

Dorset College

2022

Annual Quality Report (Institution)
Reporting Period 2020-2021

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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 [name of HEI] for the reporting period March 2021 to February 2022.

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

The AQR has been approved by Academic Management Committee and is submitted by **Jack Leahy & Patricia Kaufmann**

The Institution

Dorset College (T/A Computer Training Specialists Limited) is a private college delivering programmes in English Language, Computing, Business Studies, Accounting and Finance, Information Technology, Business Administration, Childcare, Montessori, Nursing Studies and Healthcare.

The college delivers programmes leading to awards from Level 5 to Level 8 on the National Framework of Qualifications, with a largely international learner population from over 64 countries, including Brazil, Bolivia, Saudi Arabia, China, Mexico, Argentina, Japan and Korea.

Founded in 1983, Dorset College is committed to developing high quality programmes to meet the challenges of an increasingly diverse learner base and demanding workplace. Situated close to the city centre, the College has grown into a vibrant centre for learning, which caters for the needs of school-leavers, graduates, international learners and mature learners.

Dorset College aims to provide high-quality globally recognised and leading-edge educational programmes, delivered in a dynamic environment by a highly qualified industry-experienced team of professionals. Based on knowledge and experience, programmes of study are presented using a variety of teaching methods and strategies. This facilitates individual learners in achieving success through learning methods that are familiar and appropriate to them.

Central to our educational ethos is our desire to prepare learners for the demands of higher education and the workplace; to fulfil their potential, to provide them with the knowledge, skills and competence that they require for their careers and personal development.

Dorset College delivers programmes leading to awards accredited by the following awarding bodies:

- Quality and Qualifications Ireland (QQI)
- The Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (CIPD)
- Project Management Institute (PMI)
- Cisco
- European Computer Driving Licence (ECDL)
- Microsoft
- Accreditation and Coordination of English Language Services (ACELS).
- LYIT: Dorset College is a second provider of the Letterkenny IT (LYIT) BSc in Early Childhood Care, Health and Education.

Process for development and approval of the AQR

The college began the process of compiling information for Part B in December 2021. This involved a series of meetings convened by the person writing the report, held with members of the Academic Management Committee and Programme Leaders.

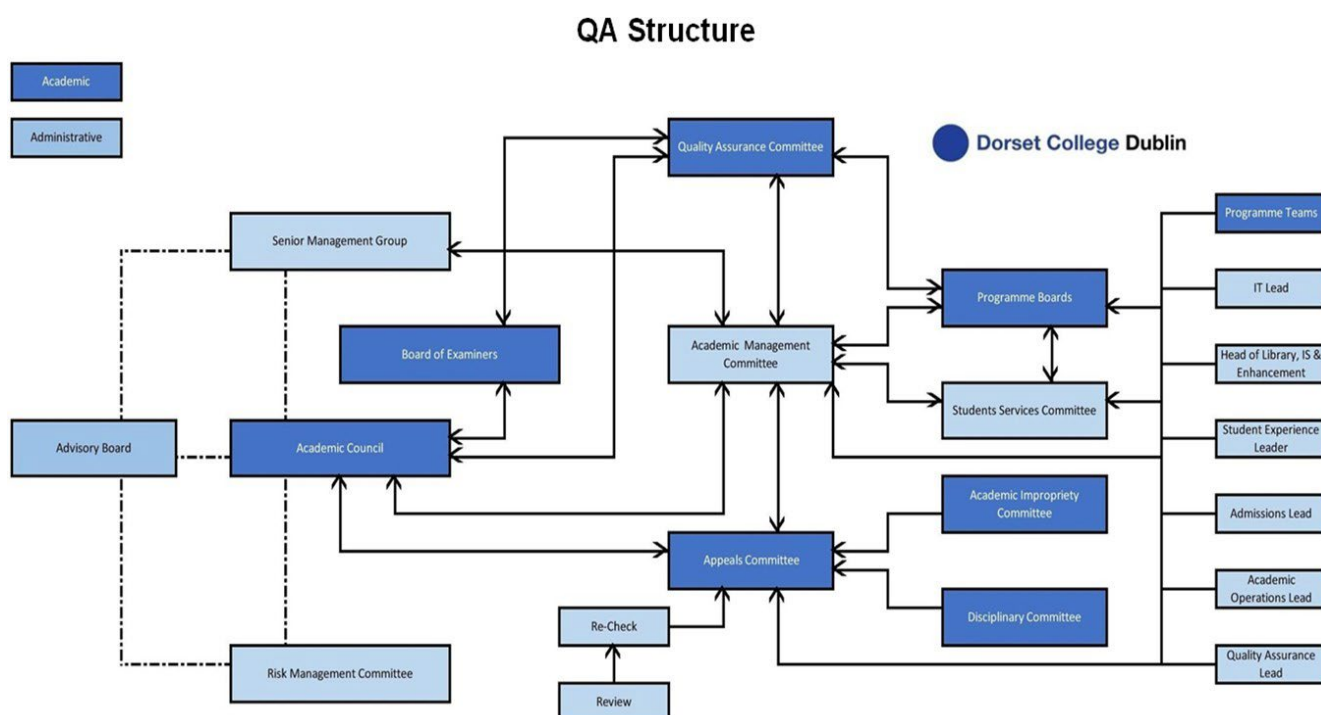
These meetings provided an opportunity to reflect on the development of quality assurance and enhancement in the college over the previous 12 months. Draft versions of the report were discussed following the meetings and final sections were agreed.

