

Children's Therapy Centre

2022

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**Annual Quality Report**  
**Children's Therapy Centre**  
**Reporting Period 2020-2021**

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**Annual Quality Report (Children's The**  
**PART A: INTERNAL QA SYSTEM**  
**Reporting Period 2020-2021**

## PREFACE

The **Annual Quality Report (AQR)** (formerly AIQR) forms part of Quality and Qualifications Ireland's (QQI) quality assurance (QA) framework of engagement with Higher Education Institutions (HEIs). The AQR provides documentary evidence of the development and evolution of each institution's internal quality system. It provides QQI with assurance that internal QA procedures have been established and are being implemented consistent with regulatory requirements.

The AQR, particularly part A, should assist with **document management** in the institutional review process and will facilitate institutions in providing review teams with procedural QA documentation in preparation for the external review process. It is an important part of the evidence base considered by external **review teams** as part of QQI's CINNTE cycle of institutional reviews, demonstrating that the institution's internal QA system is aligned with QQI's Core and relevant Sector- and Topic-specific Statutory QA Guidelines, and with the European Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area 2015 (ESG). It enables the review team to satisfy itself of compliance with these requirements for the purpose of the institutional review process.

Each AQR is **published in full on QQI's website**, providing transparency on the HEIs' assurance and enhancement of quality to external stakeholders. (As such, institutions should ensure that their submissions do not contain any data that they consider to be commercially sensitive.) Collectively, the AQRs comprise a single national repository of quality assurance practice in Irish higher education institutions.

Each year, QQI produces a synthesis report of the key themes highlighted across the AQRs, primarily arising from Part B of the reports.

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## Guidelines on Completing the Report

The AQR is aligned with QQI's Core, Sector and Topic-specific Statutory Quality Assurance Guidelines and with the ESG (2015). A mapping of the ESG to QQI Core QA Guidelines is included in Table 1 below; the structure of Part A of this report template aligns with the first column of the table. Additional guidance on completing this template and reference material is included in each section. Institutions should adhere to this guidance and have regard to QQI Core, Sector and Topic-specific Statutory Quality Assurance Guidelines. **The guide text within each section should be deleted before submission of the report.**

### Submission Process and Timeline

The deadline for submission of the AQR each year is in February of the relevant year, with the call for submission sent to institutions in November of the preceding year. Once the call for submission has been made, QQI will provide access to QQI's provider portal, QHub, to the designated institution contact(s) to facilitate submission of the report. Through QHub, each institution will have access to an editable version of its AQR for the previous reporting period. This document can then be amended/updated to reflect any changes or developments that occurred during the current reporting period before submitting the final report to QQI.

### Completing the AQR

- When completing the AQR template, all relevant colleagues in the institution should be consulted.
- Consider whether external audiences will be able to understand the terminology used (particularly local abbreviations and acronyms); it may be helpful to include a glossary.
- Aim to avoid duplication in the report - where information is relevant to more than one section, the first mention may be referenced in subsequent sections.
- Provide reflections on what worked well, but also what may have been tried but did not work.

## Report Structure

### Part A: Internal QA System

Part A of the AQR comprises a record of each institution's current QA policies and procedures and should provide links to those policies and procedures. Private HEIs may provide links to the policies and procedures approved by QQI during initial access to validation (IAV) or reengagement. It is the responsibility of each HEI to ensure before submission of the AQR that all links are correct and functional, and that the policies and procedures referred to are the most up-to-date versions available. Given that the AQR is submitted in respect of a discrete reporting period, it may be helpful for institutions to establish a SharePoint/OneDrive folder (or similar) for each reporting period that contains the current versions of their policies and procedures, and that hyperlinks to these versions of the documents be provided in the AQR

Part A is to be completed only if there have been **material** changes to QA policies and procedures during the reporting period. Such changes may include the approval and implementation of new policies or procedures, or significant amendments to existing ones.

### Part B: Quality Assurance (QA) and Quality Enhancement (QE)

Part B of the AQR documents and captures QA activities, developments and enhancements undertaken by institutions **during the reporting period** and their **impact**. Insofar as is possible, institutions should demonstrate in Part B how plans set out in the previous AQR were progressed during the reporting period - these may be plans linked to strategic objectives, to reengagement advices, or to institutional review recommendations.

### Case Studies

In each reporting period, QQI may request updates on specific thematic areas or may invite the institution to submit case studies in response to specific topics. Further, institutions may include case studies to share good practice on topics of their choosing, demonstrating QA and QE in action. In formulating case studies, institutions are encouraged to reflect on and highlight areas that may be of interest to other institutions and would benefit from wider dissemination. Further guidance is provided in Part B.

## Links to Reference Documents Cited in this Template<sup>1</sup>

### Legislation

- [Qualifications and Quality Assurance \(Education and Training\) Act 2012 \(as amended\)](#)
- [Regional Technical Colleges Act 1992 \(as amended\)](#)
- [Technological Universities Act 2018](#)
- [Universities Act 1997](#)

### QQI Documents

#### Statutory QA Guidelines (QAG)

- [Core QAG](#)
- [Sector-specific QAG for Independent/Private Providers](#)
- [Sector-specific QAG for Designated Awarding Bodies](#)
- [Sector-specific QAG for Institutes of Technology](#)
- [Topic-specific QAG for Providers of Statutory Apprenticeship Programmes](#)
- [Topic-specific QAG for Providers of Research Degree Programmes](#)
- [Topic-specific QAG for Blended Learning](#)

#### Other QQI Policy Documents

- [QQI's Policy for Collaborative Programmes, Transnational Programmes, and Joint Awards, 2012](#)
- [QQI's Code of Practice for Provision of Programmes of Education and Training to International Learners, 2015](#)
- [QQI Policy Restatement on Access, Transfer and Progression, 2015](#)

### Other National/International References

- [European Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area \(2015\)](#)
- [IHEQN Guidelines on Collaborative Provision](#)
- [National Policy Statement on Ensuring Research Integrity in Ireland](#)
- [Ireland's Framework of Good Practice for Research Degree Programmes, 2019](#)
- [HEA National Framework for Doctoral Education](#)
- [The Salzburg Principles](#)
- [The Salzburg II Recommendations](#)
- [SOLAS Code of Practice for Employers and Apprentices](#)
- [UN Sustainable Development Goals](#)

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<sup>1</sup> These links will be updated as further guidance documents are published.

## PART A: INTERNAL QA SYSTEM

Table 1

Table 1 Mapping of ESG (2015) to QQI QA Guidelines (QAG)				
AQR Part A Section	QQI QAG Core Sub-section No.	QAG Core Sub-section Title	ESG Standard No.	ESG Standard Title
1.0 - Internal QA Framework	2.1	Governance and Management of Quality	1.1	Policy for Quality Assurance
	2.2	Documented Approach to Quality Assurance		
2.0 - Programme Development and Delivery	2.3	Programmes of Education and Training	1.2	Design and Approval of Programmes
4.0 - QA of Research Activities and Programmes			1.9	On-going Monitoring and Periodic Review of Programmes
8.0 - Monitoring and Periodic Review				
5.0 - Staff Recruitment, Development and Support	2.4	Staff Recruitment, Management and Development	1.5	Teaching Staff
2.3 - Teaching, Learning and Assessment	2.5	Teaching and Learning	1.3	Student-centred Teaching, Learning and Assessment
	2.6	Assessment of Learners		
3.0 - Learner Resources and Supports	2.7	Supports for learners	1.6	Learning Resources and Student Support
6.0 - Information and Data Management	2.8	Information and Data Management	1.7	Information Management
7.0 - Public Information and Communication	2.9	Public Information and Communication	1.8	Public Information
2.0 - Programme Delivery and Development	2.10	Other Parties Involved in Education and Training	1.9	On-going Monitoring and Periodic Review of Programmes
8.0 - Monitoring and Periodic Review			1.2	Design and Approval of Programmes
9.0 - Details of Arrangements with Third Parties				
2.0 - Programme Development and Delivery	2.11	Self-evaluation, Monitoring and Review	1.9	On-going Monitoring and Periodic Review of Programmes
8.0 - Monitoring and Periodic Review			1.10	Cyclical External Quality Assurance
4.0 - QA of Research Activities and Programmes	QAG for Providers of Research Degree Programmes			



## Introduction and Overview of Institution

This is the AQR for Children's Therapy Centre for the reporting period **1 September 2020 - 31 August 2021**.

The AQR has been approved by the Academic Council and is submitted by **Eileen Prendiville**.

### Introducing the Children's Therapy Centre

The Children's Therapy Centre (CTC) is a private limited company (Company Number 385699), incorporated in 2004, providing a range of training courses in the areas of Counselling, Psychotherapy, Play Therapy, Therapeutic Play, Child Psychotherapy and Clinical Supervision. This is quite a narrow niche market. Most of our students are mature students with a professional background in the mental health, education, child-care, or social care field.

The first group of play therapy and psychotherapy trainees, who were not already psychotherapists, making them the first official core training group, began their studies at CTC in February 2004. Our first graduates, ending their three-year training process, completed their training in October 2007. We began to offer Level 6 courses in 2007 and Level 9 training in 2010. We continue to offer one level 9 award - the 4-year MA Creative Psychotherapy (Humanistic and Integrative Modality) incorporating the Postgraduate Diploma in Play Therapy as a potential exit point at the conclusion of 2<sup>nd</sup> year. We also offer level 6 component certificates, professional training in Clinical Supervision, and CPD courses.

CTC is a small but well-resourced provider. We do not employ a large staff team but this has increased significantly over recent years. We have four full-time employees and part-time administrative back-up, all other members of the team are employed on part-time contracts and hold other posts, either for agencies or in self-employment. We have a very solid team of experienced trainers who are regularly involved in delivering our programmes. We also have a number of additional experienced trainers who are currently involved as guest lecturers. In addition, we have a number of excellent trainers, including CTC alumni who are now accredited psychotherapists and play therapists, who are available for further teaching input if and when the opportunity arises.

CTC have achieved course recognition from the 1) [Irish Association for Humanistic and Integrative Psychotherapy](#) and the 2) [Irish Association for Play Therapy and Psychotherapy](#). We are also an Association for Play Therapy approved provider of play therapy training - the only one approved to deliver training in Ireland. In addition, CTC is recognised as a European Accredited Psychotherapy Training Institute (EAPTI) by the [European Association for Psychotherapy](#).

### Preparation of the AQR

The Board of Directors have overall responsibility within CTC for implementation of the procedures related to self-evaluation. Preparation of the AQR is the responsibility of the Director of Academic Affairs.

The purpose of CTC's self-evaluation, monitoring and review procedures is to ensure that we monitor and improve the delivery, design, and evaluation of our programmes and all related aspects of our services on an ongoing basis. We assess that our quality assurances procedures are working effectively and provide transparent descriptions, and evaluations, of all aspects of our work. This enables us to constantly improve and to provide excellent services to our learners, a suitable work environment for our staff, and maintain open communication and relevant information to all stakeholders.

