

City Education Group

2022

Annual Quality Report (Institution)
Reporting Period 2020-2021

City Education Group

2022

Annual Quality Report (Institution)
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 Template¹

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](#)

¹ 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 **City Education Group** for the reporting period **1 September 2020 - 31 August 2021**.

It is to be submitted by **Friday, 25 February 2022**.

The AQR has been approved by **City Education Group Academic Board** and is submitted by Louise Heeran Flynn.

Please refer to the City Education Group QA Manual (<https://citygroup.ie/wp-content/uploads/2022/02/CEG-QA-MANUAL-2021.pdf>)

Please refer to Chapter 1 of [City Education Group QA Manual](#)

City Education Group (CEG) - Overview and Context

- The City Education & Learning Group Ltd. (trading as the City Education Group) is a holding company for three subsidiaries:
 - City Colleges Education Ltd. (incorporating Ashfield College and City Colleges);
 - Progressive Education Limited (t/a Progressive College); and
 - Malvern House Ireland Limited (t/a City Language School).
- The principal shareholders in The City Education & Learning Group Ltd. are Philip Burke and Mansard Limited. Mansard Limited is beneficially owned by Thomas Anderson.
- The Group is ultimately governed by its Board of Directors, which is chaired by the Chief Executive. Commercial and long-term strategic decisions are made by this Board. The Board currently has one non-executive director who brings an external influence and typically a 'devil's advocate' role to the decision-making process.
- The Group has an Advisory Board. The role of the Advisory Board is to advise the Group's Board of Directors on any matter pertaining to the successful operation of the Group as a whole and the constituent Colleges within the Group. This includes, but is not limited to, issues relating to mission, vision, values and strategy, the strategic development of the Group with reference to current and future trends in education and training in Ireland, Europe, and globally at second, further and higher levels. The 2020-22 Advisory Board consists of Dr Myles Dungan, Broadcaster, Academic & Historian; Tony Kennedy, Former Executive VP of Global Operations, Teleflex Inc, Board Member, IDA; Dr Paul Clinch, Chairman of Spanish Point Technologies Ltd.; Stan McHugh, Education Consultant, Former Chief Executive of FETAC and Madeleine Mulrennan, Public Policy Consultant, Former President of St Catherine's College of Education.
- Over its lifetime, and through its acquisitions, CEG has established a significant educational and professional provision which includes extensive portfolio delivery experience.
- Each of the Colleges within the Group has a particular focus for the delivery of its programmes as detailed in the following paragraphs.
- The Group has its main campuses at South Great Georges Street and Dame Street, both in the centre of Dublin, with an additional campus in Dundrum to the south of Dublin.

While both have excellent transport links, the latter also has excellent car parking facilities. Both campuses are well-resourced and the facilities include well-appointed lecture rooms; IT facilities; library and learning resources provision and support. There is a full administrative and support team at each campus and full use is also made of on-line learning provision.

- The City Education Group delivers a diverse range of second and third level, academic, further and professional training and education programmes. The Group also delivers professional courses online to learners in Australia, Canada, France, Italy, Latvia, Romania, Singapore, the United Kingdom, and the United States. In total across the four Colleges, the Group currently encompasses a 7,000 global student body supported by more than 230 fulltime equivalent staff.

The College of Progressive Education (CPE)/Progressive College

- The College of Progressive Education, which celebrated its 30th anniversary in 2016, became a part of the City Education Group in 2011-2012. CPE provided education in child care, health care, and business/management education provider.
- The College of Progressive Education delivered programmes in child care in collaboration with City & Guilds throughout the 1980s and 1990s. From 2001, the College began developing programmes in special needs education at both certificate and diploma level in partnership with Froebel College of Education (now incorporated into the National University of Ireland).
- The College also delivered childcare management programmes, accredited by University College Dublin's Centre for Adult Education from 2001-2006.
- Since 2003, the College has been an approved provider of (and successfully delivering) a wide-range of Level 5 and 6 programmes, accredited by the Further Education Training Awards Council (FETAC) and subsequently QQI (Quality and Qualifications Ireland).
- In 2012, the College was successfully validated to deliver its FE programmes under the Common Award System.
- In 2020, the College changed its name to Progressive College.
- In 2020, the College was successfully validated to deliver a Level 8, Major Award in the domain of Education (ISCED: 01).

City Colleges

- The Group, through City Colleges, is an approved learning partner of the ACCA, and has successfully delivered professional accountancy programmes to ACCA students since 2012, and has become one of the most popular providers in the Republic of Ireland.
- In addition, a number of City Colleges' diplomas are recognised by the Psychological Society of Ireland and the Institute of Banking for CPD purposes.
- City Colleges is the only current provider of Personal Insolvency Practitioner programmes accredited by the Insolvency Service of Ireland.
- In 2020, City Colleges was validated to deliver a Level 8, Major Award in the domain Social Sciences, Business & Law (ISCED: 03).

Ashfield College

- Ashfield College, a second level (secondary education to sixth year) institution, has over a 40 year track record (1977-2017) of recognised and acknowledged league table

success in the education sector in Ireland. During the period in which Ireland's second level 'league table' compilation included private sector institutions Ashfield College was listed as the premier institution in its sector.

City Language School

- City Language School (formerly Oscars International) became part of the City Education group (CEG) in December 2018. The change of name from Oscars International to City Language School in August 2020 was made to emphasise the pathway opportunities that this development created. This change of name does not affect City Language School's legal identity. City Language School continues to be Malvern House Ireland Limited, but now trading as City Language School.
- City Language School (CLS) is an ACELS- recognised English Language Teaching Organisation (ELTO). The Accreditation and Coordination of English Language Services (ACELS) is a legacy function of Quality and Qualifications Ireland (QQI).
- City Language School is a full member of Marketing English in Ireland (MEI).
- City Language School offers both extensive and intensive language programmes in General English, Business English, and Academic English, with fulltime courses eligible for the recruitment of Non-EEA nationals and listed on the Interim list of Eligible Programmes (ILEP).

Consolidation within the City Education Group (CEG)

- The inclusion of The College of Progressive Education within the CEG was preceded by the foundation of the City Education Group itself, and the inclusion of Ashfield College.
- The consolidation of The College of Progressive Education, Ashfield College, and related areas of expertise into one City Education Group has brought together a team of lecturers and support staff who have extensive teaching and administrative experience in delivering a high quality academic, educational, and professional curriculum and a learning experience which encompasses a provision extending from schools level to Continuing Professional Development programmes.
- The Group has an established record of successful collaboration with accrediting and professional bodies and this has been incrementally and strategically developed to build upon established expertise and provide a coherent and diversified set of recruitment and educational opportunities for its students, while providing a framework which supports and encourages progression, accumulation of experience and educational development, and credits, from school to CPD levels.
- In its record of delivery and established collaborative relationships the Group has a recognised reputation as a leading alternative, private-sector provider in Ireland.
- Each collaborative relationship is established using appropriate due diligence, and managed within the terms of the subsequent contractual agreement reached between CEG and the respective accrediting/awarding/professional body.
- Each partnership includes the requirement for a Confirmed Responsibilities Agreement on the specified professional/academic programmes or training portfolio to be delivered by CEG, and an understanding of the application and designated responsibilities of the Group and the collaborating accrediting/awarding/professional body. CEG will use specifications agreed with or laid down by the accrediting/awarding/professional body (for example regulations specifications), and may also propose and/or utilise examples/templates which are examples of good practice benchmarking and responsibilities templates.

- In developing its partnership strategy CEG is fully aware of, and alert to, the requirements for ensuring that relevant regulatory frameworks are adhered to and followed.
- Consequently CEG operates at all times within the respective and relevant validation and/or professional bodies' requirements. These may include QQI requirements; professional body specifications, or other awarding body specifications as these relate to particular academic and/or professional programmes.
- Specific partnership agreements, and/or accreditation/validation relationships may therefore identify and confirm responsibilities for:
 - Oversight and management requirements for the provision and the portfolio;
 - Oversight and management of quality assurance and academic standards;
 - Teaching, learning and assessment and the delivery of academic programmes;
 - Management and enhancement of the quality of learning opportunities and the learning environment;
 - Student support and guidance matters (including academic, professional, and welfare/administrative support);
 - Public information and related documentation;
 - Admissions and related procedures;
 - Documentation and data requirements;
- In this context, the CEG academic regulations provide the framework for the internal oversight of the provision and the protocols, conventions and management of the provision.
- Where programmes of study are internally assessed and not subject to, or requiring, external assessment for the purposes of an awarding body awarding credit, then the CEG academic regulations will take precedent and the assessment protocols identified in the academic regulations will be applied.
- Where CEG undertakes assessment which leads to the award of credit and/or a final award, and which is recognised to be on a national or international credit framework/regulations, then the Academic Regulations and/or the Professional Regulations, and/or the Assessment Regulations (including the criteria referenced specifications) of the specific assessment regime operated by the awarding body will be applied to the respective programme/modules/CPD delivered by CEG.

Future Relationships

- City Education & Learning Group Limited, trading as City Education Group (CEG), will engage directly with QQI in respect of QA approval and programme validation. It is proposed that this company will deliver QQI validated programmes, with the support of its subsidiaries, City Colleges Education Limited and Progressive Education Limited.
- Following its reorganisation, CEG has the direct and exclusive relationship with QQI, and Progressive Education Limited's current relationship ceased. City Colleges and the College of Progressive Education have become registered business names of City Education & Learning Group Limited (CEG).

CEG's Vision Statement and Objectives

The City Education Group's Vision

The City Education Group's vision is:

'the provision of excellence in responsive applied education'.

CEG is committed to providing high quality, responsive educational programmes which contribute to the educational, social, economic and cultural development of the individual, society and the economy in general. We endeavour to provide an enriching learning environment which affords students the opportunity to attain their best whilst studying on our programmes.

Our vision is based on firm foundations which are designed to ensure that CEG will continue to develop on a sound financial base, while providing the appropriate academic programmes, resources and support services.

CEG's Objectives

The City Education Group aims to provide high quality, cost-effective higher education programmes in the discipline fields and subject related areas that are responsive to both the individual learner and society.

Our programme development, content and delivery is based on our established expertise in the delivery of high-quality programmes. We are committed to providing:

- The best possible learning experiences for all learners: irrespective of the programme, we aim to provide high quality learning experiences to all of our learners.
- High quality, cost effective, accessible programmes: we aim to deliver high quality material in a cost effective way, using a variety of delivery modes, including face-to face and blended provision, thus making our programmes accessible for the learner.
- Cutting edge programmes, delivered by experts in the relevant field: our programme content and delivery is cutting edge. In order to remain competitive and relevant to stakeholder and societal requirements, programmes delivered by CEG must maintain our currency in terms of our curriculum content, pedagogic approaches, responses to market and environmental circumstances. Our cutting edge material is, delivered by subject matter experts in the field.
- Responsive programmes: Our programme development is responsive, recognising and respecting a variety of career development pathways, individual aspirations, international cultures, learners and stakeholders and their respective needs.
- Theory-Practice Nexus: Theory and practice are intrinsically linked within our programmes, in order to make our programmes successful for our learners and for society as a whole. Academic and professional discipline and subject areas are interconnected and our programmes provide access to career development and continued CPD opportunities.
- Multi-entry routes: Recognising that everyone has different aspirations, at different times in their lives, our discipline and subject areas offer multiaccess pathways to meet the varying needs of the individual and society.
- Diverse: Our programmes should be international in their focus and multicultural in context and nature.

CEG's vision and objectives are therefore, designed to ensure:

- The inclusion of practical applications and culturally and contextually referenced teaching in our teaching, learning and assessment.

- Rigour and critical relevance in scholarship, associated academic/educational/professional research activities, major project, case study and CPD development teaching and the links to the academic and professional experience of our students.
- Innovation in teaching, learning, assessment, stakeholder development and relationship development.

Strategic Objectives

CEG's main strategic vision for the Group is to further strengthen its reputation as a leading independent higher education provider, providing innovative, responsive education, which can transform the lives of its learners.

In order to achieve this strategic goal (ref CEG's Strategic Plan: Towards 2021), CEG aims to focus on the strategic objectives as identified in Figure 1) (CEG is currently undertaking a dynamic consultation across the Group with relevant internal and external stakeholders in order to create its new Strategic Plan, *Toward 2025*).



Figure 1: Strategic Objectives - CEG's Strategic Plan, Towards 2021

Planning and implementation of the CEG's Vision and Strategy

CEG's strategic planning process and the implementation of strategic plans is developed within a number of contexts and specific priorities. This includes the carefully considered establishment, firm consolidation, and successful continued development of:

- An appropriate portfolio of provision
- A track record of providing a good quality educational and professional/CPD experience for students (as appropriate to the programme, level and context)
- The successful development of a series of well-regarded and mutually beneficial cooperative activities with accrediting/awarding/professional bodies.

A cornerstone of the vision and strategic plan is the objective of delivering high quality career-related programmes. All programmes, therefore, are designed to provide a clear and detailed foundation of

knowledge and experience in the principles and subject areas which make up the respective practice-focused disciplines. The provision within the portfolio is benchmarked against the required standards and expectations of both CEG and QQI, and as required by our respective accrediting/awarding/professional body good practices and expectations. Building on these principles, all teaching is designed to provide students with the knowledge and expertise necessary to develop their overall academic, professional and career capability and with opportunity to develop specialist expertise and career development directions. Our teaching philosophy and pedagogic vision therefore, provides an Academic and/or Professional experience with strong emphasis on the knowledge, skills and capabilities appropriate to the rapidly changing global, cultural, human and technological contexts and organisational cultures and environments.

The focus is primarily on academic and professional standards within all programmes and with integrating both teaching experience and professional external world experience in teaching teams. Responsibility for the development of the CEG's strategy lies with the senior management team (SMT) and the Academic Board, as appropriate. The SMT and Academic Board may receive advice and support from the Advisory Board, if/as required. Further details of our philosophical and pedagogic principles are outlined in a suite of documents which outline our pedagogic philosophy and principles, for example, in:

- CEG's Graduate Attributes Framework (2018; updated 2019),
- CEG's Teaching, Learning and Assessment Strategy (2018; updated 2019),
- CEG's Teaching, Learning and Assessment Philosophy (2018; updated 2019),
- CEG's Peer Observation Handbook (2018),
- CEG's Digital Strategy (2019).

During this reporting period, Progressive College, part of CEG, ran the following QQI accredited courses:

Autumn 2020

1. Special Needs Assisting - Level 5 - Part Time (classroom based)
2. Special Needs Assisting - Level 6 - Part Time (classroom based)
3. Children with Additional Needs - Level 5 - Part Time (classroom based)
4. Early Childhood Care & Education - Major Award - Level 6 - Part Time (classroom based)
5. Healthcare Support/Nursing Studies - Major Award - Level 5 - Part Time (classroom based)
6. Healthcare Support/Nursing Studies - Major Award - Level 5 - Blended Learning

7. Care of the Older Person - single module - Level 5 - Part Time (classroom based)
8. Purchasing Supply Chain & Logistics - Major Award - Level 6 - Blended Learning

Spring 2021

1. Special Needs Assisting - Level 5 - Part Time (classroom based)
2. Special Needs Assisting - Level 6 - Part Time (classroom based)
3. Children with Additional Needs - Level 5 - Part Time (classroom based)
4. Special Needs Assisting - Level 5 - Blended
5. Special Needs Assisting - Level 6 - Blended
6. Children with Additional Needs - Level 5 - Blended
7. Early Childhood Care & Education - Major Award - Level 6 - Part Time (classroom based)
8. Child Development - Single Module - Level 5 - Blended Learning
9. Healthcare Support/Nursing Studies - Major Award - Level 5 - Part Time (classroom based)
10. Healthcare Support/Nursing Studies - Major Award - Level 5 - Blended Learning
11. Care Skills - single module - Level 5 - Blended Learning
12. Purchasing Supply Chain & Logistics - Major Award - Level 6 - Blended Learning

During this reporting period, City Colleges, part of CEG, ran the following level 5 QQI accredited courses:

Diploma in Nutrition
 Diploma in Social Studies
 Diploma in Business Management
 Diploma in Employment Law
 Diploma in Psychology

Overview of the Process for Development and Approval of the AQR

City Education Group (CEG) gained access to Initial Validation in July, 2019. The period of Initial Access to Validation and the eighteen months prior, had seen extensive outputs in terms of Quality Assurance across the Group. Similarly, extensive work was carried out by the Registrar and Director of Quality in terms of creating a quality culture across the Group in the period after Initial Access to Validation.

The reporting period therefore, (i.e. 1 September, 2020 to 31 August, 2021), following Initial Access to Validation coincides with the roll out of a number of Quality Assurance mechanisms including holding our inaugural CEG Academic Board and initiating our own Annual Reporting Cycle. The Office of the Director of Quality developed an Annual Reporting Template which was approved for roll out by Academic Board in September 2019. The Annual Reporting Template was developed very much with the Annual Quality Review in mind. All CEG Colleges completed their first Annual Report in this reporting period; completion of such Annual Reports was considered good preparation for the Annual Quality Review. In order to ensure meaningful reporting in our Annual Reports, the Office of the Director of Quality and the Registrar held briefing sessions with stakeholders across the Group. This training included ensuring that all relevant stakeholders and departments were able to complete the relevant sections of the Annual Report.

All of the above work on our Annual reporting mechanisms, greatly helped the Group with the completion of the Annual Quality Review. Before we began the AQR as a Group, the Director of Quality's Office held a briefing session and Q & A session on completing the AQR. The AQR featured as an item on our Academic Board agenda. The Office of the Director of Quality held regular meetings with relevant stakeholders in relation to AQR progress. The AQR also featured as an item on the weekly agenda of the individual colleges' operations meetings.

1.0 Internal QA Framework

1.1 Governance and Management of Quality

Guide:

[Ref: QQI Core QAG Section 2.1 - *Governance and Management of Quality*; 2.2 - *Documented Approach to Quality Assurance*; 2.10 - *Other Parties involved in Education and Training*; ESG 1.1]

- **Overarching Quality Assurance System, its Governance and Management in the Institution.**

Please refer to Chapter 2 of [City Education Group's QA Manual](#).

- 1 Overview of the Overarching CEG Quality Assurance System
- Introduction

The City Education Group (CEG) Quality Manual 2021 is the source of reference and provides descriptive guidance for all staff across all quality assurance areas related to the academic and professional operational aspects of CEG upon which CEG academic quality assurance framework is based. The CEG Quality Manual is consistent with the statutory requirements of the Qualifications and Quality Assurance (Education and Training) Act, 2012 (the 2012 Act). The updated Quality Manual includes the vision, governance, and internal quality mechanisms, protocols and processes. It was written to take account of current policies, criteria and guidelines developed by Quality and Qualifications Ireland (QQI). It provides guidance covering the areas which are vital for successful quality provision, academic and professional standards, and learning environments. The policies, procedures and guidelines referenced in the Quality Manual apply to all academic activities and learner support services. This revision is enhanced by an initial review by a QQI Committee in July 2018, ongoing internal review of CEG practice, and the experience of all staff involved in the implementation of Quality Assurance (QA) policies. The CEG Quality Manual also contains academic and professional policies and related documents. These are applicable to all staff and all programmes. The reference areas include details on governance, programmes and management together with details on the following:

- the student experience
- the learning environment
- teaching staff and support staff
- information management
- academic and professional strategies, policies and City Education Group protocols.

The Manual was updated for implementation from May 2019; the current version has been updated in January 2021. This manual is subject to annual review under the Academic Board to support CEG's ongoing commitment to continuous quality improvement. QQI will be notified of any subsequent changes which may be made to the Manual.

The CEG Quality Assurance Manual is available on all of our Colleges' websites by clicking on 'Quality Assurance' on the specific College website. All College websites lead to the Quality Assurance section of the City Education Group website i.e. <https://citygroup.ie/quality-assurance/>

Scope

The City Education Group (CEG) Quality Framework documentation consists of:

- Part One: [The City Education Group's QA Manual](#).
- Part Two: The City Education Group Supplementary Academic Regulations - additional policies, procedures and documents (contained within the [City Education Group's QA Manual](#)).
- Part Three: The City Education Group Staff Handbook - includes the general principles and requirements expected of a CEG staff member.
- Part Four: The City Education Group Quality Library (on Microsoft Teams - contains all documentation related to the provision and portfolio of programme which are delivered within CEG).
- Part Five: The City Education Group Programme Handbooks

In addition, within the Quality Framework, CEG English Language Programmes are subject to the Documented Curriculum Framework (DCF).

References

The CEG QA Manual is informed by:

- Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area - ESG 2015.
- Policy on Quality Assurance Guidelines - QQI April 2016.
- Statutory Quality Assurance Guidelines developed by QQI for use by all Providers - QQI April 2016.
- Statutory Quality Assurance Guidelines developed by QQI for Independent/Private Providers coming to QQI on a Voluntary Basis - QQI April 2016.
- Policy on Monitoring - QQI Dec 2014.
- Policy for Cyclical Review of Higher Education Institutions - QQI Feb 2016.
- Re-engagement with QQI Policy and Criteria for Renewed Access to QQI Validation for Voluntary Providers of Higher Education and Training - QQI, 2014.
- Re-engagement with QQI - Overarching Policy for All Providers - Jun 2014.
- Programme Validation Manual for Programmes of HET and Apprenticeships (FET and HET), edition 3 - QQI, 2018.
- Assessment and Standards - QQI Revised 2013.
- Effective Practice Guidelines for External Examining - QQI, 2015.
- Topic Specific: Statutory Quality Assurance Guidelines for Providers of Blended Learning Programmes - QQI, 2018.
- Policy and criteria for Access, Transfer and Progression - QQI, restated 2015.
- RPL Principles and Guidelines - QQI, 2015.
- Principles and Operational Guidelines for the Implementation of a National Approach to Credit in Irish Higher Education and Training - NQAI, 2006.
- Protection for Enrolled Learners (PEL) - Information, protocols and guidelines - QQI, 2013.
- Qualifications and Quality Assurance (Education and Training) Amendment Act 2019.

CEG is subject to, and has developed appropriate policies and processes, to meet the requirements of statutory legislation including:

- Qualifications and Quality Assurance (Education and Training) Act, 2012
- Employment Equality Acts, 1998-2015
- Disability Act, 2005
- Data Protection Acts, 1988-2018

Specific legislation is referenced within the appropriate sections of the Quality Manual where they are addressed. A full list of policies and references informing the Quality Manual can be found in

Appendices 1 and 2 of the [City Education Group's QA Manual](#).

Advice and information on all policies and procedures in the Quality Manual can be obtained from the Registrar's/Director of Quality's Office. All definitive versions of policies and procedures in the Quality Manual and support documents including meeting minutes; programme descriptors; module specifications; approved/validated and franchised programme documents; Annual Reports; Moderator/Tutor reports and responses; external examiners' reports and responses; and documentation, are stored in the CEG Quality Library in Faculty's Microsoft Teams QA section.

QA in an education and training context as defined by CEG is informed by overarching principles and internationally recognised effective practice. The Quality Manual has been developed within the context of the following principles of QQI's Policy on Quality Assurance Guidelines, April 2016:

- The primary responsibility for quality, and its assurance, lies with education and training providers.
- Quality systems are context dependent i.e. the scale and scope of a provider's provision will impact on how it operates QA. Providers should be able to demonstrate their quality publicly.
- A quality culture is the outcome of individual staff and collective organisational commitment to continuous improvement. In such a culture, QA procedures are not viewed as a bureaucratic burden, but as tools to drive improvement and enhancement.
- Education and training exists principally for the purpose of enabling people to learn and, accordingly, programmes of education and training should be designed, implemented and evaluated with learning outcomes in mind. Approved QA procedures and those procedures which must have regard to QQI guidelines are fully implemented by providers and are monitored by providers for effectiveness.
- A provider-owned QA system makes appropriate use of external persons who are independent of the provider and are expertly qualified to make relevant national and international comparisons.
- Continuous improvement must be the goal of a QA process. The quality of academic education and training and other programmes needs to be developed and improved for students and other beneficiaries of higher and further education and training.
- QA systems should enhance transparency. Processes should be developed through which education and training providers can demonstrate their accountability, including accountability for the investment of public and private money.
- The QA system supports public confidence (only when this is deserved) in the provider and its capacity to provide programmes to agreed standards. Assuring the quality of provision and related services requires significant effort and resources on the part of the provider. Providers should actively promote their internal quality system and proactively develop it as a tangible resource and an explicit part of the education and training infrastructure. Public confidence is a key objective for provider owned QA. All outputs of the internal QA system should be published.

CEG's policies, principles, procedures and practices have been prepared to facilitate meeting all relevant sectoral QA requirements, and are grounded in the requirements of the European Standards and Guidelines for Internal Quality Assurance within Higher Education Institutions (ESG, 2015), as per Table 1 below.

Table 1: CEG's Quality Manual chapters as aligned to Standards and Guidelines for Internal Quality Assurance - ESG 2015.

CHAPTER	ESG STANDARD
1 Context	ESG 1.1 Policy for Quality Assurance Standard: <i>Institutions should have a policy for quality assurance that is made public and forms part of their strategic management. Internal stakeholders should develop and implement this policy through appropriate structures and processes, while involving external stakeholders.</i>
2 Governance and Structures	ESG Standard 1.1 Policy for Quality Assurance Standard: <i>Institutions should have a policy for quality assurance that is made public and forms part of their strategic management. Internal stakeholders should develop and implement this policy through appropriate structures and processes, while involving external stakeholders.</i>

CHAPTER	ESG STANDARD
3 Programme Development and Validation	ESG Standard 1.2 Design and Approval of Programmes Standard: <i>Institutions should have processes for the design and approval of their programmes. The programmes should be designed so that they meet the objectives set for them, including the intended learning outcomes. The qualification resulting from a programme should be clearly specified and communicated, and refer to the correct level of the national qualifications framework for higher education and, consequently, to the Framework for Qualifications of the European Higher Education Area</i>
4 Programme Monitoring and Review	ESG 1.9 On-going Monitoring and Periodic Review of Programmes Standard: Institutions should monitor and periodically review their programmes to ensure that they achieve the objectives set for them and respond to the needs of students and society. These reviews should lead to continuous improvement of the programme. Any action planned or taken as a result should be communicated to all those concerned. ESG 1.10 Cyclical External Quality Assurance Standard: Institutions should undergo external quality assurance in line with the ESG on a cyclical basis.
5 Admissions	ESG 1.4 Student Admission, Progression, Recognition and Certification Standard: Institutions should consistently apply pre-defined and published regulations covering all phases of the student “life cycle”, e.g. student admission, progression, recognition and certification.
6 Teaching, Learning and Assessment	ESG 1.3 Student-Centred Learning, Teaching and Assessment Standard: Institutions should ensure that the programmes are delivered in a way that encourages students to take an active role in creating the learning process, and that the assessment of students reflects this approach.
7 Learner Supports	ESG 1.6 Learning Resources and Student Support Standard: Institutions should have appropriate funding for learning and teaching activities and ensure that adequate and readily accessible learning resources and student support are provided.
8 Assessment and Standards	ESG 1.4 Student Admission, Progression, Recognition and Certification Standard: <i>Institutions should consistently apply pre-defined and published regulations covering all phases of the student “life cycle”, e.g. student admission, progression, recognition and certification.</i>

CHAPTER	ESG STANDARD
9 Collaborative Provision and Non Framework Programmes	<p>ESG 1.4 Student Admission, Progression, Recognition and Certification Standard: <i>Institutions should consistently apply pre-defined and published regulations covering all phases of the student "life cycle", e.g. student admission, progression, recognition and certification.</i></p> <p>ESG 1.8 Public Information Standard: <i>Institutions should publish information about their activities, including programmes, which is clear, accurate, objective, up-to date and readily accessible.</i></p>
10 Staff and Staff Development	<p>ESG 1.5 Teaching Staff Standard: <i>Institutions should assure themselves of the competence of their teachers. They should apply fair and transparent processes for the recruitment and development of staff.</i></p>
11 Information Management	<p>ESG 1.7 Information Management Standard: <i>Institutions should ensure that they collect, analyse and use relevant information for the effective management of their programmes and other activities.</i></p> <p>ESG 1.8 Public Information Standard: <i>Institutions should publish information about their activities, including programmes, which is clear, accurate, objective, up-to date and readily accessible.</i></p>

The processes and procedures which apply specifically to City Language School (CLS) at CEG are separately contained in the School's Documented Curriculum Framework (DCF), which is annually reviewed and audited through the Accreditation and Coordination of English Language Services (ACELS) inspection process. Ongoing review and updating for accuracy, completeness and compliance of the QA Manual is the responsibility of the Registrar/Director of Quality.

Quality Assurance and Enhancement Policy and Strategy

CEG's Academic Board provides the oversight for quality assurance and enhancement activity, and the strategic development and implementation of the quality assurance policy. The goal of providing a quality-focussed academic and professional portfolio helps to achieve the vision, and meet CEG strategic objectives, through ensuring quality within the provision and stimulating enhancement in all aspects of the portfolio.

CEG recognises the important role of engagement with external organisations in ensuring quality and promoting improvement. Engagement with external organisations is designed to include active consideration and involvement with, for example:

- Quality and Qualifications Ireland

- accrediting/awarding/professional bodies, if/as relevant, including e.g. the Chartered Institute of Marketing (CIM); Association of Chartered Certified Accountants (ACCA).

Where appropriate, CEG also makes use of external experts and consultants in ongoing enhancement activities, within the Advisory Board and within regular reviews of specific programmes and areas of activity. Each member of teaching and support staff is responsible for the quality delivered to the students and the programme with which they are engaged. They are in turn fully accountable to their appropriate Director/Dean, and respective Programme Leaders for their work.

The City Education Group's Programme Portfolio/Scope of the Quality Manual

CEG's development of quality programmes is aimed at meeting the needs of all students in an increasingly competitive market. This remains central to the quality principles which underpin the delivery of the curriculum and the teaching, learning and assessment philosophy which leads programme developments. Programmes are designed to build on and reinforce strength in teaching and learning which develops the student's professional capabilities and their theoretical understanding which itself informs practice. CEG caters for an educational and professional market and students who enter programmes at certain stages in their development are able to build on their career experience to date within a high quality theoretical, practice focussed and career intentioned learning experiences.

As part of its 2019 Initial Access to Validation Application to QQI, CEG proposed the development of a small number of Level 8, Major Awards, in the domains of Education (ISCED: 01) and Social Sciences, Business & Law (ISCED: 03) in face-to-face and Blended Learning formats. To date, two such programmes, one in each domain, have been validated by QQI. The [City Education Group's QA Manual](#) defines the policies, procedures and regulations which attach to these proposed programmes within CEG.

Circulation and Document Version Control

The accuracy and currency of the Quality Manual is the responsibility of the Director of Quality, working closely with the Registrar and nominated members of the Academic Board. Updates to the Quality Manual are approved by, and reported to Academic Board annually, or more frequently, if/as required. The most current version of the Quality Manual is made available to all staff via Microsoft Teams. All definitive versions of quality framework support documents are stored in the CEG Quality Library within the Faculty Hub on Microsoft Teams and accessible across the Group. The most up to date CEG QA Manual is also available on all of the College's websites.

Responsibility for the Quality Framework

CEG's Academic Board has ultimate responsibility for the content, development, maintenance and oversight of the CEG Quality Framework at CEG. The Academic Board is required to confirm and approve the academic strategies and policies which are developed, incorporated in, and implemented as a part of the CEG Quality Framework. CEG's Academic Board sub-committees are required to report on a regular basis to the Academic Board on all significant decisions and matters which require the approval of the Board as defined in their published Terms of Reference. This includes the provision of feedback from students and faculty.

- **2 Governance and Management of the CEG Quality Assurance System within CEG**
- **Overarching Quality Assurance System, its Governance and Management in the Institution**

The City Education Group has established an appropriate governance structure to ensure that it is governed and managed effectively, with clear and appropriate lines of accountability. This section of the Quality Manual will outline these structures and reporting mechanisms, and indicate how they are reviewed as part of CEG's overall commitment to quality and continuous enhancement of its activities. Through the application of these governance structures, CEG ensures that objective oversight is in place to ensure that CEG is financially sustainable, that financial management is sound, and that a clear relationship exists between CEG's financial strategies, risk assessment and management, and the safeguarding of the quality and standards of its academic provision.

CEG's overall governance infrastructure comprises the following primary decision making bodies:

- A Board of Directors to provide effective corporate governance and meet their statutory and regulatory obligations (reference section 2.2.1 of the [City Education Group's QA Manual](#) where we outline the Terms of Reference of the Board of Directors).
- A Senior Management Team (SMT), led by the Chief Executive Officer (CEO), is an advisory management body which reports to the CEO. Its members have formal responsibilities within the Group, as ascribed to their respective roles. The Senior Management Team deals with key operational matters across the Group e.g. marketing, finance, facilities, and receives reports from the Management Teams across CEG - those of City Colleges, Ashfield College, the College of Progressive Education, and City Language School (reference section 2.2.3 of the [City Education Group's QA Manual](#) where we outline the Terms of Reference of the SMT).
- An Advisory Board to provide independent external advice related to the sectors and disciplines within which CEG offers its programmes and individual modules as required. Advice may be given directly to the CEO but may also be provided in other scheduled meetings with the CEG Senior Management Team and/or Academic Board. The Advisory Board is constituted to include independent expertise in academic quality and assurance (reference section 2.2.4 of the [City Education Group's QA Manual](#) where we outline the Terms of Reference of the Advisory Board)
- An Academic Board which is responsible for the oversight of procedures concerning quality assurance and academic standards. The Academic Board is the primary decision making body for all CEG academic matters (reference section 2.3.1 of the [City Education Group's QA Manual](#) where we outline the Terms of Reference of the Academic Board).

There is a clear delineation between the academic and commercial parts in the governance structure. These arrangements are in place to ensure that the academic decision-making processes within CEG (relating to the provision of education, training and professional programmes) is independent of commercial considerations or the undue influence of the business owners. When a programme is proposed, it is within the jurisdiction of the Academic Board to specify the funding requirement to assure appropriate resources and facilities are made available, and the Academic Board has an effective veto, with regard to the CEG programme portfolio, if the Board of Directors does not approve the necessary spending.

Overview of CEG Academic Governance

The CEG Academic Governance structure is outlined in full detail in Chapter Two of the CEQ QA Manual. The Chapter details overall academic governance and management framework at CEG and the board and committee structures that support the framework (as identified in the Figure 2 below), including the role, composition and responsibilities of the following:

- The Advisory Board (Terms of Reference section 2.2.4 of the [City Education Group's QA Manual](#))
- The Academic Board
- Programme Boards

Other committees are identified within Chapter 2 of the [City Education Group's QA Manual](#) and detailed within other sections of the Manual.

The Terms of Reference for each committee (as outlined in Chapter 2 of the [City Education Group's QA Manual](#)) indicate how Academic Board delegates to its permanent sub-committees responsibility for the development and monitoring of specific areas of academic strategy, operational implementation, and oversight responsibility.

CEG utilises a participatory governance system and as such, the Terms of Reference for our Academic Board and its subcommittees indicate that we utilise representation of learners and external stakeholders.

Meetings of Academic Board, and its permanent Sub-Committees, are scheduled within the general business and academic calendar of CEG in order to ensure the effective and efficient conduct of business. There shall normally be four meetings of Academic Board each year, at least one per quarter, in close proximity to a Board of Directors' meetings.

In conducting their business, Academic Board and its sub-committees follow 'committee procedures' in relation to its agenda, decision making, minute recording and record retention.