Approval

The AQR was then reviewed by the Academic Management Committee, and the Senior Management Group and prior to submission to QQI.

1.0 Internal QA Framework

1.1 Governance and Management of Quality



Quality Assurance Structure

The College's QA structure has been designed to provide a clear, robust and transparent structure to ensure the College functions to the highest educational standards and is well managed. This structure has been designed with a commitment to quality education provision to all learners. Central to this is efforts from the College to ensure a robust structure for decision-making and, importantly, a separation of responsibilities between those who make decisions and those who approve them. This QA structure ensures rigour, transparency and avoids conflict of interest(s).

Senior Management Group

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

The membership of the SMG comprises of:

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

The SMG meets once per quarter. The Quorum shall consist of at least two members of the SMG and if a matter is related to or impacts an academic matter the quorum shall be as follows:

At least one of the following persons:

Managing Director/Director of Sale & Marketing/Financial Manager; -and- Dean of Academic Affairs

The functions of the SMG are to:

1. Assess the financial viability of the College's programmes. This is done through review and discussion of income and expenditure data on programmes/cost-based analysis prepared by the College's Financial Manager.
2. Develop and implement the strategic direction and goals of the College.
3. Review the current level of staffing of the College and consider what is the appropriate level of staffing for the College's strategic interests.
4. Review the College's premises, facilities and resources and assess if they are fit-for-purpose. This review may be informed by recommendations from other groups/committees within the College's Quality Assurance structure.
5. Review data and reports pertinent to the operations of the College and assess where improvements can be made in light of this.
6. Approve and/or prioritise capital investment decisions of the College.

Advisory Group

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

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

Frequency of Meetings: Twice per year

The Quorum shall consist of at least two members of the Advisory Board with at least one external member present (3 in total), with the external member providing a written report which the Chair will read into the minutes should he/she not be in a position to attend in person.

Terms of Reference

- Helps inform and shape the strategic development of the college and approves the Strategic Plan for the College.
- Contributes to the improvement of the student experience.
- Strategically contributes to the development of industry relevant, high standard academic programmes and recommends programmes prior to submission for validation to QQI or another recognised body.
- Advises and assists the college in building and sustaining relationships between the college, its graduates and the wider community.
- Contributes to the enhancement of public confidence in Dorset College.

Academic Council

Academic Council has overall responsibility for quality assurance of and in academic provision and is the final arbiter of all quality assurance decisions for Dorset College. All quality committees, and sub-committees report to the Academic Council namely; the Quality Assurance Committee, the Academic Management Group, Appeals Committee.

Membership of the Academic Council comprises of:

- Dean of Academic Affairs (Chair)
- Quality Assurance Lead (Secretary)
- IT Lead
- Director of Studies (English language education)
- Admissions Lead
- Academic Operations Lead
- Programme Leaders
- Two academic faculty members (Further Education and Higher Education)
- Student Experience Leader

- 1 current learner representative

The Academic Council meets twice per annum and additionally when and as required. The Quorum shall consist of at least three members of the Academic Council and at least one learner representative (3 persons in total).