### ***Ongoing Monitoring that feeds into Periodic Reviews***

CTC engages in consistent ongoing monitoring processes in all aspects of work. There are 2 main focuses of such monitoring:

- Focus on specific programmes of study
- Focus on the institution itself

Ongoing monitoring is referenced in various sections of our QA documentation. It includes, but is not limited to:

- Teaching staff engage in ongoing, regular review of feedback from learners on training delivered;
- The Programme Management Team analyse the feedback from learners and present this analysis in the annual report;
- Spot checks linked to Health and Safety, Equality and Diversity, and QA processes are carried out by the Equality & Diversity Officer, the Health and Safety Officer, and the Internal Quality Assurance Team;
- Analysis of data arising from such monitoring is compiled in annual reports;
- Monitoring of learner results for each assignment with reference to levels of achievement as monitored by the Programme Management Team each year;
- Monitoring of completion, progression, attrition rates and academic outcomes as presented at the Examination Board annually;
- Consultations with learners throughout their studies in regard to changes in employment linked to the completion of various stages of their training (e.g. completion of the Postgraduate Diploma in Play Therapy);
- Ongoing monitoring of the implementation of the agreed QA procedures in all aspects of CTC work.

### ***Preparing the AQR***

The Director of Academic Affairs, with support from various staff members, is tasked with the review of relevant reports and documents for the AQR. Such documents are prepared by the relevant individuals and teams throughout the year. Having been through both a programmatic review and the re-engagement process in the previous year meant that CTC has copious amounts of data to hand, and had already begun the process of organising data in segments that matched with the templates provided by QCI.

Preparation of the AQR involves the Director of Academic Affairs in collaboration with relevant staff members and teams and making reference to any/all self and peer evaluations and reports conducted during the year in question. This includes:

- Any External Reports regarding re-engagement and/or revalidation;
- Student Handbooks
- The Annual Report for the Academic Council;
- The annual Internal Quality Assurance Team Report;
- Equality and Diversity Officer's Report;
- Health and Safety Report;
- GDPR report;
- Relevant programme plans;
- Statistics and reports regarding e.g. enrolment, retention, progression
- Course evaluation Reports;
- Minutes of meetings;
- and other documents produced within the year in question.

Particular attention is paid to any amendments to CTC's Quality Assurance Policy and Procedures that have occurred during the relevant period and any updates to organisational or process charts or other visual representations.

## 1.0 Internal QA Framework

### 1.1 Governance and Management of Quality

CTC's quality assurance documentation was completely revised and rewritten in 2019-2020. This also included a total revamp in terms of presentation: a new standardised template format was adopted and the policies and procedures as developed prior to and throughout the revalidation process were approved by the Academic Council in January 2020. All QA documentation has been collected and collated into the [CTC Quality Assurance Manual](#). The Manual is available on the CTC website and is also made available to all students on our online portal.

While the whole of CTC's QA Manual governs our management of quality, Section 2: *Introduction to Children's Therapy Centre and Governance Structures* of our QA Manual provides details information in regard to CTC's governance. An overview of governance structures is provided in [section A2.2](#) of the manual; this is supplemented by a [visual representation of our organisational structure](#).

The QA Manual is a living document subject to regular review and updating to enhance our policies and procedures. The Internal Quality Assurance Team undertake a systematic annual review culminating in the preparation of an annual report for the Academic Council.

Decisions are made about quality assurance within CTC by:

- The [Academic Council](#) (A2.3) are charged with protecting, maintaining and developing the academic and professional standards of the Centre and the quality of CTC's Programmes. They have particular roles in monitoring, reviewing and enhancing QA policies and procedures.
- The Director of Academic Affairs holds executive responsibility for academic matters and assuring quality management, development, and delivery of all programmes in accordance with agreed QA documentation.
- The [Internal Quality Assurance Team](#) (A2.4 (3)) are responsible for monitoring and reporting to the CEO and the Academic Council on the implementation and effectiveness of all CTC's QA policies and procedures, and identification of areas for enhancement.

The CEO leads the Business Operations Team who assist him in attaining the strategic business goals of the Centre as well as controlling the operational day-to-day management of the Centre including administrative support for academic staff as well as general business functions including Finance, Marketing and Advertising, I.T., Recruitment, Health and Safety, Communications and Legal compliance.

CTC's approach is to identify, assess and manage risk at local, functional and institutional level and assigning responsibility for the mitigation of risk (A10.3 [Risk Management](#)):

- Board of Directors: Reputational Risk
- Academic Council: Academic Risk
- CEO: Financial Risk

The [Research and Ethics Committee](#) (A2.4 (4)) are responsible for review and approval of Research Applications from staff and learners.

Learners contribute to management of quality by way of the [learner representative system](#) (A10.2) and by provision of feedback in regard to all aspects of their experiences within the institute ([A8.1](#)). This facilitates both the improvement of the learner experience and the improvement of the relevant programme of study. Reports on programme quality (enrolment, learner feedback, staff feedback, outcomes, resources, development etc) are considered at Programme Management Team Meetings, Examination Board Meetings, by the External Examiner, and by the Academic Council. The Board of Directors ultimately receives reports in regard to all work of the company to fulfil its' role in maintaining corporate and legal responsibility.

The Research and Ethics Committee and the Examination Board each have external independent members to provide an outside view of process and contribute to any decisions made. The External Examiner also provides a source of informed oversight providing valuable analysis to enable better decision-making. The Academic Council has an experienced independent external member as Chairperson, plus an independent Learner Representative, providing informed oversight and management of significant academic decisions as the body with delegated responsibility for all academic matters. Each of these committees has significant involvement in analysis of monitoring reports.

External stakeholders are involved in governance and management of quality within CTC in many ways including independent representation on Academic Council, Examination Board, peer review panels,

and as an independent external consultant to the Research and Ethics Committee ([A2.7](#)). In addition to these roles, consultation takes place with graduates, alumni, placement sites, professional bodies and employers within our field ([A2.8](#)).

## 1.2 Linked Providers, Collaborative and Transnational Provision

### Collaborative Provision

Children's Therapy Centre is a linked provider and delivers the Principles of Art Therapy Certificate course which is awarded by Munster Technological University (previously Cork Institute of Technology). This is the only collaborative partnership arrangement that we have in place.

Our policy in regard to external partnerships with other providers is detailed in section A2.7 (2) in the [Other Parties Involved in Education and Training](#) section of our QA Manual.

## 2.0 Programme Development and Delivery

### 2.1 Programme Development and Approval

*Programme Development* (A4.1 [Procedure for the Design and Validation of New Programmes](#))

The Children's Therapy Centre's policy in regard to Programme Development, and approval, is detailed in [section 4.1](#) in our QA Manual and a [visual representation of the process](#) is provided in A4.1(PDP).

Any member of CTC staff; member of a CTC committee or sub-committee; or any internal or external stakeholder may propose a new programme. A brief initial proposal is prepared and submitted to the Director of Academic Affairs who will review and assess it. Should she find that the proposal has merit, she submits it to the Board of Directors who may attribute resources to develop the programme. The Academic Council then appoint a Programme Development Team to develop the Draft Programme Document. This team develop the proposed programme learning outcomes as part of their brief to ensure the programme being developed is compliant with all quality assurance policies and procedures (See clause 3.4 of Policy [A4.1](#)). This development process includes consultation with internal individuals and teams (e.g. the Internal Quality Assurance Team and the Equality and Diversity Officer) and external stakeholders including potential employers, and consultation with other providers in regard to potential transfer and progression routes. The draft document (including the proposed LO's) requires approval by the Academic Council prior to submission to the Board of Directors and any subsequent external validation process.

*Minor Modifications to Programmes*

Minor modifications to programme (A8.2 [Minor Modifications to Programmes](#)), responsive to feedback from both learners and teaching staff, external stakeholders, the External Examiner, and recommended by the appropriate Programme Management Team to improve the programme are considered as part

of each Annual Review. An annual Programme Improvement Plan is developed and implementation of agreed changes are initiated at the team days that follow shortly after the review. All modifications must be approved by the Director of Academic Affairs. Information collated for the Annual Report for the Academic Council, and the outcomes presented to the Examination Board, also inform decision making.

### *Programmatic Review*

Every 5 years we conduct a full Self-Evaluation and produce a report that is submitted to the independent Peer Review Group, and subsequently to QQI, as part of the Programmatic Review Process (A4.2 [Programmatic Review and Revalidation](#)).

Key performance indicators are considered for each:

- Academic year
- For each stage of a programme

Data monitored as performance indicators include:

- Profile of learner population
- Feedback reports from learners
- Learner numbers enrolled
- Learner progression/attrition/completion rates
- Graduation/certification rates including grade analysis
- Career paths of graduates

This self-evaluation process concludes with the development of an action plan detailing proposed modifications and revised draft programme documentation.

### *[Placements: Clinical Practice and Supervision](#)*

CTC take a careful and sequential approach to clinical practice: for safety reasons there are many carefully monitored stages before the work with clients will reach the level of psychotherapy. Trainees begin by engaging in child observation sessions, then therapeutic play sessions, then play therapy sessions with children and adolescents, support session with parents, and counselling sessions with adults, as they progress through the training and are assessed as being ready to engage in supervised clinical practice.

### *Safety Provisions*

CTC requires all staff and trainees to work in accordance with the [Children First Act 2015](#) and the [Children First: National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children](#), all relevant legislation, and ethical codes set by the relevant professional bodies (A10.4 [Child Protection Policy](#)).

It is necessary for participants be vetted by An Garda Síochána (A10.5 [Learner Garda Vetting Policy](#)) and to be covered by professional insurance cover prior to undertaking direct work with children. To be eligible for professional insurance cover, each participant must be a member of the Irish Association for

Play Therapy and Psychotherapy and act in accordance with their Code of Ethics ([www.iaptp.ie](http://www.iaptp.ie)). CTC operate a Garda vetting scheme.

## 2.2 Admission, Progression, Recognition & Certification

Our policy in regard to Access, Transfer and Progression is detailed in the various subsections in Section 5 of our QA Manual. Links to each sub-section are provided below.

### *A5.1 Information Provision*

Detailed information is provided to learners, and prospective learners, in respect of access, transfer, progression, course recognition and certification. Information is made available to the public in course leaflets and promotion material via:

- advertising in journals;
- websites, social media, on notice boards;
- direct mailing;
- responding to requests for information.

This includes information on:

- programme title and award
- NFQ level and ECTS
- awarding body
- entry criteria
- selection procedures
- course content
- structure
- duration
- venue/s
- fees
- assessment
- learning aims
- protection for learners
- assignments

The information is also given to learners, tutors, committees, the External Examiner and other stakeholders by inclusion of relevant segments in handbooks and placement packs.

Section A2.8 [Key Streams of Communication](#) in our QA Manual describes how we ensure that cohesive, structured and effective communication channels exist within the organisation to optimise both internal and external communication.