Academic Board review the academic processes and regulations on an annual basis in order to ensure that they continue to comply with sectoral and governance good practice. Where relevant, Academic Board will take into account and facilitate statutory and regulatory requirements for the conduct of its business. This includes, for example:

- a. QQI Core Statutory Quality Assurance Guidelines;
- b. QQI Policies and Criteria for the validation of programmes of education and training;
- c. The National Framework of Qualifications, Ireland;
- d. Respective quality assurance guidelines for UK-based programmes (e.g. the UK Quality Code and Academic Infrastructure requirements) with regard to professional/CPD programmes.
- e. International professional subject accreditation bodies as appropriate to CPD professional requirements.

Ex-officio Board and Committee members shall be those CEG staff appointed by the CEG CEO to specific roles within the Group - a role may be combined with other CEG roles across the group under a different job title, but this does not impact on the individual's committee membership. The CEO chairs the SMT and is responsible for providing the strategic management leadership and coordination links between the senior academic and management groups within CEG.

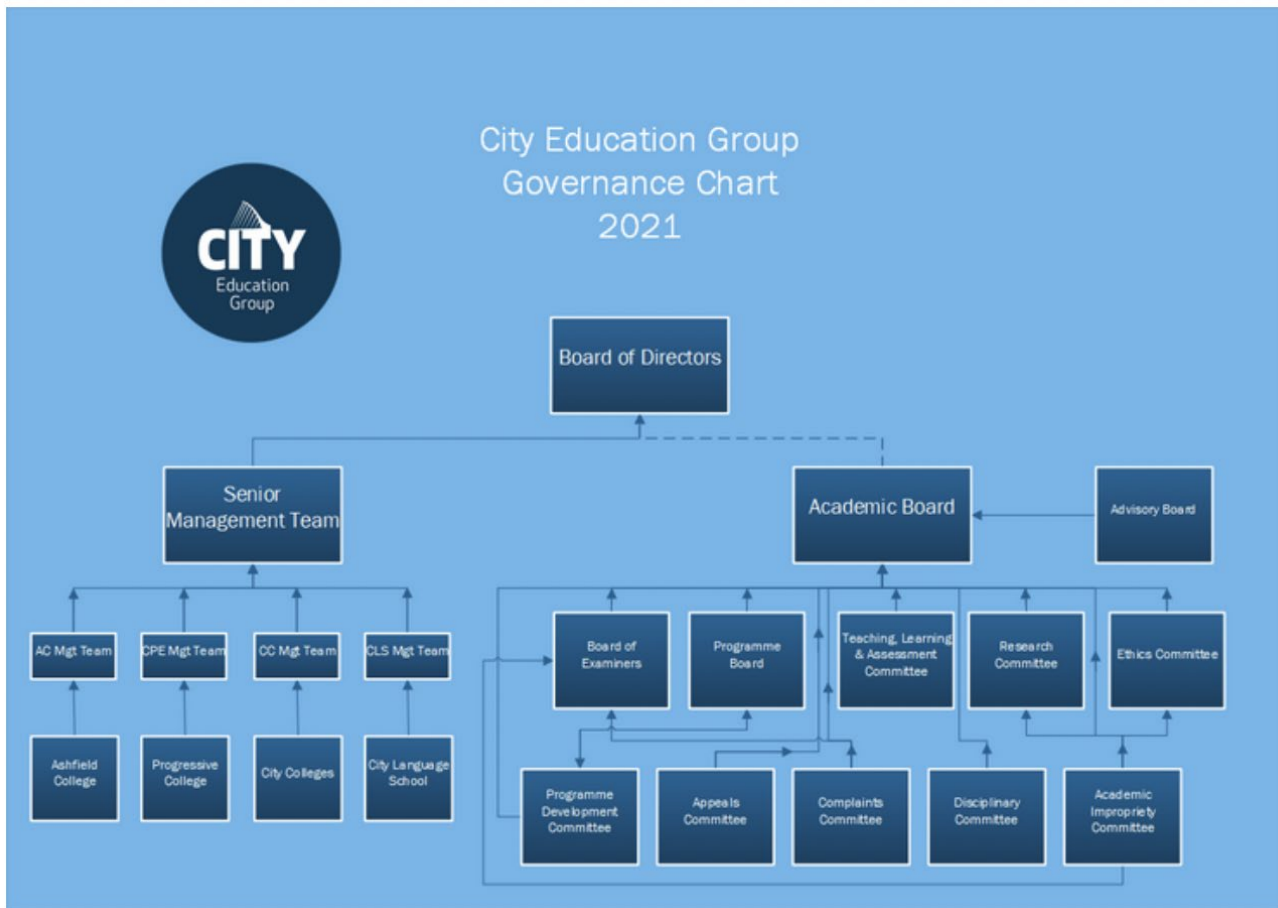


Figure 2: Governance and Management Structure - City Education Group (including constituent Colleges, Academic Board and its sub-committees, and their reporting pathways) 2021.

Please note: Individual College Organisation Charts are in Chapter 2 of [City Education Group's QA Manual](#).

Organisational Governance in CEG

The Board of Directors

The Group is ultimately governed by its Board of Directors, which is chaired by the Chief Executive. Commercial and long-term strategic decisions are made by this Board. The Board currently has one non-executive director who brings an external influence and typically a 'devil's advocate' role to the decision-making process for the Group.

Chief Executive Officer

The Chief Executive carries ultimate responsibility for all of the City Education Group operations and management. The Chief Executive Officer is responsible to the shareholders of City Education Group, and is an executive Director of CEG. The CEO is advised by a Senior Management Team which meets normally on a biweekly basis.

Terms of Reference for the CEG SMT are located in Section 2.2.3 of the [City Education Group's QA Manual](#).

Terms of Reference for the CEG Advisory Board are located in Section 2.2.4 of the [City Education Group's QA Manual](#).

Terms of Reference for the CEG Academic Board are located in Section 2.3.1 of the [City Education Group's QA Manual](#).

Sub-Committees of Academic Board

The work of Academic Board is supported by, and carried out through, appropriate delegation to its permanent Sub-Committees. Academic Board Sub-Committees are required to meet and report on a regular basis to Academic Board, and to provide Academic Board with minutes/records of the business carried out on its behalf. Sub-Committees also provide Academic Board with annual reports of their work to support the strategic oversight of all academic matters and associated responsibilities within CEG. Sub-Committees will also provide Academic Board with appropriate policy and strategic papers for consideration and review.

The permanent Academic Board Sub-Committees are:

- Ethics Committee (Terms of Reference section 10.7.2 of the [City Education Group's QA Manual](#).)
- Board of Examiners
- Programme Boards (Terms of Reference section 6.5 of the [City Education Group's QA Manual](#).)
- Research Committee (Terms of Reference section 10.7.1 of the [City Education Group's QA Manual](#).)
- Teaching, Learning and Assessment Committee (Terms of Reference section 6.1 of the [City Education Group's QA Manual](#).)

The permanent Academic Board Sub-Committees have very specific defined functions and will work in consultation with each other to enhance the overall quality of the CEG provision through the conduct of formal business agendas; through consultation, feedback and dialogue with CEG academic and support staff, students, other members of the Irish and international academic and professional communities, and, as appropriate, with CEG stakeholders and other interested external parties. The Academic Board and its permanent Sub-Committees determine an appropriate annual schedule of ordinary meetings, which are timetabled within the CEG academic calendar.

Academic Board also constitutes a series of academic committees, which are convened if/as required by CEG to meet operational requirements, including:

- Appeals Committee
- Complaints Committee
- Disciplinary Committee
- Academic Impropriety Committee

Details of these committees are provided in the relevant sections of Chapter 2 of the [City Education Group's QA Manual](#), as they fit into the academic processes on which they deliberate and are relevant. In addition, Academic Board may establish additional permanent or ad hoc sub-committees, temporary working groups, or Standing Committees, from time to time across the academic year as it may think necessary to meet academic and operational requirements.

Appointments to sub-committees will be made/approved by Academic Board at its meetings. Should a vacancy arise, the Chair of Academic Board may appoint an interim member of a Sub-

Committee in consultation with the Chair of the Sub-Committee. Any such interim member will be formally appointed if agreed at the next meeting of Academic Board.

Boards and committees may appoint sub-committees and/or temporary working groups or Committees as they deem appropriate for the carrying out of duties and responsibilities.

Ethics Committee (Terms of Reference section 10.7.2 of the [City Education Group's QA Manual](#))

Research strategy and practice within CEG is supported by the Ethics Committee, which grants ethical approval for research conducted by staff, faculty, and third-parties seeking to conduct research in the Group's community. Details of the function and operation of the Committee are provided in section 10.7.2 of the [City Education Group's QA Manual](#).

Board of Examiners

The Board of Examiners holds the responsibility for decision making for summative assessments and decisions related to the recommendations of assessors. The Board of Examiners fulfils the regulatory requirement to establish a board or committee to "consider all assessment findings and to determine assessment results for each of the learners presented". Reference section 8.24 of the [City Education Group's QA Manual](#) for more information.

Programme Board (Terms of Reference section 6.5 of the [City Education Group's QA Manual](#).)

A Programme Board is established for each programme (or group of programmes) and acts as the academic management forum and operational management team for the programme(s) - reference section 6.5 of the CEG QA Manual for more information.

Research Committee (Terms of Reference section 10.7.1 of the [City Education Group's QA Manual](#))

The Research Committee guides the Academic Board and the City Education Group community in strategy, policy and the approach to research activity within CEG - reference section 10.7.1 of the CEG QA Manual for more information. Reporting to the CEG Academic Board, The Research Committee ensures the quality assuring research activity, which includes governance, design, managing, resourcing, monitoring and review of research activities across the Group. The Research Committee works closely with the CEG Ethics Committee, as proposals for all new research activities must pass through the CEG Ethics Committee.

The Teaching, Learning and Assessment Committee (Terms of Reference section 6.1 of the [City Education Group's QA Manual](#))

The Teaching, Learning and Assessment Committee guides the Academic Board and the CEG community in strategy, policy and the approach to teaching, learning and assessment activity across the group - reference section 6.1 of the CEG QA Manual for more information.

Business Management/Operational Teams

There are a number of additional management teams, within CEG, which contribute to the effective business and administrative management and delivery of the portfolio of activities. These include the following:

Marketing Team

This team is led by the Director of Sales & Marketing. The team meet on a regular basis and operate throughout the calendar year. Regular operational and monitoring meetings ensure the smooth running of all marketing, promotion and publicity activities and procedures as well as the careful and detailed planning for procedures related to applications to programmes. Effective liaison between the marketing team and programme staff takes place particularly with reference to the confirmation of places offered to applicants to programmes.

Admissions Team

Final decisions on admissions to CEG programmes are taken by academic staff who receive applications after checking procedures have been completed by nominated administrative staff. (In specific circumstances, as indicated above admissions decisions may be subject to final approval by a respective collaborating accrediting/awarding/professional body. Subject where required to agreements with respective accrediting/awarding/professional body). The receipt of a formal application to study leads to a significant level of contact between the applicant and CEG staff prior to the offer of a place to study on a programme/module (as outlined in section 5.10 of the [City Education Group's QA Manual](#)). To support this process administrative and marketing staff receive regular training in the handling of applications; the respective admissions criteria, and general administration requirements. Significant focus is made in the recruitment activities to ensure that the aspirations and capability of each applicant is suitably matched to the programme to which they are applying and to which they are admitted. Information related to the programme is made freely available to applicants through the use of web-based advertising and programme information: through targeted advertising and promotional activities: through ensuring the accuracy of information which is provided to applicants, through brochure material and other means (reference section 11.3 of the [City Education Group's QA Manual](#)). Applicants must demonstrate the required level of proficiency in the use of the English language before they are admitted to the programme/module and all final offers of a place to study are subject to the individual meeting the admissions criteria identified in each programme document (e.g. and approved with the respective approved validation/accredited/professional body documentation).

Student Support Services

Student Support Services is led by the Student Support Officer who provides overall support for students prior to and at the point of entry to the CEG. The offer of a place is matched to discussion with the successful applicant and includes financial arrangements related to fees and similar matters. Student support services staff are fully involved in student orientation (reference sections 6.7 and 7.2 of the [City Education Group's QA Manual](#) for more information).

Additional Staff Team Meetings

A number of other staff groups meet and deal with operational matters on a regular basis. There are regular meetings of the marketing and operational lead teams conducted by the CEO or nominated member of staff. These team meetings cover as appropriate: administration; business calendar; assessments and examinations; database and IT; hospitality; academic and

teaching; reception/registry/front of house; social and events; general student matters; student welfare; teaching timetables; facilities use, etc.

The CEO and SMT also hold updating meetings with staff to maintain up to date communication on matters of overall strategic interest to CEG.

Financial Planning, Budgets and Risk Management

Financial plans, income targets, margins, and overall expenditure and budgetary allocations are identified as a part of the annual planning cycle, and are regularly monitored and reviewed throughout each annual period by the SMT. The review of financial performance against target is undertaken on a regular basis which may be monthly, quarterly and/or by exception basis if required. There is a central budgetary operating, control and review system and allocations are identified by the CEO for the activities of CEG, where appropriate.

There is central provision for the allocation of teaching support and teaching and delivery budgets, and for learning support facilities. Financial plans are monitored against income sources and expenditure on a weekly, monthly, quarterly and annual basis and are related to the income cycles of CEG. Detailed oversight of the financial cycle, within each annual and wider planning framework, takes place on a rigorous basis and is adjusted and finetuned where required. Sensitivity analysis and scenario planning considerations are taken fully into account in the monitoring of financial matters and budgets are regularly analysed to ensure that value for money and effectiveness and efficiency is being maintained. Good practices guidelines and compliance requirements are adhered to as these are identified and required in the appropriate articles of incorporation; in good fiscal governance practices; in professional required practice, and are benchmarked against private sector good practice and parallel public sector models where appropriate. CEG's financial reporting requirements are implemented in accordance with statutory requirements. An evaluation of financial and contextual risks is undertaken regularly and forms part of the executive management oversight of strategic development. Subsequent risk assessment and management informs CEG decision-making and forward planning.



1.2 Linked Providers, Collaborative and Transnational Provision

Guide:

[Ref: QQI Core QAG Section 2.3 - *Programmes of Education and Training* & 2.10.1 - *Other Parties involved in Education and Training*; 10.2- *External partnerships and second providers*; ESG 1.1; IHEQN Guidelines on Collaborative Provision; QQI's Policy for Collaborative Programmes, Transnational Programmes, and Joint Awards, 2012]

Collaborative Provision of Programmes & Transnational Provision

Please refer to Chapter 9 of [City Education Group's QA Manual](#).

All CEG's collaborative arrangements or other relationships with external bodies, both in Ireland and abroad, are organised with appropriate bodies and are subject to appropriate internal and external QA procedures, and the application of appropriate due diligence. Chapter 8 of the CEG QA Manual details the policy and procedures which should be followed for the development, approval and ongoing quality management of programmes operated in collaboration with other organisations nationally or internationally. Chapter 8 of the CEG QA Manual is informed by both internal CEG documents and those of external agencies, including:

- Statutory Quality Assurance Guidelines developed by QQI for use by all Providers - QQI April 2016.
- Statutory Quality Assurance Guidelines - Sector Specific for Independent/Private Providers - QQI 2016.
- Collaborative Programmes, Transnational Provision and Joint Awards - QQI 2012.
- ACCA Collaborative Partner Operations Manual
- The Institute of Commercial Management (ICM) Approved Centres Policies and Handbooks

CEG has established partnerships with:

- QQI
- ACCA
- The Institute of Commercial Management (ICM)

In addition, CEG liaises with professional bodies to secure recognition for its programmes, in particular the professional/short programmes, including:

- LIA (Life Insurance Association Ireland)
- The Insolvency Service of Ireland (ISI)
- The Institute of Banking

The nature of all collaborative arrangements and the full current programme offering can be viewed in the CEG Prospectus and on CEG's websites.

Approval for Collaborative Arrangements

When considering any collaborative arrangement, CEG implements an approval process to mitigate any financial and/or reputational risk to CEG, the sector and/or the national qualifications system associated with particular prospective providers, awarding bodies and other third parties. All collaborations regarding the delivery of academic programmes must be

approved by the Academic Board and the Board of Directors. In reaching its decision, the Board of Directors will be advised by the SMT on strategic considerations and potential risks. Clear and appropriate policies and procedures for the QA of collaborations, with clearly articulated responsibilities for all parties, must be agreed and underpinned with a formal agreement memorandum. Collaborative arrangements vary in nature from delivery of existing programmes and/or those developed in partnership with an awarding body, or to facilitation as a study centre arrangement. The application for approval by the Academic Board is prepared by the SMT member or functional unit proposing the collaboration. All applications for approval must be arranged to cover the following key risk assessment headings:

1. Legal, reputation and compliance requirements
2. Resource, governance and structural requirements
3. Programme development and provision requirements

The due diligence exercised must take account of the overall suite of education and training provision offered by the proposed collaborator. The Academic Director is responsible for academic due diligence. CEG Director is responsible for undertaking financial and legal due diligence. All due diligence reports and associated paperwork are submitted to the AC with the final proposal for approval. Where a collaborative arrangement is agreed procedures must be put in place to monitor and review the effectiveness of those arrangements. Any review agreed with a collaborating body, must be periodic, two-way and there should be a facility to schedule a review where there is a doubt or concern regarding the quality of the arrangement. The Registrar is responsible for maintaining all formal agreements and QA arrangements and agreeing a schedule of review.

QQI Policies on Transnational, Collaborative Provision, and Joint Awards

CEG does not currently offer any formal collaborative, transnational programmes, or joint awards validated or awarded by QQI. However, CEG intends to develop collaborative provision relationships. As such, all collaborative provision arrangements will be informed by these policies when considering any potential collaborative provision. CEG will request a change of scope to any agreed procedures with QQI, in accordance with QQI's QA procedures for Collaborative Provision, Transnational Provision and Joint Awards.

Accreditation and Coordination of English Language Services

CEG's City Language School language school is a recognised Accreditation and Coordination of English Language Services (ACELS) School and, is a member of the Marketing English in Ireland (MEI) association. CEG/City Language School is inspected annually by ACELS, who publish a list of recognised schools annually (<http://www.acels.ie/schools>).

CEG/City Language School operates under the 'Regulations Governing the Recognition of English Language Teaching Organisations 2017' and the operation is described in the CEG Documented Curriculum Framework (DCF). The recognition process includes a site visit and inspection of the CEG English Language School facilities. The full current programme offering can be viewed in the CEG Prospectus and on CEG website.

External Expertise

CEG has occasion to engage external, independent, national and international experts from time to time.

These include:

- Membership of Committees
- The Academic Board
- Board of Directors
- Co-opted members
- Advisory Support
- The Advisory Board
- Business Advisory Group
- Expert Committee Involvement
- Internal Review
- Programme Review with Awarding Bodies
- External Examiners

When selecting and proposing external experts, independence and appropriate expertise must be proven, ethical considerations and conflict of interest actual and/or perceived must be considered and declared by the proposed Committee member. External Examiners and external Committee members for programme review are subject to the approval of the Academic Board. For External Examiner appointment processes refer to described in section 8.25 of the [City Education Group's QA Manual](#).

For external review processes, CEG engages with, and is guided by, the procedures for the relevant awarding body for the appointment of experts. The Registrar and Director of Quality are responsible for maintaining a record of the names and affiliations of expert Committee lists, examiners and other external experts associated with CEG.

Peer Relationships with the Broader Education and Training Community

CEG has substantial engagements with peers across the Group (within the individual entities/Colleges), which is greatly supported by the SMT meeting as the Group continues to explore potential partnerships and developments. It is a strategic imperative that CEG engages with the broader education and training community, by attendance at conferences and membership of academic groups or committees. In all cases the reputation of CEG is considered and any formal arrangement is subject to the approval of the Academic Board.

2.0 Programme Development and Delivery

2.1 Programme Development and Approval

Guide:

[Ref: QQI Core QAG Section 2.3.1 - *Programme development and approval* & 2.10 - *Other Parties involved in Education and Training*. ESG 1.2; relevant QQI sector and topic specific QAG i.e. Topic-specific QAG on Research; Topic Specific QAG on Apprenticeship].

- Please refer to Chapter 3 of the [City Education Group's QA Manual](#).

Within CEG, academic programmes are required to be designed by teaching teams and to follow clear, distinct and parallel processes for both business approval and academic validation. Chapter Three of the CEG Quality Manual outlines how CEG undertakes this activity to assure that an enrolled learner who completes that programme will acquire, and where appropriate, be able to demonstrate, the necessary knowledge, skill or competence to justify an award being offered in respect of that programme.

Regulatory Framework - Academic and Professional Programme Development

In approving these regulations for programme development and subsequent amendments to them, Academic Board take account of good practice, precepts and principles which are included in published and current national guidelines for higher education and professional education in Ireland and will also take account of the EU quality frameworks and similar UK Frameworks.

Programmes delivered by CEG will consequently be benchmarked against the:

- National Framework of Qualifications, Ireland
- The European Qualifications Framework

The outcome of this exercise will be reflected in the approved programme schedule(s) for each validated programme stage.

Programme development at CEG is informed by national regulatory requirements, including those identified in:

- Policies and Criteria for the Validation of Programmes of Education and Training - QQI 2017.
- Statutory Quality Assurance Guidelines developed by QQI for use by all Providers - QQI April 2016.
- Programme Validation Manual for Programmes of HET and Apprenticeships (FET and HET) - QQI, 2018.
- Blended Learning Programmes Statutory Quality Assurance Guidelines for Providers of Blended Learning Programmes - QQI, 2018.
- Statutory Quality Assurance Guidelines - developed by QQI for Independent/Private Providers coming to QQI on a Voluntary Basis - QQI 2016.
- The Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG) 2015.
- Policy and Criteria for Making Awards - QQI 2014.

- Policy for Determining Awards Standards - QQI 2014.
- NFQ Awards Standards.
- ECTS User Guide -2015.
- International Standard Classification of Education (ISCED) - UNESCO 2011.

CEG academic and professional programmes provision, including programme and module descriptors, academic standards and quality assurance will be mapped against the requirements of the QQI Policy statements and Guidelines documentation and for additional accrediting/awarding/professional body programmes against the applicable National Framework of Qualification requirements.

Programmes designed by CEG as blended learning programmes will satisfy the quality assurance guidelines of QQI and the policies and procedures of CEG. In doing so, they shall satisfy the academic quality and standards required of all CEG programmes leading to QQI awards and reflect the underpinning concepts outlined within CEG's Teaching, Learning and Assessment Strategy and CEG's Digital Strategy. The use of technologies within programme delivery is determined by the relevant Programme Development Committee in the context of the best suited pedagogic approach for the discipline, programme level, award type, target learners and available technologies. The existing quality assurance policies and procedures of CEG, as approved by QQI, remain applicable in all instances. The CEG Digital Strategy also supplements CEG's quality assurance policies and procedures, specifically in terms of explicit requirements with regard to blended learning programmes. In the absence of explicit requirements being documented within CEG's Digital Strategy, CEG's quality assurance policies apply. In accordance with QQI's Statutory Quality Assurance Guidelines for Provider of Blended Learning Programmes procedures for assuring the quality of blended learning programmes in CEG reflect requirements of the organisational context, the programme level context and the learner experience context.

The Senior Management Team is responsible for ensuring that all proposed developments are aligned with the strategic intentions of the College, as articulated in the Strategic Plan, underpinned by appropriate investment plans and specified timeframes for implementation. This includes the development of all new programmes, included Blended Learning programmes.

Academic Board retains responsibility for the academic oversight and governance of all programmes, proposed and current, including those delivered through blended learning.

CEG Academic and Professional Programmes Regulations

The Academic Board will monitor additions and make required changes to CEG Regulations and this Quality Manual in response to any changes which take place within the NFQ framework requirements identified above and/or where required in an agreement with any professional body and/or applicable framework guidelines and specifications. Based on this monitoring, Academic Board will regularly review CEG's academic regulations to ensure that they continue to conform to the relevant national and accrediting/awarding/professional body guidelines.

Application of the Applicable Framework Guidelines and Descriptors

In the design, approval and validation, monitoring, review and modification of all programmes:

- The academic and professional standards of the respective CEG programme will be benchmarked against the relevant level descriptors identified in the appropriate Award

Standards and as required in the development of additional programmes which are validated by an accrediting/awarding/professional body.

- Programme descriptors will be documented in line with the national frameworks and/or professional frameworks and criteria.
- In the context of these regulations, discipline will mean an academic discipline or area of professional practice.

Award standard descriptors are included in programme descriptors, as appropriate/relevant to the programmes, discipline and awarding/professional body.

Programme Credit Framework

CEG programmes use the European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System (ECTS) higher education credit system as appropriate to the QQI programmes, in accordance with the ECTS User's Guide (European Communities, 2015).

ECTS credit requires a minimum of 25 hours of learner effort per higher education credit. Credit will therefore be allocated on the basis of one credit for every 25 notional hours of learning, where up to 60 (ECTS) credit points are awarded for a full year of study. A typical 'first cycle' (or Bachelor's) Degree, would consist of 180 or 240 credits, whereas a typical 'second cycle' (or Masters) Degree, would consist of 90 or 120 credits, with at least 60 credits at second cycle level.

The following will be the minimum number of credit points required for the successful completion of a Major Award at the specified Level and, where appropriate, for an award/transcript of performance to be generated:

NFQ Level 6 = 120 ECTS

NFQ Level 7 = 180 ECTS

NFQ Level 8 = 180/240 ECTS

NFQ Level 9 = 90 ECTS

Notional hours of learning include the anticipated time involved in all learning activities undertaken by the student including teaching staff contact time, group or individual work, personal study, self and directed learning, assessments, and research undertaken as part of the programme.

CEG Modules will be of a minimum of 5 ECTS credits value, or a multiple of 5 ECTS credits - combinations of 5/10 ECTS credit modules are permitted within a single programme.

The number of credits allocated for each module/stage/award will be defined in the approved programme schedule.

The CEG Programme Framework

A framework for the effective development of the academic portfolio of programmes will be specified and maintained by the Academic Board to reflect the principles of the respective accrediting/awarding/professional body:

- programmes will be composed of approved combinations of modules that fulfil the required programme level's minimum intended programme learning outcomes to be considered for the award of credit

- All RPL award of credit/credit accumulation for the purposes of gaining advanced entry to the latter stages of a CEG programme is subject to the agreement and approval of the respective accrediting/awarding/professional body personnel, if/as appropriate, based on academic credit transfer; advanced entry; and accumulated credit regulations

Modules will be described in module descriptors which are generated using the QQI template as contained in section 6 of the Programme Validation Manual for Programmes of HET and Apprenticeships (FET and HET) (Edition 3, 2018) or, where related to specific accrediting body/awarding body requirements and agreements, will be based on accrediting/awarding/professional body requirements and specifications (as approved by the Academic Board). Module design may include the following types of module (modules may meet the requirements of more than one of the following descriptors)

- Subject area module
- Skills application module
- Self-managed learning module
- Practical/work-based learning module
- Distance blended, (e)learning module
- CEG Diploma Module

Minimum Intended Programme Learning Outcomes (MIPLOs) will be based on defined generic learning outcomes and award-standard level descriptors, and included in the Programme document, and approved within the CEG internal approval procedures and through validation, as appropriate.

Minimum Intended Module Learning Outcomes (MIMLOs) will be specified in module descriptors in which module aims, indicative content, teaching and learning approach, including the use of technologies, assessment requirements, and bibliographic and other learning resource requirements are also indicated. These MIMLOs are also mapped to the MIPLOs where modules are combined for award purposes.

Module assessment requirements (for example the number and length of assignments) will be defined in the module descriptor. Assessment criteria will be defined in assessment templates or marking templates.

Module teaching balance and/or programme attendance requirements may be specified in terms of type or mode of teaching and learning required within the module. This may include direct contact teaching requirements (e.g. lectures); independent learning requirements (e.g. private study); directed learning (e.g. specific tasks set as a result of contact teaching)

Programme regulations and research methods training will include consideration of CEG approaches towards research, and research conduct relevant to the programme, as well as research ethics and ethical approval of major projects where appropriate.

Where required for specific accrediting/awarding/professional body programmes, approval will also include compliance with the arrangements and requirements of the respective accrediting/awarding/professional body.

Title of Programmes and Awards

In City Education Group programmes, the title of the award will be that agreed at the time of validation of the programme and will be consistent with, and appropriate to, the relevant QQI Award standard and consistent with unit 3.1 of QQI's Policy and Criteria for Making Awards, reflects sectoral conventions and is otherwise legitimate (it must comply with applicable statutory, regulatory and professional body requirements).

Types of Programme

For the purposes of the [City Education Group's QA Manual](#) CEG programmes are classified as follows:

- academic programmes (taught and blended)
- professional programmes (taught, blended and e-learning)
- continuing professional development programmes (taught, blended and elearning)
- short programmes (taught, blended and e-learning)
- CPD programmes (taught, blended and e-learning)
- Taught pre-entry programmes (including for example bridging and/or English language or skills development programmes)

Internal Authorisation of Programme Development within CEG

- Validated programmes at CEG are all subject to the required validation/approval by City Education Group, the relevant awarding body, and/or the relevant professional bodies, as appropriate.
- The Academic Board, or nominated chair acting on behalf of the Academic Board, oversees and ensures the consistent management of programme development, accreditation, and validation procedures and processes, within CEG, including:
 - Review and approval of outline programme proposals;
 - Arrangements and timetables for accreditation, validation franchise, submissions, including the monitoring of documentation and its submission
 - Monitoring compliance with regulatory bodies, to include QQI and any other awarding/professional body requirements
 - Management of outcomes, including the meeting of conditions and recommendations from validation/franchise/accreditation events.
- The procedures for programme approval and/or validation will include (i) business approval and (ii) the design, approval/validation of the programme(s) as appropriate to the responsibilities of CEG and/or the respective accrediting/awarding/professional body.
- These processes, the business approval and the academic and professional validation/approval are designed to be separate but complementary, and ensure that financial, market and strategic viability of a programme is confirmed before detailed work is undertaken on programme design and development. This process is also designed to ensure that strategic and operational approval of a programme is distinct from its academic approval and/or validation.
- Business approval to design, develop and approve/validate/franchise a based on a strategic and market assessment of the programme(s), together with a consideration of the business case for the programme, including a consideration of risk, capability, capacity, market demand, need and positioning, and of resource requirements.

- Once the Board of Directors approves the development of the programme, the Senior Management Team takes over the ongoing resource monitoring of the development project.
- Internal programme approval and validation procedures specify complementary roles for Academic Board and Senior Management Teams in their oversight of the respective academic and professional, and business aspects of new programme development and programme update.
- The role and responsibilities of Academic Board are indicated in section 2.3 of the [City Education Group's QA Manual](#). Its responsibilities include approving final programme documentation, following approval/validation by an accrediting/awarding/professional body, where appropriate. It will oversee approval and validation processes and reports (where appropriate and required), programme modifications, annual and periodic review procedures and processes.
- New programme proposals and proposals for review/revalidation must be monitored by the SMT prior to detailed academic and professional planning (and any significant expenditure on the proposal or relevant research).
- Additionally, in the event of a substantial material change to a proposal that already has business approval from the Board of Directors, the programme development committee is obliged to inform and liaise with the SMT for continued agreement to progress.
- Prior to the launch of any new programme, final business approval must be obtained from the Board of Directors. This internal business approval procedure ensures that the programme fits with the development strategy, continues to have the required commitment of CEG, and will be resourced at an appropriate level.
- It is within the jurisdiction of the Academic Board to specify the funding requirement to assure appropriate resources and facilities are made available, and the Academic Board has an effective veto, with regard to the CEG programme portfolio, if the Board of Directors does not approve the necessary spending.
- For the purpose of Blended Learning programmes, the new programme proposal must define the technical resources and infrastructure requirements of the programme and identifying any specialist tools, hardware or software requirements. This is considered early in the curriculum planning stages when the nature of the blend is determined. CEG utilises the application of the ABC Curriculum Design Model established by UCL (please refer to the CEG Digital Strategy for further detail). The CEG SMT is responsible for undertaking budget planning and allocation of resources in accordance with requirements or advising where budget or resource constraints require consideration of alternative approaches. Workload considerations in Blended Learning programme programmes are considered by the PDC. The PDC is required to consider the potential for overload in Blended Learning programmes. In this respect, contact hours is defined as those hours which require student engagement with faculty, other students or content as part of a structured lesson or learning activity. This can include synchronous and asynchronous activity but excludes independent study (for example, assessment preparation). PDCs are required to consult the CEG Digital Strategy early in the development stage of all proposed Blended Learning programmes as within CEG, Blended Learning provision is considered and planned for, early in the development stage of Blended Learning programmes.

Programme Development Committees

- Programme Development Committees (PDCs) are ad hoc sub-committees, established by Academic Board, for the purposes of development and delivery of new programme proposals for internal approval prior to their submission (as required) to the accrediting/awarding/professional body.
- PDCs are essentially teams comprised of teaching staff, and may be led by the Director/Dean, Programme Leader, Director of Quality or another designated member of staff (as Project Manager), where this is appropriate.
- Working with the PDC to develop new programme proposals, the designated Project Manager is responsible for the progress of new proposals through the stages of development and approval (internal and external). Programme teams are required to carry out a similar activity when programmes are significantly revised.
- Membership of the PDC may include the Programme Leader(s); Director of Quality; Registrar, academic staff as required; other support staff as required; external and/or professional body advisors or similar external advisor contributions, including alumni of the CEG. There is no stipulated maximum or minimum number of team members and the composition of the committee will be based on expertise and the nature of the programme.
- The Director/Dean and Director of Quality provide advice to PDCs teams to ensure consistency of approach and enhance the quality of proposals.

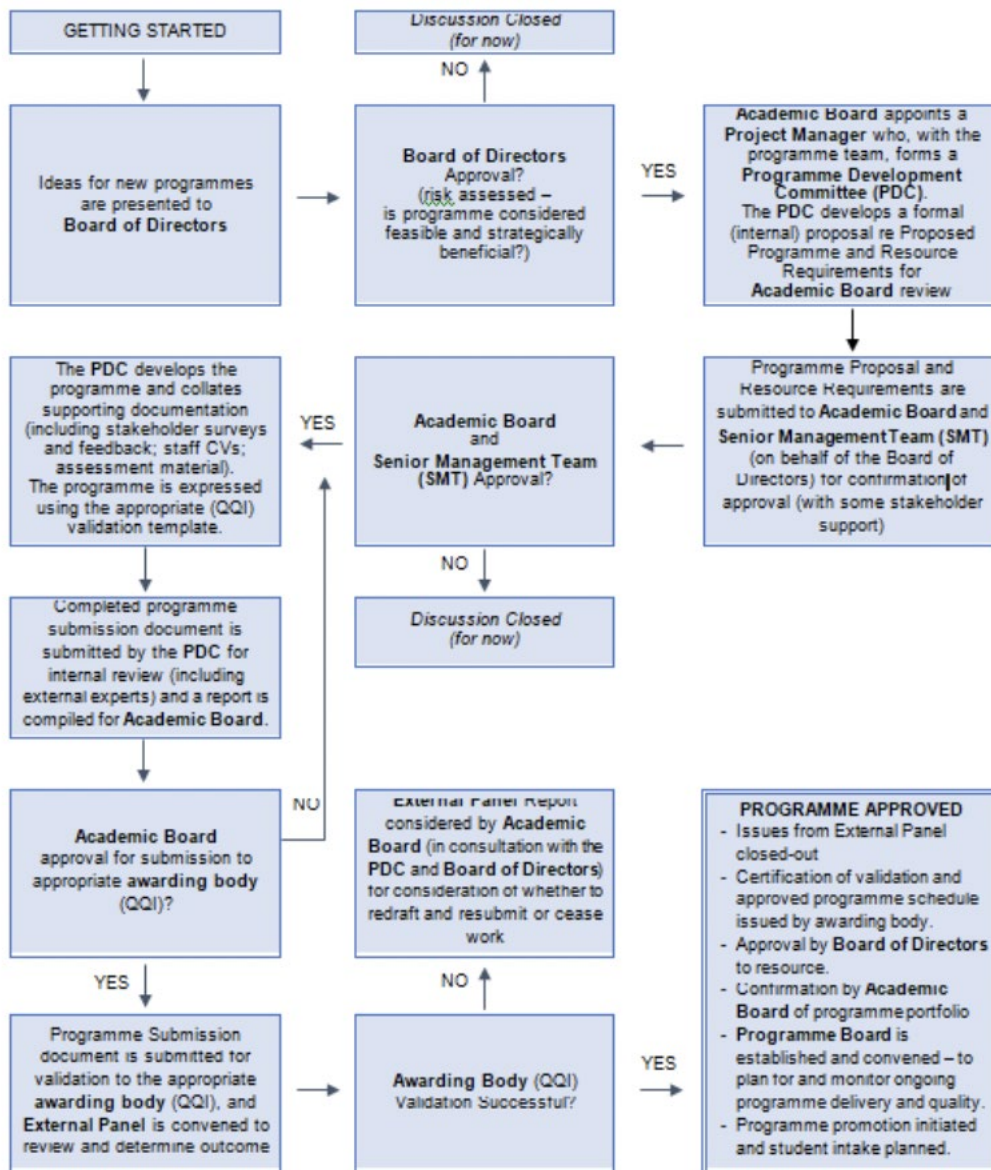


Figure 3 Overview of CEG Programme Development and Approval Process

Programme Approval, Design, and Validation

- Quality assurance of academic and professional programmes will be maintained through the procedures for:
 - Board of Directors' business approval of, and for, the development of a programme.
 - CEG programme design undertaken by a designated programme development committee team which may include the Programme Leader(s); Director of Quality; Registrar, academic staff as required; other support staff as required; external and/or professional body advisors or similar external advisor contributions, including alumni of the CEG. There is no stipulated maximum or minimum

number of team members and the composition of the committee will be based on expertise and the nature of the programme.