The functions of the Academic Council are to:

1. Establish, maintain, develop and monitor the strategy and effectiveness of quality assurance and standards of academic provision in the College within the overall context of the Academic Strategy of Dorset College acting as the final arbiter of all quality related decisions.
2. Approve the development of new academic programmes in the College. This approval will be cognisant of potential learner numbers and the capability of the College to accommodate such a programme within its facilities and available resources.
3. Review and approve decision-making that has been taken by other College groups, and committees and subcommittees.
4. Review the operations of other groups and committees in the College.
5. Assign responsibility for quality assurance tasks, such as an owner for a new programme development, programme review and all accreditation applications.
6. Consider conditions and recommendations from quality assurance reviews and action and/or prioritise work to be implemented based on these recommendations.
7. Approve any monitor revisions and updates to the College's quality assurance policies and procedures including the overall Quality Assurance Manual.

Risk Management Committee

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

The membership of the RMC comprises of:

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

The RMC meets twice per annum.

The Quorum shall consist of at least two members of the RMC. The functions of the RMC are to:

1. Identify areas of risk or potential risk for the College.
2. Classify those areas of risk into either high/medium/low risk.
3. Propose strategies that could be adopted to avoid or mitigate identified risk areas.
4. Develop and maintain a risk register.
5. Review the financial performance of the College's programmes to mitigate/avoid financial risk.
6. Update the Academic Council and the Senior Management Group as to risk clusters when requested.

Academic Management Committee

The Academic Management Committee (AMC) is the decision-making body for academic operational issues. The AMC facilitates greater communication flow within the College's various departments and ensures that operational issues are resolved in a effective and efficient manner. The remit of the AMC is broader than solely academic issues and also incorporates pastoral, facilities, admissions and HR issues. It also allows for updates of various College activities and ensures they are communicated appropriately.

The membership of the AMG will comprise of:

- Academic Operations Lead (Chair)
- Quality Assurance Lead (Secretary)
- Operations Lead
- Admissions Lead
- IT Lead
- Head of Library, Information Systems and Enhancement
- Financial Manager
- Director of Studies (English Language/EFL)
- Academic(s)- at least one from Further and Higher Education respectively
- Student Experience Leader

The AMC meets once per month but can meet more frequently should it be required. The Quorum shall consist of at least three members of the AMC.

The functions of the AMC are to:

1. Report and resolve operational (academic and non-academic but which have an impact on the academic for example capacity planning) issues in a timely and efficient manner.
2. Consider pastoral issues of learners and agree support mechanisms where necessary.

3. Confirm the order of priority for planned operational activity within the College.
4. Approve resources for the operational activities of the College's programmes.
5. Make the relevant operational decisions in support of the College's academic and strategic priorities.
6. Set deadlines for work tasks to be complete and to monitor their progress.
7. Assess learner participation through monitoring and review of attendance reports.
8. Communicate pertinent operational developments to the College's staff and reports to the Senior Management Group (operational issues) and the Academic Council (academic issues).

Quality Assurance Committee

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

The membership of the QEC will comprise of:

- Quality Assurance Lead (Chair)
- Academic Operations Lead (Secretary)
- Programme Leader (s)(from each of the following sectors: Further Education, Higher Education and English Language (EFL) to ensure the alignment of policies/procedures with and within programmes)
- A staff member/member of faculty that has significant operational duties in a specific policy area (rotating member dependent on specific policy)
- Student Experience Leader
- 1 current learner

The QAC shall meet twice per annum or additionally when required for example during a period of programme review and/or revalidation.

The Quorum shall consist of at least three members of the QAC and shall consist of one academic, one operational member of staff and one learner.

The functions of the QAC are to:

1. Oversee of the development of quality assurance policies and procedures across the Quality Assurance Structure.

2. Support the College's goal of enhancing and continually improving its quality assurance structures across the Quality Assurance Structure.
3. Review draft policies and procedures in line with best practice.
4. Agree on the appointment of external advisors, should they be needed for specific policy areas.
5. Sign-off on finalised quality assurance policies and procedures with a reporting function to the Academic Council.
6. Monitor the implementation of established quality assurance policies and procedures across the Quality Assurance Structure.
7. Report bi-annually to the Academic Council.

Programme Board

A Programme Board (which could also be referred to as a formal and documented Programme Team Meeting) is central to the organisation and management of an academic programme. A Programme Board is a decision-making body for academic and operational issues (should the latter have an affect on academic issues) of a programme. It also reviews how the programme has been performing and operating and plans the operations of a programme in the future.