### *A5.2 Learner Entry and Deferred Entry*

Entry criteria for programmes are determined as part of programme planning and at review stage and places are allocated with regard to the set criteria. When an interview is part of such criteria, each interviewee is scored against the criteria and this informs the selection process. Unsuccessful applicants are informed of the outcome of their application and advised of how they may more fully meet entry criteria in the future. Deferral of entry on an award bearing programme may be granted for a maximum of one year.

#### *A5.3 [Recognition of Prior Learning](#)*

Course literature gives details of criteria for direct entry and also informs potential applicants of the indirect entry route. Applicants are provided with detailed information about this process and the supports available to applicants. We have a separate application and portfolio based application process for such applicants. This process is described in full in [Recognition of Prior Learning \(RPL\) Document](#) and RPL Guide for Mentors and Assessors, and in the associated [visual representation](#).

#### *A5.4 [Transfer and Progression](#)*

Should a learner wish to transfer to another programme, CTC offer support and issue them with relevant documentation. Europass Diploma Supplements are issued to graduates to facilitate progression.

## **2.3 Procedures for Making Awards**

### **Learning Outcomes and Alignment with the National Framework of Qualification**

#### *[Developing a new programme](#)*

When the Director of Academic Affairs assesses a proposal for a new programme and finds that it has merit, she submits the proposal to the Board of Directors who may attribute resources to develop the programme. The Academic Council then appoint a Programme Development Team to develop the Draft Programme Document. This team develop the proposed programme learning outcomes as part of their brief to ensure the programme being developed is compliant with all quality assurance policies and procedures (See clause 3.4 of Policy [A4.1](#)). The draft document (including the proposed LO's) are approved prior to submission to the Board of Directors and any subsequent external validation process.

#### *[Ensuring Acquisition of Learning Outcomes](#)*

Various sections of the QA Manual describe processes for ensuring that the learner acquires the standard of knowledge, skill or competence associated with the level of each award within the National Framework of Qualifications prior to achieving the award. These include A7.9 [Consistency of Marking](#) and A7.11 [Internal Verification and Review of Provisional Assessment Results](#).

CTC consults with external bodies and individuals with outstanding knowledge and skills, and with national bodies, in developing its standards for marking assignments and portfolios which enable learners to be fully assured in relation to the standard of their award. Our [Marks and Standards Document](#) (A7.9 MSD) details the marking schemes in operation for CTC's Level 6 and Level 9 programmes. Examiners utilise marking schemes and grading descriptors to ensure that the work to which the mark is awarded reflects the standard that correlates with it. Internal moderation of every component that contributes to the classification of an award is designed to ensure that learners are



accurately and fairly assessed and that marking standards are consistent. CTC provides training for assessors in methods of assessment as appropriate to the particular subject, the national standards and awarding body/s. Training is provided to new members of faculty, or those taking on marking of an assignment for the first time, in relation to the specific marking criteria, bands, expectations and standards. The Course Leader retains oversight of the marking linked to each subject and each learner, and is available to consult with markers, to raise queries, and/or to offer support. The External Examiner or External Authenticator (as appropriate) monitors the standard of work to ensure consistency with relevant standards.

CTC has a number of systems designed to ensure consistency (A7.9 [Consistency of Marking](#)) with national and international standards. These include:

- Annual review by External Examiner who is chosen partially because of their capacity to make national and international comparisons and who addresses this question as part of the annual External Examiner Report;
- Ensuring outcomes are aligned with those approved by validating body and detailed in the approved programme document;
- Training for markers and detailed marking rubrics to assist assessors with consistent and accurate marking;
- CTC seek opportunities for international benchmarking and comparisons with similar programmes.

In choosing potential members for Peer Group Review we choose those who are capable of making national and international comparisons. Similar criteria apply when appointing External Examiners. In preparing the Self-evaluation report for Programmatic Review, the grade distribution for CTC awards and that of other providers is compared and examined.

## 2.4 Teaching, Learning and Assessment

Section 7 of CTC's QA Manual is concerned with Teaching, Learning and Assessment. Section 13 is concerned with Online and Blended Learning ([A13.1](#))

### *Teaching and Learning*

The Children's Therapy Centre is committed to best practice in the areas of teaching and learning (A7.1 [Teaching, Learning and Assessment Strategy](#), and [A7.1a](#)) and to fair and consistent assessment of all learners attending training at the Centre, using a variety of methodologies specifically suited to the elements of training delivered on all courses and programmes. CTC aim to ensure that programmes are reflective of current and emerging theories, that trainers are highly competent and creative in their teaching, and that learners are facilitated in achieving their potential and demonstrating their learning.

<b>Achieving Excellence</b>	
Programme planning and development	Student Experience

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Fits with CTC mission</li> <li>Relevant and responsive to identified needs</li> <li>Appropriate resources assigned</li> <li>Professional Standards</li> <li>Academic Standards</li> <li>Appropriate validation and recognition</li> <li>Well-structured curriculum and delivery</li> <li>Coordinated approach to assessment</li> <li>Focus on theory and skills</li> <li>Built in feedback mechanisms</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Learner centred</li> <li>Active learning</li> <li>Inclusive</li> <li>Personally enriching</li> <li>Confidence building</li> <li>Supported</li> <li>Stimulating</li> <li>Challenging</li> <li>Engaging</li> <li>Enjoyable</li> </ul>
Teaching	Learning
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Coordinated across modules</li> <li>Experiential approach</li> <li>Incremental and integrated</li> <li>Inclusive</li> <li>Engaging</li> <li>Range of effective methodologies</li> <li>Takes account of the various learning styles</li> <li>Skills modelled</li> <li>Enhances practice</li> <li>Activate learner potential</li> <li>Facilitating environment</li> <li>Personal development opportunities inbuilt</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Humanistic ethos</li> <li>Builds independent learning skills</li> <li>Experiential Learning</li> <li>Incremental, layered approach to learning</li> <li>Building on skills</li> <li>Active participation</li> <li>Self-directed and peer-engagement</li> <li>Collaborative</li> <li>Scaffolded</li> <li>Transformative</li> <li>Apply knowledge to real-world problems</li> <li>Engage with virtual learning environment</li> </ul>
Assessment	Graduate Attributes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Coordinated</li> <li>Direct links to intended learning outcomes</li> <li>Clear guidelines provided</li> <li>Marking rubrics that make sense</li> <li>Allows for demonstration of learning</li> <li>Varied tasks that embed learning</li> <li>Enhances comprehension and competence</li> <li>Links theory and practice</li> <li>Contributes to sense of self-efficacy</li> <li>Enhanced by feedback</li> <li>Develops transferable skills</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Mature</li> <li>Highly employable</li> <li>Professional</li> <li>Compassionate</li> <li>Knowledgeable and skilled</li> <li>Adaptable and creative</li> <li>Empathetic</li> <li>Reflective</li> <li>Collaborative</li> <li>Integrous</li> <li>Well prepared for future developments</li> </ul>

The humanistic philosophy of teaching that is subscribed to at CTC is that our role is to facilitate the learning of each learner, that we have a responsibility to scaffold and support learning, and that it is CTC's role to make it as easy as possible for each student to learn as much as possible.

CTC programmes are based on three constructs of learning - theoretical, experiential and clinical, which form a central core of learning defined as 'professional practice'. We see learning as involving complimentary, interlinked and interweaving strands of skills, theory and personal development.

Course content is coordinated across modules; opportunities for both personal and professional development are built into the curriculum; skills are both modelled and practiced; both teaching content and assignments focus on enhancing the learner's capacity to apply knowledge to real-world problems and preparing them to deal effectively with new experiences and novel situations.

CTC place a high emphasis on experiential learning while ensuring that the emphasis on depth and breadth of knowledge is simultaneously maintained. Faculty encourage active participation of the learner in each session. We interweave content within learning blocks so that many training sessions incorporate content from two or three subject strands and interweave learning in clinical skills, theoretical studies, and reflective practice. This integrated approach is further enhanced by delivering content in incremental stages so that each layer builds on what has previously been learnt and lays the foundation for future learning.

Our preference is for the group to learn something experientially first, then to extrapolate the theory (or the methodology if it was a skill based session) within (e.g.) a group discussion, follow this with a lecture that elaborates on the theory, and links it to the relevant theorists, compare and contrast how this new material fits in with theories and methods already learned, and in this way develop the ability to locate each new learning in a framework that facilitates comparative analysis and critical reflection. It is important to us that learners develop a capacity to take a critical perspective on presented theory so that they can formulate their own reflective position.

Careful attention is paid to the physical learning environment including provision of appropriate resources to support teaching and learning as presented in Section 3: Learner Resources and Supports. Facilities are also provided for students with specific needs (A7.5 [Reasonable Accommodation](#)) or extenuating circumstances (A7.6 [Extenuating Circumstances](#)), those requesting extensions on assignment submission dates (A 7.7 [Applying for an Extension and Penalties for Late Submission of Assignment](#)) or seeking a [module](#) (A7.12) or [programme deferral](#) (A7.13).

CTC utilise formative and summative assessments as described in the relevant programme documents. A core principle that CTC subscribe to is that the completion of assessment tasks should:

- help to extend and embed learning;
- facilitate the linkage of theory to practice;
- enhance comprehension;
- contribute to an enhanced sense of self-efficacy.

A [co-ordinated approach \(A7.4\) to planning assessment](#) ensures that assignments are directly linked to the subject's aims and intended learning outcomes, and that a broad range of assessment methods are utilised to take account of the various learning styles of the learners. Assignment schedules ensure that

learners have a fairly even spread of work throughout the year and avoid periods where multiple assignments are due at the same time.

Feedback is an integral part of the assessment process and is intended to enable the learner to understand marks received in the context of the assessment criteria; to inform them of their progress; and to assist them in improving their performance. Timely and detailed feedback (A7.10 [Provision of Marks and Feedback](#)) is provided on assignments and a facility exists for internal verification and review (A7.11 [Internal Verification and Review of Provisional Assessment Results](#)) as required. Systems for [security of assessment related processes and materials](#) (A7.8) and [return of certification data](#) (A7.14) are in place.

Exam papers are securely stored. Exams, and in-class short answer tests, are supervised by the allocated Exam Supervisor who remains in the room throughout the exam and monitors learners' behaviour throughout.

Records of each learner's assignments, submissions, results, any appeals, appeal process followed and outcomes etc are kept and stored in a locked filing cabinet in the Centre, and/or securely stored on an encrypted computer. The Course Leader is responsible for ensuring that all data on learner assessment is thoroughly checked for accuracy and all results are verified internally prior to final processing.

Following External Authentication (Level 6), or External Examination and processing at the Exam Board (Level 9), final results are entered into the QBS system by the CEO.

### *External Examining*

Policy and procedures for external examining are detailed in section A2.6 [External Examiner](#) of our QA Manual.

CTC appoints an External Examiner (EE) to monitor the standards of work on higher-level awards in the centre and make reports to the Academic Council and the Board of Directors. The External Authenticator carries similar functions for our Level 6 awards.