- Confirmation by an accrediting/awarding/professional body that all conditions for the validation have been met.
- Following approval or validation, confirmation of the programme descriptors and meeting of approval/validation conditions at the Academic Board.

- Subject to CEG portfolio development decisions, which are

(1) confirmed by the Board of Directors;

(2) where required and agreed to be appropriate for the particular programme, and

(3) subject to agreements with respective accrediting/awarding/professional bodies, the above procedures may be required to be followed by:

- agreement and verification with the respective accrediting/awarding/professional body that the programme is suitable and will be submitted for validation
- agreement on the programme Levels or programme stages which will be subject to either validation and/or mapping requirements and confirmation for advanced entry via RPL procedures.
- validation or accreditation by the accrediting/awarding/professional body, as required on forms of agreed delivery
- confirmation of the programme(s) by CEG's Academic Board

- Approval of a programme will only be confirmed following the necessary detailed academic scrutiny at an CEG approval event or, as appropriate, at a QQI validation event

- Where a programme descriptor, or a part of a programme descriptor, has been subject to the requirements of formal validation by a accrediting/awarding/professional body, or to approval for RPL credit-rated advanced entry purposes to a programme, either through:

- a validation and/or
- a programme approval exercise, and/or
- a mapping-benchmarking exercise, and/or
- through approval of curriculum modifications.
- then-
- the respective CEG programme descriptor,
- the Levels/modules within the programme descriptor,
- the semester or trimester curricula,
- the module descriptors,
- teaching, learning and assessment strategy
- mode of delivery
- and all other aspects of the Programme descriptor will be deemed by CEG to be appropriate for, and meeting the required academic standards necessary to deliver CEG Level and credit-rated programmes.

- CEG will deem that respective accrediting/awarding/professional body validation/approval, using any of the above methods, confirms that the programme descriptor, or Levels or parts of the Programme descriptor as indicated above, meets the approval requirements for the delivery of the programme at the respective higher

education or CPD Level(s) or at module specification level(s) within the respective CEG programme.

- In cases where confirmation is required with a respective accrediting/awarding/professional body for example for fully validated programmes at higher education Levels or where modifications may be identified as major modifications to the accredited programmes, then the accrediting/awarding/professional body will be formally contacted to confirm responsibility and the process to be followed.
- All promotional material related to programme that have approval and/or validation (where these requirements apply to an agreement with an accrediting/awarding/professional body), as appropriate, will state explicitly that admission is subject to third-party final approval and/or validation as required.
- External members of approval and/or validation Committees (where appropriate to an accrediting/awarding/professional body programme) concerned with the quality assurance of academic programmes will be independent of CEG and of the accrediting/awarding/professional body. Anyone who may be seen through his or her previous association with CEG or the accrediting/awarding/professional body to be compromising the objectivity of this role will not be appointed. Such ineligible categories will include:
 - Teaching staff or staff, either current or employed by CEG within the last three years;
 - Those with recent close involvement with the delivery of CEG programmes or with staff involved with the programme(s) being considered;
 - Current CEG students and graduates of CEG programmes within the previous three years.

Programme Approval Documentation

- The required documentation to be provided for approval of a new programme will be contained in the programme submission. Where required by an accrediting/awarding/professional body for validation and/or articulation and/or RPL approval the documentation will comply with the requirements of the accrediting/awarding/professional body. Documentation is normally required to contain the following:
 - The Programme descriptor
 - An academic rationale and curriculum outline for the programme, including:
 - A summary of the programme and its context, including the external reference points used in designing the programme
 - Admission criteria
 - Programme teaching, learning and assessment strategy
 - Details regarding mode of delivery
 - Assessment specifications
 - The programme objectives and minimum intended programme learning outcomes
 - Module descriptors and minimum intended module learning outcomes
 - Bibliographies/reading lists
 - Depending upon the nature of the approval, or where appropriate within validation or articulation agreements with an accrediting/awarding/professional body, the following documentation may

be required

o A draft student handbook/course outline

- Documentation to be provided to a CEG Programme Development Committee for internal CEG approval of a new module or for recommendation to an accrediting/awarding/professional body for the approval of a new module or the revision of a current module will be subject as required to the CEG and/or the accrediting/awarding/professional body regulations. The documentation may include the following:

An academic rationale for the module, including:

- A summary of the development of the new or revised module and/or the required new or revised module specification including an indication of the Level/reference points of the module;
 - A summary of the module and its context, including the external reference points used in designing the module;
 - Module learning and teaching strategy;
 - Mode of delivery;
 - Module assessment specifications;
 - The module descriptor and learning outcomes;
 - Bibliographies/reading lists
 - Approval and/or validation method
- Where new programme(s) or module(s) approval, or modifications to modules are a part of the CEG QQI-validated programme provider responsibilities then the procedures will be conducted in accordance with these CEG Regulations.
 - The approval and/or validation event, and/or modifications will be conducted within an approved calendar identified and confirmed by the SMT and the Academic Board. To expedite matters of programme development this calendar and implementation timetable can be undertaken through chairs action by the chair of Academic Board.
 - Where new programme approval, or revisions or modifications to existing programmes or to modules are part of a fully validated accrediting/awarding/professional body programme, or covered by agreements with the relevant accrediting/awarding/professional body, or require RPL accreditation then procedures will be conducted in accordance with the accrediting/awarding/professional body regulations. This may require mapping of modules and/or curriculum and module frameworks to confirm equivalence of programme content and RPL accreditation (including mapping of CEG modules against comparable modules).
 - Where required, and if conducted by a respective accrediting/awarding/professional body, the approval and/or validation event will be conducted within an agreed calendar confirmed between CEG and the respective accrediting/awarding/professional body. In these cases Programmes are designed and benchmarked against respective accrediting/awarding/professional body regulatory conventions and external reference points, particularly as these relate to programme formats, credit frameworks and similar requirements.

Student Handbooks and Programme Outlines

Student Handbooks will be approved by the Programme Leader liaising with the Programme Administrator and Module Leaders will oversee the production of Module Outlines. Student Handbooks will require to be approved by the Academic Board or the respective accrediting/awarding/professional body.

Programme Approval and Validation Outcomes (where appropriate)

- Following CEG approval (and/or where required, accrediting/awarding/professional body validation or accreditation or mapping approval) a report will be given to Academic Board. To expedite matters internally within CEG where the CEO or nominated Senior Manager nominates a PDC, then the PDC will take the decision on internal CEG approval of documentation prior to submission of documentation (as and where appropriate) to the respective accrediting/awarding/professional body for approval, or validation, or accreditation for RPL purposes.
- A draft report of the approval, validation, and accreditation or RPL event will be provided for academic board and the CEO or nominated Senior Manager. (Where required the PDC will consider any responses to conditions imposed at accrediting/awarding/professional body validation or other events and draft and communicate the responses to the relevant Accrediting/awarding/professional body or other body). If these are of a minor nature, the chair of the Committee may take (or delegate) Chair's action and will inform all Committee members that this has been done. The chair will also confirm in liaison with the Director of Quality and SMT (as appropriate) when all conditions or other recommendations set by a validation, accreditation or similar body have been met and completed. The Director of Quality will monitor that conditions are met on time in consultation with the chair of the PDC and/or the Accrediting/awarding/professional body link representative as required.

Programme Monitoring and Review

CEG will conduct a regular process of annual review and periodic review of programmes. For fully validated programmes this will be required to be undertaken within the academic regulatory frameworks of CEG or awarding body as outlined in Chapter 4 of the [City Education Group's QA Manual](#).

Modifications to Programmes

Minor or major modifications to programmes will be implemented using the procedures identified in these CEG Regulations or those required by awarding bodies as outlined in Chapter 4 of the [City Education Group's QA Manual](#).

2.2 Admission, Progression, Recognition & Certification

Guide

[Ref: QQI Core QAG Section 2.3.2 - *Learner admission, progression and recognition*; ESG 1.4; QQI Policy Restatement on Access, Transfer and Progression (2015)].

Please refer to Chapter 5 of the [City Education Group's QA Manual](#).

Admissions Principles in CEG

- All applications to all programmes are subject to the Academic and Professional Regulations and admissions requirements of CEG and/or the respective collaborating awarding body or validating body/accrediting body with whom the CEG has an agreement to deliver the programme/training programme/professional programme/CPD programme.
- All admissions to all programmes are also subject to the specified admissions criteria which are indicated in the validated approved programme schedule as approved by the respective accrediting/awarding/professional body (as specifically required).
- Admission Criteria for programmes may specify both generic and/or specific admission criteria against which applications will be considered. These may be related to the programme design; the mode of delivery; the programme content; the applicant profile; the programme philosophy; or pedagogic requirements of the programme.
- Admission Criteria will make no age discriminatory limitations on applicants. Admission criteria will also be interpreted flexibly where appropriate to ensure that applicants who are able to gain from the programme to which they are applying and who are capable of meeting the academic standards required within the programme are successful in achieving their objectives.
- All applications received by CEG for admission to a programme will be treated in an equal manner. All decisions related to the success or failure of an application for admission to a programme delivered by CEG will be made based on the applicant's potential to benefit from, and contribute to, the programme to which he/she is applying for admission.
- All Admission Criteria and the procedures by which applicants are evaluated, interviewed and accepted will be:
 - fair and open;
 - consistently applied in line with published admissions criteria and procedures;
 - consistent with the principles of equal opportunities;
 - Subject to the Regulations applying to the respective programme.
- During the consideration of an application for admission there will be no discrimination on the grounds of race, gender, age, religious, political belief or other associated area of discrimination.
- Applications from individuals with disabilities are welcomed and every reasonable effort will be made to support such applicants. If reasonable adjustments made by CEG would be insufficient to enable the student to be reasonably expected to complete his/her/their studies, the application may be rejected. Where appropriate the applicant may be directed to a more appropriate programme of study and/or study method or mode of study. Applicants will be encouraged to disclose special educational needs or disabilities at an early stage in the recruitment and admissions processes.
- Applicants are responsible for demonstrating and providing evidence in relation to programme admission criteria, for example their level of academic/professional qualifications/experience and previous academic/professional/contextual relevant achievement/experience.

- CEG will require evidence of qualifications and such other items of evidence as are deemed required by CEG in order to confirm the applicant's suitability to enter and meet the overall requirements of the programme of study. This may include the capability of the applicant to meet the financial investment required to cover the fee requirements associated with undertaking a programme of study and the general capability and capacity necessary in order that the applicant may be reasonably believed to be expected to complete the programme of study.
- Applicants who have misrepresented information provided in relation to their application (including evidence relating to RPL) or who have misrepresented or falsified information in support of their application may be rejected. If misrepresentation is discovered after registration, the student may be formally required to withdraw from their programme with immediate effect.
- Applications will only be accepted when there is a reasonable expectation that an applicant will be able to fulfil all the requirements of a programme and achieve the standard for the programme and the final award. Where it is not believed that the applicant is capable of meeting the requirements for the programme then the application may be rejected.
- Unsuccessful applicants may be provided with feedback on the reasons for the result of their application in order to provide advice to the applicant on any future application that they may make to CEG or to another higher education institution. Such feedback may not be used to renegotiate the rejection of the original application to a CEG programme or to appeal against their rejection.
- Unsuccessful applicants may submit a subsequent application to a programme at a future date. Any such subsequent application will be considered within the normal procedures for all applications to that programme at the time of that application. A subsequent application will be treated on its merits, and will not be subject to discriminatory or different selection procedures from those applied to other candidates, or entitled to any form of priority treatment.
- Applications for 'Admission with Advanced Standing' and 'Admission with Academic Credit' to a programme of study will be treated in accordance with these admission principles and with the respective programme Admissions Regulations and programme admissions criteria. (Where accrediting/awarding/professional body regulations are required to be consulted with reference to admission with advanced standing to programmes then the appropriate accrediting/awarding/professional body regulations will be applied).
- For admission specifically to an accrediting/awarding/professional body programme, where the accrediting/awarding/professional body programme leads to a higher education/CPD award of that body, then the respective body's admissions regulations will be operated subject to the admissions criteria which have been agreed for each programme at the validation of the programme by the respective accrediting/awarding/professional body.

General Admission Criteria

- The admission criteria for entrance to a programme are those confirmed by CEG, and/or the respective accrediting body/awarding body, or validating body.

- The programme admission criteria for each programme will be specified in the Programme descriptor and confirmed during validation or accreditation. After approval, validation, or accreditation as appropriate, proposed changes to programme admission criteria will be treated as a modification to a programme and will be subject to the modification procedures.
- For accrediting/awarding/professional body programmes changes to admission criteria will be agreed directly with the accrediting/awarding/professional body Programme admission criteria together with procedures for the processing of an application for a programme may be published in web-site or other promotional materials.
- For accrediting/awarding/professional body programmes the accrediting/awarding/professional body admission criteria will be applied. The accrediting/awarding/professional body may also retain the right to take the final decision on student admission to and registration for final/award stages of programmes.
- Admissions criteria for entry to NFQ Level 6, 7 and 8 programmes and/or to short CEG CPD or similar programmes may include consideration of the applicant's:
 - Possession of the required academic, and/or professional, and/or practice-based qualifications or experience, and/or experiential learning record(s). (e.g. Level 4 and 5 Leaving Certificates)
 - Ability to fully participate in and meet the financial and study commitments incurred and required by the programme.
 - Level of proficiency in oral and written English to enable the applicant to fully participate in a programme taught and assessed in English.

Experiential Learning

Programme admission criteria may describe pre-entry experience that applicants may find it beneficial to possess in order to be considered for admission to the programme to which they are applying. This level of experience should be appropriate to the Level of the programme and consistent with the ability of applicants to contribute to the educational experience of themselves and others.

Academic/Professional/Experiential Achievement

- Academic and/or professional achievement will be expressed in terms of a level (e.g. an Honours degree of at least a given classification, an indicative period of experiential learning) and/or the discipline, or subject area, or suitable field of academic and/or professional achievement.
- Programme admission criteria will specify the level of pre-entry academic/professional/RPL achievement which applicants will normally be required to possess in order to be considered for admission to the programme to which they are applying. This level of academic/professional/experiential achievement should be consistent with programme objectives and the ability of students/learners to contribute to the programme and have a reasonable expectation of satisfactorily completing the programme.
- Where applicants do not have formal achievement at the specified level, they will be given the opportunity to demonstrate that they have achieved an equivalent level of academic/professional achievement through providing evidence of experiential learning, continuing professional development or other appropriate means.

- In such cases, CEG will normally consider the overall profile, professional qualifications, commitment and capability of the applicant, academic and/or professional references, and any other evidence which is deemed appropriate to demonstrate the applicant's suitability for entry to a programme. (Respective accrediting/awarding/professional body may for example reserve the right to set pre-admission tasks, exercises, assignments and examinations to assess such applicants where required).

Language Ability

- Applicants who have been taught through the medium of English will be deemed to be suitable for admission to a programme of study. (Note: - Where programmes are subject to accrediting/awarding/professional body admissions regulations the level of English language ability will/may be specified in the Programme submission following agreement with the respective accrediting/awarding/professional body as appropriate to the award).
- An applicant whose first language is not English or who has not been educated wholly or mainly in the medium of English will (a) either be expected to reach, before commencing a programme, a suitable minimum level of competence in English in order to participate fully in the Programme or (b) will be required to participate in pre-sessional or in-sessional English language classes in order to reach a required level of competency. English language admission requirements either specified by CEG or the accrediting/awarding/professional body, as appropriate, are required to be satisfied before commencement of study at CEG.
- Programme Admission Criteria will specify the levels of achievement in written and oral English language. Normally this will include evidence of achievement of the British Council International English Language Testing Score (IELTS) at a score indicated in the programme submission and/or other recognised equivalent international English language test.
- Applicants whose first degree, or other academic qualifications, has been studied and assessed substantially in English or who can demonstrate extensive use of written and spoken English as a result of their experiential learning background, or professional background or similar, may be exempted from the above requirements.
- An applicant who does not meet the above minimum standard or other acceptable equivalent may be admitted to a programme on the condition that specific English Language instruction is undertaken and, if appropriate, evidence of achievement provided before admission.

Other/Non Standard Entry Admission Criteria

- CEG admission policies and criteria are designed to welcome applications from applicants interested in furthering their education and/or professional development. If applicants do not meet the standard entry requirements but can demonstrate that their life/work skills would make them suitable for study, they will be considered for entry to programmes. (This may be subject to the agreement of a respective accrediting/awarding/professional body).

- In such non-standard entry cases admissions procedure will include a careful and thorough scrutiny of the candidate's application forms and evidence which is provided by the applicant in support of their application for entry. Consideration for entry to the programme may include scrutiny of the applicants:
 - Previous educational record and professional and academic qualifications and experiential and/or certificated learning
 - Relevant work experience of an appropriate nature and duration
 - The ability to pass examinations and meet the assessment requirements for the programme which will be considered on merit and/or on past record
 - A suitable independent business, professional or educational-academic reference
 - An assurance that the applicant has a reasonable command of English at an acceptable IELTS or equivalent standard
 - A statement from the candidate indicating their reasons for applying to the programme and outlining their academic, professional and personal objectives for entering the programme

Advice Provided to Applicants

Applicants who are unsure about the acceptability of their qualifications will be directed to appropriate CEG staff for advice on application and entry requirements. Consistent with a commitment to widen access and participation the College(s) encourage applications from mature students and from groups normally under-represented in higher education. This policy is also subject to accrediting/awarding/professional body policies. The general policy in operation for non-standard entry applicants is to look for a good level of literacy, together with proven interest and/or experience in a discipline area, field of activity, professional background and experiential learning which equips the applicant to cope with the demands of a higher education programme and successfully complete that programme.

Mature Candidates

- Mature candidates with significant management or related employment field experience may be admitted to the programme without degree or degree/professional equivalent qualifications if they can demonstrate their potential to meet the learning requirements of the programme and satisfy the respective Admissions Criteria and Admissions Regulations.
- Required eligibility will be determined by a review of the application, an interview with the admissions tutor (as required), and subject to confirmation with the respective Programme Leader (also as required). Where admission is to a accrediting/awarding/professional body qualification final confirmation of admission may be required from the respective accrediting/awarding/professional body for admission to the programmes with credit accumulated through RPL. Where admission with advanced standing is considered all applicants may be required to provide written references for their work experience and/or suitable evidence supporting their application. (Applicants may also be formally considered for admission to the programme using the appropriate Regulations and RPL, procedures at each Programme Stage).

Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL)

Programme admission criteria will identify any specific provisions for the Recognition of Prior Learning (which CEG understands to include Accreditation of Prior Certificated Learning (APCL) and Accreditation of Prior Experiential Learning (APEL). RPL arrangements will be subject to respective CEG requirements and/or external awarding body agreements and regulations.

Principles of RPL at CEG

- CEG recruits students who have qualifications and experience which may be gained in a variety of academic, professional, experiential and geographic contexts. The Group includes in its applications and admissions strategy provision for the encouragement of increased access to higher education award bearing programmes; professional programmes; professional training programmes; short updating and qualification programmes; and CPD programmes through its use of Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL).
- The Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL), (or other applicable acronym which is used for the consideration of advanced entry to academic, accrediting body, and professional award bearing programmes), is the recognised mechanism by which CEG and/or a respective accrediting/awarding/professional body allocates academic credit for learning which has been derived (or which may be banked/accumulated) from prior certificated study and/or experience and/or other forms of recognised and demonstrated learning.
- That is: - the Recognition of Prior Learning and achievement is aimed at recognising the different types of learning which are deemed to be equivalent to learning that might otherwise have been achieved by following a full or part time CEG programme and/or a programme delivered by another body which is deemed to be equivalent to that of a CEG programme level.
- In CEG, Recognised Prior Learning (RPL), will include accreditation of all forms of prior learning which is verified with degree award certificates; diplomas; other recognised certification; exemption awards (professional or similar); or other certificated and verified learning. It will include all forms of learning which are able to be verified through evidence and related to the experience of the applicant prior to their application for entry to a CEG programme and/or to a previous programme undertaken by an applicant. In all cases the prospective applicant is specifically responsible for providing satisfactory evidence of their RPL and this is subject without exception to the specifications and evidence requirements set by CEG for that particular applicant.
- CEG may grant credit and/or exemption, and/or advanced entry through RPL to first and second year undergraduate programmes, and/or short professional programmes and Continuing Professional Development Programmes only when:
 - this is agreed to be appropriate within the respective CEG Regulations and for the respective CEG programme:
 - the respective Professional Body and/or accrediting body accepts and recognises that the accumulation of credit related to the prior learning and the nature of that learning is allowable within their respective regulations for professional and undergraduate and/or postgraduate taught programmes, and/or other programmes;

- the applicant provides evidence of prior learning/experience in accordance with the CEG Regulations and relevant programme regulations, and where required accrediting/awarding/professional body regulations when applying for entry on a programme; and,
 - the prior learning has not formed part of a previous higher education qualification and is essentially the same as, and is able to be mapped against, the equivalent Learning Outcomes within the programme being applied for; and,
 - the prior learning is accredited and completed before completion of the applicant's Registration on the programme being applied for.
- RPL will be identified through the evidence provided by the applicant that their previous achievement of academic and/or professional learning is at an appropriate academic/professional Level and standard. This will be demonstrated through:
 - Certificated proof of learning (e.g. from educational or professional institutions or accrediting/awarding bodies), and/or,
 - The submission by the applicant of an acceptable portfolio of evidence, and/or assessments which may be set at the absolute discretion of CEG to verify the RPL claims by the applicant.
 - RPL is only permitted as explicitly specified in CEG regulations and will not be considered or granted unless the application meets with the CEG Regulations, and/or complies with the requirements of the Professional Body/accrediting body Regulations for the Level of programme and for RPL purposes, and for which the respective accrediting/awarding/professional body has given agreement.
 - The award of credit for prior learning, or for the recognition and accreditation of prior learning and subsequent entry with advanced standing to CEG or accrediting/awarding/professional body programmes is subject to agreement with the respective accrediting/awarding/professional body and their respective RPL regulations.

Interviews

- Where interviews are required they may be conducted on a one to one basis, or applicants may be interviewed by more than one member of CEG staff. Applicants may be interviewed singly, in small groups, or by telephone or video conference. Where interviews are held they will enable both applicants and programme staff to:
 - Explore the suitability of the applicants for the programme
 - Assess the fit between the applicants' expectations and the demands of the programme
 - Understand the needs and capabilities of the applicants.
- Where interviews are required they will be designed to ensure that applications are considered on their individual merits. In order to avoid discrimination, interviews will be conducted against the criteria requirements indicated on the applications form and pre-determined agenda or checklists of areas to be covered. A record will be kept of all interviews related to the application of each applicant.

Other Selection Procedures

Where required, (for example by professional bodies for accreditation purposes), admission and selection procedures may also include other forms of assessment or testing that contribute to the decision on the suitability of the applicant for the programme. These may be specified by the respective accrediting/awarding/professional body at their entire discretion. If forms of assessment or testing (other than an interview) are used, the following principles will be applied as well as those indicated in “interviews “above.

- The precise purpose and nature of any assessment or testing/evaluation will be communicated to applicants at an early opportunity before any required participation;
- Such assessment or testing/evaluation will be available at times and locations which will minimise the inconvenience to the applicant;
- Such assessment or testing/evaluation will be conducted and evaluated in a standardised manner which is congruent with an equal opportunities philosophy.

Fees and Financial Support

- CEG will publish the current fee levels of all programmes open to individual applicants in:
 - Promotional material for the respective Programme
 - On the CEG website.
- On request, CEG will provide an applicant to a programme with appropriate information on:
 - Details of the payment schedule and available methods of payment of fees;
 - Other costs on an indicative basis (for example optional accommodation costs for non-Ireland based international applicants), and likely costs of textbooks and other items);
 - Financial support which may be available to suitable and appropriate applicants including scholarships or bursaries or other forms of sponsorship from professional bodies.
- Scholarships or Bursaries or other forms of sponsorship may be financed by third parties and/or applicants/sponsors/employers. Where applicants are supported by professional bodies/employers or similar CEG will confirm with the applicant their status with the sponsor and specifically the requirement for reporting on progress to their respective sponsor. This will include when encouraging applications which widen the access to applicants from international communities.

Information Available to Current Learners & Prospective Students

In keeping with QQI Core Guidelines, we ensure that our information made available to prospective students and current learners’ details:

- Whether or not a programme leads to an award
- The name of the awarding body
- The title of the award
- Whether the award is recognised on the NFQ and if so, the award type and NFQ level
- Whether the programme is subject to procedures for access, transfer and progression, and if so, what these are

- Details of the Protection of Enrolled Learners (PEL) in place, should PEL be a requirement

Marketing Information

There are set procedures for the generation, authoring and approval of promotional, marketing and publicity material and all material which refers to accrediting/awarding/professional bodies and their programmes is required to be approved by the respective accrediting/awarding/professional body. All marketing material is generated by the marketing team leader, which in turn is formally approved by the CEO (and, if contractually required, as part of an agreement the respective accrediting/awarding/professional body).

Following the approval and/or validation of a programme for delivery by CEG, the Director of Marketing, will consult with the CEO, Director/Dean, Programme Leader (as required) to identify promotional and marketing texts which are approved for use in the marketing, promotion and advertising of the programme. The results are checked for copyright accuracy and clearance by the Director of Sales & Marketing. The copy and design content of the promotional materials are double checked and vetted for accuracy by the Programme Leader and CEO for final approval. All involved parties are responsible for the accuracy of the contents and checking the validity of the documentation provided to prospective students, to include all relevant information regarding Access, Transfer and Progress together with PEL arrangements.

Processes for the regular and continual monitoring and security of marketing and promotional material which is in the public domain and which relates to information provided to prospective students and corporate identity and the portfolio are robust and designed to ensure that all material is both accurate and in compliance with required standards. In the case of CEG delivering accrediting/awarding/professional body programmes all material is subject to verification and approval for use by the accrediting/awarding/professional body. Marketing personnel work with academic and professional programmes staff, CEG, management and administration staff to implement all checks and balances. This undertaking of a consistent and rigorous approach towards the monitoring, checking and vetting of all marketing materials and all marketing procedures ensures that material which is produced is accurate in content and substance and reflects the work and the portfolio activities of the City Education Group.

Where modifications occur or new programmes are introduced the process for generating programme information, the stages for the sign off of published information and the checking of the accuracy of marketing Information which City Education Group produces and which is in the public domain is the same as that outlined above. If any new course/programmes development take place the marketing and publicity material are modified to reflect the changes and the material is signed off by the Director of Marketing.

City Education Group Student Handbooks (generic) and Programme Handbooks

The process for generation and sign-off of module handbooks, programme handbook documentation, parallels that for all marketing materials except the process is overseen by the programme leader, Director/Dean and the Director of Quality.

Website Content

Website content is produced by a nominated member of staff. Where updating of the website is required this is subject to a series of checks involving the Programme Leader for academic

content; the CEO for business content; the Director of Sales & Marketing for oversight and compliance. Where updating is required these are undertaken promptly. All updates are proof read for accuracy. The Programme Leader undertakes regular and scheduled periodic monitoring and updating of the website contents.

2.3 Procedures for Making Awards

Guide

[Ref: QQI Sector-specific QAG for Designated Awarding Bodies, Section 6].

Not relevant to CEG.

2.4 Teaching, Learning and Assessment

Guide:

[Ref: **Teaching and Learning:** QQI Core QAG Section 2.5 - *Teaching and Learning*; ESG 1.3; **Assessment:** QQI Core QAG Section 2.6 - *Assessment of Learners*; ESG 1.3]

Please refer to Chapter 6 of the [City Education Group's QA Manual](#)

CEG is aware that, driven by globalisation, technological innovation and changing demographics, the nature of work, the skills for success in the workplace and the jobs of the future are rapidly evolving. Many jobs that our graduates will take up do not yet exist. Thus, institutions such as our Colleges must respond to the rapidly changing skills needs of the workplace, reflect the more dynamic economy and society in which we live and work and future-proof our graduates and their skills and attributes. Chapter 6 of the [City Education Group's QA Manual](#) describes how teaching, learning and assessment strategies, developments, practices, and infrastructural supports are supported within CEG to achieve these ambitions.

The Teaching, Learning and Assessment Committee

The CEG Teaching, Learning and Assessment Strategy was created in 2018 through a dynamic consultation process with its stakeholders. It was updated in 2019. The CEG Digital Strategy was created in 2019.

The purpose of both the CEG's *Teaching, Learning and Assessment Strategy* (2019) and the CEG *Digital Strategy* (2019) is to provide a visible and relevant framework for the development of teaching, learning and assessment practices across the Group. In doing so, these Strategy documents provide direction for all key stakeholders, but particularly for students and staff in terms of delivering and engaging with an effective teaching, learning and assessment experiences. The achievement of the Strategy documents - to achieve the highest standard of educational practices, environment and resources for all students and staff is supported specifically by CEG's Teaching, Learning and Assessment Committee (TLAC), a sub-committee of Academic Board. Details of the Terms of Reference of the TLAC are located in section 6.1 of the [City Education Group's QA Manual](#).

Academic Teaching Staff

- Primary responsibility for the delivery of programmes lies with CEG academic and professional teaching staff who deliver the programmes with the assistance of support staff. This responsibility includes the delivery of teaching as well as contributing to the overall effective management of the programme as indicated within the academic management structure detailed below.
- Individual teaching staff will be expected to:
 - sustain the necessary time and intellectual commitment to ensure that students meet the programme aims and learning outcomes;
 - contribute to a learning environment in which students can fully experience the learning opportunities provided within a programme;
 - encourage students to contribute to and shape their learning experience and contribute to the learning opportunities provided within their programme;
 - provide feedback to students on their learning and learning experience;
 - be responsible for the all aspects of the effective assessment of students, including devising assessment tasks; marking and moderating assessments; meeting the requirements for utilising assessment criteria, marking schemes, and benchmarking of assessment performance;
 - work in a cooperative way with academic and professional support staff and colleagues to provide an enriching learning experience for students

Programme Management Roles

CEG programmes are managed by a number of post holders who together, ensure the quality of the teaching, learning and assessment on all programmes including:

- Director of Quality & Registrar - Together the Registrar and Director of Quality provide academic, administrative, and management advice, guidance and support for the programme portfolio and for programme leaders, programme teams, administrative staff, and for appropriate quality assurance and academic standards arrangements, processes and procedures. There is also a nominated senior member of staff responsible for the Management and Coordination of Professional Programmes.
- Director/Dean - The Director/Dean provides the overall academic and/or professional coordination and acts as the lead academic/professional leader of the programmes within the respective College and oversees the effective delivery and all arrangements for the programmes within the College.
- Teaching Staff & Support Teams - Academic and professional leadership across the City Education Group is provided by the Director of Quality, Registrar and the respective Director/Dean supported by the respective Programme Leader and the module leader(s), who are in turn supported by the Director of Quality, Registrar and senior management team.

All teaching members of staff are required to utilise their professional and academic experience in their teaching delivery. This ensures that curriculum content incorporates an enriched mixture of theoretical, applied and experiential teaching references which are relevant to the content of the module, the requirements of the module specification, and the 'real world' contexts of module content.

- **Programme Teams** - There is a regular structure for the support and delivery of each City Education Group programme. Programme teams are made up of a Programme Leader and module leaders who are supported by Group administrative staff. Cross-programme support is provided by centralised IT and learning environment support facilities and staff.
- **Programme Board** - Oversight of the work of the Programme Team is guided by the Programme Board as laid out in the Programme Board's Terms of Reference. Programme teams are supported by the respective Director/Dean, Director of Quality, Registrar, marketing staff and administrative office staff. (Please refer to section 6.5 of the [City Education Group's QA Manual](#) for the Terms of Reference for CEG Programme Boards).

Programme Leadership

- Programmes are overseen by programme leaders. The Programme Leaders have quality assurance and academic standards responsibility for their programme areas and for all modules within their programme. Programme Leaders meet on a regular basis to consider matters of common concern and the sharing of good practice.
- This ensures that communication within the team of Programme Leaders is frequent and that any operational matters, or quality assurance or academic and professional standards matters, may be identified and responded to where required. Additional members of staff, and/or external advisors, may also be invited to attend meetings of Programme Board to provide internal advice or external consultancy advice and comment on programme currency and development.
- The Senior Management Team meets regularly as defined in the Terms of Reference and the Director/Dean and/or Programme Leaders may be invited to attend as required. The Director/Dean and Programme Leaders are represented at the Group Academic Board. Programme Leaders are required to participate in and take responsibility for all programme management functions and requirements at CEG.

Key Roles:

- Programme Leaders - work closely with the Director of Quality to ensure that their programme is effectively and efficiently managed and all quality assurance, programme, and student requirements are met. Each academic programme (or group of programmes) will have a teaching member of staff acting as Programme Leader appointed by the CEO. The Programme Leader will have overall responsibility for ensuring the effective and satisfactory management, coordination and delivery of the programme through the programme board. Programme Leaders will oversee programme delivery by staff having appropriate qualifications, knowledge and experience for the academic discipline or subject being taught. The Programme Leader will lead the process and programme operational activities to ensure that effective teaching, learning and assessment for students is delivered and undertaken in all aspects of the programme(s), and that the academic and/or professional coherence of the programme(s) is effectively maintained. Other staff may be required to assist in specific areas to assist the Programme Leader in the delivery of these responsibilities.