The membership of a Programme Board will comprise of:

- Programme Leader (Chair)
- Academic Operations Lead (Secretary)
- Quality Assurance Lead
- Lecturing Faculty (at least one member of faculty from a relevant field of learning i.e. Further Education and/or Higher Education as appropriate)
- 2 current learner (Further and Higher Education and will comprise of the Head Class Representative from each sector as elected by their peer group i.e. the full body of class reps throughout the College)

A Programme Board meets four times per year, once prior to the commencement of the academic year, once per semester and once at the end of the academic year (circa 4 times per year and additionally if and when required).

The Quorum shall consist of at least two members of the Programme Board and one current learner. The functions of a Programme Board are to:

1. Make programme related decisions based on supporting evidence derived by the College. An example of such supporting evidence would be quantitative data related to learner performance or attendance and/or completion rates, certification rates and satisfaction rates (faculty, learners etc.) with the programme content etc.
2. Identify, and seek to address opportunities and challenges that are deemed to have been critical in the programme's delivery and to ensure full visibility which will require liaising with the various college boards including the Academic Management Committee, Quality Assurance Committee etc.
3. Critique the delivery, relevance, and effectiveness of the programme looking at stakeholder feedback.
4. Suggest any pertinent changes that should be made to the programme. This could include, but is not limited to: programme schedule, assessment strategy, teaching and learning approaches.
5. Demonstrate how recommendations raised by periodic reviews of the programme, such as that from an external examiner or External Authenticator in Further Education, have been addressed.
6. Determine how issues raised by learners' through either formal or informal feedback have been addressed, or discuss why they should or should not be addressed.
7. Report on the actions that were undertaken as a result of previous Programme Board meetings.
8. Provide recommendations to be actioned, where appropriate, for the future operations of the programme by reviewing; numbers per programme, learner profiles, completion rates, staff development etc.
9. Report to and action relevant items that arise from the Academic Management Committee, the Board of Examiners meeting or from the Academic Council for example.
10. Review the assessment performance of learners (through a grade analysis) and reflect on how it compares with relevant benchmarks. Use this information to inform teaching, learning and assessment strategy.

Academic Impropriety Committee

The Academic Impropriety Committee coordinates, investigates and is the decision-making body for academic impropriety in assessment and examinations.

The membership of the Academic Impropriety Committee will comprise of:

- Programme Leader/Senior Academic (Chair)
- Academic Operations Lead(Secretary)
- Head of Library, Information Systems and Enhancement
- Academic (relevant to the field of learning but unconnected to the assessment or allegation of academic impropriety)
- Student Experience Leader

The Academic Impropriety committee meets at least twice per academic semester, typically prior to an examination board, with full membership present. This board may also sit as required throughout the academic year.

The Quorum shall consist of at least two members of the AI Committee with at least one academic present.

The functions of the Academic Impropriety Committee are to:

1. Consider allegations of academic impropriety.
2. Consider and assess all evidence put forward.
3. Decide on the appropriate outcome based on the evidence put forward.
4. Ensure any penalty is proportionate to the level of academic impropriety.
5. Ensure the learner is aware of their right of appeal to the Appeals Committee within 5 working days of the decision of the Academic Impropriety Committee.

Disciplinary Committee

The Disciplinary Committee coordinates, investigates and is the decision-making body for learner discipline in the College and deals with allegations of learner misconduct in Dorset College and/or related to Dorset College activities.

The membership of the Disciplinary Committee will comprise of:

- Academic Operations Lead (Chair)
- Quality Assurance Lead (Secretary)
- Academic (relevant to the field of learning but unconnected to the alleged disciplinary issue)
- Student Experience Leader

The Disciplinary Committee meets at least once per academic semester with full membership present and as required throughout the academic year.

The Quorum shall consist of at least two members of the Disciplinary Committee with at least one academic present.

The functions of the Disciplinary Committee is to:

1. Consider allegations of indiscipline and/or indiscipline.

2. Consider and assess all evidence put forward.
3. Decide on the appropriate outcome based on the evidence put forward.
4. Ensure any penalty is proportionate to the level of indiscipline.
5. Ensure the learner is aware of their right of appeal to the Appeals Committee within 5 working days of the decision of the Disciplinary Committee.

Student Services Committee

The Student Services Committee coordinates and is the decision-making body for the support services that the College provides its learners. This committee will also facilitate interaction between College staff and learners on how the College's learner support provision could be improved and further developed and is driven by a commitment to the student experience.