The Academic Council are responsible for setting criteria and selecting the External Examiner. The External Examiner should:

- Hold relevant qualifications to a high academic standard;
- Hold relevant professional qualifications and certification;
- Have considerable experience in delivery of training;
- Have extensive relevant experience in programme evaluation and in assessing learners including knowledge of appropriate standards on a national and international level;
- Have broad knowledge, experience, and expertise in the field of knowledge & broad programme area;

- Be independent of CTC, with no conflict of interest and having no existing or recent relationships (i.e. within at least 5 years) that could call their impartiality into question.

The External Examiner is responsible for:

- monitoring the standards of work and awards in CTC;
- the implementation of policies and procedures related to the learning environment;
- ensuring that the appropriate standards with regard to assessment results are adhered to;
- ensuring that standards are comparable with both National standards and those of other institutions.

The EE is given open access to all learner assignments (including any borderline cases) and is guided to the different levels of achievement in the provisional results. They are free to choose whichever assignments they wish to review. They also have access to all course documentation, handbooks, assignment guidelines, marking rubrics and the marks and feedback given to every learner for every assignment over the academic year. The EE is required to agree marking and, together with others in attendance at the Examination Board, sign the broadsheet certifying that the marks therein are agreed.

### *Academic Integrity*

Section 9 in our QA Manual deals with policies and procedures in regard to Learner Conduct, Appeals and Complaints.

- The [Disciplinary Procedure](#) (A9.1) is designed to deal with instances where a learner fails to adhere to CTC's rules and guidelines and describes progression through verbal and written warnings right up to possible expulsion from the course.
- The purpose of CTC policy and procedures in regard to academic misconduct (A9.2 Academic Integrity) is to protect the integrity of the assessment process and ensure that submitted assignments are the learners' own work. If plagiarism, copying, collusion, or duplication, is suspected, it is investigated and adjudicated by the Subject Leader. Should a finding of Academic Misconduct arise, a report will be forwarded to the Course Leader who will consider all the circumstances and determine the penalty to be applied. The Appeals Process may be instigated within 5 working days. The work of the Learning Support Officer supports learners with academic writing and includes facilitating a number of support sessions for learners, including those requesting reasonable accommodation support, to enable them to participate fully and/or to demonstrate their learning effectively, throughout the academic year
- Questioning the academic judgement of examiners is not grounds for appealing any assessment result (A9.3 [Appeal of Assessment Result](#))
- The complaints procedure (A9.5 [Complaints Procedure](#)) is distinct from procedures for appeals in regard to academic matters including appeals in regard to assessment, deferrals, or academic misconduct. Stage 1 in the procedure is the informal stage and can be helpful in clearing up any misunderstandings and/or correcting any mistakes as quickly as possible. Stage 2 is the formal stage in which a panel is set up, chaired by a person appointed by the CEO, who will assess the validity of the complaint, make findings, seek to resolve the issue, and make recommendations. Stage 3 allows for an appeal to be heard if the grounds for lodging it are present.

### *Supporting Scholarly Activity* (A3.3 (1.3))

CTC is mindful to ensure that we remain alert to, and contribute to, international developments in our field. To this end, we support a culture of ongoing learning and engagement in scholarly activity. CTC also promotes and supports a strong writing culture. Staff are actively supported and involved in editing books and writing chapters and papers. We include a listing of recent staff publications in our Annual Report each year. CTC staff are supported in pursuing further studies and research, including MA studies. CTC considers that training in matters related to the delivery of training to higher level students is of central importance. We include sessions in regard to pedagogy, assessment, and use of the online portal within our Team Days and as individually tailored supports throughout the year.

## 3.0 Learner Resources and Support

### *Learner Facilities and Resources*

The [life cycle of the learner](#) (A1.1 SLC) has been carefully considered and mapped by CTC. This includes 9 stages: prospect and inquiry, application, admission, enrolment & registration, learning, assessment, grading, graduation, and alumni.

Learners are informed of the nature of supports and how to access support through a variety of mediums including their course handbooks, QA documents, the online portal, direct communication the trainers and the tutor that is assigned to them, and through their learner representative. Tutorial support, access to library and resources, and access to academic writing support are among the supports available.

Section 10 of CTC's QA Manual is concerned with the CTC Environment and Section A10.1 provides detailed information on [learning facilities and resources](#) including:

- Teaching and Learning Environment
- Learning Facilities and Resources
- Programme Delivery
- Faculty
- Tutorial Support
- Access to Library and Resources
- Course handbooks
- Academic Writing Support
- Technology to Support Learning

Course Handbooks provide the learner with detailed information about their programme of study, the supports available to them, and the expectations on them. In addition to directing them to the QA Manual for detailed information on all relevant policies, procedures, and documents to access each support, the learner is provided with links on their online portal to the relevant material for ease of access. Prior to enrolment, course literature is provided to ensure the potential learner is fully briefed on suitable material to aid decision making including relevant material on potential career pathways.

The [Learner Representative](#) (Section A10.2) system provides an easy route for learners to communicate directly and efficiently with the relevant Programme Management Team and provides for effective mechanisms to improve the learner experience.

#### *Additional Support*

Enrolled learners may initiate a request for additional learning support as appropriate to the specific needs disclosed during the admissions stage. The Equality & Diversity Officer, in consultation with the learner and their assigned tutor, carries out a needs assessment to determine what supports will help to minimise the impact of their disability on their studies and to agree an action plan. This may include support from the Learning Support Officer to assist with workload planning

The roles of Tutors and the Learning Support Officer are described in clauses 7 and 8 of [Section A2.5](#) of the QA Manual.

- Tutors are assigned to specified groups of learners and will support them during their time with CTC. The tutor has an important role in mentoring students and providing them with guidance and support on both academic and non-academic matters related to student life and coordinating the various supports for the learner.
- The Learning Support Officer develops a suite of inputs in to support learners with academic writing and is tasked with facilitating a number of support sessions for learners, including those requesting reasonable accommodation support to enable them to participate fully or to demonstrate their learning effectively, throughout the academic year

#### *Learner Feedback (See [A8.1](#))*

Learner feedback is gathered and analysed by the Programme Administrator following:

- teaching inputs;
- academic years;
- the conclusion of each cycle of the programme.

These forms collect data in relation to the learners' perception of:

- the programme;
- trainers and training;
- adequacy of premises, equipment and facilities, including library facilities,
- reference materials available, premises
- materials available for practical learning at the Centre. Each learner is also asked to identify any ways in which they think any of the above could be improved.

Following teaching blocks or modules, a member of the Programme Management Team reviews the records and evaluations and discusses teaching content, learner feedback and learner progress with the trainer.

The inclusion of a Student Representative on the Academic Council ([A2.7](#) (1.5)), and on Peer Review panels ([A4.2](#) (3.5)), as well as consultation with alumni ([A2.8](#) (4.2)), enables us to better assess the impact of CTC Policy and Procedures on the learner's education and on their careers after graduation.

## 4.0 QA of Research Activities and Programmes

### *Research and Ethics Committee*

CTC's Research and Ethics Committee are responsible for review and approval of Research Outlines and Ethical Approval Applications from staff and learners. The Committee has access to an Independent External Expert for consultation as required.

The committee ensure that Research Outline Applications identify:

- The main research question and embedded questions;
- The aim of the study and its potential contribution to policy, practice and/or theory;
- A description and justification of the research sample, its location, and access to participants;
- Methods of data collection;
- Proposed timeline.

The committee must be satisfied that the proposed research will meet the ethical code of conduct.

Section A2.4 of our QA Manual deals with [sub-committees of the Academic Council](#). Clause 4 of that document describes the purpose, specific functions, membership, frequency of meetings, quorum and procedures associated with the Research and Ethics Committee.

## 5.0 Staff Recruitment, Development and Support

### *Recruitment and Selection (A3.1)*

The CEO holds executive responsibility for identifying key roles and responsibilities of individual staff members and teams. This task is carried out by gathering data on the activities currently performed, identifying any additional activities needed, and analysing and translating this data into up to date job, and team function, descriptions. A person specification for any new role identified is drawn up with reference to essential and desirable qualifications, skills, experience, knowledge and attributes. The needs of current programmes and any planned new programmes are considered with specific reference to scope of practice.

The Programme Document provides a detailed specification of the qualification (academic, pedagogical and professional/occupational) and experience required of staff to teach the specified subject. Trainers are chosen by the Course Leader for their specific training, qualification, skills and experience to deliver training at specific levels, and in the specific subject area in accordance with the specifications detailed in the Programme Document in regard to academic and professional qualifications, professional memberships, specific levels of accreditation and/or certification (e.g. as clinical supervisor or group facilitator), and skills, qualifications, and experience in delivery of training and assessment.

The CEO translating this data into up-to-date job, and team function, descriptions. A person specification for any new role identified is drawn up with reference to essential and desirable qualifications, skills,



experience, knowledge and attributes. The Equality and Diversity Officer reviews these documents in line with their responsibilities ([A10.1 EDD](#)).

### *Staff Induction (A3.2) and Communication (A2.8 (3.1))*

CTC staff and trainers have access to induction training and mentoring for their roles. This is to ensure that staff are supported and are fully cognisant and practicing within the quality framework for delivery of programmes and courses in CTC.

In addition, CTC maintains an online portal section for all staff and lecturers. This includes material in regard to CTC policies and procedures, reference material, and QOI documents relevant to the delivery of CTC services.

Open channels of communication with staff (including contract staff) are maintained through a programme of 1 - 1 meetings; team meetings; team days; email communication; planned social events; and an online portal specifically for staff use. An Annual Appraisal and Training Needs Review Meeting between each staff member and a suitable member of the relevant Programme Management Team, or the CEO, takes place once each year

Trainers complete feedback forms following each teaching input. They also contribute to programme evaluation through a range of other processes including regular conversations with members of the Programme Management Team); team meetings; annual review process; and team days.

Following teaching blocks, a member of the Programme Management Team reviews the records and evaluations with regard to teaching content, learner feedback and learner progress and any recommended changes for future delivery made by the trainer.

### *Staff Development (A3.3)*

It is common for a new trainer, or a trainer taking on the teaching of a block of teaching previously delivered by another trainer, to be accompanied on their first teaching event by a more experienced member of the CTC teaching team who acts as co-facilitator. This enables CTC to provide support and model good teaching and group facilitation skills.

Training is provided to new staff, or those taking on marking of an assignment for the first time, in relation to marking criteria, bands, expectations and standards. Should a new trainer take on the marking of an assignment previously marked by another member of the team, they are provided with sample assignments and associated marks and feedback from previous cohorts. They are helped to identify the components that led to the marks achieved and feedback given. The original marker also provides assistance to the new marker as appropriate as part of their induction into the new aspect of their work

Staff participate in an annual appraisal of training needs. At this meeting, staff members' involvement in continued professional development events over the previous and needs and plans for the upcoming year are discussed and reviewed.