- Module Leaders - are appointed for modules within programmes. These arrangements ensure that operational matters, as well as quality and standards matters, are addressed at both a programme and module level.
- Teaching Staff - In addition to part-time and/or full-time staff, teaching teams may be supplemented by proportional/fractional FTE teaching staff; contract staff that have a particular teaching specialism; teaching staff who provide specific support for the development of the scholarship, projects, or specific level teaching; contract and proportional teaching staff may be drawn from academic and professional focussed lecturers and may be guest lecturers and/or individuals who bring either academic and/or professional expertise to the teaching of the programme. Fractional staff may also be selected because of their specific areas of expertise and experience and may be recruited from within Ireland or international sources. All members of teaching staff are required to maintain their personal Continuing Professional Development and scholarship activity as outlined in the policy.
- Guest Teaching Staff - There may also be teaching/guest teaching staff on CEG programmes and, where they contribute to the delivery of a programme, they are required to work with nominated module leaders/Programme Leaders as required.
- Programme Administrators - Each programme or group of programmes will have a nominated member of staff who acts as the Programme Administrator who will assist the Programme Leader in the delivery of the programme and act as a point of contact for students and the programme management team.

Within CEG, we utilise a Peer Observation process. Please refer to section 4.3.1 of the [City Education Group's QA Manual](#) which outlines how we conduct this process in order to ensure the quality of teaching, learning and assessment and to showcase best practice.

Teaching, Learning & Assessment during Covid-19

Any changes that had to take place in relation to teaching, learning and/or assessment, were discussed with relevant External Examiners, approved by the CEG Academic Board and QQI (if appropriate). Faculty received specific training in relation to online delivery and surveys were conducted with all stakeholders to ensure the quality to the teaching, learning and assessment across the Group. This is dealt with in more detail in section 4.0 below.

External Examiners at CEG (please refer to section 8.25 of the [City Education Group's QA Manual](#))

- External Examiners are appointed and operate within the Academic and Professional Regulations of respective applicable CEG programmes, and where required those of the accrediting/awarding/professional bodies.
- The External Examiner system will provide the formal mechanism by which CEG confirms that the academic and professional standards of its programmes match (where applicable) Irish, professional body, and international academic and/or professional standards. Where applicable to specific programmes, CEG and/or the accrediting/awarding/professional body are responsible for the appointment of their respective External Examiners who are appointed to confirm the standards of programmes at the final award and/or intermediary Level.

- Where appointed programmes will be required to have External Examiners who are able to comment on the overall standards of the programmes and are not necessarily required to be appointed for each individual programme. The appointments responsibility of the External Examiner will vary between CEG and accrediting/awarding/professional body requirements and these arrangements are subject to applicable specifications and Regulations.
- External Examiners will be appointed for the period of office specified in their respective Regulations. Exceptionally, extensions to appointed periods may be offered by CEG and/or a respective accrediting/awarding/professional body if there are strong grounds for so doing. Extensions to the period of office of an External Examiner are required to be approved by Academic Board or the respective accrediting/awarding/professional body.

Criteria for appointment of an External Examiner

- External Examiners will be independent of CEG and the respective accrediting/awarding/professional body and will not have been employed at CEG for a designated previous period subject to applicable Regulations and periods of office. They will normally have recent examining experience (preferably external examining experience) or comparable professional and/or academic experience. Their experience will indicate that they have competence and clear capability to act as an External Examiner for the Level(s) of programme(s), or group of programmes to which they have been appointed.
- External Examiners will have academic and/or professional standing, expertise and experience in higher education and/or professional practice which is germane to the subject/discipline being assessed-examined and at a level(s) matching the programme(s) and/or groups of programmes to be assessed-examined, in order to be able to confirm the standards achieved at the specific Level for which they have been appointed.
- External Examiners will normally be a current member, or may be a recently retired member of a higher education and/or professional institution; and/or have sufficient experience of higher education or professional activity in Ireland or internationally and/or have previous experience in a higher education or professional institution at the Level(s) being examined and equivalent standing in a commercial or other organisation. External examiners are required to have empathy with the values of delivering higher education and/or professional programmes to a higher education and/or professional student body at the respective NFQ Level or at an equivalent international Level.
- In appointing External Examiner(s) CEG, and respective accrediting/awarding/professional body, will normally be expected to look for and appoint an appropriate balance of existing expertise to be held by External Examiners and they are preferred to have recent experience of assessing students on a comparable Level of programme(s) elsewhere (either as an internal or external examiner).
- External Examiners who may be seen through their previous association with CEG and/or with a accrediting/awarding/professional body to be compromising the objectivity of the External Examiner role and their effective execution of their duties and responsibilities will not be appointed as an External Examiner. Such ineligible categories may include:

- Teaching staff or other CEG staff, either currently or previously employed by CEG within the respective defined prohibited period. This exclusion period for CEG programmes is 36 months prior to the commencement of an external examinership.
 - Those with recent close involvement with the delivery of CEG academic and/or professional programmes or with staff, or with students, who are in any way involved with the programme(s) being examined and for which the external examiner is being appointed.
 - Current CEG students and previous graduates of CEG programmes within the CEG defined prohibited period
 - Current or previous consultants or advisors to CEG (including external members of academic committees) who have provided a consultancy service to CEG within the CEG defined prohibited period.
 - Current professional clients or consultants of CEG.
 - Current shareholders or similar individuals who have a defined interest in the affairs of CEG or those who have held such interest within the previous thirty six months prior to the commencement period as an external examiner.
- External Examiners will be excluded from consideration and will not be normally appointed if they are:
- Personally associated with the sponsorship of students.
 - Required to assess colleagues who are students on the programme.
 - In a position to significantly influence the future employment of students as an employer.
- In appointing External Examiners, except where specific allowance is made by professional bodies and/or accrediting bodies, CEG, and accrediting/awarding/professional body will normally use the following general principles:
- External examiners will not hold more than two other substantive external examining appointments in the higher education and/or professional community in Ireland or internationally.
 - There must not be more than one external examiner from the same professional organisation or higher education Institution in any one assessment board. There should be no reciprocal examining arrangements with another institution or professional body on the same or similar programme(s).
 - An external examiner may not be replaced by another external examiner from the same institution or professional body as the retiring external examiner.
 - No External Examiner may be re-appointed within the prohibited period of years following a previous appointment as an External Examiner at CEG.
- Any proposed exception to these principles will require to be approved by Academic Board and/or the accrediting/awarding/professional body.

Appointment of External Examiners - Nomination and Approval

Nominations for External Examiners will be made and considered within the respective Regulations and procedures. All CEG appointments are required to be approved by the Academic Board.

The Role of External Examiners within CEG

- External examiners are appointed as independent expert reviewers, evaluators and moderators of the assessment and examinations process. They are expected to ensure that standards of academic and/or professional programmes match their intentions that students are assessed according to the requirements of Programme descriptors, and that justice in assessment and examinations is done and seen to be done for individual students.
- The external examiner's role is defined within the respective CEG and/or accrediting/awarding/professional body regulations. The CEG Regulations define the role of the external examiner as below.
- The role of the CEG external examiners includes the following obligations:
 - Attend Board of Examiners meetings (and where attendance is not possible, to make a written report available to the meeting)
 - Scrutinise a representative sample of work which has been submitted for assessment
 - Scrutinise a representative sample of assessed work placed by the internal examiners in each percentage band at the Levels assessed at that examinations diet
 - Review, comment on, and approve examination papers (and where appropriate marking guidelines)
 - Comment, when consulted by the Board of Examiners, on the content and form of all assessments including course assessment models and proposals and Examinations
 - Advise, where appropriate, the CEG Board of Examiners on:
 - o The appropriateness and effectiveness of internal assessment and marking processes
 - o Assessment regulations and modes of assessment
 - o The desirability of any moderation or (only in exceptional circumstances-remarking of assessed work)
 - o The appropriateness of the Academic and/or Professional Standards against which the assessment process has taken place
 - o Cases involving disagreement between Internal Examiners.
- External examiners may also provide comment to Board of Examiners in the development of a body of good practice for exercise of its academic and professional judgement under the CEG Regulations
- Subject to applicable Regulations, in the event of exceptional circumstances (such as an Academic or Professional Appeal or Mitigating Exceptional Circumstances), to be involved when requested by the Board of Examiners, in any required additional review of the student's assessed work or specially arranged assessment, for example an oral examination
- Comment on the academic standards achieved in the programme(s) for which they are an external examiner and the degree to which they meet the academic and/or professional standards of the NFQ and the professional bodies as appropriate.
- Confirm in writing that they approve all marks and award of credit and sign the Board of Examiners record sheets
- Submit external examiner reports in the form and at the time prescribed by the CEG and/or the respective accrediting/awarding/professional body.
- Subject to the respective applicable Regulations External Examiners are normally required to:

- Attend any meeting of a Board of Examiners of which they are a member (or if not available to provide commentary on the assessment being conducted).
 - Declare matters of principle at a Board of Examiners that will be dealt with in accordance with these regulations.
 - Review the assessment of the programme(s) for which they are external examiner.
 - Be consulted on assessment specifications and other assessment arrangements before they are implemented.
 - Inform CEG, and/or where applicable, an accrediting/awarding/professional body and/or the respective Chair of Academic Board of any concern about academic or professional standards.
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- Where required within the applicable award bearing Regulations and subject to the requirements of CEG, and/or the accrediting/awarding/professional body, prior to the meeting of the respective Board of Examiners the appointed External Examiner(s) will be sent an agreed representative sample of the assessed work for review and for the confirmation of the achievement of respective academic and/or professional standards for that assessment diet.
 - Where the CEG and/or accrediting/awarding/professional body specify the protocols for the role of the External Examiner, including the way in which work submitted for assessment is to be marked and/or moderated, and the proportion of representative work to be seen by the External Examiner, then the respective protocols and procedures related to the award of credit and/or the final classification and conferment of the final award are to be followed.
 - The external examiner(s) role, for all programmes requiring the use of External Examiners, will be required to confirm the academic and/or professional standards and the sequence and order which is represented by the agreed sample of assessed work sent to him/her. The agreed sample seen by the External Examiner will in all cases be appropriate and enable the External Examiner to moderate, confirm, evaluate and cover the full mark runs for the modules/components of assessment being assessed at the relevant Board of Examiners sitting. This will normally be expected to include a representative sample of a selection of modules, a representative sample selection of assessment modes, and a representative sample of the student population for that assessment component including:
 - Assessed work which is marked at a fail level or below;
 - A sample of assessed work in other bands of percentage marks including assessed work that is just above the pass mark and in the highest category of marks for that mode or assessment component being marked.
 - The External Examiner, either through the sample sent, or at the time of their visit to the examination-assessment board may also be asked to review marks of individual students outside this sample.
 - The External Examiner will review the marks given by the internal marker(s) and provide comment on any individual papers or scripts where he/she has concerns.

- The examination-assessment board will review the comments of the External Examiner and the final agreed mark for the respective assessment will be presented to the relevant Board of Examiners for conferment.

Written Examinations

- Course definitive documentation and programme descriptors will include details of all assessments-examinations associated with a programme and/or module. The assessment-examinations timetable will include the dates, times and locations of examinations.
- In this context, formal examinations are modes of assessment based on answers to questions set out in an examination paper and written in an answer book and for which students are required to attend at specified times and locations in an examination room. Examinations are undertaken in examinations room conditions unless specified by a CEG accrediting/awarding/professional body.

Further details in relation to the appointment and role of External Examiners, including the External Examiners' Reports is located in Chapter 8 of the [City Education Group's QA Manual](#).

3.0 Learner Resources and Support

Guide:

[Ref: QQI Core QAG 2.7 - *Supports for Learners*; ESG 1.6; QQI Code of Practice for Provision of Programmes of Education and Training to International Learners; QQI Statutory Topic-specific QA Guidelines for Providers of Blended Learning Programmes]

Please refer to Chapter 7 of the [City Education Group's QA Manual](#).

CEG understands that support must be multifaceted and as such, we ensure that students are provided with an array of supports (please refer to Chapter 6 of the CEG QA Manual for further details). Students may access a range of supports such as:

Academic support - through their tutors and lecturers

Administrative support - through Programme Administrators and the programme team

Pastoral Support - through our Student Support Officer. Our Student Support Officer can also refer students to other forms of support such as English Language Support, Academic Writing Support, or Maths Support.

IT/Technical Support - through our IT Team

Student Orientation

Registration takes place prior to the commencement of teaching. Students are given a welcome orientation which includes the following:

- Respective CEG programme handbook/teaching support materials (e.g. module guidelines/curriculum outlines/programme handbooks)
- Timetable for the teaching of the programme, module(s) or semester
- Specific details of how Blended Learning provision works within CEG, IT requirements and IT supports available, if applicable to the programme
- Information about the CEG and its facilities
- Supports in place for learners; including both academic and pastoral support contact details
- General CEG rules and regulations, any specific programme rules and Codes of Conduct
- Outline of requirements for submission of work for assessment, referencing, and plagiarism
- Fee details and payment plan(s) for the programme (where appropriate to the programme);
- CEG Terms and Conditions including PEL arrangements for the programme.

Students attend a formal orientation, wherein they are introduced to CEG staff and their fellow students. Orientation provides an outline of contacts within the Group and identifies contacts that students may be required to meet if a need arises in a specific area.

On commencement of classes, students are given access to programme materials with details of:

- Programme syllabus and module specifications
- Lecture sequences
- Calendar of assessment dates
- Module requirements
- Bibliographies
- Sample assessments examples
- Details of module lecturer(s)

Students are also provided with information from examinations-assessments office staff on assessment requirements (as appropriate), minimum assessment requirements, procedures for academic appeal and non-academic complaints and contact persons. Our Student Support Officer also provides a range of support, advice and guidance services tailored to the needs of students on particular programmes, (for example details of professional body requirements where a programme leads to submission for accreditation purposes to a professional body).

Diploma, Undergraduate and CPD Teaching, Learning and Assessment

CEG's teaching, learning and assessment utilise an inclusive range of approaches. These are based on a range of methods including an emphasis on a student-centred approach. Main lectures/workshop discussion sessions are used to present information, general principles, applications and methods and to deliver the body of knowledge underpinning the subject within the discipline. Lectures/workshop discussion sessions are enhanced by support activities including tutorials, problem solving, laboratories, group work and projects.

Students are required to take responsibility for their own academic and professional development. It is required that students undertake directed work and further study in their own time. Work undertaken throughout programmes varies in accordance with the assignment load and the scheduling of assessments. The assessment schedule is published in advance and students know what is expected of them and when. The structure of the staged approach to learning ensures that the learning workload is evenly distributed through a single module, and through all modules which may constitute an overall programme. This pedagogic ethos supports the development of a professional attitude to learning which enhances skills required within future careers.

The learning approach is designed to enhance necessary discipline expertise and transferable learning skills. Students also have access to their programme leader/module tutors with whom they can discuss academic issues and problems they may be facing.

Further details are available in the *City Education Group's Teaching, Learning and Assessment Strategy* (2019), the *CEG Teaching, Learning and Assessment Philosophy* (2019), the *CEG Digital Strategy* (2019) and the *CEG Graduates Attributes Framework* (2019).

Student-Centred Learning

City Education Group's teaching philosophy for face to face and blended learning promotes a culture of student-centred learning which focuses on student needs and incorporates learning requirements which are fostered within:

- a learning environment which nurtures personal academic growth;

- administrative procedures that help students to obtain a high-quality education, and academic and/or professional learning experience;
- personal experience that leads to feeling 'connected' to CEG;
- learning opportunities that develop students as responsible citizens and skilled professionals.

Teaching and delivery at the CEG is through a blend of lecture-seminars; workshop tutorials; workshop/discussion sessions and other appropriate teaching modes utilising a variety of learning and assessment methods, This includes the consideration of a variety of types and sources of case studies; individual and/or team presentation(s); class discussions; and other appropriate learning methods. A summary of approaches is indicated below.

As a part of all modules and programmes students are expected to undertake:

- Directed learning
- Self-managed independent learning

These strategies are designed to encourage the development of the student and to enable each student to have confidence in their own abilities while developing an enquiring mind.

Supports for Blended Learning

All learners are provided with a dedicated online Orientation programme which is scaffolded with a range of easy to access video and text support materials. CEG employs a range of digital support tools including online interactive guides, integrated online reading list software, library support classes, careers guidance support services and live chat and discussion forums across a range of departments. Student Handbooks outline the expected standards and norms of behaviour and communication in the online environment. Faculty and staff are required to operate within the stated requirements of existing policies specific to student support. Our Digital Strategy outlines in detail how we engage and motivate students in an online environment.

Student Support Officer

Our Student Support Officer is a source of both pastoral and academic support as s/he can also refer students to other forms of support such as English Language Support, Academic Writing Support, or Maths Support.

Attendance Monitoring

Students are required to attend lectures, lecture-seminars and lecture workshops for the modules for which they are registered. There are likely to be instances when absence due to illness or other reasons may arise. All absence is required to be covered by a medical or similar certificate and CEG administration is required to be informed by the student of the rationale for their absence.

Engagement in Blended/Online Learning

We utilise motivational tools such as progress bars to engage students and also to monitor engagement. CEG is keen to continue to use Learner Analytics to help engage students and

increase student engage and success rates. Our Digital Strategy outlines in detail how we engage and motivate students in an online environment.

Academic and Professional Progress

Programme staff monitor individual academic and professional progress through performance in lecture-seminar-workshop sessions, in tutorials, through case studies and through the guided preparation of major examples of work submitted for assessment - e.g. project work. Performance in formative and summative assessments provides further material for monitoring student progression. Students are also able to seek assistance from academic staff and support staff in any area of their studies.

Academic and Professional Student Support

Students have direct access to programme and administrative staff who facilitate academic and professional related pastoral support, including referral to teaching references, professional body guidance and support.

Academic Facilities and Supports

Library

Within the Library at CEG, core and recommended texts are provided on a three, seven or fourteen day loan basis, while a limited number of texts are placed on desk reserve. An extensive range of texts and journals is available through our e-brary.

Centre for Excellence in Teaching, Learning, Assessment & Research

Students can gain access to a number of supports such as English Language classes, Maths Support and Academic Writing Support through the our Centre for Excellence in Teaching, Learning, Assessment & Research. This Centre also provides study facilities for our students.

Computer Lab

The Computer Laboratory at CEG is equipped with 26 student PCs, a wired network, free student WiFi, and printing and scanning facilities. The classrooms are web-enabled, allowing the live streaming of all classes on the web.

Virtual Learning Platforms

In the delivery of a high quality learning experience to its students City Education Group makes substantial use of the City Education Group VLE Platform as a fundamental part of a learning environment in which traditional lecture-discussion seminar, and tutorial based learning is supported by the use of on-line provision of lecture notes, interactive discussion, and virtual support packages of learning materials.

The VLE platform is used as a learning vehicle for all programmes. This is facilitated through the availability of campus Wi-Fi and the provision of open access computing stations at specific campus locations.

CEG uses Moodle, along with Adobe Connect, and other cutting edge e learning tools to allow students to participate in the classroom, even when viewing classes online.

E learning Studio

The CEG e learning studio is utilised to record all our material for students.

Classrooms

CEG has a number of boardroom, seminar and classroom style meeting rooms for 8-50 people. There is a selection of 5 meeting rooms, seating up to 15 people, and 3 rooms which accommodate 25-30. A large digital room suitable for up to 50 people is also available. All CEG classrooms have webinar facilities, and are all fitted with audiovisual equipment, suitable for press conferences, presentations and lectures to small and large audiences. Additional equipment is available on request.

Canteen Facilities

Canteen facilities, including complimentary water, tea and coffee, are available at CEG.

Parking

CEG has negotiated a special evening parking rate for staff and learners in Dublin city centre.

Student Feedback

- Students may provide feedback on the programme/module(s) through questionnaires and student representatives may attend CEG boards, including Programme Board and Academic Board. Module results are circulated to individual teaching staff and teams (as required) with issues discussed in Programme Board meetings and team meetings where, if needed, corrective actions are initiated.
- All programmes use these mechanisms which are designed to provide regular, systematic feedback to which all students may contribute. Programme Board minutes and other documentation provide records of feedback that ensure audit trail transparency.
- Student feedback given at Programme Board meetings is reviewed by the Programme Leader who provides a feedback commentary to Academic Board. Actions and responses to student feedback may be actioned at the Programme Board, or at the Academic Board as required.

Career Development Support

- Career development support takes place within the teaching approaches embedded within the programme/module syllabus and in the delivery of programmes and is particularly related to the academic and professional choices made by students in their planning of their eventual career and professional development direction.

- Students receive advice on continuing academic and professional study from teaching staff and Programme Leaders who are able to comment on options for progression to other levels of learning.
- Additional career advice is provided through guest lecturers, seminar, discussions and similar events.

Participatory Governance

In our participatory governance system, students have seats at most boards and committees.

NSTeP Programme

We are in the process of being accepted to be part of the National Students' Engagement Scheme which will give further support to our student representatives.

Protection for Enrolled Learners (PEL)

The Qualifications and Quality Assurance (Education and Training) Act 2012 Part 6 requires that all programmes of 3 months or more duration have in place arrangements for the Protection of Enrolled Learners to ensure learners have the opportunity to complete their programme of study. CEG is also aware of Qualifications and Quality Assurance (Education and Training) Amendment Act 2019. CEG is committed to ensuring that appropriate protection is in place for learners on programmes currently in operation and learners on any future programmes that will be developed within CEG. CEG utilises Arachas. Arachas launched its new Learner Protect facility in March, 2021. The product is underwritten by Aviva Insurance Ltd.

International Students

International students who may have English language concerns can benefit from access to language classes in City Language School. Any student who has difficulty with literacy or numeracy may also access classes in our second level school, Ashfield College.

Equal Opportunities and Diversity

- Integral to the development and future strategy of the CEG is the commitment to equal opportunities in all aspects of the work of the Group.
- In achieving this aim the Group seek to ensure through formal policies and procedures, and in its operating practices, that no present or future student or programme participant or employee will receive less favourable treatment than any other on the grounds of any condition or status not directly affecting their study or work.
- In support of these objectives, City Education Group aims to provide an enabling and supportive working and learning environment, which encourages all students, participants and employees to fully participate in all its educational opportunities and activities.

4.0 QA of Research Activities and Programmes

Guide:

[Ref: QQI Topic-specific QAG for Providers of Research Degree Programmes; Ireland's Framework of Good Practice for Research Degree Programmes (2019); HEA National Framework for Doctoral Education, The 'Salzburg' Principles, The 'Salzburg II' Recommendations; National Policy Statement on Ensuring Research Integrity in Ireland]

Please refer to Chapter 10 Section 10.6 and 10.7 of the [City Education Group's QA Manual](#).

CEG is committed to maintaining and developing a culture informed by and committed to research. We believe that:

- a research culture is fundamental to the quality of our teaching and learning environment.
- our combined institutional knowledge and insights across second level-further education and undergraduate education provides a unique opportunity to embed and develop research awareness and application.

City Education Group Research Strategy

Overview

City Education Group (CEG) occupies an exceptional space in Irish learning across legal, accounting, business, psychological, educational, and healthcare domains. Our students have joined the professional job market or are seeking enhanced employment opportunities. Our lecturers and tutors are experienced in their field and deliver up-to-date applicable knowledge.

City Education Group is committed to a Research Strategy which enhances our teaching and learning, and which strengthens our relationships with students and professional bodies. Our goal is to develop and promote spaces where research can be fostered so that we can grow our profile at the national level as a higher education institution. By doing this, we aim to improve the quality of learning for our students and the opportunities they can avail of.

Teaching Approach

At City Education Group, the goal is to provide the most effective student learning experience. By incorporating evidence-based approaches that elucidate the nexus between theory and practice, our academic staff maintain the applicability of knowledge in the foreground of their teaching strategy. Moreover, our teaching is informed by relevant academic research, and a culture of curiosity is fostered by providing access to academic and scientific sources of information. Our lecturers teach by imparting theoretical and technical underpinnings, contextualised in clinical and professional experiences, imbuing in students a critical and reflexive stance in relation to their professional context. We also receive regular feedback between student and faculty, responding to what students and the job market see as necessary for a more successful development.

Importance of Research

City Education Group understands research as a tool for growth for the group, academic staff, and the student body. Research provides the core evidence-base for delivery of enhanced and relevant programmes, embedded in professional working contexts. Students therefore benefit from being exposed to research methods, publications, conferences, etc. It allows them to deepen their understanding of the field of study and to be more critical and reflective of the information they are exposed to in their daily lives. Furthermore, as students acquire more research skills, they will also count with more professional and academic opportunities.

We aim to promote a research culture of collaboration amongst academic staff and students. We support tutors and lecturers who have embarked on diverse research quests and intend to continue to widen their spectrum of research opportunities within the group. In this way, our approach is designed to contribute to the expansion of professional contexts both for our teachers and for our students. Research is a central aspect of our academic goals as we see it as an pivotal step towards increasing the visibility of our profile as a high-quality academic institution.

Our Mission Statement & Research Strategy

In reflecting on its Mission Statement, CEG is setting out its Research Strategy to enhance our educational offerings within the QQI (Quality and Qualifications Ireland) framework, to leverage our existing organisational connections and academic successes, to provide opportunities for our staff and students to enhance their career opportunities, and to deepen our staff and student's appreciation and understanding of their lives and working environments.

Ethics and Governance

CEG is committed to ethical behaviour in Research, subject to oversight by our internal Ethics and Research Committees and the relevant professional, ethical guidelines of its staff and faculty. We are committed to continually developing Research Governance under its Quality Assurance framework.

Currently, the Research Strategy is articulated by the Research and Ethics Committees and the Research Officer. The Research and Ethics Committees report to the Academic Board and they oversee the review of research projects, applications, and procedures while safeguarding the health, welfare, rights, and privacy of participants and researchers. Their purpose is to facilitate quality research activities across the group.

Staff Support & Collaboration

Our academic staff are supported in engaging in ongoing Continual Professional Development (CPD) activities required by their respective accrediting bodies. Annual training days take place to ensure continual improvement and consistency across the group in emphasising the importance of promoting research. Material is also available for consultation, especially with regards to academic writing and referencing.

Staff are encouraged to get involved in research activities and the Research and Ethics committees are responsible for providing feedback with regards to research projects and surveys. The post of Research Officer was established in 2021 to provide support to Faculty and staff with the submission of research and funding applications, as well as helping to establish, maintain, and promote a research culture across the group.

Workshops will be made available for those who desire to hone their research skills, for instance, in publication, funding applications, academic conferences, etc. For the upcoming CEG academic conference, presenters will be able to ask for support prior to the event to ensure that quality standards are maintained.

In its role of providing educational and development opportunities for our students and staff, the City Education Group connects the commercial, professional, and academic needs of students and staff, to provide an academically and commercially relevant teaching and learning environment.

In 2022, Progressive College secured funding through a collaboration with GMIT (Galway Mayo Institute of Technology) and Hibernia College to conduct research on the platform eTwinning.

RESEARCH MILESTONES

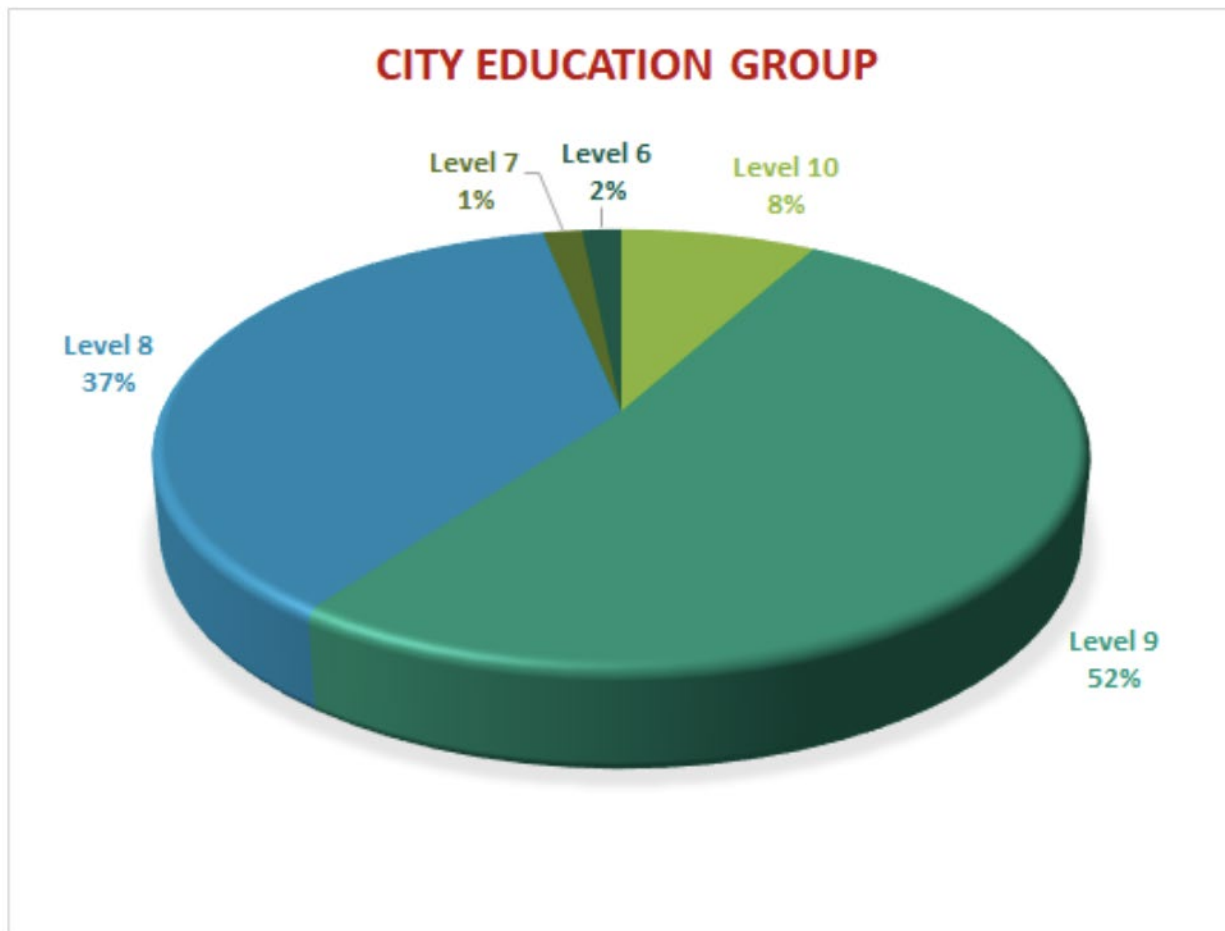
City Education Group has consistently worked on establishing a solid research structure that will promote research interests and output. To provide wider access to resources for both staff and students, we have added Taylor and Francis to our online library resources. Our physical library is now located in Wicklow House. We will continue to expand the scope in both our libraries, as necessary. Currently, the platform OpenAthens provides our library website for a more efficient search process.

City Education Group conducted a survey to assess the main specialisms clusters across all faculty. The findings revealed that Special Needs, Education, Business and Accounting, Healthcare, and Law are our main research clusters (See Figure 4). This survey also allowed for the collation of staff qualifications categorised by QQI level in the whole group and in each of the colleges. Figure 5 shows that 60% of the entire staff have Level 9 or above. Since City Education Group provides higher education courses, the qualifications of staff are of uttermost importance.

Figure 4: CEG Research Specialisms



Figure 5: Staff & Faculty Qualifications



Based on these findings, City Education Group has planned a virtual staff conference for May 2022. The aim is to support our researchers by showcasing their work to students and staff, and to encourage communication and research collaboration amongst peers. This will be our first in-house conference and will represent an opportunity to disseminate ongoing projects and research finding to our community.

Currently undergoing development is our Faculty Hub, whose aim is to provide a virtual space to share materials and resources, engage communication with other lecturers, consult calendar of events, receive information of updates, procedures, and other important documentation, and most importantly, establish a platform where news about ongoing projects and developments are posted.

RESEARCH FOCUS 2025

City Education Group sees the current achievements as the first steps towards establishing a research culture that generates a sustainable stream of research activity.

Our goals are:

1. To continue to implement the requirements of the QQI and the CEG Quality Assurance frameworks to ensure that appropriate standards for Research are met and maintained.
2. To strengthen support to both academic staff and students in their research endeavours.
3. To maintain Research as a pillar of CEG's growth so that we remain at the forefront of professional development and training.
4. To ensure interdisciplinary cooperation is undertaken to provide bespoke research responses to professional needs and issues. In addition, the City Education Group will seek to enhance cooperation between the working environments of many of its staff and students, and its research output.
5. To enhance Teaching, Learning and Assessment (TLA) aspects of the City Education Group activities by engagement in research by students and staff to enhance learning and academic experiences.
6. To adhere to professional standards of governance, quality, and ethics to ensure that ethically appropriate research is carried out.
7. To grow the identified research areas in the group.

TARGETS 2025

To achieve these goals, we have established the following targets:

1. To maintain and strengthen communication channels amongst the Research and Ethics committees and the Academic Board to standardize procedures.
2. To hold workshops or webinars for staff who need support for grant applications, journal publications, peer-review process, etc.
3. To offer "study days" or "study time" to staff who have an ongoing research projects or deadlines.
4. To increase the visibility of academic staff by encouraging social media presence (ResearchGate, Academia.edu, etc.)
5. To increase academic staff publications by 5%.
6. To define a Research Reward System for faculty.
7. To use the Faculty Hub to foster research collaborations amongst staff and thus establish Research Groups.
8. To disseminate in-house research and research awards internally and externally through the Faculty Hub and the CEG social media accounts.
9. If Level 9 programmes are approved, to provide appropriate guidance for academic supervisors and students.
10. To establish collaborations with other academic bodies by encouraging and supporting lecturers to attend external conferences.
11. To host an annual conference to showcase in-house research to students.
12. To expand the scope of online and physical library resources by acquiring subscriptions where necessary.

Please also refer to Chapter 10 of the [City Education Group's QA Manual](#) for further details on Research in CEG.

Please refer to section 10.7.1 for the Terms of Reference for the CEG Research Committee ([City Education Group's QA Manual](#))

Please refer to section 10.7.2 for the Terms of Reference for the CEG Ethics Committee ([City Education Group's QA Manual](#))

5.0 Staff Recruitment, Development and Support

Guide:

[Ref: QQI Core QAG 2.4 - *Staff Recruitment, Management and Development*; ESG 1.5; National Forum for the Enhancement of Teaching and Learning in Higher Education, National Professional Development Framework for All Staff Who Teach in Higher Education]

Please refer to Chapter 10 of the [City Education Group's QA Manual](#).

Recruitment and Orientation of Members of Staff

The provision of teaching staff with appropriate qualifications to satisfy the requirements of all courses is a primary objective of the recruitment process. There is a staff orientation programme for staff to support the academic and professional programmes. The normal minimum qualification for appointment to teach a programme is a relevant qualification at the next highest level being taught and/or significant professional and/or practice focussed expertise. A significant proportion of teaching staff exceed the minimum requirements. Please refer to Figure 5 above.

Teaching staff may also be required to submit their CV details and experience details in order to be formally approved by professional bodies to teach on their programmes.

Recruitment of Staff

The City Education Group must assure themselves of the competence of their faculty. We apply fair and transparent processes for the recruitment and development of staff. CEG recognises that effective teaching and learning is not possible without assuring itself of the competence of its teaching staff and other personnel who contribute to the wider learning experience and the assurance of a quality. CEG recognises the learner experience is impacted by staff in the classroom and outside of it and therefore it prioritises recruiting staff with the appropriate qualifications and attributes that complement the quality-focused culture of the Group and promote a positive learning environment for students. Administration, Technical and Support Staff - For administration, technical and support staff the minimum requirements of the role will be determined by the Senior Management Team based upon the intended objectives of the role. With Academic Staff, in respect of academic appointments, the Group is committed to having a qualified, competent and committed teaching staff in sufficient numbers, employing suitable teaching, learning and assessment methods and engaging in appropriate professional development, innovation, research or scholarly activity to support the delivery of the programmes within the Group, and facilitate a positive learner experience. The Group has developed and implemented policies and procedures to promote the recruitment and retention of qualified and experienced staff required to ensure the delivery of a quality education service.