The membership of the Student Services Committee will comprise of:

- Head of Library, Information Systems and Enhancement (Chair)
- Student Experience Leader (Secretary)
- Academic Operations Lead
- Quality Assurance Lead
- Programme Leader(s)
- 2-4 learners (across all relevant fields of learning)

The Student Services committee meets at least once per academic semester. The Quorum shall consist of at least two members of the Student Services Committee with at least one learner present.

The functions of the Student Services committee are to:

1. Consider feedback from learners on the learner supports offered by the College.
2. Coordinate the collection and collation of surveys of the learner body.
3. Assess the effectiveness and usage of the learner supports offered by the College
4. Coordinate training activities for class representatives.
5. Ensure that learners are fully informed of the support services offered to them by the College.
6. Liaise various committees within the college such as the Quality Assurance Committee.
7. Report to the Academic Management Committee.

Board of Examiners

A Board of Examiners is an approval body of the assessment results of learners on academic programmes. It acts as the oversight body of individual assessor's assessment grading decisions. The membership of an Examination Board will comprise of:

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

An Examination Board meets at least once per semester. The quorum shall consist of the following members:

- Programme Leader or nominee who shall act as Chair in place of the PL when required
- Examinations Officer or Academic Operations Lead (either individual can act as Secretary in place of the QA Lead if and when required)
- Two internal examiners per programme
- External Examiner
-

The functions of an Examination Board:

1. Approve the provisional results of each individual module.
2. Approve the award of each learner, where appropriate.
3. Approve whether each learner has progressed or not, where appropriate.
4. Agree on borderline results where they may affect if a learner passes or fails, or if it affects a learner's overall award classification.
5. Approve decisions made regarding mitigating circumstances and academic impropriety.

Where issues arise between meeting of a Board of Examiners, the Chair is empowered to make decisions within the Terms of Reference of the Board of Examiners (see above), and after gaining the approval of the External Examiner(s). Such decisions will be reported to the next meeting of a Board of Examiners. Once official results are released a learner can re-check, review or appeal their marks

Appeals Committee

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

1. Reviews and appeals that learners may wish to make with regards a component of their original assessment prior to marks being put forward to the Board of Examiners. Once an application for an appeal is received the Appeals Committee will appoint an independent assessor (Review) to provide them with a report; and
2. Appeals from a decision from the Disciplinary Committee or Academic Impropriety Committee.

The Appeals Committee will ordinarily meet after the issuance of provisional results for a particular programme or level thereto. The Appeals Committee looks at appeals from a re-check or review of a component of their assessment (an internal process please see Section 6.10 of the QAM) or pursuant to an appeal from the Disciplinary or Academic Impropriety Committee.

The membership of the Appeals Committee will comprise of:

- Quality Assurance Lead (Chair)
- Senior Academic/Programme Leader (not involved in original decision)
- Student Experience Leader

The full membership is required to constitute the Appeals Committee. Should a member be unavailable they shall advise the Dean of Academic Affairs of their nominee and rationale for such a nominee for Dean's approval.

The functions of the Appeals Committee are to:

- Consider the recommendation put forth by the independent assessor pursuant to a recheck or review (which is a procedural process section 6.10 of this QAM);
- Agree a formal response to all learners' appeals;
- Ensure learners are notified of the outcome of their review or appeal.

Dean of Academic Affairs

The Dean of Academic Affairs provides academic and administrative leadership to Dorset College and has overall responsibility for the management of the programmes and related facilities and supports within

Dorset College. This entails the management of a programme's academic staff, as well ensuring that a programme is delivered to the standard expected of the College.

The key roles and responsibilities of the Dean of Academic Affairs are to:

- Liaise with accreditation bodies.
- Lead Programme validation and revalidation on behalf of the College.
- Ensure the academic objectives of the college are achieved.
- Oversee the day-to-day operations of programmes under their remit including the scheduling of programmes through the College's Academic Calendar.
- Allocate duties and resources, including recruitment, required of a programme to ensure its optimal operation.
- Manage the staff (academic and non-academic) on programmes under their remit.
- Manage the budget, as well as Dorset College's programme(s) infrastructure.
- Provide orientation and guidance to academic and non-academic staff to ensure an understanding of their role and contribution to Dorset College.
- Support the professional development of academic staff.
- Ensure that the duty of care owed to learners and staff is fulfilled.
- Ensure the learner experience is of the standard expected of and by Dorset College.
- Ensure services are delivered in a consistent and professional manner.
- Support the development of new programmes under the terms agreed by the Academic Council.
- Implement and monitor the College's Quality Assurance Manual and related framework(s).
- Oversee the Assessment, Teaching and Learning Strategy of the College.
- Lead the College's Quality Enhancement efforts.
- Oversee the appropriate maintenance of learner records from admission to graduation.
- Oversee the certification and graduation of learners.
- Advise the College on pertinent quality assurance matters.
- Chair the Academic Council and ensure the College's committees and boards are appropriately chaired and/or designate a replacement in the event of absence.

Director of Sales and Marketing

The Sales & Marketing Director has overall responsibility for the management, operations and effectiveness of the College's Sales & Marketing activities. This role also oversees the necessary administration of applicants and maintaining relationships that the College develops with partner institutes. The Sales & Marketing Director

ensures all learner recruitment policies compliment all academic admission requirements as identified by the Dean of Academic Affairs in line with the Quality Assurance Manual.

Managing Director

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

Leadership Team

Dorset College has developed as part of its Quality Assurance Structure and due to operational needs a leadership team which comprises:

- Operations Lead
- Admissions Lead
- IT Lead
- Academic Operations Lead
- Quality Assurance Lead

Each respective Lead will work with the other Leads and Departments to ensure cohesive delivery of programmes from an application to graduation by ensuring the interface with the prospective learner, learner and graduate is integrated and learner centered at every stage.

The College have also ensured the learner experience is protected through the development of roles such as The Student Experience Leader, Head of Library, Information Systems and Enhancement as well as Programme Leaders for all accredited programmes in the College.

College satisfactions rates have improved with the creation of the Leadership Team and this team ensures quality is assured throughout the learner journey.

1.2 Linked Providers, Collaborative and Transnational Provision

Dorset College has a collaborative/consortium agreement with LYIT for direct entry from our Level 6 to their Level 7 BSc in Early Childhood Education.

2.0 Programme Development and Delivery

2.1 Programme Development and Approval

Programme Development

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

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

- Outline the programme's rationale and coherency with the strategy of Dorset College.
- Have clearly defined programme aim(s), objectives, and Minimum Intended Programme Learning Outcomes (MIPLOs).
- State the intended National Framework of Qualifications (NFQ) level of the programme and provide a clear rationale for the level chosen.
- Outline the stakeholder consultation that has taken place as well as outlining all consultations with the College's Advisory Board to ensure industry engagement with the proposed programme.
- State the intended delivery method, the teaching & learning strategies of the programme, and its assessment strategy.
- Outline the resources that the proposed programme would require.
- Timeframe for the development of the programme, should the Proposal be successful

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

The Development of programmes at Dorset College will:

- Be informed of stakeholders' views and expertise.
- Ensure learners are fully informed of their access, transfer, and progression opportunities.
- Consult with professional bodies, where applicable. Also, if possible, programmes at Dorset College will seek membership, exemptions etc., for graduates of the programme.

- ▮ Be written using learning outcomes and aligned to the appropriate award standards.
- ▮ Be internally, including a mock panel, considered before being put forward for consideration to QQI. Meet the criteria for Preparing an Application for Validation, as detailed in section 5 of QQI's Policies and criteria for the validation of programmes of education and training. This will ensure that the preliminary matters for any validation are in place, that the programme is appropriately documented in the template provided by QQI, and that the programme has been evaluated against the validation criteria.

2.2 Admission, Progression, Recognition & Certification

Admission

All QQI programmes are offered by Dorset College on an academic year basis are on, or are formally aligned to the National Framework of Qualifications (NFQ) and awards thereto. Applicants can access Dorset College programmes through the following:

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

Dorset College ensures the following:

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

Access & Admission Higher Education

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

Access

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

Admission

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

1. CAO Applicants (Standard and Non-standard);
 - a. Leaving Certificate results appropriate to the programme applied for;
 - b. QQI Award transcripts (where applicable);
 - c. Transcripts of any relevant completed study;
 - d. IELTS 6.0.

2. Direct Entry
 - a. Through our Admissions Office in person or via our website;
 - b. Leaving Certificate results equivalency as certified by NARIC Ireland;
 - c. IELTS 6.0.