CTC staff are supported in pursuing further studies and research, including MA studies and engagement in the International Play Therapy Study Group. Such events may be funded by CTC for CTC direct employees.

CTC support staff in meeting CPD requirements by facilitating them to attend courses and training blocks. Trainers may attend any CTC training block to update themselves in skills and newly emerging theories. This serves the additional purpose of ensuring that teaching staff have a broader and deeper knowledge of the content and delivery of the MA, get to experience other team members teaching style, and assists each trainer to understand more fully how their own content fits into the wider context of the MA programme. CTC also considers that training in matters related to the delivery of training to higher level students is of central importance. We include sessions in regard to pedagogy and assessment within our Team Days and as individually tailored supports throughout the year.

#### *Supporting Scholarly Activity* ([A3.3](#) (1.3))

CTC is mindful to ensure that we remain alert to, and contribute to, international developments in our field. To this end, we support a culture of ongoing learning and engagement in scholarly activity. CTC also promotes and supports a strong writing culture. Staff are actively supported and involved in editing books and writing chapters and papers. We include a listing of recent staff publications in our Annual Report each year. CTC staff are supported in pursuing further studies and research, including MA studies. CTC considers that training in matters related to the delivery of training to higher level students is of central importance. We include sessions in regard to pedagogy, assessment, and use of the online portal within our Team Days and as individually tailored supports throughout the year.

## 6.0 Information and Data Management

### Information Management

Section 12 of CTC's QA Manual is concerned with Information Management. This includes information in regard to learner and information management systems, records maintenance and retention as well as data protection.

CTC's [Introduction to Information Management](#) document (A12.1) provides details of the systems in place to insure the reliable availability of data to inform decision-making and enhancements. This provides information on learner and management information systems, information management for decision-making, and records retention. Systems for return of certification data (including QBS) generate detailed records and reports. Reports are generated on learner enrolment, learner satisfaction, learner progression, learner retention, completion and non-completion as well as learner attainment / grade distribution / certification classification. Data in regard to Key Performance Indicators is used to inform improvement of our QA processes and programmes.

CTC's [Privacy Notice](#) (A12.2), [Data Protection Policy](#) (A12.3) [Data Access Request Policy](#) (A12.4), and [Data Breach Notification Policy and Procedure](#) (A12.5) combine to ensure security and sustainability of

our GDPR compliant information systems. The Privacy Notice details how CTC complies with the principles of GDPR and explains:

- the definitions of some key terms from GDPR;
- the principles of GDPR;
- CTC in the context of GDPR;
- who to contact in CTC about personal data;
- what personal data CTC collects and how it is used;
- when and with whom CTC shares personal data;
- the arrangements for transfer of data to other countries outside of the European Economic Area (the “EEA”);
- how CTC keeps data safe;
- how CTC stores personal data and how it is destroyed;
- rights in relation to personal data;
- the process for changes to the Privacy Statement

CTC’s Data Protection Policy applies to all Personal Data collected, processed and stored by CTC in relation to its staff, former staff, learners, applicants for courses, graduates and service providers. The policy covers both personal and special categories of personal data (sensitive data) processed in relation to data subjects by CTC. The policy applies equally to personal data held in manual and automated form.

Our [learner record keeping systems](#) (A12.9) provide for secure and relevant maintenance of learner records including assessment outcomes and course assignments. Access to the Learner Information Management System is restricted to authorised users and incorporates different layers of access (user rights) to ensure accuracy and integrity of data while enabling transparency and mechanisms for correction of personal data, as required by GDPR. All data in regard to learner enrolments, retention, completion, outcomes, and progression is compiled and analysed by the Course Leader for presentation to the Director of Academic Affairs. The Director of Academic Affairs is responsible for monitoring, collating and ensuring secure retention of data in regard to assessment outcomes and trends, learner enrolment, completion rate data, and providing data to the External Examiner within the factual data section of the External Examiner report template, for discussion at the Exam Board, presentation to the Academic Council, and as part of the [annual programme review process](#) (A8.1) and to contribute to [periodic self-evaluation processes](#) (A11.1), [Institutional Reviews](#) (A11.2) and [Programmatic Review and Revalidation](#) (A4.2).

Procedures for registering learners, and outcomes, ([A7.14](#)) on the QBS system ensure security of personal data.

Data related to assessment is securely stored in locked cabinets and on encrypted computers ([A7.8](#)). Our [Website Privacy Policy](#) (A12.6) and [Cookie Policy](#) (A12.7) are openly available on our website and those who subscribe to our [mailing list](#) (A12.8) may remove themselves by clicking on the unsubscribe link in each mailing.

## 7.0 Public Information and Communication

### *Communication Streams (A2.8)*

CTC's QA Manual, and relevant evaluations, is available to the public on our [website](#) as is information on our Centre, staff, programmes of study, external examiner reports, ethical frameworks and our ethos, testimonials from relevant stakeholders, and links to our online portal, Facebook and Instagram pages. We have a strong presence on social media and regularly post content.

Information on programme titles, awards, awarding body, entry criteria, selection procedures, course content, structure, duration, venue/s, fees, assessment, learning aims, protection for learners, and assignments is made available to the public via advertising in journals, on websites, social media, on notice boards, by direct mailing and by responding to requests for information.

CTC endeavours to share information with individuals and agencies with potential importance for the centre, learners and staff. Communication with professional bodies, employers, placement sites takes place throughout each academic year and through our consultation process when conducting self-evaluations.

CTC liaise with relevant professional and academic bodies about:

- specific programmes;
- policy;
- job opportunities;
- the profession including national developments in regard to regulation and registration.

Each year, our Research and Ethics Committee ([A2.4](#) (4)) identify dissertations that may be suitable for the author to base a Poster Presentation or publication on. Students and graduates are supported in presenting papers and poster presentations at conferences, professional events, and in publishing chapters, research, and articles by the Centre. Such events facilitate the sharing of relevant information with interested parties.

## 8.0 Monitoring and Periodic Review

### *Self-Evaluation: Informing Practice*

In 2019-2020 CTC successfully completed both the Reengagement and Programmatic Review processes in regard to our Level 9 awards. Final reports are available on our website, as is feedback from learners and graduates in regard to our programmes. Self-evaluation takes place regularly in CTC and both Peer and External Reviews are much valued processes to us. We undertake a comprehensive 5-year review of our programmes in accordance with our policy on [Programmatic Review and Revalidation](#) (A4.2).

Section 11 of our QA Manual describes our [Internal Periodic Self-Evaluation](#) (A11.1) and [QQI Institutional Review](#) (A11.2) processes.

Self-evaluation takes place in CTC throughout the year; at the conclusion of each academic year; and at 5 yearly intervals for specific QOI events. Our Internal Quality Assurance Team engage in regular checks and an annual review and prepare an annual report which informs us in making improvements. Likewise for our Equality and Diversity Officer and our Health and Safety Officer. The Programme Management Team also review the programme supports and facilities in detail on an annual basis so that we can improve incrementally.

As a private provider of programmes on the National Framework of Qualifications CTC must provide for the regular revalidation of programmes and regular institutional reviews. Overall responsibility within CTC for implementation of the procedures related to institutional reviews rests with the Board of Directors.

CTC's comprehensive self-evaluation is produced with input from the relevant staff including the Programme Management Team/s and Director of Academic Affairs on the academic side, and the Board of Directors and the CEO on the corporate governance side. The report includes a description of the evaluation process undertaken, including records of consultations with internal and external stakeholders; CTC's organizational structure; quality management and enhancement; programmes delivered; staffing and staff development; learning environments, supports, and resources; and relevant statistics related to learner outcomes.

Similar procedures are in place for the Self-evaluation for Programmatic Reviews. The self-evaluation process includes extensive consultation with learners, staff and external stakeholders; a critical analysis of all QA related to the educational quality and running of the programme since the most recent validation or revalidation; and analysis and evaluation of relevant statistics including learner numbers, retention rates and success rates.

Key performance indicators are considered for each:

- Academic year
- For each stage of a programme

Data monitored as performance indicators include:

- Profile of learner population
- Feedback reports from learners
- Learner numbers enrolled
- Learner progression/attrition/completion rates
- Graduation/certification rates including grade analysis
- Career paths of graduates

This self-evaluation process concludes with the development of an action plan detailing proposed modifications and revised draft programme documentation.

## 9.0 Details of Arrangements with Third Parties

### *Munster Technological University*

CTC has a collaborative partnership (linked provider) in place as a Secondary Provider to Munster Technological University (entered into when they were the Cork Institute of Technology) for their [Principles of Art Therapy Certificate](#) (10 credits at Level 8). In the Agreement document CIT (now MTU) take responsibility for governance.

CTC rent premises and provide lecturers to deliver the course in Dublin/Kildare. MTU are the First Provider. All literature on our website, in information leaflets, on the online portal, and presented in conversation makes this clear. CIT ran this programme for many years prior to our involvement and the learners register with MTU rather than with CTC. They receive access to MTU library, are issued with student cards, receive final results on the MTU online portal, and are issued their parchments from MTU.

### *European Association of Psychotherapy*

CTC was assessed by both the European Association for Integrative Psychotherapy and the European Association of Psychotherapy in November 2019, January 2020, and February 2020. The outcome of these evaluations was that the Children's Therapy Centre was successfully accredited as a European Accredited Psychotherapy Training Institutes (EAPTI) by the Training Accrediting Committee (TAC) of the European Association for Psychotherapy (EAP) and the EAP Board on February 20th, 2020. We are now one of only 3 European Accredited Psychotherapy Training Institutes in Ireland.

### *Irish Association for Play Therapy and Psychotherapy (IAPTP)*

Our Postgraduate Diploma in Play Therapy is a recognised course of the Irish Association for Play Therapy and Psychotherapy (IAPTP) for play therapist accreditation. They have also approved our CTC's MA in Creative Psychotherapy (Humanistic and Integrative Modality) so that graduates of the four-year programme are eligible for professional accreditation as a psychotherapist with a specialisation in play therapy.

### *Irish Association of Humanistic and Integrative Psychotherapy (IAHIP)*

CTC's MA in Creative Psychotherapy (Humanistic and Integrative Modality) is an IAHIP recognised course - the only child and adolescent psychotherapy training to achieve this status. IAHIP is a section of the [Irish Council for Psychotherapy](#) so accredited members will be eligible to receive the European Certificate in Psychotherapy through the ICP.

### *Association for Play Therapy (APT)*

CTC is also an APT approved provider of play therapy training - the only one approved to deliver training in Ireland

## 9.1 Arrangements with PRSBs, Awarding Bodies, QA Bodies

Type of arrangement	Total Number
PRSBs	0
Awarding bodies	0
QA bodies	0

<b>1. Type of arrangement</b> (PRSB/awarding body/QA body)	
Name of body:	
Programme titles and links to publications	
Date of accreditation or last review	
Date of next review	

## 9.2 Collaborative Provision

### Definitions:

QQI's Policy for Collaborative Programmes, Transnational Programmes, and Joint Awards, 2012 defines **collaborative provision** as a process that occurs where two or more providers are involved by formal agreement in the provision of a programme of higher education and training.