For academic appointment, the Group ensures oversight from Academic Board in all stages of the recruitment and selection process. The Group applies minimum requirements for all academic posts determined by the programme, modules, and framework level of the awards upon which the appointee will be teaching and or assessing. The cross College Working Group has outlined the minimum requirements for academic appointments as follows:

- Evidence of appropriate subject matter expertise is essential, evidenced through academic or professional qualifications, and advanced professional, vocational, technical or research activity in a relevant field. Normally, candidates should have a

qualification at the NFQ level above the programme on which they will be teaching. In the case of Masters programmes, a Masters or equivalent professional qualification is a minimum requirement.

- Currency of subject matter expertise should be evidence through recent and regular professional development activity including training and practice.
- Training in pedagogy or experience in teaching and assessing is also desirable. Where this is not evidenced, successful candidates will be required to commit to engaging in appropriate activities to develop their experience in this area.
- Specific staffing requirements for teaching modules will be documented in any programme validation submissions and this will be adhered to as part of the recruitment and selection process.

Recruitment Process

If a new position is being created, or an existing position is significantly modified, appropriate Job Descriptions will be designed and agreed by the relevant staff, with clear qualifications and experience criteria for the particular job being specified. Whether the position is new or recently vacated, there will be a careful determination of why the position is needed, how it will assist the College/Group in achieving its strategic goals and mission, how it relates to other positions in the College/Group, and what skills and other abilities are necessary to carry out its responsibilities. All proposed academic appointments are considered by the Academic Board. The specification for the new position and ideal candidate should also take heed of ethical consideration with regard to ethnic, gender, age and minority bias, particularly in the language adopted to present it. At a minimum, the position description should include: position title, credentials and experience required, location of the position, goals or objectives for the post holder, a summary of work activities and the nature of the contract being recruited to.

Where a position is to be filled internally, all relevant information will be communicated to all staff. When advertising externally, CEG will use such media as national job recruitment websites, newspapers, and radio. Advertisements will be pre-approved by the Senior Management Team, including material relating to academic posts. Relevant CEG staff members, appointed by the CEO will act as the interview panel. For non-academic appointment, membership will be comprised of the line manager for the position being recruited, a staff representative in a comparable role and an additional member of staff in a management position.

For academic appointments, Academic Board requires the involvement of the Academic Director/Dean of the College along with the Dean of a particular School, in the interview process. The screening process of applications shall provide for the rejection or acceptance for the interview stage, based upon fulfilment of the essential personnel requirements as advertised.

Following screening, shortlisted candidates will be invited to interview where a series of pre-agreed, competency-based questions will be asked of all candidates. Supplementary questions stemming from candidate answers may also be asked. Each interview panel member will record their views on each candidate and an agreed interview record and score will be retained, indicating the collective views of the panel for each candidate. The deliberations of the interview panel shall be strictly confidential, and not be shared with any external person, without the expressed and recorded authorisation of the interviewee.

In some instances the interview panel may produce a short-list of candidates for second round interview. These will be presented to the CEO and a second interview panel will be appointed. This may include panel members from the first-round panel. All interviews will be based on a semi-structured style, to allow candidates a certain amount of freedom to express their individual style and personality while dealing with a range of consistent questions posed to all candidates. Where a presentation or mini lecture is required, the panel will notify the candidates of this as part of the invitation to interview. The interview panel make the final decision on the best candidate for the position. CEG recognises that qualifications and references verification are a crucial part of the selection process. Reference checks in particular round out the profile of a job applicant by providing third-party support and information. Reference enquiries and requests can be made by telephone, email or writing.

Once all references and certifications have been verified a final job offer will be issued.

Important components to be included in the final job offer are: starting salary, commencement date, length of contract, employee benefits, any other negotiation points. The candidate will be given sufficient time to either accept or reject the offer. However, CEG will not compromise the availability of other candidates if the candidate of choice declines the offer by allowing too much time to pass between the offer and the decision. If the candidate accepts the position, the offer and conditions of employment will be communicated to the candidate in writing as soon as possible. If the candidate declines the position, the CEO will offer the position to the next candidate of choice. Once an individual has been secured for the position, all other interviewed candidates will be notified immediately.

All contracts are offered on a probationary basis of 6 months, after which time the contract will be reviewed with the CEO. A mentor may be assigned to the successful applicant to assist them through the initial stage of the probationary period.

Academic Faculty will be assigned to modules in accordance with their subject matter expertise and the Academic Director/Dean will ensure compliance with programme specifications. A report confirming this will be submitted to the Academic Board each year by the Academic Director/Dean in their Annual Report submission. Any requirement to deviate from the staffing specification is referred to Academic Board. All documentation relating to the recruitment and selection process for all candidates will be processed in accordance with CEG's policies for data protection.

Information regarding the efficacy of the recruitment and selection process is obtained through a number of means including:

- A review of the general suitability and number of candidates applying for the position
- Feedback received from the assigned mentor, where applicable
- Annual appraisal and performance monitoring
- Student feedback
- Annual Reports

Recruitment and Selection policies and procedures shall be continuously reviewed to ensure that they reflect good practice and meet the requirements of relevant legislation.

Staff Orientation

CEG will provide training and orientation that will familiarise new staff members with current staff members, the working environment and its policies, procedures and operating practices. The orientation is also used as a means of ensuring all new staff are familiar with the primary values of integrity, honesty and fairness esteemed by CEG.

Orientation is done through a mix of online and face to face. All staff are issued with a Staff Handbook and a schedule of orientation meetings and activities is devised by the Academic Director/Dean, reflecting the role of the new employee. They are given a link to the Faculty Hub and its Orientation section.

The Group recognises that in order to support employees to feel a sense of belonging and a valued member of the team it is important to issue them with key information, facilitate understanding of the Group's structure and processes and enable the successful development of peer relationships. Orientation is seen as an important tool in promoting an inclusive and welcoming work environment. Orientation is also viewed by the Group as the first important step on the ladder of professional development and career development which the Group encourages and supports through the annual appraisal process, provision of in-house staff development, and support for participation in external professional development and scholarship.

An Orientation to CEG, its facilities and policies, including health and safety and equal opportunities and Child Safeguarding, is provided to all new members of staff through the City Education Group Faculty Hub. All new members of faculty receive professional advice and feedback on their progress during their early months of employment from Programme/Module Leaders.

Orientation of New Staff - The Process

- All new employees will receive formal orientation training. The overall purpose of orientation training is to familiarise new members of staff with all aspects of their job and new working environment. The Group recognises that the Orientation process is a very active one especially for the first month of employment.
- For each new employee a member of Senior Management Team is assigned as the point of contact and holds responsibility for coordinating the orientation programme for that employee.
- On the employee's first day they will be met by the assigned member of staff, provided with a copy of the Staff Handbook, a link to the Faculty Hub, and given a tour of the campus(es), including an introduction to their own office space and facilities. An initial orientation meeting will also take place with the assigned Senior Management Team member to explain the orientation plan and go through key information.
- The employee will be provided with a schedule of meetings over the duration of the week. The meetings will as minimum, include a meeting with each member of the Senior Management Team. The purpose of the meetings is to:
 - Discuss the area for which the manager has responsibility
 - Identify how the employee's role will integrate with that area
 - Introduce them to key documents, resources, systems or processes
 - Introduce them to the staff in their department

- Direct them to the City Education Group Faculty Hub and the relevant ‘Orientation’ section
- A meeting is also arranged with the CEO, where the employee will be provided with information to assist in understanding the Group structures, culture, mission, goals and daily operation of the Group. In addition, new employees will be briefed on strategic plans, information on relevant legislation, and health, safety and welfare at work.
- As part of welcoming a new staff member to the Group the Senior Management Team member responsible will seek to arrange an informal, social meeting where immediate team members and the new employee will meet for coffee or lunch.
- An experienced staff member will be appointed as a mentor to the new employee and the main role of the mentor will be to provide guidance, support, advice and feedback particularly over the first month.
- For new lecturing staff in-class observation is an option available during orientation period, and beyond, whereby they can receive advice and constructive feedback. Additional supports can also be secured from the Academic Director/Dean and through the Centre for Excellence in Teaching, Learning, Assessment & Research.
- Each new employee will have an end of orientation meeting with the assigned Senior Management Team member and the effectiveness of the orientation programme will be evaluated through a feedback discussion. Where it is apparent additional input and support is required, or where this is requested, appropriate arrangements will be implemented.
- All new employees are appointed for an initial probationary term. During this period, the employee will have regular meetings with their line manager and will continue to be provided with information, support and guidance to assist them in their new role.
- Further Staff Supports are identified in section 14 of the CEG Staff Handbook.

Staff Development Policy and Strategy

CEG’s Staff Development Policy is summarised as follows:

“City Education Group positively encourages its staff to seek out learning opportunities that will enable them to be proficient in their job and to facilitate their personal and professional growth. A key objective is to develop staff and so contribute to the attainment of individual and team objectives and support the individual development of the member of staff. Appropriate development encouragement is given to all staff, irrespective of grade, hours of work, length of service, gender, ability or age”.

The full text of the Staff Development Policy is available in the Quality Library and is designed to align with the requirement of the QQI’s Core Statutory Quality Assurance Guidelines and QQI’s Statutory Quality Assurance Guidelines for Independent/Private Providers.

The general principles of the Staff Development Policy related to teaching staff are based on the following:

- All Teaching Staff are expected to be engaged in some form of staff development activity. This may be identified by Programme Leaders and/or the individual member of staff. This may

include an identified selection of activity based on the following menu of staff development activities:

- Continuing Professional Development (CPD),
- Scholarship or research,
- enhancement of qualifications,
- development and innovation of teaching and delivery methods or curriculum content
- pedagogic development
- scholarly activity appropriate to their own personal stage of development
- participation in the internal staff development programme provided for all staff

The College(s) is aware of the need to ensure that staff are appraised of legislation on such issues as Equality and Diversity, Health and Safety, First Aid, Fire Regulations, and Freedom of Information/Data Protection, and all staff are required to be fully cognisant with the policies and their implications.

On a day-to-day basis, all administrative and teaching staff are kept informed of current issues and matters arising by regular meetings and one-to-one sessions. These are supported by a regular schedule of Executive Management Team, Senior Management Team, regular staff meetings, academic management meetings (e.g. Academic Board, Programme Board meetings), and extensive use of electronic communications.

CEG Teaching, Learning and Assessment Strategy

CEG is committed to the provision of excellence in applied education. The CEG Teaching Learning and Assessment Strategy (2019) affirms and underpins this commitment and is aligned to national and international best practice. Together with the CEG Digital Strategy (2019), it provides direction for faculty in terms of the required standards for learning provision. The CEG Teaching Learning and Assessment Strategy (2019) has been developed with specific regard to sections 5 and 6 of QCI's Core Statutory Quality Assurance Guidelines (2016).

CEG Digital Strategy

The CEG Digital Strategy (2019) has been written to complement the CEG Teaching Learning and Assessment Strategy (2019), and provides direction for faculty in terms of how digital technologies can be used to support and enhance teaching, learning and assessment. It has been written with specific regards to QCI's QA Guidelines for Providers of Blended Learning Programmes (2018).

For further details please refer to:

- Chapter 10 of the [City Education Group's QA Manual](#).
- Section 14 of The CEG Staff Handbook
- The CEF Staff Development Policy

6.0 Information and Data Management

Guide:

[Ref: QQI Core QAG 2.8 - *Information and Data Management*, ESG 1.7]

Please refer to Chapter 11 of the [City Education Group's QA Manual](#).

The CEG Quality Assurance Library

City Education Group has established and maintaining an electronically-based quality assurance document library on Microsoft Teams in which all quality assurance and standards items, keynote documents and similar material is archived.

This library is designed to provide access to a range of documentation including committee and board minutes; key guidance papers; policy and strategy papers; validation documentation; programme documentation; learning and teaching papers and support material; scholarship and research papers and supporting documentation; annual monitoring and periodic monitoring documentation; academic standards papers; QQI Documentation; annual monitoring documentation, and other material which is relevant to the continued development and context of CEG.

The library is developed with a variety of levels of access which are designed to maintain confidentiality if required but also to facilitate access to a common source of documentation related to the overall activities of CEG. The library is populated by named individuals according to the level of access required. There are also access controls which allow specific authors and sources to enter material, edit material and make material available to all staff within CEG, if required.

The Quality Library is both an archive and an ongoing resource for the development of the City Education Group. As such it is designed to be a proactive reference source for all documentation and for the continued enhancement of the provision.

Programme Documentation

Programme definitive documentation, including programme descriptors, programme and module descriptors, validation reports, and associated materials are held in specific sections of the quality library.

Marketing Information

There are set procedures for the generation, authoring and approval of promotional, marketing and publicity material and all material which refers to accrediting/awarding/professional bodies and their programmes is required to be approved by the respective accrediting/awarding/professional body. All marketing material is generated by the marketing team leader, which in turn is formally approved by the CEO (and, if contractually required, as part of an agreement the respective accrediting/awarding/professional body). Following the approval and/or validation of a programme for delivery by CEG, the Director of Marketing, will consult with the CEO, Director/Dean, Programme Leader (as required) to identify promotional and marketing texts which are approved for use in the marketing, promotion and advertising of the programme. The results are checked for copyright accuracy and clearance by the Director

of Sales & Marketing. The copy and design content of the promotional materials are double checked and vetted for accuracy by the Programme Leader and CEO for final approval. All involved parties are responsible for the accuracy of the contents and checking the validity of the documentation. All publicity material on programmes leading to the final and/or interim award of an accrediting/awarding/professional body (including degree awards), is normally required to be submitted to the respective body for approval.

Compliance and Checking of Materials for Marketing and Promotional Use

Guidelines are in place to check the authorship and authenticity of the material; for ensuring the correct usage and visibility of the CEG brand (and 'partner' brand as required) and trademarks, and whether material which has been produced meets the legal and social requirements of the respective target market/country. Legal advice is sought if queries arise at this stage.

Commissioning and Agency Use

In the overseas use of marketing and promotional materials the commissioning of 'agencies and their output is required to be monitored and a number of good practice checks are required to be in place to ensure that the City Education Group are correctly represented at all marketing and promotional levels of activity.

Preventative and Proactive Actions on Misrepresentation and Risk Management

City Education Group takes proactive management action to prevent any occurrence of misrepresentation or lack of accuracy in any of its marketing materials. City Education Group provides all copies of promotional material to any acting as representative agents. All advertising content, copy, promotional imagery, and use of corporate imagery has to be approved by the CEG Director of Sales & Marketing prior to its use and, where required, by the respective accrediting/awarding/professional prior to use.

Security and Compliance of Material in the Public Domain

Processes for the regular and continual monitoring and security of marketing and promotional material which is in the public domain and which relates to corporate identity and the portfolio are robust and designed to ensure that all material is both accurate and in compliance with required standards. In the case of CEG delivering accrediting/awarding/professional body programmes all material is subject to verification and approval for use by the accrediting/awarding/professional body. Marketing personnel work with academic and professional programmes staff, CEG, management and administration staff to implement all checks and balances indicated above. This undertaking of a consistent and rigorous approach towards the monitoring, checking and vetting of all marketing materials and all marketing procedures ensures that material which is produced is accurate in content and substance and reflects the work and the portfolio activities of the City Education Group.

Modifications to Programme Content or New Programme Developments and Launch

Where modifications occur or new programmes are introduced the process for generating programme information, the stages for the sign off of published information and the checking of the accuracy of marketing Information which City Education Group produces and which is in the public domain is the same as that outlined above. If any new course/programmes

development take place the marketing and publicity material are modified to reflect the changes and the material is signed off by the Director of Marketing.

City Education Group Student Handbooks (generic) and Programme Handbooks

The process for generation and sign-off of module handbooks, programme handbook documentation, parallels that for all marketing materials except the process is overseen by the programme leader, Director/Dean and the Director of Quality.

Website Content

Website content is produced by a nominated member of staff. Where updating of the website is required this is subject to a series of checks involving the Programme Leader for academic content; the CEO for business content; the Director of Sales & Marketing for oversight and compliance. Where updating is required these are undertaken promptly. All updates are proof read for accuracy. The Programme Leader undertakes regular and scheduled periodic monitoring and updating of the website contents.

Student Records

CEG administrative and examinations office staff (the latter may be subject to the regulations of the relevant accrediting/awarding/professional body), are responsible to the CEO, for the accuracy of all communications to students which are related to admission, registration and progression of students, from the point at which the student enters the programme to its completion and the conferment of the award to the student. Assessment details are entered into secure spreadsheets which in the first instance are collated by examinations office staff working - where required - with accrediting/awarding/professional body staff. Assessment records are checked by both City Education Group and as appropriate accrediting/awarding/professional body staff prior to their use at examinations-assessments boards. (Subject to agreements with the accrediting/awarding/professional body). Records are kept in both electronic and physical format where required for security and/or format purposes. All storage of Student information is in line with the relevant Data Protection and GDPR legislation. Staff in the CEG examination-assessments office manage internal CEG student records and ensure that the following are securely held:

- Application and admission information;
- Visa and sponsorship information (where required);
- Registration Information;
- Attendance records;
- Academic Progression Information;
- Records of Marks and Assessments and Examinations Results;
- Records of Grades awarded, the conferment of exit awards, Final Academic Awards;
- Disciplinary records;
- Appeals records and Student Complaint records;
- Student results and related information.

The examinations officer handles all examinations-assessments matters, and provides a secure procedure for undertaking this responsibility. There is a dedicated examinations office

team which ensures the secure and effective handling of all assessment and examinations requirements within programmes delivered at City Education Group. Further detail may be found in the GDPR section of the relevant Microsoft Teams group.

Data Protection

CEG is a Data Controller under the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR). Staff are considered Data Subjects of City Colleges Group under this regulation. The below information sets out the Group's obligations to staff and students under the GDPR, and their rights. CEG shall retain personal information. Should an individual have any queries regarding how CEG handles their personal information they may contact CEG at 38-40 Parliament St, Dublin 2; Telephone: 1850 252 740; email: mydata.rights@citygroup.ie. CEG processes personal data pursuant to a contract of employment and in compliance with applicable law and regulations. It therefore processes personal data under Article 6(b) and (c) of the GDPR. An individual may volunteer certain information which shall be processed under the legal basis of consent, Article 6(a). Employees may provide CEG with documents which reveal health information, typically sick certificates. This is a special category of information under the GDPR and is processed under article 9(1)(a). If provided, this is considered to come with explicit consent that it can be used for dealing with any employment matters that relate to your health issues. An individual should consider speaking to the relevant manager to redact these documents after review and before they are stored within the individual's file. All staff relevant information will be provided to state and regulatory bodies as required to support employment. Academic staff academic background and qualifications may be supplied to awarding/review/audit bodies considering CEG as a provider of courses. At the end of an individual's employment contract CEG will retain their personal information in line with standard employment law practices. It is anticipated that all information would be deleted after 8 years. Subsets of information are likely to be deleted before this 8-year deadline. Staff members have the same rights to access as any data subject. These can be exercised while an employee or after you leave. There are however some limitations on this, for example, where the data consists of an expression of opinion about the individual by another person given in confidence or on the understanding that it would be treated as confidential, and not provided to the subject. CEG may process data because consented was provided. If an individual wishes to withdraw that consent they may contact CEG at mydata.rights@citygroup.ie. CEG shall stop retaining/processing the personal data bar that which CEG is required to retain in accordance with the law. If an individual has a concern or query as their personal data is handled CEG would appreciate if they contacted CEG about it to facilitate the issue being addressed. Complaints may be lodged with the Irish Data Protection Commission (or other relevant supervisory authorities). CEG processes staff individual data further to its contract with the staff member and subject to their employment contract and legal obligations. Failure on behalf of a subject to supply information may result in suspension and a review of employment.

Access Rights Request

The General Data Protection Regulation places obligations on CEG towards its data subjects. These data subjects include staff and students, and potentially any person on whom we keep a record. It also applies to persons captured on CCTV. One obligation on CEG is to respond in a timely manner to access rights requests. Access right requests are typically requests for a copy of the information we have on the data subject. For example, an ex-student may ask whether CEG has any information on them, and what that information is. CEG would then have to provide it. Other access right requests include a right to rectification; right to erasure (also known as the 'right to be forgotten'); right to restriction of processing; a right to data portability

and a right to object to us processing their data. CEG has designated a member of staff as a Data Subject Request Handler and all access rights requests should be forwarded to him or her for processing. Please note that access right requests do not necessarily have to follow a particular format nor indeed be in writing. The classic example of a 'hidden access right request' is a long email complaint which includes a single line asking for a copy of their data held by CEG. These requests (redacted if necessary) should be forwarded to the Data Subject Request Handler immediately. In general, access right requests must be replied to within 30 days.

Notification of Data Breaches

The General Data Protection Regulation (the GDPR) introduces the requirement for a personal data breach to be notified to the competent national supervisory authority - typically the Irish Data Protection Commissioner. In certain cases, we must also communicate the breach to the individuals whose personal data have been affected by the breach. The GDPR defines a "personal data breach" as "a breach of security leading to the accidental or unlawful destruction, loss, alteration, unauthorised disclosure of, or access to, personal data transmitted, stored or otherwise processed."

Breaches can be categorised as:

- "Confidentiality breach" - where there is an unauthorised or accidental disclosure of, or access to, personal data;
- "Integrity breach" - where there is an unauthorised or accidental alteration of personal data;
- "Availability breach" - where there is an accidental or unauthorised loss of access to, or destruction of, personal data.

Examples of data breaches could include:

- Loss of a portable drive containing a database of student details;
- Infection by ransomware leading to a loss of availability of staff data;
- A hack whereby information on servers may have been modified;
- A direct marketing email is sent to recipients in the 'to:' or 'cc:' field thereby enabling each recipient to see the email address of all other recipients.

CEG has designated a member of staff as a Breach Responder. All incidents which you feel could be a personal data breach should be forwarded to him or her for examination. You are asked to err on the side of caution and report potential breaches early, even if you are still gathering all the facts.

CEG will ensure that we will notify the personal data breach to the supervisory authority no later than 72 hours after having become aware of a data breach.

City Education Group Privacy Statement(s)

CEG respects the privacy of its students and the users of its website, and will handle individual's personal information in compliance with all relevant laws and regulations. CEG publishes its privacy policies on the website.

Personal Information Collected

CEG collects personal information on students including their name, date of birth, contact details and matters directly relevant to their course. It also tracks academic progress. Some courses require CEG to record a student's PPS number for registering results with examining bodies. Financial information may also be recorded to take payment. With regard to website usage, CEG only collects information from users that is explicitly supplied under Contact Us (plus your IP address) or under the Live Chat section. Web user data is not forwarded to any third parties.

Special Categories of Personal Data

CEG may also record some special categories of personal data which is obtained directly from the student. This information is treated as confidential and only disclosed to the relevant staff and other bodies if/as required.

Special Categories

CEG will not require students to provide information that is regarded as a special category of personal data under Article 9 of the General Data Protection Regulation. However, some students may volunteer this information. For example, students may advise us of health issues so that an accommodation can be provided regarding exams, or dietary requirements for religious reasons.

National Vetting

Some courses require the student to undertaking National Vetting. CEG will retain relevant information for not longer than the student is on the relevant work placement. This information shall only be provided directly to the student.

Visas

CEG assist some students in gaining visas and in some cases have an obligation to provide their attendance records to the Irish Naturalisation and Immigration Service. This is particularly relevant to English Language students from outside the EU.

CCTV

CCTV footage is captured and stored in some CEG buildings. CEG will provide the Garda with this footage on their request if they advise that they are investigating criminality, or we suspect criminality. Stored footage is typically kept for 30 days before it is automatically deleted.

Access and Rectification and Deletion

Individuals have certain rights under GDPR to obtain a copy of the data CEG might retain. If an individual is aware of any inaccuracy in the personal data supplied to or held by CEG, if advised CEG we will update its records accordingly. CEG will delete individual's information held on request, except that which we must keep in accordance with the law or relevant regulations. CEG will periodically delete portions of individual's data as necessary. However, it may retain some of details indefinitely, including basic details, the course completed, and assessment outcomes. We do this to support future certification requests or requests to confirm course

completion details to a potential employer. Any request may be emailed to mydata.rights@citycolleges.ie. Any web-user may request access to, rectification or erasure of their personal data that is held by CEG by emailing mydata.rights@citygroup.ie. They can also ask CEG to stop processing their data. If requested, users have the right to receive their personal data in a structured, commonly used and machine readable format. CEG will delete information held on an individual's request, except that which we must keep in accordance with the law.

Direct Marketing

CEG will not add individuals to its direct marketing list without your express permission, and will remove them from this list at their request. If an individual requests that CEG stops contacting them with marketing information, it will do so.

Cookies

CEG's website does not use cookies, apart from 'session' cookies, which allow the organisation to remember which pages on this website have already been visited. No information is retained once the 'session' is ended, and CEG does not use cookies to profile or does not track individuals on the website for marketing, performance or profiling purposes.

Security

CEG takes appropriate physical and security measures, including staff awareness training to maintain the security of personal data supplied reviews these measures regularly. CEG partners and purchases its software and services from market leaders in their field, to further ensure the security of individual's data. As a result, some data may be stored on the cloud, however, CEG remains the controller of that data.

Documentation Version Control and Updating

Version controls for all documentation are in place and subject to authoring access control, editing control, and level of confidentiality control.

Documentation Responsibilities

Responsibility for authoring, editing, generating documentation is identified and confirmed and resides with the functional responsibilities and roles of specific individuals within the City Education Group.

7.0 Public Information and Communication

Guide

[Ref: QQI Core QAG 9 - *Public Information and Communication*; ESG 1.8;]

Please refer to Chapter 11 of the [City Education Group's QA Manual](#).

CEG engages its Marketing Team to organise marketing campaigns relevant to each of its specific colleges. Each college holds weekly meetings with the Marketing Team to determine and agree spend on relevant communications methods of communicating with the public such as using social media channels such as FaceBook and Instagram. Open Days are held for all Colleges at various points in the year and Virtual Open Evenings are now held regularly since the onset of Covid-19. As we emerge from Covid-19, the Virtual Open Evening still remains popular with potential students due to its convenience. In this reporting period, three Virtual Open Evenings have been held.

Prior to Covid, CEG would also typically attend regular relevant Education and Recruitment Fairs in person.

The most up to date CEG QA Manual is located on each of the College's individual websites as well as being housed on the CEG website.

8.0 Monitoring and Periodic Review

Guide:

[Ref: QQI Core QAG 2.1 - *Governance and Management of Quality*, 2.2 - *Documented Approach to Quality Assurance*, 2.10.3 - *Expert panellists, examiners and authenticators*, 2.11 - *Self-Evaluation, Monitoring and Review*; ESG 1.1]

Please refer to Chapter 4 of [City Education Group's QA Manual](#).

Programme Leaders and Programme Board are required to ensure that monitoring of teaching, learning, and assessment; the student learning experience; and other aspects of the programme takes place.

Ongoing monitoring of programmes will include the following feedback mechanisms:

- Programme Board meetings
- Subject/module feedback or equivalent mechanisms
- Informal feedback, for example through Programme Leader

- Peer Observation throughout teaching, or equivalent mechanisms
- Feedback from External Examiners and responses to reports
- Annual and periodic review processes are required to provide an approach that promotes enhancement of programmes through:
 - regular, consistent review of programme achievements and challenges
 - reflection on the programme rationale; curriculum content; teaching, learning and assessment strategy; and future programme development

Programme Monitoring and Review - Annual Report

- Academic Board is responsible overall for academic and professional standards within programmes
- Each programme is required to produce an Annual Report that reviews and evaluates its progress during the preceding year and identifies targets for action in the coming year.
- Annual Reports will also be produced as required in accordance with the regulations of a accrediting/awarding/professional body. Within the CEG reporting cycle an overview report of the provision is normally produced which fits within the overarching accrediting/awarding/professional body requirements for the Annual Reporting cycle.
- Annual reports will, as appropriate, meet the requirements of the accrediting/awarding/professional body, and focus on the achievements, issues and enhancement opportunities in a programme rather than be a record of all aspects of its operation. The Academic Board will identify requirements for CEG Annual Report. This may include the location for information associated with the Annual Reports to be readily available (for example in the quality assurance documentation located on the public drive) rather than needing to be included in each copy of the report.
- The purpose of the Annual Report is to give a clear overview of the work done on a programme or group programmes over the year (what was planned? what was achieved?) and outline what the programme(s) will be working on for the next year in order to inform and improve the programme(s) and to aid self evaluation.
- The Annual Reports will indicate progress and achievement at given times, and will normally be presented annually. The Academic Board will decide at which point in the year the Annual Report will be presented for each programme. Annual reporting cycles will, as appropriate, also be related to the accrediting/awarding/professional body 's annual reporting requirements.
- Programme Leaders, in consultation with the programme team, and in liaison with a number of other College teams such as Admissions, Marketing, IT, Student Support, will be responsible for producing annual review/programme monitoring reports for the respective accrediting/awarding/professional body and for CEG reporting purposes. In the compilation of the report, the Programme Leader will refer to appropriate evidence sources, including External Examiners' reports, student statistics, Programme Board meetings and minutes and actions undertaken during the preceding year, as well as feedback from other stakeholders.
- The Programme Leader will submit the Annual Report to the Programme Board for confirmation and comment. The Programme Board may append additional comments to it prior to its submission to the Academic Board. The Director of Quality and/or the Academic Board may provide critical feedback and comment on the contents of the

Annual Report to the programme leader, the programme board, and where appropriate to academic board.

- The Academic Board or the Director of Quality (depending on the timing of annual report and where required for compliance with the accrediting/awarding/professional body reporting cycle) may consider Annual Reports and will provide an overview report for use within CEG to support wider review and/or programme development activity.
- The Annual Report should be reflective in nature - using Borton's (1970) framework - What? So what? Now what?
- Each heading should connect to the priority areas as outlined in the CEG's Towards 2021, Strategic Plan, and the CEG's Teaching, Learning and Assessment Strategy (and its suite of accompanying documents), and the CEG's Research Strategy, in order to ensure a clear trajectory between the strategic objectives and their programmatic/College realisations.
- Each section should:
 - give an update (what?) (descriptive in nature, provided by the section's owner(s))
 - provide comment (so what? - to be provided by the owner(s) of the update)
 - conclude with an analysis provided by the overall Leader of the programme (now what?)
- All of the above leads to Section II of the report where the Programme Leader writes the Findings & Recommendations based on Section I of the report.
- The completed report is presented to the College's Director/Dean, on an agreed date, who fills Section III of the report, which is an overall analysis of all reports received.
- In Section III of the Annual Report, the College's Academic Director/Dean documents Key Priority Indicators (KPIs) and Action Plan for the forthcoming twelve-month reporting period, based on his/her analysis of Sections I and II.
- In all cases, the Programme Leader will write the overall associated analysis of each section in Section I and complete Section II in its entirety.
- The Annual Report will normally consider the following:
 - review of achievements during the previous year, including innovation and good practice, teaching and learning, scholarship;
 - A record of the principal actions taken resulting from of previous annual reviews as well as issues identified, resolved and outstanding during the previous year;
 - Developments in the programme and subjects/modules, including any proposed or anticipated modifications;
 - Analysis of feedback from programme stakeholders, including as appropriate students, teaching staff, and where appropriate employers, professional bodies and alumni;
 - External examiners' reports and other feedback for the previous year and responses to the reports;
 - Enhancement priorities and targets for the coming year and how they are to be addressed
 - Annual reports may include or make available appropriate statistical summaries which contribute to the consideration of the programme(s) at that point in time. These may include consideration of:
 - applications and admissions data, including grants of Advanced Standing or Academic Credit through APL
 - cohort demographic analyses
 - academic performance and progression data

- module evaluation statistics
 - External Examiners' reports and the formal response from the Programme Leader to the External Examiner will be made available with the Annual Report.
 - Programme Board minutes, as well as student module evaluation data, will be made available with the Annual Reports.
- The College's complete Annual Report (Sections I, II and III) is presented to Academic Board and following that, to the Board of Directors.
 - CEG has developed its own Annual Report template. All staff receive training on the Annual Report and its completion.
 - The Academic Board considers all annual reports and particularly the action plan and KPI section of the reports, as part of an overview of the aspects of the provision related to awarding/accrediting/professional bodies, as appropriate. This identifies any strategic or operationally significant recommendations for action. The compilation of overview reports normally summarises the areas of focus which are considered by Academic Board, and also by the SMT as part of its business oversight of the provision with regard to resource requirements.

Using Feedback to Monitor and Improve Programme Quality

CEG recognises that feedback is hugely useful in terms of its commitment to the continual improvement of its programmes. CEG recognise that feedback provides vital information as to how it can continue to improve upon the quality of educational provision. Therefore, CEG, through consultation across the Group, has developed a realistic Feedback Strategy, which allows it to garner feedback from students and staff which may be used to support programme enhancement. Feedback is secured on a regular basis, formally and informally, from the stakeholders identified in Figure 6 below, and through the mechanisms and channels identified in Figure 7.

