team where an action requires the approval of both.	Academic Council	Minutes of Academic Council

17.4 Review of Self-Evaluation, Monitoring and Review Policies and Procedures

The College will review the Self-Evaluation, Monitoring and Review 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:

- Dean of Academic Affairs
- Leads
- Quality Assurance Lead
- 1 Learner

18 Miscellaneous

Policy Title	**Miscellaneous**
Date Approved	17/12/2018
Effective From	02/01/2019
Monitor	Dean of Academic Affairs / QA Committee
Summary	Dorset College is committed to ensuring all stakeholders' best interests are protected and to ensure such protection the College, from time to time as appropriate, create policies, statements and handbooks to ensure best practice is adhered to. All policies, statements and handbooks are subject to the Policy on Policy and Self-Evaluation Policy as per this Quality Assurance Handbook.
Related Policies	
Revision History &	Version 1 – 2019
Commencement Date & Date of Next Review	Commencement Date (Version 1): 02/01/2020 Date of Next Review: Following Independent Assessment from Re-engagement process
Purpose	Dorset College is committed to ensuring all stakeholders' best interests are protected and to ensure such protection the College, from time to time as appropriate, create policies, statements and handbooks to ensure best practice is adhered to. All policies, statements and handbooks are subject to the Policy on Policy and Self-Evaluation Policy as per this Quality Assurance Handbook.
Scope	This policy covers all engagements with outside parties with the exception of External Examiners, which is covered under the Assessment policies.
Policy Statement	The College must ensure accuracy of its information provision that it puts in the public domain if it is to maintain its duty of care to its current and prospective learners. Therefore, this policy is intended to detail the how it will ensure the accuracy of its public information and the commitments that the College makes in its public communication.

18.1 Appendix: Miscellaneous Policies & Statements

Such policies, statements and handbooks include but are not limited to the following:

1. Policy on Policy.
2. Programme Development Policy.
3. External Examining Policy.
4. GDPR Policy.
5. Employee Handbook.
6. EFL Teacher Handbook and Documented Curriculum Framework (English Language
7. Education).
8. Child Protection Policy and Child Safeguarding Statement.
9. Parent/Guardian Consent Form.
10. Learner Handbooks and Appendix:
    i. Further Education
    ii. Higher Education
    iii. Professional Courses

All the above are included by way of Appendix to the Quality Assurance Handbook as well as leaner forms, such as a Personal Mitigating Circumstances (Extension or Deferral) Form, which are attached to the Learner Handbook by way of Appendix and on our VLE, Moodle.