The Qualifications and Quality Assurance (Education and Training) Act 2012 (as amended) defines '**joint award**' as a single award made jointly by two or more awarding bodies

The Qualifications and Quality Assurance (Education and Training) Act 2012 (as amended) defines '**linked provider**' as a provider that is not a designated awarding body but enters into an arrangement with a designated awarding body under which arrangement the provider provides a programme of education and training that satisfies all or part of the prerequisites for an award of the designated awarding body.

Type of arrangement	Total number
Joint research degrees	
Joint/double/multiple awards	
Collaborative programmes	
Franchise programmes	1
Linked providers (DABs only)	

<b>1. Collaborative provision</b> (Type of collaborative provision)	We are a linked provider. Munster Technological University are the First Provider. CTC is a second provider. We rent premises and provide lecturers to deliver the course in Dublin/Kildare. Learners are registered with MTU and governed by their P&P's.
Name of body (/bodies):	Munster Technological University
Programme titles and links to publications	CR_AATPY_8 Certificate in Principles and Theory of Art Therapy
Date of last review	2014
Date of next review	

### 9.3 Articulation Agreements

#### Definition:

Per the IHEQN Guidelines for the Approval, Monitoring and Review of Collaborative and Transnational Provision, an **articulation agreement** may be defined as a process whereby all students who satisfy academic criteria on one programme are automatically entitled (on academic grounds) to be admitted with advance



standing to a subsequent stage of a programme of a degree awarding body. These arrangements are subject to a formal agreement between the parties.

<b>Articulation agreements - Total number</b>	<b>0</b>
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<b>1. Articulation agreement:</b>	
Name of body (/bodies):	
Programme titles and links to publications	
Date of agreement/arrangement or last review	
Date of next review	
Detail of the agreement	

[Higher Education Institution]

2022

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**Annual Quality Report (Institution)**  
**PART B: INTERNAL QUALITY ASSURANCE**  
**ENHANCEMENT & IMPACT**  
**Reporting Period 2020-2021**

## **PART B: INTERNAL QA SYSTEM**

## 1.0 Quality Implementation and Developments

### 1.1 Strategic QA Updates

This year we began work on preparing an application to QQI to become a Blended Learning Approved Provider so that we can move towards developing programme submissions, and perhaps differential validation of our MA, for Blended Learning provision. We also began reviewing and planning update to policies in relation to online provision of some of our CPD and professional training programmes.

Covid-19 accommodations led us to proceed in this direction as we saw the success of the adaptation we had made in light of National Restrictions and Guidelines.

## 1.2 Update on Planned QA Objectives identified in Previous AQR

<b>No.</b>	<b>Planned objectives (Previous AQR)</b> Note: Include reference to the relevant section of the preceding AQR, where applicable	<b>Update on Status</b> Provide brief update on status, whether completed or in progress. If an action was planned in the previous AQR, but not completed, provide reasons/short reflections for the delay/non-completion.
1	Review of premises to allow for physical distancing including securing a new permanent base that will allow for this where necessary.	CTC rented conference facilities in hotels in both Limerick and Westmeath to allow for physical distancing when restrictions allowed for face-to-face delivery of modules. In addition, a new permanent premises was secured in Limerick that allows for full group attendance (with appropriate distancing).
2	Continuing to monitor the effectiveness of flipped classroom strategies and blended learning as implemented during the coronavirus crisis. Review provision of flipped classroom learning and use of online delivery for some lecture based components and individual dissertation support sessions.	Ongoing restrictions on face-to-face contact required us to continue to offer remote access to training during the year when attendance was prohibited for health and safety reasons. We continued to monitor the effectiveness of flipped classroom strategies and blended learning and concluded that the continued use of these in specified contexts would be beneficial in the long term. To this end, CTC, began work on reviewing and updating policies and procedures in preparation for submitting an application to QQI as a provider of blended learning.
3	Participate in preparation for statutory regulation and registration including engagement with other psychotherapy training providers who work to TAC standards.	The CORU Registration board continues to work on developing standards and procedures for the regulation of the profession and the registration of counsellors and psychotherapists. CTC has been working on a review of CORU standards and application procedures as they apply to professions already within their scope and has been reviewing CTC's MA content and QA policies with reference to CORU standards.
4	Continue to update policies and procedures	Our Internal Quality Assurance Team, and Director of Academic Affairs, are involved in regular reviews of policies and procedures. Minor amendments were

		adopted this year with more substantial amendments to follow in 2021-2022 in line with CORU standards (see above) and QQI requirements for providers of blended learning.
5	Regular review of our Risk Register in light of emerging developments that may impact on provision of education service.	Amendments to the Risk Register in regard to Online and Blended Learning were formulated. Plans for adoption in autumn of 2021 are in place.
6	Continue to monitor and review GDPR procedures in light of requirements and any issues that come to light in implementing revised record keeping procedures (Storage and return of learner files, destruction of data when no longer required).	The improved system for return of learner files and secure destruction of data when no longer required has worked effectively and has facilitated the return of files to learners when no longer needed, and the destruction of old files that were no longer required.
7	Continue to monitor effectiveness and adjust procedures to become more useful and learner friendly. Improve ways of performing daily, weekly, monthly and annual tasks.	Minor amendments to procedures were implemented during the year.
8	Monitor revised policies and procedures in regard to academic integrity and the impact of the new resources being made available to learners by our recently appointed Learning Support Officer.	The provision of new videos regarding academic integrity on the online portal has been welcomed by learners and noted by the External Examiner as leading to improved referencing in assignments. We have now commissioned the production of additional video and plan to offer additional tutorials.

## 1.3 Governance and Management

### 1.3.1 QA Governance Meetings Schedule

Body	Meeting dates
Academic Council	September - March: various members on various dates 23 <sup>rd</sup> March 2021
Examination Board	14 <sup>th</sup> July 2021

Internal Quality Assurance Team	<p>Regular virtual meetings throughout the year in regard to National Guidelines and Covid-19.</p> <p>3<sup>rd</sup> Sept 2020  14<sup>th</sup> Jan 2021  10<sup>th</sup> May 2021  1<sup>st</sup> July 2021  13<sup>th</sup> July 2021</p>
MA Programme Management Team	<p>Regular virtual meetings throughout the year in regard to National Guidelines and Covid-19.</p> <p>3<sup>rd</sup> Sept 2020  16<sup>th</sup> Nov 2020  12<sup>th</sup> Dec 2020  11<sup>th</sup>, 18<sup>th</sup> and 25<sup>th</sup> January 2021  20<sup>th</sup> Feb 2021  8<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> May 2021  21<sup>st</sup> June 21  13<sup>th</sup> July 21</p>
L6 Programme Management Team	<p>Regular virtual meetings throughout the year in regard to National Guidelines and Covid-19.</p> <p>3<sup>rd</sup> Sept 2020  10<sup>th</sup> Feb 2021  8<sup>th</sup> June 2021</p>

### 1.3.2 QA Leadership and Management Structural Developments

Further separation of corporate and academic governance has been facilitated by the change in ownership of the private company during the year. The Director of Academic Affairs is no longer the owner or director of the company. The MA Course leader is now owner and director. The Director of Academic Affairs continues to hold executive responsibility for academic matters and ensuring quality management, development and delivery of all programmes in accordance with QA policies.

A new external Chairperson, previously an external member of the Board, was appointed to the Examination Board.

## 1.4 Internal Monitoring and Review

### 1.4.1 Overview of Periodic Reviews

Unit of review for which report has been published during reporting period	Date of completion/reason for conducting review (if not planned) or non-completion (if planned but not conducted)	Links to relevant publications
<p><b>Annual MA Creative Psychotherapy Programme Review</b></p> <p>CTC's Annual Programme Review process is designed to aid the development of an Annual Programme Improvement Plan and facilitate 1) the implementation of minor modifications to award bearing programmes, and 2) improved delivery of the programme and enhancement of the learner experience.</p> <p>In 2020, CTC engaged in an extensive review of all elements of our MA programme. Data was gathered regarding:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• teaching blocks;</li> <li>• trainer evaluation;</li> <li>• learner feedback and evaluation;</li> <li>• programme and subject evaluations at conclusion of course or stage;</li> <li>• consultation with the External Examiner;</li> <li>• placement sites;</li> </ul> <p>Data from this review was presented in the CTC Annual Report and considered by the Programme Management Team at the Annual Programme Review, Training and Evaluation Day, and at the annual team meeting.</p>	<p>July 2021</p>	



<p>Plans for minor modifications to the programme, responsive to the feedback from both learners and teaching staff, the External Examiner was agreed and presented in the Annual Programme Improvement Plan. This plan included improvements that are related to the delivery of the programme without impacting on the programme itself (for example, sequencing of content), i.e., no change to any content in the approved programme document.</p> <p>The Annual Programme Improvement Plan was approved by the Director of Academic Affairs prior to implementation in the 2020-2021 academic year.</p>		
<b>External Examiner Review</b>	July 2021	

## 1.4.2 Expert Review Teams/Panels<sup>2</sup> involved in IQA

### (i) Expert Review Team/Panel Size and Related Processes

	Total	Academic Schools/ Department	Professional Services/Support Unit	Approval/Review of Linked Provider	Programme Approval	Programme Review	Other
Number of review/ evaluation processes							
<i>of those:</i>							
On-site processes							
Desk reviews							
Virtual processes							
Average panel size for each process type*							

\* excluding secretary if not a full panel member

### (ii) Composition of Expert Review Teams/Panels involved in IQA

Type of Expert/ Role on Panel	Total	Gender			Internal	National	International			Institution Type	
		Male	Female	Other, or unspecified			UK, incl. NI	Other European	Outside of Europe	Similar	Different
Chair											

<sup>2</sup> QQI acknowledges that the terminology used to describe the groups of individuals that conduct peer review/evaluation varies from institution to institution.



## 2.0 IQA System – Enhancement and Impacts

### Introduction

The Internal Quality Assurance Team were involved in monitoring the use and effectiveness of QA procedures throughout the year.

Particular attention was paid to CTC's response to the Covid-19 challenges and ensuring that CTC QA procedures were robust enough to meet these challenges and ensure procedures could be readily implemented to meet these challenges.

A need for a new policy on blended learning has been identified and will be addressed over the coming year. This will involve engagement with QQI.

Some possibilities for minor modifications were noted and have either been adopted (see below) or are in the process of being addressed.