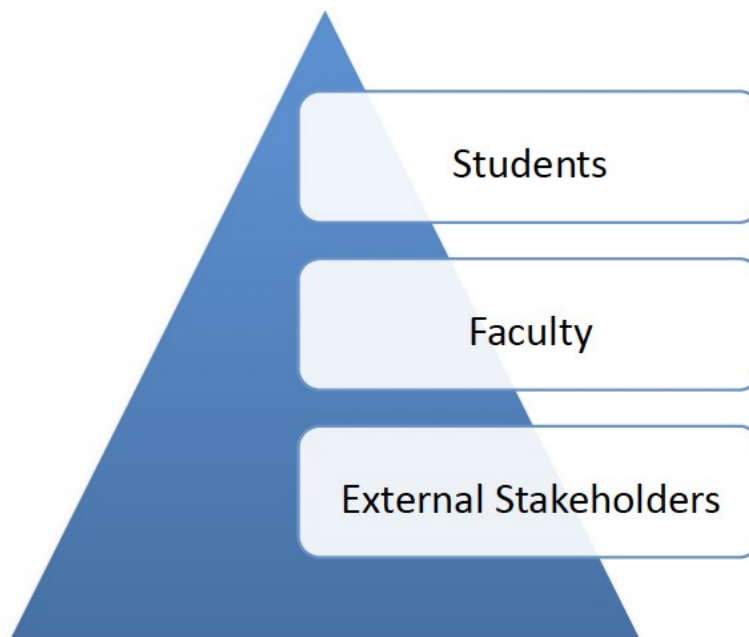


Fig. 6: CEG identified stakeholders for Feedback provision

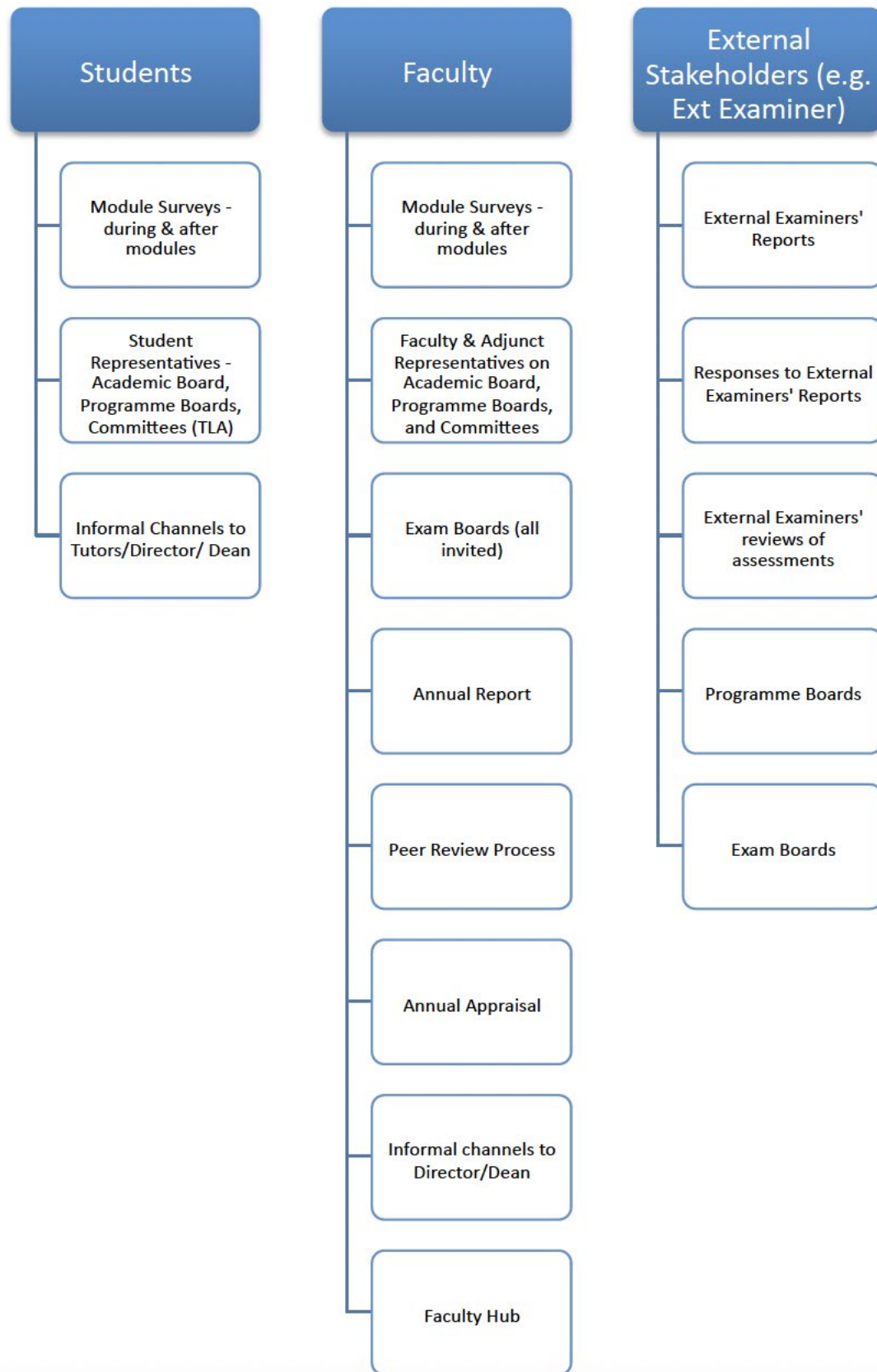


Figure 7: CEG Stakeholder Feedback Channels

Quality is assured through regular use of the feedback channels identified in Figure 7, which include:

- the inclusion of student representatives within the formal governance structure which provides formal feedback from student representatives at these committees, for example Academic Board and Programme Boards.
- regular student feedback on the quality of their learning experience with module surveys conducted during and at the end of all modules.
- teaching staff feedback on module and programme matters - gathered during and at the end of all modules. Staff also provide feedback through their membership of, for example, Academic Board, Programme Board and the Teaching, Learning and Assessment Committee.
- module performance analysis related to the evaluation and monitoring of academic and/or professional standards reached in each module and each programme - at the Board of Examiners.
- external examiners' feedback via external examiners' reports and Programme Board responses to these reports.
- the Annual Report, written by the Director/Dean, provides a comprehensive overview of a programme through a variety of lenses and provides Action Plans and Key Performance Indicators for use in the following academic year.
- the external review and monitoring of programmes through regular CEG and/or third-party processes and procedures, including formal QQI review and revalidation exercises.
- the peer observation and review of teaching and learning.

Peer Observation

Best practice in teaching, learning and assessment and in CEG requires that faculty who are involved in the delivery of programmes within the Group, conduct reflective reviews of their own teaching in order to enhance students' learning and faculty's teaching practices. CEG's beliefs about teaching, learning and assessment are set out in The City Education Group's Graduate Attributes Framework, The City Education Group's Teaching, Learning & Assessment Strategy and The City Education Group's Teaching, Learning & Assessment Philosophy. All faculty are expected to read and be familiar with these documents, the practices in teaching, learning and assessment which are advocated therein, and the attributes which CEG hope that its students will attain from the learning experiences which CEG provides. This process is designed with the express purpose of continuing to drive excellence for both faculty and students; it is built upon the expertise of the CEG's faculty, and aims to showcase the exemplary practice within the Group. The process for Peer Observation is outlined in the [City Education Group's QA Manual](#), section 4.3.1. Based on best practice in teacher education, Faculty are given clear guidance on what to observe during a session.

The Use of Mentoring and Appraisal Systems

The use of mentoring and appraisal systems, combined with the initiative and substantial experience of teaching and support staff, contribute equally to the ongoing enhancement of programmes and the learning environment as well as supporting the maintenance of academic and professional standards achieved by students. Quality and quality enhancement are responsibilities for management, teaching staff and support staff across the CEG. The application and development of quality assurance at the programme level is primarily the responsibility of the Programme Leaders and the Director/Dean. In these areas, the Director of

Quality and appropriate staff (e.g. senior administrative staff) provide general and specific advice as well as reporting to Academic Board as appropriate.

Across all areas, CEG's Academic Board promotes the sharing of good practice and provides a focus for enhancement based on critical self appraisal. In doing this key Academic Board operating principles include:

- Transparency - quality processes and enhancement activities are able to demonstrate the maintenance of academic and professional standards and assurance of quality to those not directly engaged with the specific or particular programme
- Simplicity - quality processes and enhancement developments are 'fit for purpose', and integrated with the normal programme activity whenever practical and feasible
- Focus on participants and outcomes - quality activities are driven by the desire to deliver high quality programmes to students as well as meeting vision aims.

In relation to academic and professional programmes, the achievement of academic and professional standards is monitored within quality processes at programme level through:

- The confirmation of academic and professional standards by external examiners/accrediting body moderators and at progression-interim finals/Board of Examiners/awards boards;
- Regular annual and/or periodic review monitoring undertaken by Academic Board; academic and professional and administrative support staff; the Director of Quality; the respective academic and professional programme team; the Programme Leader and the collaborating body/degree awarding body;
- Regular formal reporting mechanisms.

CEG is committed to meeting specified national and international standards. This includes meeting all the requirements of QQI and/or the respective professional body (as appropriate). The quality assurance approach towards its academic and professional programmes reflects in matters of detail CEG's distinctive strategy and strength rather than seeking to simply copy and imitate approaches used in large higher education and/or professional body providers. CEG seeks to encourage and engage its teaching staff with a range of external activities and professional bodies in order to gain from the breadth of experience elsewhere in education and the professions.

Periodic Programme Review

Programmes at CEG will normally be subject to a periodic review which takes place within the regulatory requirements of respective accrediting/awarding/professional bodies. This may include review of single programmes or groups of programmes. The schedule for third-party periodic review of programmes will be determined by CEG, and normally in consultation with the relevant accrediting/awarding/professional body. Please refer to section 4.4 of the [City Education Group's QA Manual](#) for further details of Periodic Review (including conducting a Self Evaluation).

External Examiners at CEG (please refer to section 8.25 of the [City Education Group's QA Manual](#).)

- External Examiners are appointed and operate within the Academic and Professional Regulations of respective applicable CEG programmes, and where required those of the accrediting/awarding/professional bodies.

- The External Examiner system will provide the formal mechanism by which CEG confirms that the academic and professional standards of its programmes match (where applicable) Irish, professional body, and international academic and/or professional standards. Where applicable to specific programmes, CEG and/or the accrediting/awarding/professional body are responsible for the appointment of their respective External Examiners who are appointed to confirm the standards of programmes at the final award and/or intermediary Level.
- Where appointed programmes will be required to have External Examiners who are able to comment on the overall standards of the programmes and are not necessarily required to be appointed for each individual programme. The appointments responsibility of the External Examiner will vary between CEG and accrediting/awarding/professional body requirements and these arrangements are subject to applicable specifications and Regulations.
- External Examiners will be appointed for the period of office specified in their respective Regulations. Exceptionally, extensions to appointed periods may be offered by CEG and/or a respective accrediting/awarding/professional body if there are strong grounds for so doing. Extensions to the period of office of an External Examiner are required to be approved by Academic Board or the respective accrediting/awarding/professional body.

Criteria for appointment of an External Examiner

- External Examiners will be independent of CEG and the respective accrediting/awarding/professional body and will not have been employed at CEG for a designated previous period subject to applicable Regulations and periods of office. They will normally have recent examining experience (preferably external examining experience) or comparable professional and/or academic experience. Their experience will indicate that they have competence and clear capability to act as an External Examiner for the Level(s) of programme(s), or group of programmes to which they have been appointed.
- External Examiners will have academic and/or professional standing, expertise and experience in higher education and/or professional practice which is germane to the subject/discipline being assessed-examined and at a level(s) matching the programme(s) and/or groups of programmes to be assessed-examined, in order to be able to confirm the standards achieved at the specific Level for which they have been appointed.
- External Examiners will normally be a current member, or may be a recently retired member of a higher education and/or professional institution; and/or have sufficient experience of higher education or professional activity in Ireland or internationally and/or have previous experience in a higher education or professional institution at the Level(s) being examined and equivalent standing in a commercial or other organisation. External examiners are required to have empathy with the values of delivering higher education and/or professional programmes to a higher education and/or professional student body at the respective NFQ Level or at an equivalent international Level.
- In appointing External Examiner(s) CEG, and respective accrediting/awarding/professional body, will normally be expected to look for and appoint an appropriate balance of existing expertise to be held by External Examiners

and they are preferred to have recent experience of assessing students on a comparable Level of programme(s) elsewhere (either as an internal or external examiner).

- External Examiners who may be seen through their previous association with CEG and/or with a accrediting/awarding/professional body to be compromising the objectivity of the External Examiner role and their effective execution of their duties and responsibilities will not be appointed as an External Examiner. Such ineligible categories may include:
 - Teaching staff or other CEG staff, either currently or previously employed by CEG within the respective defined prohibited period. This exclusion period for CEG programmes is 36 months prior to the commencement of an external examinership.
 - Those with recent close involvement with the delivery of CEG academic and/or professional programmes or with staff, or with students, who are in any way involved with the programme(s) being examined and for which the external examiner is being appointed.
 - Current CEG students and previous graduates of CEG programmes within the CEG defined prohibited period
 - Current or previous consultants or advisors to CEG (including external members of academic committees) who have provided a consultancy service to CEG within the CEG defined prohibited period.
 - Current professional clients or consultants of CEG.
 - Current shareholders or similar individuals who have a defined interest in the affairs of CEG or those who have held such interest within the previous thirty six months prior to the commencement period as an external examiner.

- External Examiners will be excluded from consideration and will not be normally appointed if they are:
 - Personally associated with the sponsorship of students.
 - Required to assess colleagues who are students on the programme.
 - In a position to significantly influence the future employment of students as an employer.

- In appointing External Examiners, except where specific allowance is made by professional bodies and/or accrediting bodies, CEG, and accrediting/awarding/professional body will normally use the following general principles:
 - External examiners will not hold more than two other substantive external examining appointments in the higher education and/or professional community in Ireland or internationally.
 - There must not be more than one external examiner from the same professional organisation or higher education Institution in any one assessment board. There should be no reciprocal examining arrangements with another institution or professional body on the same or similar programme(s).
 - An external examiner may not be replaced by another external examiner from the same institution or professional body as the retiring external examiner.
 - No External Examiner may be re-appointed within the prohibited period of years following a previous appointment as an External Examiner at CEG.

- Any proposed exception to these principles will require to be approved by Academic Board and/or the accrediting/awarding/professional body.

Appointment of External Examiners - Nomination and Approval

Nominations for External Examiners will be made and considered within the respective Regulations and procedures. All CEG appointments are required to be approved by the Academic Board.

The Role of External Examiners within CEG

- External examiners are appointed as independent expert reviewers, evaluators and moderators of the assessment and examinations process. They are expected to ensure that standards of academic and/or professional programmes match their intentions that students are assessed according to the requirements of Programme descriptors, and that justice in assessment and examinations is done and seen to be done for individual students.
- The external examiner's role is defined within the respective CEG and/or accrediting/awarding/professional body regulations. The CEG Regulations define the role of the external examiner as below.
- The role of the CEG external examiners includes the following obligations:
 - Attend Board of Examiners meetings (and where attendance is not possible, to make a written report available to the meeting)
 - Scrutinise a representative sample of work which has been submitted for assessment
 - Scrutinise a representative sample of assessed work placed by the internal examiners in each percentage band at the Levels assessed at that examinations diet
 - Review, comment on, and approve examination papers (and where appropriate marking guidelines)
 - Comment, when consulted by the Board of Examiners, on the content and form of all assessments including course assessment models and proposals and Examinations
 - Advise, where appropriate, the CEG Board of Examiners on:
 - o The appropriateness and effectiveness of internal assessment and marking processes
 - o Assessment regulations and modes of assessment
 - o The desirability of any moderation or (only in exceptional circumstances-remarking of assessed work)
 - o The appropriateness of the Academic and/or Professional Standards against which the assessment process has taken place
 - o Cases involving disagreement between Internal Examiners.
- External examiners may also provide comment to Board of Examiners in the development of a body of good practice for exercise of its academic and professional judgement under the CEG Regulations
- Subject to applicable Regulations, in the event of exceptional circumstances (such as an Academic or Professional Appeal or Mitigating Exceptional Circumstances), to be

involved when requested by the Board of Examiners, in any required additional review of the student's assessed work or specially arranged assessment, for example an oral examination

- Comment on the academic standards achieved in the programme(s) for which they are an external examiner and the degree to which they meet the academic and/or professional standards of the NFQ and the professional bodies as appropriate.
- Confirm in writing that they approve all marks and award of credit and sign the Board of Examiners record sheets
- Submit external examiner reports in the form and at the time prescribed by the CEG and/or the respective accrediting/awarding/professional body.
- Subject to the respective applicable Regulations External Examiners are normally required to:
 - o Attend any meeting of a Board of Examiners of which they are a member (or if not available to provide commentary on the assessment being conducted).
 - o Declare matters of principle at a Board of Examiners that will be dealt with in accordance with these regulations.
 - o Review the assessment of the programme(s) for which they are external examiner.
 - o Be consulted on assessment specifications and other assessment arrangements before they are implemented.
 - o Inform CEG, and/or where applicable, an accrediting/awarding/professional body and/or the respective Chair of Academic Board of any concern about academic or professional standards.
- Where required within the applicable award bearing Regulations and subject to the requirements of CEG, and/or the accrediting/awarding/professional body, prior to the meeting of the respective Board of Examiners the appointed External Examiner(s) will be sent an agreed representative sample of the assessed work for review and for the confirmation of the achievement of respective academic and/or professional standards for that assessment diet.
- Where the CEG and/or accrediting/awarding/professional body specify the protocols for the role of the External Examiner, including the way in which work submitted for assessment is to be marked and/or moderated, and the proportion of representative work to be seen by the External Examiner, then the respective protocols and procedures related to the award of credit and/or the final classification and conferment of the final award are to be followed.
- The external examiner(s) role, for all programmes requiring the use of External Examiners, will be required to confirm the academic and/or professional standards and the sequence and order which is represented by the agreed sample of assessed work sent to him/her. The agreed sample seen by the External Examiner will in all cases be appropriate and enable the External Examiner to moderate, confirm, evaluate and cover the full mark runs for the modules/components of assessment being assessed at the relevant Board of Examiners sitting. This will normally be expected to include a representative sample of a selection of modules, a representative sample selection of assessment modes, and a representative sample of the student population for that assessment component including:

- Assessed work which is marked at a fail level or below;
 - A sample of assessed work in other bands of percentage marks including assessed work that is just above the pass mark and in the highest category of marks for that mode or assessment component being marked.
- The External Examiner, either through the sample sent, or at the time of their visit to the examination-assessment board may also be asked to review marks of individual students outside this sample.
 - The External Examiner will review the marks given by the internal marker(s) and provide comment on any individual papers or scripts where he/she has concerns.
 - The examination-assessment board will review the comments of the External Examiner and the final agreed mark for the respective assessment will be presented to the relevant Board of Examiners for conferment.

Written Examinations

- Course definitive documentation and programme descriptors will include details of all assessments-examinations associated with a programme and/or module. The assessment-examinations timetable will include the dates, times and locations of examinations.
- In this context, formal examinations are modes of assessment based on answers to questions set out in an examination paper and written in an answer book and for which students are required to attend at specified times and locations in an examination room. Examinations are undertaken in examinations room conditions unless specified by a CEG accrediting/awarding/professional body.

Further details in relation to the appointment and role of External Examiners, including the External Examiners' Reports is located in Chapter 8 of the [City Education Group's QA Manual](#).

The Director of Quality and Registrar play a key role in ensuring that all the internal QA procedures within CEG engages with external quality assurance.

Details of Arrangements with Third Parties

Guide:

Under this section, provide details of engagement with third parties, including:

- Arrangements with PRSBs, awarding bodies, QA bodies
- Collaborative provision
- Articulation agreements

If available on the institution's website, include links to separate lists of all other relevant arrangements with third parties that were entered into prior to the reporting period.

9.1 Arrangements with PRSBs, Awarding Bodies, QA Bodies

Guide:

Type of arrangement	Total Number
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PRSBs	
Awarding bodies	QQI x 2
QA bodies	

1. Type of arrangement (PRSB/awarding body/QA body)	Validation
Name of body:	QQI
Programme titles and links to publications	Bachelor of Arts (Hons.) in Business Studies
Date of accreditation or last review	July 2020
Date of next review	

2. Type of arrangement (PRSB/awarding body/QA body)	Validation
Name of body:	QQI
Programme titles and links to publications	Bachelor of Arts (Hons.) in Early Childhood Education & Care
Date of accreditation or last review	December 2020
Date of next review	

9.2 Collaborative Provision

During the reporting period, CEG does not currently offer any formal collaborative, transnational programmes, or joint awards validated or awarded by QQI. Please refer to Chapter 9 of the [City Education Group's QA Manual](#).

9.3 Articulation Agreements

During the reporting period, CEG does not currently offer any articulation agreements. Please refer to Chapter 9 of the [City Education Group's QA Manual](#).

9.0 Details of Arrangements with Third Parties

9.1 Arrangements with PRSBs, Awarding Bodies, QA Bodies

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

9.2 Collaborative Provision

Type of arrangement	Total Number
Joint research degrees	0
Joint/double/multiple awards	0
Collaborative programmes	0
Franchise programmes	0
Linked providers (DABs only)	0

9.3 Articulation Agreements

Articulation agreements - Total number

0

[Higher Education Institution]

2022

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

PART B: INTERNAL QA SYSTEM

Guidelines on Completing Part B

As outlined in the general guidelines for this template (p.5), **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 submission were progressed during the reporting period - these may be plans linked to strategic objectives, to reengagement advices, or to institutional review recommendations.

Part B of the AQR is an opportunity for self-reflection and critical evaluation of the effectiveness of QA activities over the reporting period. Institutions are encouraged to reflect both on what worked well and what did not work well, and to consider impact measures, using both quantitative and qualitative evidence (metrics, benchmarks and feedback/judgement) in how they led to specific QA improvements and enhancement.

Part B provides evidence of quality improvement and enhancement and impact² of QA activities within the totality of an institution's QA system.

Section 1 pertains to internal quality assurance implementation and developments since the previous reporting period.

Section 2 deals with institutional analysis of IQA enhancements and impacts including activities undertaken in respect of academic integrity, and the enhancements and impacts resulting from same.

Section 3 relates to IQA developments and plans for the next reporting period.

Section 4 provides an opportunity for institutions to illustrate IQA in action through case studies in relevant thematic areas.

Institutions are invited, if they wish to do so, to use case studies to demonstrate quality in action and to highlight areas of practice for dissemination at any point in this part of the report.

Case Studies

QQI recommends that written case studies should:

- Be between half a page and two pages in length;
- Relate to a specific time- and subject-bound issue;
- Include an introduction that sets out a brief overview of contextual matters;
- Include any relevant supporting data and data analysis;
- Include links to any sources cited;
- Include a clear concluding paragraph with overview of key outcomes/learning.

Although case studies will generally be in written form, institutions may also provide links to audio-visual/multimedia case studies. QQI does not prescribe a format for case studies.

² The National Forum for the Enhancement of Teaching and Learning in Higher Education have considered impact and measures leading to development and improvement specifically in terms of teaching and learning. See: <https://www.teachingandlearning.ie/wp-content/uploads/NF-2020-Insights-from-Practice-About-Impact-in-Teaching-and-Learning-web-ready.pdf>. This is a very useful reference, though impact in the context of this report should be considered

1.0 Quality Implementation and Developments

1.1 Strategic QA Updates

Note: This is CEG's first AQR and as such, we do not have a previous AQR to which we can refer. We gained successful Initial Access to Validation from QQI in July, 2019. As such, we have used the period post Initial Access to Validation, when we were reflecting and implementing QA enhancements and improvements to aid us in completing the section below.

Overview

City Education Group gained Initial Access to Validation in May, 2019. In the period that preceded this, CEG had engaged in extensive work in relation to Quality Assurance. Following successful application for Initial Access to Validation, the Group engaged in further robust developments in Quality Assurance across the Group. Arising out of this extensive period of reflection and action in terms of quality enhancements and development, the section below outlines how the Group's Strategic Objectives were aligned to KPIs which helped us to make quality improvements and enhancements arising in the reporting period of this AQR.

CEG's Strategic Objectives

In City Education Group's Strategic Plan, *Towards 2021*, CEG outlined its strategic objectives for the three year period 2018-2021, which includes this reporting period. *Towards 2021* highlighted how the world continues to change at an alarming rate, and how, against such a backdrop, there is an even greater need to ensure that our programmes and our educational offerings within City Education Group are responsive to the emerging and changing needs of society.

Within this context, our Strategic Plan set out our role in City Education Group to be responsive to the needs of the individual, society and the economy. We understand that education is considered a key driver of economic and social success for individuals, employers and nations (OECD, 2010). A higher level of education can lead to a series of positive outcomes for both the individual and society related to employment, higher salaries, better health, less crime, higher social cohesion, lower public and social costs and higher productivity and growth (European Commission/EACEA/Eurydice/Cedefop, 2014). Those with higher levels of educational qualifications are more likely to access high quality employment and gain higher pay levels and these advantages persist through adult life (Byrne and Smyth, 2010). Highly educated adults have broader social advantages, including improved health status (Smyth and McCoy, 2009). Education has a documented effect on health, nutrition, economic development and on environmental protection (UNESCO, 2015). In many quarters, education is believed to offer a route whereby people can escape from disadvantaged family backgrounds and climb the social ladder (Drudy, 2009). More educated people tend to live longer, tend to engage in more civic activities and tend to feel happier (OECD, 2016). In City Education Group, we aim to provide accessible, responsive educational programmes to our learners so as to enrich their lives and empower learners towards success.

In keeping with the above, our mission therefore, is to provide learners with accessible, high quality, flexible learning opportunities, and professional development programmes that reflect

current and emerging knowledge and practices relevant to the learner, society and to employers. Our vision is the provision of excellence in responsive applied education. Through the delivery of excellent further and higher education programmes, CEG is committed to transforming the lives of its learners by providing an enriching and inspiring learning environment. These learners will, in turn, contribute positively to the educational, economic and cultural development of Ireland and beyond.

We endeavour to provide an enriching learning environment which affords learners the opportunity to attain their best whilst studying on our programmes. Our main vision as a leading educational Group, is to transform lives through excellence in teaching and learning and by inspiring our teachers, students, and graduates.

Our main strategic vision for the Group over the period 2018-2021 was to further strengthen our reputation as a leading independent higher education provider, providing innovative, responsive education, which can transform the lives of our learners.

In order to help us achieve this, we aimed to focus on the following eight Strategic Objectives:



Figure 8: Strategic Objectives for CEG's Strategic Plan, *Towards 2021*

The above Strategic Objectives are the result of input from stakeholders gathered during a two stage consultation process for our Strategic Plan 2018-2021. Each Strategic Objective is supported by a number of Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) which will help us to achieve the various objectives.

The following table outlines quality improvements and enhancements arising out of the period of Initial Access to Validation and afterwards, and the internal quality improvements that emerged following a period of self-evaluation and reflection across the Group. The quality

improvements and enhancements are aligned with our eight Strategic Objectives. In order to help us realise each Strategic Objective, we have documented a series of KPIs for each Strategic Objective.

Table 2: CEG Quality Assurance Improvements & Enhancements aligned with Strategic Objectives and Associated KPIs

Strategic Objective 1: Excellence in inclusive Teaching, Learning and Assessment	
KPI	Status
<p>Creating a suite of documents which will enhance Teaching, Learning and Assessment across the Group. We commit to creating a:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Graduate Attributes Framework • Teaching, Learning and Assessment Strategy • Teaching, Learning and Assessment Philosophy • Digital Strategy <p>It is our aim that the above documents will underpin all our teaching, learning and assessment on all programmes across the Group and help to support our shared vision.</p>	<p>Completed</p> <p>The following documents have all been created (and in some cases, updated):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>The City Education Group Digital Strategy. (2019) (Updated 2020)</i> - <i>The City Education Group Marks & Standards. (2020)</i> - <i>The City Education Group Digital Strategy. (2019)</i> - <i>The City Education Group Teaching, Learning & Assessment Strategy. (2018) (Updated 2019)</i> - <i>The City Education Group Teaching, Learning & Assessment Philosophy. (2018) (Updated 2019)</i> - <i>The City Education Group Graduate Attributes Framework. (2018) (Updated 2019)</i> - <i>The City Education Group Peer Observation Handbook (2018)</i> - <i>Towards 2021: The City Education Group Strategy Document. (2018)</i>
<p>Supporting the roll out of a:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Graduate Attributes Framework • Teaching, Learning and Assessment Strategy • Teaching, Learning and Assessment Philosophy • Digital Strategy 	<p>Completed</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Training Days have been completed with faculty across the Group using these documents. <p>Ongoing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Annual Refresher Training Days are held across the academic year to ensure that all faculty and staff are familiar with the above documents and any relevant updates.

<p>by ensuring that they form the basis of training for faculty</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - These documents continue to form the basis of orientation for new faculty as well as being part of refresher training. We have created a new orientation programme (both face to face and online) which introduces new employees to the Group and all QA documents, including those listed above are included in this orientation. - We continue to liaise with colleagues in other HEIs with expertise in the areas of TLA and Technology Enabled Learning to help us support faculty in enhancing TLA across the Group.
<p>Supporting all faculty as they embed a:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Graduate Attributes Framework • Teaching, Learning and Assessment Strategy • Teaching, Learning and Assessment Philosophy • Digital Strategy <p>across their programmes and Colleges</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Ongoing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - These documents continue to form the basis of orientation for new faculty as well as being part of refresher training for existing faculty. - Similarly, in order to ensure that CEG programmes are developed in line with these documents, we have developed specific processes for programme development which ensures that Programme Development Committees utilise all relevant QA documents when they are creating new programmes (this includes our TLA and Digital Strategies).
<p>Establishing a Teaching, Learning and Assessment Committee with staff and students to support best practice in teaching, learning and assessment across the Group</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Completed</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The TLA Committee has been established. • The CEG TLA Committee is a sub-committee of the CEG Academic Board and it meets four times a year. • In the reporting period, we invited an external stakeholder with considerable expertise in TLA to

	<p>sit on this Committee. This has been a very positive move and other members of the TLA Committee have commented on how “fruitful” TLA Committee meetings are. Committee members have commented how having an external TLA expert has been a great source of information and learning for them also. As such, we are actively seeking to add further expertise to the TLA Committee (and other such relevant committees).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Similarly, as CEG is a diverse Group, Committee members have commented on how it is very helpful to bring faculty from all across the Group together around the virtual table as they can gain insight and advice from others in the Group.
<p>Continuing to explore and promote the use of a wide range of inclusive teaching, learning and assessment methods including Universal Design for Learning</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Ongoing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - We continue to explore best practice in teaching, learning and assessment through the CEG Teaching, Learning and Assessment Committee. - Specifically in relation to Universal Design for Learning (UDL), we have invited an external stakeholder who sits as an external voice on this TLA Committee, who has completed a National Forum badge in UDL, to facilitate the roll out of this badge across the Group. To date, over 30 faculty have participated in the first UDL course. - We continue to engage with our External Examiners in relation to utilising a wide range of inclusive teaching, learning and assessment strategies. - We have consulted with an Educational Technologist in

	<p>terms of ensuring best practice in TLA across the Group. Before we began the consultation, stakeholders across the Group provided an insight in to areas in which they had questions or required training. As such, the consultation was very targeted for our faculty and their training needs. Faculty voiced that they were very happy to have access to an expert in the area and we have arranged to invite a series of expert speakers to talk with the Group on a range of topics.</p>
<p>Providing regular training for staff in relevant areas which will also be used to showcase best practice</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Ongoing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Regular training days are held throughout the academic year. - Annual Monitoring & Feedback mechanism which we have rolled out (such as Annual Reports, tutor surveys, Programme Boards) have helped us to garner faculty and student voices in terms of specific topics for further training.
<p>Setting up a Centre for Teaching, Learning and Assessment Excellence</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Completed</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The Centre has been a useful support for faculty and students alike. Faculty can use the space as a meeting place to exchange ideas and collaborate. It is also through the Centre that students can access additional help in terms of literacy, English language, Maths, Academic Writing or Study Supports. Students also have access to study space in the Centre.
<p>Creating an online Faculty Hub where faculty can share ideas and resources</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Ongoing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Whilst we have created a shared online space, we continue to work with our IT provider to develop a more robust Faculty Hub. Similar

	<p>to the positive comments expressed when faculty from across the College get an opportunity to sit at a virtual table with faculty from across the Group at various sub committees, faculty have also mentioned that they are really enjoying being able to liaise with other faculty in different CEG colleges and departments to forge collaborations and discuss issues or topics. Faculty mentioned this was especially useful in Covid times, where faculty could exchange ideas on online teaching.</p>
<p>Introducing a Peer Review Process which will aid the provision of high quality teaching, learning and assessment across the Group</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Completed</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - We rolled out the Peer Review/Observation Process in 2020. <p style="text-align: center;">Ongoing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The Peer review/Observation Process is undertaken each academic year.
<p>Establishing a Digital Learning Department (DLD) to support the use of digital technologies in enhancing teaching, learning and assessment across the Group</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Ongoing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - During the reporting period, we consulted with an Educational Technologist to get further specialist advice in this regard. - We have created an e learning studio in our Parliament Street campus.
<p>Establishing a Digital Learning Studio</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Complete</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - During the reporting period, a state of the art Digital Learning Studio has been established in our Parliament Street campus.
<p>Making relevant appointments to ensure the appropriate resourcing and expertise in terms of</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Ongoing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - During the Reporting Period, we conducted a survey which allowed us to gather detail of

teaching, learning and assessment across the Group

inhouse expertise. We also conducted a Needs Analysis in terms of specialist expertise that we require across the Group. This led us to make a number of important appointments which support TLA across the Group.

- During this period we recruited a Registrar to support the Director of Quality in leading quality enhancements and creating a quality culture.
- We recruited a subject specific Early Years specialist.
- We engaged in a consultation with an Educational Technologist to advise on best practice TLA across the Group.
- Through our TLA Committee we invite relevant speakers with relevant expertise to talk to members.
- We appointed a Student Support Officer. (We feel that having an SSO greatly supports learning across the Group in her support and advocating of students).
- We employed Infinite Technology to deal with the CEG IT infrastructure.
- We recruited a Head of HR.
- We recruited a Project Manager.
- We recruited a Research Officer/Librarian.
- We recruited an additional IT Support person bringing our total to three support technicians.
- The Head of HR established a Faculty Database which is hugely useful in terms of establishing available expertise.
- We established an Advisory Board which provides expert help and advice.
- During the Reporting Period, we also rolled out a National Forum badge in UDL.

<p>Enhancing Feedback strategies by introducing end of module tutor and student feedback, Programme Boards and Annual Programme Monitoring Mechanisms such as Annual Reporting mechanisms</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Ongoing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Programme Boards were held on 31st January, 2020, 19th September, 2020 and on 5 April, 2021. - Introducing a participatory governance system, student and tutor surveys, annual reports and Programme Boards has provide particularly positive on a number of levels. - Moving towards a participatory governance system whereby faculty across the Group have seats on various Boards and Committees has been particularly positive. Faculty have committed on how enjoyable it is to learn what is going on across the Group. Equally it has provided opportunities for faculty to collaborate on projects and get advice from other faculty across the Group. - Both faculty and students have commented on how they are “delighted” that they can give feedback in module surveys. - Annual Reports, though daunting to begin with, have proved positive with faculty and staff, with faculty and staff commenting that they felt the level of reflection that was required to complete such reports, helped them to learn more about their programme(s) and this helped them to discover several ways to improve the programme. - Programme Boards proved to be particularly positive and enjoyable as all relevant stakeholders were around the
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	one table with the one goal of improving the programme.
Creating a Tutor/Faculty Handbook which showcases and disseminates best practice	<p style="text-align: center;">Completed</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - A Tutor Handbook has been created. <p style="text-align: center;">Ongoing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The Tutor Handbook is updated every academic year.
Continually reviewing all teaching, learning and assessment practices	<p style="text-align: center;">Ongoing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - This is aided by close collaboration with External Examiners. - We rolled out our Peer Review/Observation Process in May 2020 and this also allows us an opportunity to review TLA across the Group. - Regular monitoring and feedback mechanisms allow us to ensure the quality of TLA across the Group. These include Annual Reporting, tutor and student surveys, and Programme Boards.
Strategic Objective No. 2: Providing a high quality Student Experience, conducive to learning	
Continuing to enhance the employability of our graduates by reviewing our programme offerings to ensure that programmes are responsive to the need of the individual, society, the economy and the employer	<p style="text-align: center;">Ongoing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Our Advisory Board has a number of external experts in various industries. They are huge source of advice for the Group. - Equally, our Colleges remain in close contact with relevant industry experts and up to date research in terms of societal needs and requirements.
Promoting and continuing to develop the effective supports to assist students to manage their mental health particularly during their time with the City Education Group, through the use of meaningful informational workshops on subjects relevant to	<p style="text-align: center;">Ongoing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - We appointed a Student Support Officer - We host a Mental Health Month every November

<p>students. We commit to running a Mental Health Month for students and staff every year.</p>	
<p>Continuing to develop the Careers Service at the Group in enhancing students' job readiness skills and awareness of industry trends, information, and careers available</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Ongoing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - We intend to establish a Careers Service which will run out of the Registrar's Office.
<p>Expanding the wide array of existing student supports and services</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Ongoing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - We have recruited a Student Support Officer. - Students may now access English Language support through City Language School. - Students may now access Literacy and Maths support through our sister second level school. - We have created additional resources which provide students with Academic Writing. - Our IT Department have created a series of 'How To' videos which help students to engage with Moodle and our VLE. - We continue to ensure that our Support Services are multifaceted incorporating academic, administrative, pastoral and IT/technical support.
<p>Involving more student representatives on all relevant committees and boards</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Ongoing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - We are committed to engaging student representatives and we have included having students at relevant committees and boards across CEG in our participatory governance system. - However, we acknowledge that we find it difficult to engage student reps on to programmes as we acknowledge it can be a challenging though rewarding role. As such, we are engaging with the NSTeP programme and

	we hope that with the help of the NSTeP programme, we will be able to recruit and support more student representatives.
Setting up a Student Council	<p>Completed</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - We have established a Student Council. For reasons mentioned above, it is difficult to recruit student reps but students appear more willing to engage in a Council. Our success with Student Council has made us consider if it may be possible to recruit student reps for shorter terms.
Joining the National Student Engagement Programme (NStEP) to support student representatives across the Group	<p>Ongoing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - We could not engage in NStEP until we started running our level 8s. As we are now rolling out two level 8 programmes, we are not in talks with NSTeP to engage with this programme.
Appointing a Student Support Officer	<p>Completed</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Student Support Officer has been appointed.
Encouraging students to get more involved with civic responsibility and charity work	<p>Ongoing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - We continue to engage with a number of charities including St. Vincent de Paul, Team Hope Christmas Show Box Appeal, National Council for the Blind. - In this reporting period, one of our staff members has qualified as a Gaisce Coordinator. As such, we are in a position now to facilitate Gaisce award completion.
Continuing to develop initiatives which will enrich the lives of our student body. These will include enhancing a clubs and societies culture, supporting social events for students, and	<p>Ongoing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Our Student Support Officer has a keen interest in establishing

developing further staff/student community and charity based events and initiatives.	clubs and societies for our student body.
Enhancing existing Orientation Programmes for students and introduce an Orientation Programme where none currently exist	<p style="text-align: center;">Ongoing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - We have created face to face, online and blended orientation programmes. - We continue to improve our Orientation Programmes to ensure that we include Student Support Officer, Exams Office and relevant tutors.
Developing further the pastoral care offering for all learners	<p style="text-align: center;">Ongoing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - We have recruited a Student Support Officer. - We continue to ensure that our Support Services are multifaceted incorporating academic, administrative, pastoral and IT/technical support.
Inviting students to participate in key consultations in order to ensure that their voice is heard	<p style="text-align: center;">Ongoing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - We are committed to engaging student representatives and we have included having students at relevant committees and boards across CEG in our participatory governance system. - However, we acknowledge that we find it difficult to engage student reps on to programmes as we acknowledge it can be a challenging though rewarding role. As such, we are engaging with the NSTeP programme and we hope that with the help of the NSTeP programme, we will be able to recruit and support more student representatives.
Promoting our participatory governance structure in order to ensure the Student Voice is heard and utilised	<p style="text-align: center;">Ongoing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - This is not without its problems, (as outlined above), but we hope that our participatory governance systems , involvement with

	NSTeP and support of our SSO, this will make the Student Voice stronger in CEG.
Strategic Objective No. 3: Reviewing all Academic Governance and Quality Assurance	
Reviewing our entire Academic Governance structure and associated documents and policies, actively involving and consulting with all staff and stakeholders	<p style="text-align: center;">Completed</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Within CEG we revised our Governance System and developed a more participatory governance system with a clear delineation between academic and business interests. - Our QA Manual is reviewed annually through Academic Board. - Many new QA documents have been created and update: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>The City Education Group Digital Strategy. (2019) (Updated 2020)</i> - <i>The City Education Group Marks & Standards. (2020)</i> - <i>The City Education Group Digital Strategy. (2019)</i> - <i>The City Education Group Teaching, Learning & Assessment Strategy. (2018) (Updated 2019)</i> - <i>The City Education Group Teaching, Learning & Assessment Philosophy. (2018) (Updated 2019)</i> - <i>The City Education Group Graduate Attributes Framework. (2018) (Updated 2019)</i> - <i>The City Education Group Peer Observation Handbook (2018)</i> - <i>Towards 2021: The City Education Group Strategy Document. (2018)</i>
Reviewing our Quality Assurance Framework, Manual and Academic Regulations Manual	<p style="text-align: center;">Ongoing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Our QA Assurance Framework, Manual and Academic regulations are reviewed annually through Academic Board
Holding weekly Quality Assurance meetings	Ongoing

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The Director of Quality and the Registrar meet weekly every Thursday. - The Director of Quality and the Registrar hold weekly QA training sessions with faculty across the Group every Monday.
Establishing appropriate governance and quality assurance structures and processes	<p style="text-align: center;">Ongoing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The Director of Quality & the Registrar lead quality enhancements and the development of a quality culture across the Group. This work is ongoing as they continue to roll out quality initiatives across the Group.
Maintaining and reviewing our Quality Assurance system, including a successful Initial Access Application with Quality & Qualifications Ireland (QQI), along with other engagement events throughout our life-cycle with QQI	<p style="text-align: center;">Completed</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - We attained a successful Initial Access to Validation in May, 2019.
Creating a Risk Register	<p style="text-align: center;">Completed</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - We created a CEG Risk Register and we have completed training with relevant staff. This is updated quarterly.
Strategic Objective No. 4: Supporting Staff Development	
Continuing to support the professional development of our staff through mentoring, network training initiatives, development opportunities, education events and career support	<p style="text-align: center;">Ongoing</p>
Creating a suite of documents to support our shared vision such as Teaching, Learning and Assessment, Digital and Research Strategies	<p style="text-align: center;">Completed</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - As above

Introducing a Peer Review Processes, which will encourage reflection and best practice	<p style="text-align: center;">Completed</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - As above
Providing regular training for staff in relevant areas which will also be used to showcase best practice	<p style="text-align: center;">Completed & Ongoing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - As above
Setting up a Centre for Teaching, Learning and Assessment Excellence	<p style="text-align: center;">Completed</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - As above
Creating an online Faculty Hub where faculty can share ideas and resources	<p style="text-align: center;">Completed & Ongoing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - As above
Creating a Tutor/Faculty Handbook which showcases and disseminates best practice	<p style="text-align: center;">Completed & Ongoing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - As above
Inviting/electing staff to sit on relevant Boards and Committees, ensuring that their voices are heard utilising our participatory governance structure	<p style="text-align: center;">Ongoing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - We have developed a participatory governance system which ensures that staff have seats on our various governance committees.
Inviting students to participate in key consultations in order to ensure that their voice is heard	<p style="text-align: center;">Ongoing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - We have developed a participatory governance system which ensures that students have seats on our various governance committees. - We note that it has been difficult to engage part time students in student representation. However, as we roll out our level 8 degrees and engage with NSTeP, with the help of our Student Support Officer, we envisage that student representation will improve.
Enhancing existing Orientation Programmes for staff, to include an online Orientation Programme and introduction to the City Education Group	<p style="text-align: center;">Completed</p>
Enhancing Feedback strategies by introducing end of module tutor and student feedback, Programme	<p style="text-align: center;">Completed</p>

Boards and Annual Programme Monitoring Mechanisms such as Annual Reporting Mechanisms with KPIs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Tutor and Student module surveys have been rolled out. - Programme Boards have been rolled out and are held twice an academic year. - Annual Reports are completed every academic year.
Committing to running a Mental Health Month for students and staff every year.	<p style="text-align: center;">Completed</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - November is Mental Health Month in CEG
Developing further staff/student community and charity based events and initiatives	<p style="text-align: center;">Ongoing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - As a Group, we engage with a number of charities including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o St. Vincent De Paul Food & Toy Appeal o Team Hope Shoe Box Appeal o Focus Ireland o Breast Cancer Ireland o Irish Hospice Foundation o Hygiene Bank Ireland
Developing further the pastoral care offering for all staff such as offering free flu vaccines during flu season	<p style="text-align: center;">Ongoing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - During our Mental Health & Well Being Month in November, staff are offered a free flu vaccine.
Inviting staff to participate in key consultations in order to ensure that their voice is heard	<p style="text-align: center;">Ongoing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - We opened a number of two stage consultations with all staff and students to help us to create a number of our QA Framework documents including our Strategic Plan, our TLA Strategy and Philosophy, our Graduate Attributes Framework and our Digital Strategy.
Developing further the pastoral care offering for all staff	<p style="text-align: center;">Ongoing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Our new Head of HR has engaged in organising a number of staff well being activities including weekly well being sessions every Thursday.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - We hold a Mental Health & Well Being Month every November across CEG. Staff are offered a free flu vaccine during this month.
Creating a Staff Handbook	<p style="text-align: center;">Completed</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Created and made available to all employees at orientation - Regularly updated by the Head of HR
Strategic Objective No. 5: Supporting Research	
Creating The City Education Group Research Strategy	Completed and Updated
Establishing a Research Committee	<p style="text-align: center;">Completed</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Established February, 2020
Establishing an Ethics Committee	<p style="text-align: center;">Completed</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Established February, 2020
Appointing a Research Officer, to promote Research and research funding opportunities/calls within and across the Group	Completed
Actively promoting and encouraging staff and students to disseminate their research	<p style="text-align: center;">Ongoing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Our Research Officer plays a vital role in promoting research across the Group. - Our Research Officer has created a Research section on our Faculty Hub where staff can connect and collaborate on research projects. - We will hold our first Research Conference in May 2022. - Our Research Officer has updated our Research Strategy.
Encouraging staff to collaborate on research papers and presentations	<p style="text-align: center;">Ongoing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - As above. Our Research Officer plays a vital role in creating a research culture across the Group.

Giving research parity of esteem within and across the Group	<p style="text-align: center;">Ongoing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - As above. Our Research Officer plays a vital role in creating a research culture across the Group.
Promoting evidence based practice	<p style="text-align: center;">Ongoing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - We ensure that documents such as our TLA Strategy, TLA Philosophy and Digital Strategy are up to date and based on the best practice in pedagogy. - We ensure that we utilise our training days to roll out the aforementioned documents to all faculty. - Our Peer Observation Process helps us to ensure that we can provide relevant training as required for faculty.
Supporting staff in attendance and presentations at conferences	<p style="text-align: center;">Ongoing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - As above. Our Research Officer plays a vital role in creating a research culture across the Group.
Raising our research profile	<p style="text-align: center;">Ongoing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - As above. Our Research Officer plays a vital role in creating a research culture across the Group.
Strategic Objective No. 6: Supporting Meaningful Collaborations & Partnerships	
Forging links and partnerships with relevant partners	<p style="text-align: center;">Ongoing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - CEG has established progression routes with NCI and St. Nicholas' Montessori. - CEG has established links with a number of Early Year Services for student placements.
Fostering active engagement with industry partners through the establishment of an Industry	<p style="text-align: center;">Ongoing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - CEG established an Advisory Board in 2020.

Employer forum/Industry Advisory Board, Guest Lecturing, and Careers Fairs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - We have engaged a number of Homecare services to speak with students about careers paths and employment opportunities - We intend to run an Career Fairs and we are exploring an online Career Fair. - We ensure that we engage with industry experts when developing programmes and at the development stage, we include external industry voices in our Programme Development Committee.
Facilitating a lifetime relationship with our Alumni, including enhanced communications and engagements with our Alumni community, and profiling of our Alumni to promote The City Education Group brand	<p style="text-align: center;">Ongoing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - We are undertaking to create an Alumni Association through our Sales & Marketing Team.
Carefully considering linked provision partnership with Irish state aided higher education institution(s) for mutually beneficial educational relations, in addition to our relationship with QQI.	<p style="text-align: center;">Ongoing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - We are in discussions with a number of colleagues in other relevant HEIs
Strategic Objective No. 7: Provision of Resourcing & Facilities	
Aiming to provide the Group's community with the best possible learning environment, including learning spaces, library and study areas	<p style="text-align: center;">Ongoing</p>
Continuing to enhance the campuses of the Group as an ever-evolving digital learning environment, with the provision of cutting edge IT infrastructure	<p style="text-align: center;">Ongoing</p>
Continuing to promote principles of equality, mutual respect, and embracing diversity	<p style="text-align: center;">Ongoing</p>
Ensuring a balanced approach to assessing the Group's physical, academic, and organisational capacity as the Group grows and expands	<p style="text-align: center;">Ongoing</p>

<p>Continuing to support the professional development of our staff</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Ongoing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - We continue to create a supportive environment for staff development. - We have rolled our first National Forum course for a Digital Badge in UDL - 30 faculty enrolled. - One of our faculty has completed a Professional Development PACT - National Forum Facilitators' Digital Badge which we look forward to rolling out across the Group. - We will hold our inaugural Research Conference in May 2022. - We have rolled out a 10 week diploma for staff and faculty on Diversity & Inclusion in the Classroom. - We hold a Mental Health & Well Being every November. - We hold Well Being sessions for staff and faculty every Thursday.
<p>Maintaining best practice of corporate governance and organisational development including the constant review of our Quality Assurance system, quality promotion, human resources management, health and safety, overall college capacity, profitability and internal auditing</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Ongoing</p>
<p>Strategic Objective No. 8: Supporting Group Development & Growth</p>	
<p>Expanding the portfolio of programme offerings at the Group especially during evening and weekend schedules, utilising flexible modes of deliver</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Ongoing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Validation of two level 8 degrees in this reporting period - Submission of Special Purpose Award in Special Education Level 7 to QQI for validation - Submission of BSc. Information & Communications Technology to QQI for validation
<p>Investing considerably in the marketing and promotion of the Group</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Ongoing</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - We have made two senior appointments to help further promote the Group - a Director of Sales & a Director of Marketing
Increasing student enrolment	<p style="text-align: center;">Ongoing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - We have made two senior appointments to help further promote the Group - a Director of Sales & a Director of Marketing
Creating a Digital Strategy to support further Group growth and development	Completed

High-level responsibility for achieving the vision of the strategic plan rests with the Academic Board, Senior Management Team, and ultimately with the CEO. Certain actions have been, and will be further, devolved to other senior level staff within the group to ensure that the actions are achieved while maintaining a high-level management oversight. This Strategic Plan and its KPIs is reviewed every September during the life of this three year plan. Its progress is also reported on through the introduction of Annual Reporting Mechanisms.

Impact of Covid-19

The significant contextual factor which had an impact on our QA system was the onset of the Covid-19 pandemic in this reporting period. This is discussed in greater detail in Section 4.0 below in keeping with its specific theme.

1.2 Update on Planned QA Objectives identified in Previous AQR

This section is not applicable as this is CEG's first AQR.

No.	Planned objectives (Previous AQR) Note: Include reference to the relevant section of the preceding AQR, where applicable	Update on Status 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		
2		
3		
4		
5		

1.3 Governance and Management

1.3.1 QA Governance Meetings Schedule

Body	Meeting dates
Board of Directors' Meetings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 23rd October 2020 • 4th December 2020

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 8th April 2021 • 14th May 2021 • 8th July 2021
Academic Board	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 9th September 2020 • 9th December 2020 • 16th December 2020 (Special Sitting Covid Related) • 3rd March 2021 • 9th June 2021
Senior Management Team	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Every second Wednesday and every Friday of the reporting period
Programme Board	31 st January 2020 19 th September 2020, April 2021
Teaching, Learning & Assessment Committee	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2nd September 2020 • 2nd December 2020 • 24th February 2021 • 2nd June 2021
Research Committee	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2nd September 2020 • 2nd December 2020 • 24th February 2021 • 2nd June 2021
Ethics Committee	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • September 2020 • December 2020 • November 2020 • 4th February 2021 • March 2021

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • April 2021 • June 2021
QA Weekly Meetings	Held weekly every Thursday morning since 2021
QA Training Meeting	Held weekly every Monday morning since 20 December 2021

1.3.2 QA Leadership and Management Structural Developments

- During this period we recruited a Registrar to support the Director of Quality in leading quality enhancements and creating a quality culture.
- We recruited a subject specific Early Years specialist.
- We engaged in a consultation with an Educational Technologist to advise on best practice TLA across the Group.
- We engaged in a consultation with colleagues in other HEIs in relation to UDL and Learner Analytics.
- Through our TLA Committee we invite relevant speakers with relevant expertise to talk to members.
- We appointed a Student Support Officer.
- We employed Infinite Technology to deal with the CEG IT infrastructure.
- We recruited a Head of HR.
- We recruited a Project Manager.
- We recruited a Research Officer/Librarian.
- We recruited an additional IT Support person bringing our total to three support technicians.
- We recruited a Director of Sales and a Director of Marketing.
- The Head of HR established a Faculty Database which is hugely useful in terms of establishing available expertise.
- We established an Advisory Board which provides expert help and advice.

1.4.2 Expert Review Teams/Panels³ 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	
	Total: 19	Male	Female	Other, or Unspecified			UK, incl . NI	Other European	Outside of Europe	Similar	Different
Chair		1				1					
Secretary			1			1					
Academic/Discipline Specific		3	10			13					

³ QQI acknowledges that the terminology used to describe the groups of individuals that conduct peer review/evaluation varies from institution to institution.

Student Representative		0	0			0					
QA			1			1					
Teaching & Learning			3			3					
External Industry /Third Mission			1			1					

2.0 IQA System – Enhancement and Impacts

During this reporting period, we introduced a significant number of quality assurance enhancements. Some which were particularly positive include:

Governance and Management of Quality

- **Participatory Governance** - This has proved particularly positive. It has also been refreshing to see faculty recognise the value of QA measures such as this. Through our participatory governance system, staff and faculty across the Group, who may not otherwise get to engage much with each other, now meet at a virtual table to discuss a variety of issues at the CEG Academic Board, the CEG TLA Committee, the CEG Ethics Committee and the CEG Research Committee. This, many have said, is a very positive thing which they enjoy as they are learning what else is going out throughout the Group, as well as having opportunities to see synergies. Many have also commented on how these boards and committees are now seen as a safe space where faculty can use the board/committee as a sounding board for advice and that they are a source of professional development. This has been a very positive outcome of our governance system. It does however, prove difficult to engage students with our governance system. However, we note that many students are part time professionals who have no interest in engaging as students representatives. We hope that with the roll out of our level 8 degrees, our involvement with NSTeP and our Student Support Officer's support, we will be able to fill the student seats across our governance system.
- **Advisory Board** - Based on advice at our Initial Access to Validation, we have appointed an Advisory Board. An Advisory Board provides independent external advice related to the sectors and disciplines within which CEG offers its programmes and individual modules as required. The Advisory Board is constituted to include independent expertise in academic quality and assurance. The role of CEG's Advisory Board is to advise the Group's Board of Directors on any matters pertaining to the successful operation of the Group as a whole and the constituent Colleges within the Group. This includes but is not limited to, issues relating to mission, vision, values and strategy, the strategic development of the Group with reference to current and future trends in education and training in Ireland, Europe, and globally at second, further and higher levels. The CEG Advisory Board consists of Dr Myles Dungan, Broadcaster, Academic & Historian; Tony Kennedy, Former Executive VP of Global Operations, Teleflex Inc, Board Member, IDA; Dr Paul Clinch, Chairman of Spanish Point Technologies Ltd.; Stan McHugh, Education Consultant, Former Chief Executive of FETAC and Madeleine Mulrennan, Public Policy Consultant, Former President of St Catherine's College of Education. The advent of the Advisory Board has been a particularly positive step as advice may be given directly to the CEO but may also be provided in other scheduled meetings with the CEG Senior Management Team and/or Academic Board, and this has proved hugely useful for the Group.
- **Programme Boards** - we have had very positive responses from Programme Boards. The Programme Leader has commented on how it has enabled her to make simple and effective changes to improve the programme. We found that whilst initially people may be nervous about Programme Boards, they are overall a very positive experience.

- Teaching, Learning and Assessment

- **Peer Observation** - Similar to the introduction of a lot of quality enhancements, we found that faculty were nervous about the roll out of our Peer Observation Process. Therefore, we found that it was vital to ensure that we held a consultation session to answer faculty's questions and concerns in this regard. We then drafted a paper which explained the importance of peer observation, what it was and how it would work in CEG. We ensured that (prior to Covid) it included face to face lectures and classes as well as online webinars, that way everybody was involved and it did not focus on a certain cohort of staff. We learned that it was vital that we set out a very clear briefing document which outline best practice for teaching (based on teacher education). It was also imperative that we gave training on how to conduct peer observation. The CEG model uses three levels of feedback i.e. a lecturer is contacted to say that their lecture on a certain date has been determined as the lecture that will be observed. A senior member of the programme team will observe the lecture and give feedback; the lecturer themselves will reflect on the lecture and a peer of the lecturer will also give feedback on the lecture. The peer will then swap with the lecturer and allow the lecturer to observe and give feedback on their lecture. In this way, it became clear that the process encouraged professional dialogue. It was vital that every member of faculty was included in this process. We also learned that in the main, issues which were discovered were very small issues (such as for example, a poor quality mic which could be easily remedied). In the main, we discovered that the process revealed best practice amongst faculty and as such, we used the process to record best practice and record it in our Tutor Handbook.

- Self-evaluation, Monitoring and Review

- **Tutor & Student Module Feedback** - introducing mid point and end of module surveys has proven very useful for CEG. Mid point surveys allow Programme Leaders to catch any issues as they arise and allow students to flag any areas of concern whilst end of module surveys tend to offer a more balanced overview of a module (we have found that sometimes the mid point survey reflects a student's anxiety as they are just getting to grips with complex content. As such, we have found that it is important to consider the timing of the survey (as scheduling surveys just after students get results can affect the survey results). Equally, in order to encourage students to engage in surveys, we have found that it is important that it appears on their moodle calendar and that reminders are visible. Equally, it is very important to feed back the results to tutors in order to close the feedback loop.
- **Annual Reports** - somewhat similar to Programme Boards, we found that staff and faculty were initially nervous of completing an Annual Report. However, feedback highlighted that it was in the main a positive experience which allowed programme teams to collectively create a set of valid, relevant, specific priority areas and KPIs for a programme and its programme team. Feedback did also reveal that those who completed their first annual report said that their first report was definitely the most difficult and that it got easier. Equally, we found that it was imperative to ensure that we had created a clear template for the annual report, with a good briefing document and training was provided for all involved. We also discovered that one of the sources of nervousness about Annual Reports is that quite often staff and faculty can be sure a) what data they have to collect and b) why they have to collect it i.e. what will be done with the data and the Annual

Report. As such, we found it useful to hold briefing sessions at the start of the reporting period to ensure that everyone was clear on what data had to be gathered. Similarly, after the Annual Report was submitted, we hold a debriefing session whereby we outline the KPIs that have emerged from the programme, gather feedback from those involved that may be implemented going forward and thanking everyone for their cooperation.

Impact of Covid-19

The significant contextual factor which had an impact on our QA system was the onset of the Covid-19 pandemic in this reporting period. This is discussed in greater detail in Section 4.0 below in keeping with its specific theme.

2.1 Initiatives within the Institution related to Academic Integrity

Text Matching Software as a Formative Assessment Tool

During the reporting period we switched from using TurnItIn to Urkund, now rebranded to Ouriginal (<https://www.ouriginal.com>). Feedback from tutors and faculty at Programme Boards and tutor feedback indicated that faculty found TurnItIn cumbersome to use. The CEG Teaching, Learning and Assessment Committee undertook to investigate other alternatives on the market. Having explored a number of other alternatives, the CEG Teaching, Learning & Assessment Committee deemed that the Ouriginal product was the product which best suited our needs. Discussion at the CEG Teaching, Learning and Assessment Committee and at CEG Academic Board determined that within CEG we are keen to use text matching software as a formative assessment tool and to teach students about academic impropriety from the very start of their programmes i.e. carrot rather than stick approach. Similarly, the CEG Teaching, Learning & Assessment Committee determined that Ouriginal provided faculty with a much more user friendly report for faculty, when compared with TurnItIn for example.

Having gained academic support from the CEG Teaching, Learning and Assessment Committee and the CEG Academic Board, the Senior Management Team approved funding for the purchase of Ouriginal (or Urkund as it was at the time). Faculty have received training in the product and it has been rolled out across the Group. We have made a concerted effort to have start discussions about academic impropriety at orientation and also to pepper those discussions across the programme's lifetime. Ouriginal is also used as a formative assessment tool i.e. students are encouraged to use the text matching software for all of their assessments before final submission so as to ensure that they do not unintentionally or otherwise, plagiarise.

Faculty feedback surveys indicate that faculty are "overall" "much more satisfied" with the new text matching software than the previous product. We have also noted a decrease in cases of academic impropriety and students themselves have indicated that are "very happy" to use the tool as a formative assessment which allows them to "be confident with their submissions".

Academic Toolkit

CEG has developed a series of tools which are located on both the Faculty and Student Hub and which can be accessed through the CEG Centre for Teaching, Learning & Assessment, which help students with Academic Writing. As well as using the Toolkit, we have found that students often request help with English Language or literacy at the same time. As such, we have linked in with our sister College, City Language School to provide English Language classes for students who self-refer or who may be referred by a tutor. Similarly, our sister second level school, links in to help students who need further help with literacy (rather than English Language). Faculty have reported significant improvements in assessment standards since we have rolled out the Academic Toolkit.

Consultations with External Experts

During the reporting period, we consulted with an external specialist Educational Technologist in terms of best practice in Teaching, Learning and Assessment and a specialist in Learner Analytics. The CEG Teaching, Learning & Assessment Committee surveyed faculty across the Group to ascertain some key research questions which would guide the consultations. Specifically in the area of assessment, faculty requested guidance on how to use Moodle more

effectively, how to integrate Ouriginal in to Moodle as a formative assessment tool and how to use learner analytics to monitor engagement and participation. As a result, we have roll out a series of initiatives such as the use of progress bars. This allows faculty and students themselves to comparative assess how they are performing relative to their peers. In CEG we have noted that this comparative assessment has a powerful effect on student behaviour, as once students see that they have not completed a task that everyone else has attempted, it tends to encourage them to tackle the task. Similarly, the progress bars help our Student Support Officer (SSO) to check in on students, She has found that once she checks in on students that they can have a range of issues ranging from financial (and they may have to work), to mental health (and they may need extra supports or a deferral), they may have a technical issue (which she can resolve by linking the student in with IT) or it may be that the student is overwhelmed. The SSO can intervene in time before the students fails a module or assessment. In many occasions, the SSO reports that the student is overwhelmed with study and requires further academic assistance for example, with English Language, Academic Writing or Maths. The use of learner analytics has therefore helped to address assessment issues before they occur and has a positive impact on students success and student supports.

National Academic Integrity Network (NAIN)

As a Group, we continue to publicise NAIN events amongst faculty.

3.0 QA Improvement and Enhancement Plans for Upcoming Reporting Period

3.1 QA and QE supporting the Achievement of Strategic Objectives

Please note that currently the CEG Strategic Plan is under review and undergoing consultation. As such, we refer to the Strategic Objectives from our current Strategic Plan.

No.	Relevant objectives Note: Include reference to the relevant section of the preceding AQR, where applicable	Planned actions and indicators <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.	Strategic Objective 1: Excellence in inclusive Teaching, Learning and Assessment	1.1 Review and updating of the: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ CEG Graduate Attributes Framework ○ CEG Teaching, Learning & Assessment Philosophy ○ CEG Teaching, Learning & Assessment Strategy ○ CEG Peer Observation Handbook ○ CEG Digital Strategy Owner: CEG Teaching, Learning & Assessment Committee 1.2 Review and updating of Faculty Handbooks Owner: Relevant Deans 1.3 Ensure that regular training is provided to faculty on the above documents.

		<p>Owner: Relevant Deans</p> <p>1.4 Ensure that Programme Development Cycle and Programme Development Committees utilise the above documents in the creation of all new programmes.</p> <p>Owner: Director of Quality/Registrar</p>
2.	Strategic Objective 1: Excellence in inclusive Teaching, Learning and Assessment	<p>1.1 Create a schedule of expert speakers from other HEIs to engage with faculty in relation to topical areas of teaching, learning and assessment to include: learner analytics, Universal Design for Learning, inclusive teaching and assessment practices, online and blended teaching practices, technology enabled learning (TEL)</p> <p>Owner: CEG Teaching, Learning & Assessment Committee</p>
3.	Strategic Objective 1: Excellence in inclusive Teaching, Learning and Assessment	<p>1.1 Continue to research a wide range of teaching, learning & assessment practices.</p> <p>Owner: CEG Teaching, Learning & Assessment Committee, led by the Research Officer</p>
4.	Strategic Objective 1: Excellence in inclusive Teaching, Learning and Assessment	<p>1.1 Conducting a Peer Review Process across the Group</p> <p>Owner: Relevant Dean/Programme Leader</p>
5.	Strategic Objective 1: Excellence in inclusive Teaching, Learning and Assessment	<p>5.1 Continue to roll out the National Forum Universal Design for Learning (UDL) Badge across CEG</p> <p>Owner: Relevant Dean</p>
6.	Strategic Objective 1: Excellence in inclusive Teaching, Learning and Assessment	<p>1.1 Engage with Student Representatives to ensure that student seats are filled on relevant committees such as the CEG Teaching, Learning & Assessment Committee</p> <p>Owner: Student Support Officer</p>

		<p>1.2 Engage with NSTeP Programme</p> <p>Owner: Student Support Officer</p>
7.	Strategic Objective 1: Excellence in inclusive Teaching, Learning and Assessment	<p>1.1 Continue to foster and encourage cross-fertilisation across the Group</p> <p>Owner: CEG Teaching, Learning & Assessment Committee</p>
8.	Strategic Objective 1: Excellence in inclusive Teaching, Learning and Assessment	<p>1.1 Continue to develop the Digital Learning Department by appointing relevant specialists such as an Educational Technologist.</p> <p>Owner: Academic Board & SMT</p>
9.	Strategic Objective 1: Excellence in inclusive Teaching, Learning and Assessment	<p>1.1 Continue to roll out relevant annual training</p> <p>Owner: Relevant Dean/Programme Leader</p>
10.	Strategic Objective 1: Excellence in inclusive Teaching, Learning and Assessment	<p>1.1 Continue to develop the Faculty Hub</p> <p>Owner: Academic Board & SMT</p>
11.	Strategic Objective No. 2: Providing a high quality Student Experience, conducive to learning	<p>11.1 Development of a Student Hub.</p> <p>Owner: Student Support Officer</p>
12.	Strategic Objective No. 2: Providing a high quality Student Experience, conducive to learning	<p>12.1 Development of a range of multi-faceted supports for the learner.</p> <p>Owner: Student Support Officer</p>

13.	Strategic Objective No. 2: Providing a high quality Student Experience, conducive to learning	13.1 Development of a Careers Service for Students Owner: Director of Quality/Registrar & Relevant Deans
14.	Strategic Objective No. 2: Providing a high quality Student Experience, conducive to learning	14.1 Development of an Alumni Association Owner: Director of Marketing/Director of Sales
15.	Strategic Objective No. 2: Providing a high quality Student Experience, conducive to learning	15.1 Establishment of a range of student clubs and societies. Owner: Student Support Officer
16.	Strategic Objective No. 3: Reviewing all Academic Governance and Quality Assurance & Creation of a Quality Culture	16.1 Update the QA Framework on an annual basis Owner: Director of Quality/Registrar supported by the Academic Board
17.	Strategic Objective No. 3: Reviewing all Academic Governance and Quality Assurance & Creation of a Quality Culture	17.1 Hold regular QA Training workshops. Owner: Director of Quality/Registrar supported by the Academic Board
18.	Strategic Objective No. 4: Supporting Staff Development	18.1 Continuing to support the professional development of our staff through mentoring, network training initiatives, development opportunities, education events and career support Owner: Academic Board

19.	Strategic Objective No. 4: Supporting Staff Development	<p>19.1 Inviting/electing staff to sit on relevant Boards and Committees, ensuring that their voices are heard utilising our participatory governance structure</p> <p>Owner: Director of Quality/Registrar</p>
20.	Strategic Objective No. 5: Supporting Research	<p>20.1 Holding our inaugural Research Conference</p> <p>Owner: Research Officer, Research Committee</p> <p>20.2 Encouraging staff to collaborate on research papers and presentations</p> <p>Owner: Research Officer, Research Committee</p> <p>20.3 Actively promoting and encouraging staff and students to disseminate their research</p> <p>Owner: Research Officer, Research Committee</p> <p>20.4 Supporting staff in attendance and presentations at conferences</p> <p>Owner: Research Officer, Research Committee</p>
21.	Strategic Objective No. 5: Supporting Research	<p>21.1 Promotion of a Research culture across CEG</p> <p>Owner: Research Officer, Research Committee, Academic Board</p>
22.	Strategic Objective No. 5: Supporting Research	<p>22.1 Producing a significant research output from CEG Faculty</p> <p>Owner: Research Officer, Research Committee, Academic Board</p> <p>22.2 Forge collaborative links with other HEIs to produce peer reviewed research</p> <p>Owner: Research Officer, Research Committee</p> <p>22.3 Raising CEG's research profile</p> <p>Owner: Research Officer, Research Committee</p>

23.	Strategic Objective No. 5: Supporting Research	<p>23.1 Promoting research funding opportunities/calls within and across the Group</p> <p>Owner: Research Officer, Research Committee</p>
24.	Strategic Objective No. 6: Supporting Meaningful Collaborations & Partnerships	<p>1.1 Forging links and partnerships with relevant partners</p> <p>Owner: Deans</p> <p>1.2 Facilitating a lifetime relationship with our Alumni, including enhanced communications and engagements with our Alumni community, and profiling of our Alumni to promote The City Education Group brand</p> <p>Owner: Director of Sales, Director of Marketing</p> <p>1.3 Carefully considering linked provision partnership with Irish state aided higher education institution(s) for mutually beneficial educational relations, in addition to our relationship with QQI.</p> <p>Owner: Deans</p>
25.	Strategic Objective No. 7: Provision of Resourcing & Facilities	<p>25.1 Aiming to provide the Group's community with the best possible learning environment, including learning spaces, library and study areas</p> <p>Owner: Academic Board, SMT, Teaching, Learning & Assessment Committee, Student Support Officer</p>

		<p>1.1 Continuing to enhance the campuses of the Group as an ever-evolving digital learning environment, with the provision of cutting edge IT infrastructure</p> <p>Owner: Academic Board, SMT, Student Support Officer</p> <p>1.2 Continuing to promote principles of equality, mutual respect, and embracing diversity</p> <p>Owner: Head of HR, Deans, Student Support Officer, Admissions Office</p> <p>1.3 Ensuring a balanced approach to assessing the Group's physical, academic, and organisational capacity as the Group grows and expands</p> <p>Owner: Board of Directors, SMT, Academic Board</p> <p>1.4 Maintaining best practice of corporate governance and organisational development including the constant review of our Quality Assurance system, quality promotion, human resources management, health and safety, overall college capacity, profitability and internal auditing</p> <p>Owner: Board of Directors, SMT, Academic Board, Director of Quality/Registrar</p>
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26.	<p>Strategic Objective No. 8: Supporting Group Development & Growth</p>	<p>26.1 Expanding the portfolio of programme offerings at the Group especially during evening and weekend schedules, utilising flexible modes of delivery</p> <p>Owner: Board of Directors, SMT, Academic Board, Deans</p> <p>1.1 Investing considerably in the marketing and promotion of the Group</p> <p>Owner: Board of Directors, SMT, Director of Sales, Director of Marketing</p> <p>1.2 Increasing student enrolment</p> <p>Owner: Director of Sales, Director of Marketing</p>
<p>High-level responsibility for achieving the vision of the strategic plan rests with the Academic Board, Senior Management Team, and ultimately with the CEO. Certain actions have been, and will be further, devolved to other senior level staff within the group to ensure that the actions are achieved while maintaining a high-level management oversight. This Strategic Plan and its KPIs will be reviewed every September during the life of this three year plan. Its progress will also be reported on through the introduction of Annual Reporting Mechanisms.</p>		

In terms of Annual Reporting in CEG, CEG has developed a specific template and briefing document which is use for the development of all Annual Reports across the Group. Further details of our Annual Report template and process is located in section 4.2 of the [City Education Group's QA Manual](#). Specific details of our Periodic Review process is located in section 4.4 of the [City Education Group's QA Manual](#). This is also outlined earlier in this AQR.