### QA Manual **General Revisions:**

- The restructuring of the QA Manual, and publication of the new format in discrete sections on the website and online portal, has facilitated ease of access to the precise information being sought. This has reduced administration time for programme staff and is greatly appreciated. Having a go-to resource definitely makes it easier for both students and staff to access the answers to questions as they arise.
- The presentation of some sections in the QA Manual has been improved to make it easier to reference a particular point in the content.
  - replacing bullet points to a), b), c) etc in *A11.1 Internal Periodic Self-Evaluation Processes*
  - replacing bullet points with i, ii, iii, etc in the Marks and Standards Document)
- Replacing bullet point in *A7.4 Coordinated Planning of Assessment* with letters and numbers
- Replacing bullet point in *A11.2 QQI Institutional Review* with letters and numbers

### Governance

The addition of an additional academic to the Academic Council has ensured that decision-making is weighted towards academic concerns. While we have never had any concern that other matters influenced decision making, it is reassuring to know that the balance is now more appropriate.

The restructuring of the Examination Board so that the CEO no longer serves as Chairperson facilitated us in having a new Chairperson, previously an external member of the Board, take on that role and facilitate our Exam Board. This proved to be effective in giving us an additional focus for the meeting.

The greater clarity in terms of the purpose, role, membership and proceedings for each committee has not only enhanced our operating procedures, it has also been welcomed by the members of the various committees who have noted the increase in transparency. We were happy that we were able to host some of our governance meetings remotely and that the use of technology was satisfactory.

### **Staff and Human Resources**

- Policies in this area have governed the process undertaken to recruit a new Assistant MA Course Leader, and the current drive to recruit a new part-time administrator.
- Staff induction took place for clinical supervisors who joined the CTC team over the year. All staff members have access to the Staff unit on the online portal.
- CTC provided training for staff during the year. This included:
  - A training day for all supervisors
  - A training day on providing space for exploring gender identity
  - A training day on advanced tele-mental health
  - Individually tailored sessions in delivery of online teaching and use of platform as required
  - Induction for new trainers
  - Individually tailored sessions in assessment and marking for new trainers
- Scholarly activity was supported with staff involvement in delivering international training; editing a new book; publishing chapters; and presenting at conferences.

### **Programme Development and Revalidation**

- No new academic programmes were designed this year. CTC continues to offer both Level 9 and Level 6 programmes. The level 9 MA was revalidated in 2020.
- The level 6 programmes we offer were validated many years ago. Renewal of validation will mean submitting a new application (probably as non-CAS programme) rather than a revalidation application.
- CTC's MA was revalidated in 2020. Data regarding key performance indicators has been collected during this year and informs the self-evaluation process.

### **Access, Transfer and Progression**

- The addition of an online group session, prior to individual interviews, for shortlisted applicants proved very effective and useful this year in sharing relevant information. The aim is to enable potential applicants make an informed choice about whether to proceed with their application, and to orient those who wish to continue to the centre and the programme. It enabled us to clearly communicate information about the centre, the course, the commitment required, the award, the profession, teaching, learning and assessment strategies, and QA policies and procedures. We discussed the assessment load, the supports available, the financial, time and emotional investment needed, and used share screen to introduce participants to the online learning portal.
- Following individual interviews, when making offers for a place on the course, we provided applicants with some core texts so that they could engage in advance reading and be fully prepared for the course.
- The MA interview assessment criteria (A5.2 IF) has been amended to improve the assessment process and provide more balance between assessment of personal suitability and factual data regarding entry criteria.

### **Protection of Enrolled Learners**

- CTC procedures to comply with legal responsibilities for Protection for Enrolled Learners were implemented throughout the year for learners on our Level 6 and Level 9 programmes.
- Our specific procedures (Section 2.1 of Policy 6.1) refer to Learner Insurance Protection Insurance policies provided by O'Driscoll O'Neill and underwritten by Hiscox Insurance Company Limited.

- This section is now rewritten as the provider is now Arachas and the underwriter is Aviva Insurance Company Limited. This will be approved by the Academic Council at the next scheduled meeting.

### **Teaching, Learning, and Assessment**

- A need for a new policy on blended learning has been identified and will be addressed over the coming year. This will involve engagement with QQI. We will also update our Teaching, Learning and Assessment Strategy (A7.1) to explicitly address this.
  - CTC'S Internal Quality Assurance Team recommend that work on a new blended learning policy commence early in 2022
- Communication channels with learners were found to be working well. This includes the gathering, collating and analysis of learner feedback throughout the year and at the conclusion of each stage. Module feedback is used to inform minor modifications to the programme (see Annual Programme Improvement Plan), and to enhance teaching, learning and assessment strategies as they apply to each teaching block. A summary of the end of year data is provided in the Annual Report.
- We began rolling out our revised Placement Packs to learners and placement sites at the beginning of the last academic year. The 3<sup>rd</sup> year pack was reviewed by Tusla and contributed to successfully securing a clinical practice placement for one of our students.
- During the year new Placement Agreements for practicums and clinical practice settings were introduced. These are currently being circulated to a variety of settings and the programme administrator will be collating responses to facilitate learners in seeking placements in the coming years.
- A7.4 Co-ordinated Planning of Assessment policy was successfully implemented in revising the schedule of dates for submission of 1<sup>st</sup> year assignments for the 2022-2022 academic year. In addition, this policy informed the procedure for reassessing learners who failed to achieve the intended learning outcomes at first attempt.
  - CTC'S Internal Quality Assurance Team recommend that section 2.5 of A7.4, and section 3 of A7.9, be revised to clarify the nature of reassessment tasks.
- One assessment task (case presentations) that had to be altered to allow for online assessment (due to Covid) in 2020, was repeated in 2021 for the same reason. Ideally, we would like to continue to assess these case presentation on the online platform as they worked out really well. Some workshops had to be held online and the assessment component related to participation was utilised with regard to online participation.
- All assessment tasks, including guidelines and marking criteria, were reviewed with minor amendments made as indicated.
- Additional learning support was provided as required. The recently created position of Learning Support Officer proved very successful in assisting students with academic writing challenges. Some learner with dyslexia or specific learning or language difficulties, found this support invaluable. The provision of targeted video, and their availability on the online portal for repeat viewing, compliments the regular tutorials available.
- Any learner who had to miss a training session due to extenuating circumstances was offered the opportunity to repeat the content with another group. Where possible this took place during the same academic year. One student will be attending a first year teaching block when he is a 2<sup>nd</sup> year as there was no suitable group that he could attend with during his 1<sup>st</sup> year.
- Clarity in regard to seeking extensions for assignments has made it easier for learners to seek additional time when needed. This is a work in progress as learners still tend to presume a positive outcome even if they do not apply according to the terms, and still need to take on board that extensions are intended for exceptional circumstances. However, we are aware that Covid-19 was

in itself an exceptional circumstance this year and did delay many learners in completing placements and associated assignments in a timely manner.

→ Going forward programme staff will ensure that learners are more explicitly directed to this section of the QA Manual early in the year and are more aware of the need for extensions sought to be reasonable and of appropriate duration.

- CTC'S Internal Quality Assurance Team recommend that markers be given an advance schedule of due dates for submission of assignments, and a date for return of marks and feedback to CTC, at the start of the academic year. This will facilitate markers in setting time aside at the appropriate times.
- Internal moderation procedures were found to be working well and to be effective.
- The enhanced clarity regarding re-checks and reviews in relation to provisional assessment is appreciated by all. In particular, clarity in regard to the grounds for appeal has been experienced as informative and beneficial. There have been a small number of reviews this year.
  - CTC'S Internal Quality Assurance Team recommend that going forward, learners attention is brought to the difference between re-checks, reviews, and appeals and the possible grounds for each.
  - Emphasise that disagreeing with a result; questioning the academic judgement of the examiner; or feeling the result does not reflect the effort put into the task as not valid grounds.
- Clarity in regard to programme deferrals and the more formal application procedure has streamlined the process for learners seeking to take time out during the programme. This has been used very effectively in the 2020-2021 academic year and has enabled learners to make informed decisions in regard to deferring modules and/or progress through the programme.
- Having a formal deferral granted has enabled learners taking time out between years 2 and 3 maintain student status with the professional body and thus continue to build up clinical practice as a student member.
- A7.14: Return of Certification Data policy was effectively utilised this year to return outcomes from both the Level 6 and Level 9 programmes.
- Slight Modifications to facilitate effective use of the Clinical Practice Logs (A7.3 WP&CPL) have been made for the coming year.
- Additional parental consent forms were made available for students to include permission, and appropriate parental information, in regard to tele-health services.

### **Annual Monitoring and Minor Modification of Programmes**

- Learner and trainer module feedback has been gathered throughout the year and analysed, and presented in report format. This has been utilised by the Programme Management Team in reviewing the modules on an ongoing basis.
- End of year programme feedback is presented in the Annual Report and informs the Annual Programme Improvement Plan.
- Revision to the end of year stakeholder consultation forms for placements (A8.1 CPS1; A8.1 CPS2; A8.1 CPS3&4) have been made to assist in gathering information for future placement agreements.
- The course leader has monitored and gathered data on programme related matters (e.g. enrolment, completion rates, performance indicators, and attendance) as well as assessment outcomes for each student and each subject. In partnership with the Director of Academic Affairs, this information has been collated into organised segments and presented in relevant reports and files (e.g. template for External Examiner and/or end of year files for each cohort).
- Annual Monitoring Reports have been prepared as indicated.
- Data gathered in 2019-2020 academic year was successful used to develop the Annual Programme Improvement Plan in August 2020.

### **Learner Conduct, Appeals and Complaints**

- A9.1 Disciplinary Procedure was revised (23<sup>rd</sup> March 2021) to include reference to the Learner Code of Conduct
- A9.5 Complaints Procedure was revised (23<sup>rd</sup> March 2021) to remove an ambiguous statement, refer MA students to the facilitated group process sessions available to them, and add further clarity for any student who wishes to discuss issues with a staff member other than their assigned tutor.
- The resources, videos, lectures and tutorials provided by the Learning Support Officer have greatly enhanced learners understanding of academic integrity, appropriate academic conduct, referencing and general approach to assessment tasks.
- No appeals in regard to assessment results were lodged this year.
- Neither the appeals procedure, nor the complaints procedure, was implemented during 2020-2021.
- The Managing Interpersonal Issues Guidance Document (A9.5 MIIGD) has been modified to expand on the process for dealing with interpersonal issues.

### **The CTC Environment**

- Regular review of premises to allow for physical distancing took place to assess for Covid-19 regulation compliance.
  - Utilising our checklist (A10.1AV) to assess potential venues to ensure compliance with our requirements and standards.
  - Rental of conference facilities in hotels for face-to-face programme delivery when appropriate and compliant with national restrictions
  - Review of premises prior to purchase of new Limerick Centre.
- The acquisition of the new permanent venue in Limerick has greatly enhanced CTC's facilities.
- A10.1 Learning Facilities and Resources, was amended to include references to the new Limerick Centre.
- The Risk Register has been updated to include reference to National Emergencies and Pandemics.
- The refinement of our Garda Vetting processes, and agreement with IAPTP for sharing the outcomes of these applications in accordance with Section 12.3(a) of the National Vetting Bureau (Children and Vulnerable Persons) Act 2012 (as amended), is more effective and useful for our learners than the previous system.
  - We are refining the procedure for more integration between CTC and IAPTP in regard to sharing updates of both enrolled learners, and the processing of GV applications.
  - CTC'S Internal Quality Assurance Team recommends that, going forward, the need for IAPTP Garda Vetting is another area to ensure learners are fully aware of early in the year.
- The Duties of the Equality and Diversity Officer (A10.1 EDD) have been expanded to include contributing, as per our updated guidance document (A.5 MIIGD), to managing any incident of alleged bullying or intimidation.
- CTC'S Internal Quality Assurance Team reported satisfaction that procedures in this section were usefully implemented this year.