3.2 Reviews planned for Upcoming Reporting Periods

N/A

3.2.1 Reviews planned for Next Reporting Period

N/A

Unit to be reviewed	Date of planned review	Date of last review

3.2.2 Reviews planned beyond Next Reporting Period

N/A

4.0 Additional Themes and Case Studies

The theme identified by QQI for this reporting period is: **IQA Response to Emergency Situations/Covid-19 Pandemic**. Section 4.0 below outlines our IQA response to the Covid-19 pandemic.

CEG's IQA Response to the Covid-19 Pandemic

The significant contextual factor which had an impact on our QA system within the reporting period was the onset of the Covid-19 pandemic in this reporting period. With the arrival of Covid-19, CEG, along with many other providers, had to pivot our programmes from blended to completely online delivery. However, our extensive experience in the area, coupled with our

robust quality assurance mechanisms, meant that we preserved the integrity of all academic processes. Over the reporting period, we have been able to structure our teaching and learning, and amend our assessments to facilitate students in completing their online programmes of training, while at the same time adhering to our QA processes and meeting the learning outcomes for each of the programmes/modules. This process was supported by our robust QA processes and mechanisms that have already been in place for face to face and blended delivery.

CEG is cognisant of the fact that online delivery is different to that of face to face, or indeed, blended delivery, and we have ensured that we have retained the quality of our education and training in the online space. Thus, we can ensure the comparable quality and integrity of all our programmes, whether delivered face to face, blended or online. As our QA processes are already validated for both face to face and blended delivery, we were well placed to pivot our programmes online during the global pandemic. The following section details how our existing validated QA mechanisms and experience with online delivery have meant that we have ensured the quality and integrity of all our programmes during the national pivot to online education.

Teaching, Learning & Assessment

City Education Group's Teaching, Learning & Assessment Strategy (2019) and *City Education Group's Teaching, Learning & Assessment Philosophy* (2019) provide a visible and relevant framework for the development of teaching, learning and assessment practices across the Group. Used in tandem with our extensive *City Education Group's Digital Strategy: Using Digital Technologies to enhance Teaching, Learning & Assessment Theory, Practice and Policy* (2019), they provided clear direction for the Group when programmes had to move to online delivery and the documents were particularly effective for students and staff in terms of delivering and engaging with effective teaching, learning and assessment experiences in the online environment. These documents will continue to inform all our online teaching, learning and assessment delivery. This highlighted to us that we were extremely fortuitous to have a Digital Strategy in place prior to the pandemic and the importance of having such a document to guide blended and online delivery. It is vital to have key strategic documents as such documents play a key role in working towards a shared goal (especially in a time of emergency response).

As we are validated for both face to face and blended delivery, our QA processes and documentation are already in place and in operation for blended delivery. This meant that we had an extensive Digital Strategy (2019) created and rolled out through training with Faculty and staff, *prior* to the advent of Covid-19 and its online teaching requirements. In this sense, within CEG, we consider ourselves to be proactive in relation to online education as opposed to reactive; as such, we have been able to ensure the quality of our teaching, learning and assessment as our pedagogy is based on considered, evidenced based, best practice in the area.

In line with *City Education Group's Teaching, Learning & Assessment Strategy* (2019), and the move to online delivery, CEG reviewed all of its programmes, courses and modules to ensure effective and pedagogically sound delivery in an online space. We reviewed all programmes to ensure that key principles such as constructivism and Constructive Alignment were central and maintained in the same way that it would be in face-to-face teaching.

We utilised the *ABC Learning Design* model to pivot our modules and programmes from face-to-face delivery to online delivery. We found the ABC Learning Design Model has been found particularly useful for new programmes/modules or when changing programmes/modules to an online or more blended format (please refer to City Education Group's Digital Strategy (2019) for further information, chapter 13, section 13.3.2) and we would recommend its use to others. In addition, the *City Education Group's Digital Strategy: Using Digital Technologies to enhance Teaching, Learning & Assessment Theory, Practice and Policy* (2019) highlights how utilising an online learning environment was another way in which a teacher could actively practice constructivism.

The principles of our *City Education Group's Digital Strategy* (2019) directed the Group in creating an online learning environment which was student centred and flexible, and where the teacher/tutor was viewed as a resource, which catered for a variety of learning modes and learning preferences. The use of digital technologies ensured that we could move away from traditional 'chalk and talk' methods and engage in a more collaborative approach. As part of our *City Education Group's Digital Strategy* (2019), we are keen to ensure that the use of digital technologies, in an online learning environment, is not seen as an end in itself but as a vehicle which, when carefully considered and implemented, will enhance the learning experiences of our students. We firmly believe that, when used correctly, digital technology enhances teaching, learning and assessment. We believe in a Pedagogy First approach and as such, we ensured that students were able to attain all the required learning outcomes of their modules and programmes, supported by technology. (Please refer to the *City Education Group's Digital Strategy: Using Digital Technologies to enhance Teaching, Learning & Assessment Theory, Practice and Policy* (2019) for further details on how we utilise digital technologies to enhance teaching, learning and assessment across the Group). Again, it became evident to us that it was vital that we had a *Digital Strategy* already in place and that we had identified a learning design model which would help us with our online pivot. This highlight to us how important it is to have key strategic documents which can help create and deliver on a shared goal; although pertinent to the emergency Covid-19 pandemic response, we learned that such documents and strategy are key in any change management situation.

In order to ensure that difficulties with technology or fear of technology did not act as barriers to students or staff, we introduced a wide range of training for staff members and supports for both staff and students. Any changes made to teaching, learning and assessment (TLA), were passed through Academic Board, an External Examiner and our Teaching, Learning and Assessment (TLA) Committee was consulted for guidance and advice.

Training for Faculty

Prior to Covid-19, though we had been delivering blended programmes since 2012, (and prior to that by Distance Learning), we recognised that the move from face to face, or blended delivery to online delivery required tutors to think differently about how they could deliver their classes and engage with their students. CEG recognised that this could be problematic for some, so all of our tutors were provided with a variety of training and resources, including training in best practice for online delivery.

City Education Group also provides tutors with access to our 'Knowledge Bank' where additional resources can be utilised. In addition, our Moodle site has a Tutor Resource section, again where additional resources can be accessed. Our Head of IT compiled a selection of training videos which are available to tutors to hone and practice their online delivery skills and members of the IT department were on hand to assist with any difficulties that tutors

encountered. Tutors can access and utilise an online Practice Room, where they can get familiar with teaching online. Even though tutors receive an intensive orientation when they begin working for the Group, which ensures that they are familiar with all relevant documents and strategies such as the *City Education Group Teaching, Learning and Assessment Strategy*, the *City Education Group Teaching, Learning and Assessment Philosophy* and the *City Education Group Digital Strategy*, in the national pivot to online teaching, we provided our tutors with refresher training on these documents. A number of audits were conducted to assess the technology tutors currently had, and to ascertain and fill any gaps where required. Students were also surveyed to ensure that they too had the technology required. As programmes were delivered, students and tutors were again surveyed to ensure all was going well. The audits proved to be hugely useful as it allowed us to catch simple technology issues at the beginning rather than allow faculty and students to become stressed about the situation.

As part of the move to online delivery, CEG had a number of their tutors engage in our Peer Observation process (which we had already rolled out for face-to-face teaching), in order to ensure the quality of the TLA (Peer Observation Handbook, 2019). This process is a typical feedback and monitoring mechanism which is utilised on all programmes irrespective of delivery mode. The CEG Peer Observation process ensures best practice in relation to teaching, learning and assessment across all modules and programmes. This proved hugely useful for us as again, it allowed us to pick up simple issues before they became a bigger issue (for example, on one occasion, we picked up an issue with a tutor's mic which was very easily fixed. In the main, issues which were discovered were very simple technical issues, which were very easily remedied, rather than larger pedagogical issues. We found that the Peer Review revealed best practice rather than any issues with poor practice. This led to us adding specific examples of best practice to the Tutor Handbook where we showcased best tutor practice. This in turn raised tutor confidence and tutors became more willing to see themselves as being able to share ideas and resources with other colleagues. This helped to forge links between colleagues at a time when tutors were under a lot of pressure as nationally, we pivoted to online delivery.

Our Programme Board meetings also helped gain feedback on TLA throughout the online period. In addition, our supports for our teaching Faculty who will work online will continue and such training needs will continue to be identified through Programme Boards and our various programme feedback and monitoring mechanisms. As advised by our TLA committee, we have a schedule of speakers to assist our tutors in their further professional development in terms of online and blended delivery. One such example of this is an upcoming Digital Badge which will be offered to all Faculty and staff. Mr. Denis Bates will be facilitating our staff in achieving the National Forum/AHEAD Digital Badge for Universal Design for Learning. 30 faculty members have now completed this training. Training features as a key mechanism through which we continue to ensure the quality of our programmes, whether face to face, blended or online, whilst at the same time, ensuring that our programmes are responsive to the needs of learners and society as a whole. Training in best practice for teaching online also means that we ensure that our programmes and the teaching, learning and assessment contained therein, are inclusive (through the use of, for example, Universal Design for Learning training or Plain English Guidelines training).

Supports for Students

CEG also recognises that the move to online delivery may not only be difficult for tutors, but also for the students. In the move to online delivery and in keeping with the important emphasis CEG places on feedback from all stakeholders, a survey of students, across all constituent

Colleges was conducted to assess the impact of the move to an online environment. The analysed results revealed that, while the initial move was difficult, most students adapted quite well, due, in part to the supports that CEG had in place for them. Training in the use of our online platform is provided and our Head of IT and his Support Technicians are on standby to assist any student who might encounter technical difficulties.

In addition to academic support from the academic department team, our Student Support Officer is available to answer any queries that students might have, and if unable to answer queries, she can direct the student to the appropriate resource, whether that be academic support or pastoral support from our dedicated student counsellor. These supports will continue to remain in place for all of our programmes. The use of learner analytics allows us to assess how well and how often students engage with the online classes and the student Progress Bar on Moodle allows each student and their tutor(s) to see exactly how they were doing as they work through their programmes and modules. The use of the Progress Bar also highlights students at risk of falling behind. We have implemented processes whereby our module tutors must check the Progress Bars and follow up with students who have not engaged. This allows us to contact students who may have fallen behind for technical reasons or sensitive personal reasons. As evidenced in the research, (please refer to the City Education Group Digital Strategy for further details), learner analytics will continue to inform improvements to the guidance and support available across the board to whole cohorts of students, as well as interventions offered to students at risk. Research also shows the motivational impact of the use of the Progress Bar on the learner. From our SSO's experience, the Progress Bar allows her to check in with students and from her feedback, she has uncovered a range of issues from financial issues (where a student may have to work to support themselves), to mental health to simple IT/Technical issues.

Considerable work has also been carried out on our online campus in order to ensure that it is an inclusive one. Our Moodle pages are well laid out in an easy-to-follow structure for the user. All course materials, assessment briefs, timetables are found here as well as recorded on-demand content, and timetabled sessions for forum/discussions. We have redesigned our Moodle pages so that they now adhere to Universal Design for Learning principles. We also follow Plain English guidelines. All assessment briefs have been redesigned in order to ensure ease of understanding, in keeping with Universal Design for Learning principles. These measures have made sure that students are able to access the material and participate accordingly. With so many changes taking place due to Covid-19 and in line with our ethos of creating a supportive learning environment, CEG also held a Well-Being seminar for staff and students alike. We also held an online seminar on Chair Yoga during the pandemic.

With the successful pivot to online delivery during the pandemic, and the clear demand for this form of learning, CEG believes that we are well placed to continue to offer quality training utilising technology and to provide students with an optimal learning experience in an online environment, while at the same time ensuring that learners not only meet, but exceed the programme learning outcomes.

We understand the importance of supports for online students, therefore, in order to provide increased academic support for tutors and students, CEG provides for Virtual Office Hours. Students have access to members of the academic team by telephone and email, not only during regular office hours, but also two evenings per week, during scheduled times. They can contact any member of the team during the day in addition to their tutor in the evening. This ensures that the student remains connected to their tutor and their learning and can have their questions answered in a reasonable timeframe. Tutors play a

key role and the training provided by the Group permits tutors to support their students as they progress through their course. With due care for confidentiality, GDPR and Data Protection, tutors document their interactions with students which further highlights those students not engaging for whatever reasons. These students can then be contacted to see if they need any additional help or support. This will remain a feature of all our programmes.

Online recordings, scheduled early at the start of a module, which examine and explain the assessments briefs and the criteria required, means that the student can begin the process of understanding what the assessment entails and how to begin to attempt it. On demand recordings explore key concepts of the module in a focused manner and students can play, pause, rewind these recordings in their own time and at their own pace, thereby allowing them to take ownership over their own learning. This autonomous form of learning in the online environment benefits the learner in numerous ways. Learners can access sessions whenever and wherever they want, thereby taking control of their own learning. Research continues to show that individuals learn best when it is at their own pace. This suits the pressure of workloads, modern living, individual lifestyles, and abilities.

Student Orientation, a central tenet of all our programmes, provides the student with all of the information that they will require to complete their programme. Students may be directed to the Student Success Toolbox, an online resource which assists them in assessing if they are ready for online learning using a number of 'tools' (<http://studentsuccess.ie/thetoolbox/>) (available through Creative Commons, authors DCU, DKIT, ITS and MU). In addition, our Student Support Officer will speak with anyone starting a programme, if they are worried about online learning, as will any member of the Academic Team.

Attendance

Our online platform, Adobe Connect, automatically monitors students as they log in for their online class. When Covid-19 necessitated the move to online delivery, analysis of students logging in showed that on average, attendance in the virtual class held at between 80% and 85% (CEG, Student Survey, 10/4/2020). Moodle also allows us to monitor students' engagement and interaction on forums. Learner analytics analysis showed how well students engaged and interacted in the online classroom. As well as being electronically monitored via log-in, tutors also take attendance and complete an attendance log at each class. In the online environment our Virtual Learning Environment Moodle also records when students engage. A set amount of study tasks must to be completed before the student can move or progress on to the next topic. Monitoring attendance allows the College to see who is attending classes and engaging and also, who is not. A pattern of nonattendance/non-engagement, flagged by the tutor, is followed up by a member of the academic team and may be passed on to our Student Support Officer to assess why the student is not attending and if there is anything the Group can do to assist. Tutors are required to keep a log of students who contact them during Virtual Office hours, which again will highlight those students who are not engaging with the tutor and potentially the programme. As stated previously, tutors are provided with specific training in ways to encourage the student in order to ensure that they engage, and as such, minimise the risk of non-attendance.

In order to ensure that online classes are as interactive as possible, the use of polls and forums are used in online classes in order to encourage debate and discussion, often leading to further exploration of a particular topic. Students are encouraged to interact with each other and contribute to a Communities of Practice and Inquiry where they can share ideas and ask questions. Faculty work towards establishing Communities of Practice and Inquiry, through the

use of online student forums. As Faculty, tutors also create their own Communities of Practice and Inquiry, through the use of Faculty Forums. Research continues to show that attendance and engagement have a positive correlation on students' performance in formative and summative assessment; hence, the monitoring of attendance and engagement continues to prove very important to us on all of our programmes.

Assessment

With the advent of Covid-19, any changes to teaching, learning and assessment within programmes with the move to online learning were discussed at the CEG TLA Committee and with the relevant External Examiner(s), before being approved at Academic Board. With QQI's agreement, assessments which were required to be carried out on-site or in placement were replaced with alternative assessment techniques. Any changes to assessment techniques were reviewed by an External Examiner, to ensure that they were suitable and still met the required learning outcomes for the module/programme. In addition, the Group has reviewed a number of online proctoring solutions and the Academic Board has agreed to adopt Test Reach so that online exams, if necessary, can be carried out under the strictest of QA conditions to ensure validity. The Group will also record a series of assessment webinars to assist students in completing their assessments. These will be tailored to suit each programme.

Library

Moving to an online environment meant that students no longer had access to our on-site library. In order to cater for this move, we provided students with revised Recommended Reading Lists which could be found online. Faculty checked these lists to ensure that they were current, up-to-date and readily available. Part of our usual QA process is a review of all texts after each iteration of a module/programme. Due to the fact that tutors delivered in a blended environment, they had already checked that texts so that they were available online.

Placements

Due to Covid-19, the option of completing work placement hours was no longer viable for students. Any assessments that were due to take place while the student was on placement were revised to reflect this. Alternative assessments were kept as close as possible to the originals and all were approved by Academic Board as per our QA procedures. A number of our students were working in their specific sectors and continued to be able to do so. The students who were unable to find placement were advised to continue to try to do so, but these students were able to complete the amended assessments as an alternative.

The placement requirements remain the same for all modes of delivery. In advance of any placement, students are provided with a Placement Pack which contains all of the information that they will require while on placement. They must complete the Confirmation of Work Placement Form and on an ongoing basis, record the hours that they spend in placement. This document is signed off by the student's supervisor in the placement setting. Settings are also provided with a Placement Pack, which outlines their responsibilities to the student and the student's responsibilities to them while they are on placement, as well as the contact details of the student's tutor and/or the member of the academic team responsible for the student, (each member of the academic team will have a number of students that they will be responsible for while they are on placement) in the event that any queries, questions or issues arise while the

student is on placement. Students are also provided with a Placement Handbook which details how they should behave while on placement.

Programme Feedback and Monitoring

Utilising the numerous feedback mechanisms that CEG has in place, we were able to ensure the efficient monitoring of our programmes, especially when they moved online. Programme Board meetings, (with input from a number of stakeholders, including External authenticators, academic department staff, tutor and student representatives), student course evaluations, tutor course evaluations, the peer to peer observation process, all contributed in being able to continue providing quality feedback and any required training. Programme feedback is gathered both formally and informally and includes but is not limited to:

- Programme Board Meetings
- Mid-programme/mid-module student and tutor evaluations
- End of programme/end of module student and tutor evaluations
- External Examiner/Authenticator reports
- Peer Review processes
- CEG's participatory Governance System
- Annual Reports
- Student Representatives
- Informal feedback channels

This feedback allowed us to identify any issues that may arise in a timely manner. These feedback mechanisms are a constant feature of all of our programmes.

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Figure 9: CEG Feedback & Monitoring Mechanisms

Staffing and Resourcing

CEG has a Faculty Bank where our panel of tutors for courses is regularly updated. In the event that a tutor is unable to deliver a class, whether it is online or on-site, we can use the Faculty Bank to identify appropriate tutors to step in. All tutors in the Faculty Bank are qualified in line with our pedagogical and practical experience requirements. CEG as a Group consists of four Colleges; hence, we have access to a wide range of in house expertise across the Group. Online learning also means that we have access to a large number of expert tutors across the country, that we may otherwise not have had access to. This highlighted to us how vital it was that we have an up to date Faculty Database.

Quality Assurance

As discussed and evidenced above, as part of its 2019 Initial Access to Validation Application to QQI, CEG was validated for the development of a small number of Level 8, Major Awards, in the domains of Education (ISCED: 01) and Social Sciences, Business & Law (ISCED: 03), in both face to face and Blended Learning delivery modes. In 2020, two level 8 programmes, one programme in each of these domains, to be delivered in both face to face and Blended Learning formats, were validated by QQI. Therefore, the Chapter 10 of the [City Education Group's QA Manual](#) (2021) defines the policies, procedures and regulations which attach to both our face to face and blended programmes within CEG. Together with our extensive *City Education Group's Digital Strategy: Using Digital Technologies to enhance Teaching, Learning & Assessment Theory, Practice and Policy* (2019), both documents direct how all CEG blended learning programmes leading to QQI awards are developed, operated, managed and reviewed, and their learners managed and supported.

The purpose of the Chapter 10 of the [City Education Group's QA Manual](#) (2021) and the *City Education Group's Digital Strategy: Using Digital Technologies to enhance Teaching, Learning & Assessment Theory, Practice and Policy* (2019) is to outline CEG's quality assurance arrangements for face to face and blended learning programmes, leading to QQI awards. Our Digital Strategy complements CEG's approved quality assurance policies and procedures. The CEG Digital Strategy specifically seeks to provide guidance across the City Education Group on the quality assurance and enhancement of all forms of digital learning, (to include blended learning), where learners, for part of their programme of study, may be physically remote from:

- other learners
- teachers and assessors
- the provider institution or
- learning resources and support services (QQI, 2018).

It is evidenced therefore, from our extensive Quality Assurance framework that mechanisms are in place to ensure that both synchronous and asynchronous modules/programmes are suitably developed, operated, managed and reviewed, and their learners managed and supported. This is also evidenced in the discussion above.

The forthcoming sections outline how CEG's blended learning programmes satisfy the quality assurance guidelines of QQI and the policies and procedures of CEG, and in doing so shall satisfy the academic quality and standards required of all CEG programmes leading to QQI awards and reflect the underpinning concepts outlined within the *CEG Teaching, Learning and Assessment Strategy* and the *CEG Digital Strategy*.

The existing quality assurance policies and procedures of CEG, as approved by QQI, remain applicable in all instances and the CEG Digital Strategy (2019) supplements those with explicit requirements with regard to blended learning programmes with both synchronous and asynchronous learning. In the absence of explicit requirements being documented therein, the quality assurance policies, as published in the Chapter 10 of the [City Education Group's QA Manual](#) apply. The aforementioned documents, policies and procedures have been utilised to safeguard the integrity of all online programmes during the Covid-19 pandemic period. In accordance with QQI's Statutory Quality Assurance Guidelines for Provider of Blended Learning Programmes, procedures for assuring the quality of blended learning programmes in CEG reflect requirements of the organisational context, the programme level context and the learner experience context. The forthcoming sections outline the mechanisms in place in respect of same.

Organisational Context

The Senior Management Team (SMT) is responsible for ensuring that all proposed developments are aligned with the strategic intentions of the Group, as articulated in Towards 2021, the Group's Strategic Plan, underpinned by appropriate investment plans and specified timeframes for implementation.

As per the CEG QA Manual, the SMT is responsible for:

- Developing and monitoring the implementation of strategic plans and the attainment of strategic objectives; this includes clearly defining objectives, definitions and parameters specific to synchronous and asynchronous learning
- Managing CEG, based on strategic goals and objectives agreed through the governance structure; this includes the appropriate dissemination and communication of strategic objectives and timeframes to ensure shared understanding and to empower relevant governance structures to make informed decisions
- Recommending strategic plans to the Board of Directors for approval and Development
- Ensuring that adequate resources are available for the ongoing provision of quality and continuous improvement in all aspects of CEG, including synchronous and asynchronous learning, and recommend the acquisition of additional resources to the Board of Directors; this includes budgeting and allocation of financial resources, along with measures for approval and monitoring of expenditure and investment, to support the fulfilment of strategic objectives
- Monitoring progress against strategic goals. To include:
 - o Ensuring and implementing a planned approach to the acquisition, implementation, enhancement and or integration of necessary infrastructure and resources (human and physical) for the fulfilment of objectives
 - o Implementing arrangements to facilitate the trialling and testing of technologies at different stages in the acquisition and implementation stages
- Management of matters pertaining to intellectual property, copyright, data protection and licensing arrangements
- Effective oversight of third-party services engaged for the provision of services for example, VLE hosting and management
- Implementing effective monitoring arrangements to ensure development and implementation of arrangements consistent with strategic intent.

The CEG Academic Board retains responsibility for the academic oversight and governance of all programmes, proposed and current, including those delivered through blended learning and utilising synchronous and asynchronous learning.

Programme Development & Monitoring and Review

Programme Development

For the purpose of blended learning programmes, the Programme Proposer (in the case of new programmes) or Programme Leader (in the case of established programmes), is responsible for defining the technical resources and infrastructure requirements of the programme and identifying any specialist tools, hardware or software requirements. This is established in the curriculum planning stages when the nature of the blend is determined. As discussed above, CEG encourages the application of the ABC Curriculum Design Model (please refer to the CEG Digital Strategy for further details).

As discussed above, the SMT is responsible for undertaking budget planning and allocation of resources in accordance with requirements or advising where budget or resource constraints require consideration of alternative approaches. Workload considerations in blended learning programmes are determined on the basis of contact hours being defined as those hours which require student engagement with Faculty, with other students or with content as part of a structured lesson or learning activity. This can include synchronous and asynchronous activity but excludes independent study required for assessment preparation for example. Independent study is defined as the notional learning hours a student is required to employ to complete elements of the programme independently, including any revision or assessment preparation time. Programme Development Committees are required to be mindful of the potential for overload in blended learning programmes. Programme Development Committees are required to consult the CEG Digital Strategy.

Monitoring & Review

As per our QA procedures, we operate an extensive range of monitoring and feedback mechanisms, which ensure that quality is monitored across all programmes.

Policies, Regulations and Processes

The Director of Quality and Registrar are responsible for ensuring the continued relevance and fitness for purpose of quality assurance arrangements in the context of blended learning programmes and synchronous and asynchronous learning. This will be managed through the annual QA monitoring processes, as reported to Academic Board. As the extent or nature of blended learning provision evolves within CEG, consideration will be given to continued suitability of policies, procedures and mechanisms for their implementation.

The CEG Privacy Statement <https://citygroup.ie/privacy-policy/> reflects the collection, processing, storage and sharing of personal data in the online environment, in accordance with GDPR, outlining the legal bases upon which it relies and the purpose for its collection and with whom it is shared. All remaining policies, procedures and regulations as published by CEG remain applicable to blended learning programmes. In the absence of a specific policy relating to blended learning provision, it is assumed that the mainstream policy applies along with any specific requirements within the policy as documented.

Faculty & Staff Recruitment, Orientation, Training, Continuous Professional Development and Appraisal

The SMT, in conjunction with Academic Board, is responsible for monitoring the suitability of minimum requirements of Faculty and support staff, and arrangements for addressing these. In addition to the minimum requirements of academic staff as outlined in CEG's Staff Handbook and QA Manual, those academic staff engaged in synchronous and asynchronous learning, will be required to evidence suitable technical competence and experience and a sound understanding and experience of facilitating learning through technology. Completion of specific staff orientation and professional development programmes is a mandatory requirement for all Faculty.

CEG facilitates a range of training opportunities for Faculty. The CEG Centre for Excellence in Teaching, Learning, Assessment & Research facilitates access to the National Forum Digital Badges in Universal Design for Learning as well as an annual training schedule for Faculty.

The CEG Teaching, Learning and Assessment Committee also creates a schedule of training events, delivered by guest speakers on key priority areas for the Group. Recent events include sessions on Universal Design for Learning, Getting the Most out of Learner Analytics and Teaching Tools for an Interactive Online Class.

Staff are encouraged to engage in CPD relating to pedagogic matters and extensive annual training programmes are in place for each programme. CEG training programmes are both College and programme specific, thereby giving Faculty relevant training at a both a macro and micro level.

Engagement in research and scholarship is actively encouraged. The CEG Research Committee is responsible for promoting a culture of research and establishing research collaborations across the Group.

As part of the CEG Digital Strategy, a Digital Learning Department (DLD) has been established. The appointment of specialist support staff to facilitate the further development of our Digital Learning Department will continue in accordance with existing policy and practices.

The nature of appointments will reflect the requirement for academic, pedagogic, design, pastoral and technical support and the applicable criteria for selection and appointment will be determined accordingly.

The sourcing of appropriate expertise can also include sub-contracting to third parties where specialist expertise is required.

Intellectual Property, Copyright and Data Protection

All staff involved in the provision of blended learning programmes are notified of the legal limitations and parameters associated with Intellectual Property, copyright and data protection. Intellectual Property rights associated with materials developed for CEG programmes is clearly articulated in staff contracts and the Staff Handbook. Support guides are issued to all staff designing materials for use on the VLE to assist in strengthening understanding of legal parameters and ensuring legal compliance. The CEG Centre for Excellence in Teaching, Learning, Assessment & Research provides additional support to staff on matters of copyright, IP, Open Source and Creative Commons Licencing.

Contingency Arrangements

The Head of IT takes a lead role in the CEG Contingency Planning. Contingency Arrangements are in place in the event of platform, hardware or software failure. The Group also has a contract with a specialist e-learning provider and Moodle certified services provider for the management, maintenance and back-up of learner records and the VLE. The service provider implements industry standard offsite security and back-up arrangements to facilitate continuity in the event of frontline technology failure. Network management and administration is undertaken in-house with the support of expert consultancy as required.

CEG has an internal team of IT support technicians, led by the Head of IT, who monitor daily system performance and support staff and students. Additionally, CEG has an annual Technical Support and Maintenance contract with Infinite Technology <https://infinite technology.ie>.

CEG also uses the services of Information Register on a consultancy basis in terms of technology planning, assessment of emerging technologies and infrastructure and architecture: <http://InformationRegister.eu>.

Learning Resources, Materials and Delivery Mechanisms

Programme and content developments are a collaborative effort with input from a variety of Group teams to include discipline/programme specific teams, technical and pedagogic expertise along with Student Support Services. The collaborative approach is utilised in order to ensure appropriate arrangements to reduce the potential for overburdening the student in the online elements of the programme. All Faculty are responsible for ensuring the development of synchronous and asynchronous learning experiences, for which they have responsibility, will be delivered in the context of the learner centred approach advocated in the CEG Teaching, Learning and Assessment Strategy and the CEG Digital Strategy.

Faculty are supported by CEG Centre for Excellence in Teaching, Learning, Assessment & Research and IT Services to ensure the suitability of teaching materials and learning resources and ensuring the use of CEG approved platforms and tools for the delivery of their modules. As per our Digital Strategy, the fitness of purpose and functionality of uploaded content is reviewed prior to issuing it to learners. CEG's Feedback and Monitoring mechanisms, as per the CEG QA Manual, ensure quality is monitored on an ongoing basis. One of these mechanisms is our Peer Observation process. As per the CEG Peer Observation Handbook, a Peer Observation process is implemented to ensure quality learning experiences, and considers academic, technical and instructional design requirements/recommendations.

Where lecturers are engaging in synchronous learning such as webinars or virtual classroom activities, or undertaking recording of asynchronous content for uploading they are required to:

- Ensure they are in an environment free from potential interruptions/disruption or excessive background noise
- Secure the use of CEG approved equipment to ensure sound and picture quality of recordings/broadcasts or otherwise, they must use CEG onsite facilities for recording/broadcasting
- Lecturers are required to adhere to agreed timeframes for the upload of materials to facilitate effective application of the Flipped Classroom approach and completion of activities by learners without placing them under undue pressure in advance of the synchronous or on campus elements of the learning.

In designing blended learning lessons, as per the CEG Digital Strategy, Faculty are advised to:

- Familiarise themselves with the CEG Digital Strategy
- Attend all mandatory training sessions on teaching in an online environment
- Upload materials in advance, which include sufficient detail to adequately inform the learner of what is expected of them and what the purpose of the materials are
- Incorporate formative activities to enable the learner to determine their own progress and level of understanding and provide a bridge to the synchronous element of the learning

- Use the synchronous learning element to maximise opportunities for application, formative assessment activities, and clarification of challenging concepts theories and approaches.
- Develop stimulating lessons which will encourage internalisation of salient points, reflection, engagement and application.
- Whilst ensuring a through line between synchronous and asynchronous material, ensure the synchronous element is not simply a repeat of the asynchronous elements in a different format.
- Consider how the various learning experience work together in order to help afford the learner ample opportunity to interrogate and internalise the material.
- Make use of learner analytics to monitor engagement and attendance levels.
- Faculty are given specific training on how best to facilitate online forums.
- Faculty are expected to work towards the creating of Communities of Practice and Inquiry, whereby learners engage with both their peers and Faculty.

Technical support staff and the CEG Centre for Excellence in Teaching, Learning, Assessment & Research are available to provide instructional design and technical support as required. Programme Leaders are responsible for the quality of the learning experience across the programme they lead and they are accountable to Academic Board in this regard. Programme Leaders monitor adherence to minimum requirements in respect of tools, technologies and learning resources, upload times and compliance with validated programme requirements. Ongoing monitoring and learner feedback mechanisms are in place.

CEG uses the Moodle Virtual Learning Environment (VLE). The Head of IT, informed by Faculty and Student Feedback, is responsible for monitoring the ongoing fitness for purpose of the VLE and existing processes for programme development, monitoring and review provide opportunity for proposing enhancements and upgrades as may be required.

The VLE is used to:

- Promote the development of Communities of Practice and Inquiry and enhance the learner community created on campus
- Upload online content quickly and easily in a range of formats
- Enhance the learner experience
- Provide access to support services and materials
- Integrate with virtual classroom software, plagiarism detection software, library services and the student information system
- Monitor learner engagement with online elements of programmes
- Support assessments
- Facilitate communication with learners
- Provide motivational tools such as a Progress Bar
- Provide opportunities for the use of Learner Analytics which allows Faculty and Student Support Services to identify students at risk of disengaging

CEG utilises Adobe Connect as its virtual classroom software which is used to:

- Increase the range of learning interactions available through the VLE
- Facilitate live lectures/webinars/tutorials
- Enable multi-group breakout activities in the online environment
- Promote and facilitate accessibility for all learners
- Enable recording of live sessions for students to revisit.

This creates a back catalogue of material for learners, which helps to empower the learner. The virtual classroom software also provides the means for secure, online meetings between learners and the college should physical attendance not be a feasible option. A new e-Learning studio was established in our Parliament Street campus. This fully kitted out studio, allows Faculty to record their asynchronous sessions using up to the minute equipment, whilst working a Recording Technician. Our Digital Strategy documents how we develop content from inception to recording to release to students.

Information to Learners

Programme Development Committees are responsible for specifying information relating to any technical requirements, ICT capabilities and the nature of the blended learning elements of the programme. This detail is made available to learners in advance of enrolling out a programme. Specifically, learners are advised of:

- The minimum requirements outlined in the CEG Privacy Policy
- Detail relating to the online element of the programme and any specific requirements relating to participation times online and attendance requirements and timings onsite
- The anticipated independent learning commitment
- The technical equipment/hardware/software/internet and skills essential for participation in the programme
- Learner responsibilities and obligations in respect of the online and onsite elements of the programme
- Supports, academic, pastoral and IT supports, available to learners.

Supports for Learners

Academic, technical and support staff are responsible for the provision of and access to supports in the online environment. All learners are provided with a dedicated online orientation programme which is scaffolded with a range of easy to access video and text support materials. CEG employs a range of digital support tools including online guides, integrated online reading lists, Student Support Services and live chat and discussion forums across a range of programmes. Faculty and staff are required to operate within the stated requirements of existing policies specific to Student Support. As documented above, students can have detailed discussions with staff prior to beginning a programme which utilises synchronous and asynchronous learning. Students can also access the Student Support Officer before they start the programme. Our Head of IT and his staff have created a library of 'How to' videos to help students (and staff), as they work online. Students have access to a wide range of academic, pastoral and IT supports including but not limited to - Faculty operate Virtual Office hours; Progress Bars and learner analytics are used to identify students at risk; attendance and engagement levels are tracked; academic and pastoral supports are in place; full access to a Student Support Officer and IT technicians.

As is detailed above, the [City Education Group's QA Manual](#) (2021) defines the policies, procedures and regulations which attach to both our face to face and blended programmes, which include both synchronous and asynchronous learning, within CEG. Together with our extensive *City Education Group's Digital Strategy: Using Digital Technologies to enhance Teaching, Learning & Assessment Theory, Practice and Policy* (2019), both documents direct how all CEG blended learning programmes leading to QQI awards are developed, operated, managed and reviewed, and their learners managed and supported. These documents,

policies and procedures have been utilised to ensure the academic integrity of online learning provision.

We have taken incremental steps in order to ensure that we have appropriate expertise, resourcing and quality assurance mechanisms in place in order to ensure the quality of the learning experience. Our extensive experience in the area, coupled with our robust quality assurance mechanisms, mean that we have preserved the integrity of all academic processes.

As evidenced above, our existing validated QA mechanisms and experience with distance learning, blended delivery and online delivery during the pandemic, have meant that we have ensured the quality and integrity of all our programmes during the national pivot to online education.