### **Self Evaluation and Institutional Review**

- Extensive ongoing monitoring took place throughout the year. This focused both on specific programmes of study and on CTC itself.
- Data gathered is utilised as it is gathered and collated, and is also available for feeding into periodic reviews as they arise.



- In addition to gathering internal feedback, liaison with external stakeholders and maintaining up-to-date knowledge of sectoral requirements enables CTC to ensure that we continue to meet specified aims and relevance to learners, the professional field, and the wider context.

### **Information Management**

- In common with all our QA policies, all information in this section is made available to learners, staff, and other stakeholders to ensure they are fully aware of how their information is managed and how they may access it etc.
- There were no data access requests or data breaches this year.
- In line with A12.9: Maintenance of Learner Records policy, and the general requirements of our Information Management suite of policies, the confidential shredding of relevant documents took place early this year. These included application and assessment documents as well as records of meetings and various reports that were no longer required.

## 2.1 Initiatives within the Institution related to Academic Integrity

### *Learning Support Officer*

In 2020 CTC welcomed our Learning Support Officer - a new role for us. The Learning Support Officer developed a suite of inputs to support learners with academic writing and complement the online portal area specifically devoted to this, Videos were commissioned and produced to address:

- o Academic Integrity: avoiding unintentional errors and plagiarism
- o Academic Writing and Literacy
- o Citation Instruction

The Learning Support Officer has also facilitated a number of support sessions for learners, including those requesting reasonable accommodation support to enable them to participate fully or to demonstrate their learning effectively, throughout the academic year.

### *Integrity of Exam Processes*

The Director of Academic Affairs maintains overall responsibility for ensuring the integrity of exam processes. The External Examiner and Internal Quality Assurance Team were happy that all systems in this area worked well despite the challenges of the global pandemic.

### *Internal Moderation and Paired Teaching*

Given the changes necessitated with regard to the unfortunate illness and subsequent death of a long serving CTC trainer in December 2020, the MA Programme Management Team managed the restructuring necessary in teaching and assessment. This involved revised allocation of modules to different staff and distribution of marking assessments. To support this, a regime of paired teaching took place and increased moderation of assignments. Preparation for these changes had been instigated since Anne's illness was diagnosed in January 2020. This gradual transfer meant that disruption for staff and students was kept to a minimum. We had also ensured that some of Anne's teaching early in 2020 was recorded so that her influence and expertise could continue to contribute to the development of our students.

### *Assignments and Assessment in the Covid Era*

Learnings from 2019-2020 informed the PMT to ensure that learning outcomes were achieved and academic integrity was maintained.

### 3.0 QA Improvement and Enhancement Plans for Upcoming Reporting Period

#### 3.1 QA and QE supporting the Achievement of Strategic Objectives

No.	<b>Relevant objectives</b> Note: Include reference to the relevant section of the preceding AQR, where applicable	<b>Planned actions and indicators</b>  <i>Note: Include details of unit responsible, and how planned action will address the relevant strategic priority and/or reengagement advice/CINNTE recommendation.</i>  <i>If the institution is preparing for cyclical review, include how the planned actions will address the relevant review objective(s).</i>
1	Work on a new blended learning policy and make amendments to existing policies that have relevance to blended learning (QQI awards) and online and blended learning for CPD and Professional courses.	Director of Academic Affairs to lead team in preparing a Briefing Document for the Academic Council, completing Gap Analysis process, modify and preparing new QA policies as indicated, and preparing a Strategic Plan.
2	Submit application to QQI to become an approved Blended Learning Provider	Completing the QQI Application, engage in site visit and implement any recommendations from the panel.
3	Should our Blended Learning Application be successful, we shall convene a Programme Development Team to develop a Level 6, Non-CAS award incorporating our Therapeutic Play Skills programme	Director of Academic Affairs and relevant members of L6 Programme Management Team to attend QQI events that address level 6 programme development in regard to CAS and non-CAS awards. When outcome of Blended Learning Application is known, and if it is successful, an initial proposal is to be submitted to the Board of Directors for approval and attribution of resources. The Academic Council may then appoint a Programme Development Team to develop a draft programme document for Non-CAS award.

4	Determine if CTC should submit an application for differential validation to incorporate blended learning into the current MA or if we should wait and make any amendments when programme is due for revalidation for 2025 intakes.	Research what is involved in a differential validation. Programme Management Team to review relevant reports and hold consultative meetings to consider if we might engage in this process. Monitor the position taken by relevant professional bodies (including those that have afforded recognition to the CTC MA) in regard to blended learning.
5	Continue to prepare for statutory regulation and monitor and improve CTC QA policies in light of any evolving CORU and TAC standards	Members of the Programme Management Team to continue involvement with relevant committees and associations. Director of Academic Affairs to continue the preparatory work that has been started, including implementing improvements to QA in regard to placements and fitness to practice.
6	Continue to update policies and procedures	Our Internal Quality Assurance Team, and Director of Academic Affairs, are involved in regular reviews of policies and procedures. As a living document constant review and revision is required.
7	Regular review of Risk Register in light of emerging developments that may impact on provision of education service.	In accordance with our approved policy, and as we move towards hopefully becoming a blended learning provider, we are alert to our growing edge in regard to recognising risks and developing contingency plans in this area.
8	Continue to monitor and review GDPR procedures in light of requirements and any issues that come to light.	Constant attention and monitoring to be carried out by CEO, and those involved in all aspects of managing data.
9	Continue to focus on documenting procedures that we engage in but that may not have been adequately recorded in our QA Manual	All members of CTC staff to review documentation describing how they complete tasks that have a QA aspect.

## 3.2 Reviews planned for Upcoming Reporting Periods

The Children's Therapy Centre reviews its courses and programmes with learners, trainers, and other stakeholders through a process of regular review and engagement in an ongoing quest to identify and implement the most effective and efficient ways to improve the training we deliver. CTC does not have any external review scheduled over the next 3-4 years. However, we will continue with our standard internal reviews as follows.

### Annual Reviews (internal):

Annual reports are based on review and evaluation of the systems in operation, documents, procedures, policies, sample records, files, assignments, and any other relevant documents, and meetings and consultations with relevant people who may include learners, staff, and other stakeholders.

Reports prepared at the conclusion of each academic year:

- Annual Report prepared by the Director of Academic Affairs;
- Annual Programme Improvement Plan;
- Evaluative reports for each cycle of the programme that has been completed;
- Internal Quality Assurance Team report;
- GDPR Report;
- Equality and Diversity Officer Report;
- External Examiner Report

In addition to the annual review process, CTC monitor and review programmes on an ongoing basis through the use of learner feedback and trainer feedback. Learner feedback is gathered and analysed by the Programme Administrator following:

- teaching inputs;
- academic years;
- the conclusion of each cycle of the programme.

Trainers provide feedback following identified teaching components. They also contribute to programme evaluation through a range of other processes including:

- regular reviews with members of the Programme Management Team;
- annual review process;
- team days etc.

Material gathered through all the above processes will provide data for Institutional Review which will be due in 2024/2025.

### 3.2.1 Reviews planned for Next Reporting Period

Unit to be reviewed	Date of planned review	Date of last review
No Programmatic Reviews due in coming year.		
Application for Approval as provider of Blended Learning to be processed	January 2022	n/a

### 3.2.2 Reviews planned beyond Next Reporting Period

*There is no published schedule for these External Reviews as yet*

- MA Creative Psychotherapy (Humanistic and Integrative Psychotherapy) next programmatic review due prior to 2025 intakes.
- Institutional review due in 2024
- Revalidation with the Irish Association for Humanistic and Integrative Psychotherapy (IAHIP) due in 2023-2024
- Revalidation with the European Association for Psychotherapy (EAP) in 2026-2027

## 4.0 Additional Themes and Case Studies

Case Study: Preparing to submit an application to QQI to become a Blended Learning Provider

In March 2020 with the onset of the Covid 19 pandemic, CTC was given two day's notice to move all teaching online as we had a teaching day on the Saturday. The practical and experiential nature of the training offered presented very specific challenges that required creative and innovative solutions.

Familiarity with the Zoom Pro platform for meetings and experience in online CPD training via Zoom Pro was useful and enabled us to swiftly upskill trainers in using this platform. CTC connections with experienced international trainers provided support and guidance in managing an efficient, user friendly and ethical online learning experience. We entered into contracts with international experts in tele-mental health so that they could train staff and students in online clinical practice. We also engage more international experts (in both mode of delivery and in subject matter) to provide training so that we could experience online delivery from the learner perspective. CTC carefully implemented and monitored the effectiveness of the resulting flipped classroom strategies and blended learning experience during the coronavirus crisis.

CTC was pleasantly surprised at how effective and popular this proved to be. As we attract learners from all over the country for both our academic and CPD courses, the burden of travel can be onerous on some learners and may negatively impact on work-life balance. Our learners are mature, professional and highly motivated, and we found that many components of our education programme, including but not limited to lecture-based components (e.g. such as both clinical and dissertation supervision) were not hampered by the switch to online delivery. In addition, we found that some components were actually enhanced by the online platform and the flipped classroom and resources provided to learners.

We therefore decided to explore ways to incorporate more of these approaches into our programmes. We determined that this would include engaging in research and reviewing our QA Policies and Procedures, making changes and additions where necessary.

We identified the need for a separate “Online and Blended Learning Strategy” to include:

- Definitions of key terms
- Limits of what will constitute Online and Blended Learning (O&BL) in terms of learner numbers and geography
- Expertise included in, or available to, corporate and academic governance
- Clear rationale and business case for O&BL
- Summarising resources and agreeing an approved budget and time scale for establishing both online and blended learning, as appropriate
- Demonstrate understanding of the ongoing resource implications (human and infrastructural) and show commitment to addressing these implications

- Informing programme developers of the types of programmes and learner profiles suitable for CTC
- Selection and approval of a particular software, hardware, and media infrastructure to support BL and reasons for this choice communicated to and approved by corporate and academic governance
- Adherence to QQI guidance with regards online and blended learning, and preparation for implementation of a Gap Analysis of existing QA and QE

Work began on collating information into a Briefing Document for consideration by the Academic Council with recommendations for developing the CTC Online and Blended Learning Strategy and considering the need for an additional Online and Blended Learning QA Policy, and expanding our Teaching, Learning and Assessment policy to explicitly reference various modes of delivery.

This preliminary work could provide the foundations for an application for QQI approval as a Blended Learning Approved Provider.