3. Non-native speakers of English
 - a. IELTS 6.0 is required for all applicants including non-native speakers of English.

4. Mature Applicants
 - a. RPL and RPEL will be considered by the Admissions Lead.

Appeal

If a prospective learner's access to a programme is rejected the individual will be afforded a mechanism to appeal in writing stating the grounds of appeal to the Dean of Academic Affairs within 5 working days.

Access & Admission Further Education

Access

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

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

Admission

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

1. Direct Entry*
 - a. Through our Admissions Office in person or via our website;
2. Non-native speakers of English
 - a. IELTS 5.0 is required for all applicants including non-native speakers of English.
3. Under 21
 - a. Leaving Certificate standard or appropriate QQI Qualification or equivalent for example Level 4 to gain entry to a Level 5 Further Education Programme with all details available on the Dorset College website and brochures.
4. Mature Applicants
 - a. RPL and RPEL will be considered by the Admissions Lead. Experience in a related field will be of particular relevance for example healthcare

If a prospective learner's access to a programme is rejected the individual will be afforded a mechanism to appeal in writing stating the grounds of appeal to the Dean of Academic Affairs within 5 working days.

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

Procedures for Admission

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

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

Where the successful applicant accepts a place on a particular programme, in line with GDPR obligations, their personal details are recorded on our student information system, CLASS and they are advised of the relevant fees and Garda National Immigration Bureau (GNIB) obligations and/or requirements.

Transfer and Progression

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

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

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

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

Admission & Induction

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

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

Recognition & Certification

Dorset College provides information as to recognition and certification in our Learner Handbooks and our QA Manual.

2.3 Procedures for Making Awards

Dorset College is not a Designated Awarding Body.

2.4 Teaching, Learning and Assessment

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

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

Dorset College is committed to developing a strategy on digitally enhanced learning as part of the overall development of the College. The College will engage with relevant stakeholders to ensure that any such development is appropriate and relevant to the particular field of learning and learner and is in line with College Mission and Values.

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

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

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



The Core Teaching, Learning, and Assessment areas

Programme Content

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

Programme Content Goals:

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

The Core Teaching, Learning, and Assessment areas for Dorset College

Excellence in Teaching and Learning

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

Therefore, the College has committed to providing financial support for some of its faculty to undertake a Masters' in Teaching and Learning and facilitates members of its faculty to attain the digital badge in Teaching Strategies.

Teaching and Learning Goals:

1. To ensure that faculty are informed of teaching and learning theories, and effective teaching strategies.

2. To facilitate faculty in furthering their knowledge in this area, through providing continuous professional development opportunities.

Learner Engagement

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

Learner Engagement Goals:

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

Variety of Assessment

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

Assessment Goals:

1. To ensure a variety of assessments are utilised at each stage of a programme;

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

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

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

Assessment & Moderation

Assessment-Role of Examiners

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

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

Assessment-Role of Moderator

A Moderator is appointed for each module by the Dean of Academic Affairs and the relevant Programme Leader. Any such appointment is made on the basis of experience as an educator in the particular subject or a related area, normally including at least 2 years teaching and assessment or other curriculum-related

experience within the last 5 years at the same level on the framework as the subject which is being moderated.

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

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

- Assessment has been set in line with learning outcomes of the module;
- Assessment is appropriate, consistent, fair and transparent and does not discriminate against any learner;
- An assessment has been marked in line with the expressed aims and learning outcomes of the assignment/examination, and in terms of marking criteria fairness of marking and the equality of treatment of each learner;
- Internal consistency of assessment within a module;
- Comparability of standards across modules within a subject area;
- Assessment is appropriate to the level at which it is taught;
- A detailed guide to assessment and moderation is provided to each member of faculty.

Teaching and Learning - Further Education

Dorset College engenders internal provider driven quality assurance in the provision of Further Education by ensuring our mechanisms and procedure adopted are quality assured and driven by our stakeholders (faculty, learner, employers, alumni and relevant work-based training entities) to achieve the appropriate learning outcomes through planning, expertise, resources and commitment by Dorset College to excellence in learning through continuous improvement.

Self-evaluation and careful monitoring of each programme and in this instance Further Education is crucial in ensuring the quality of such programmes as delivered by Dorset College is effective and embraces ongoing improvements to teaching, learning and assessment.

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

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

Surveys include questions which relate to:

- Programme Content;

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

Learning Resources

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

- Programme Content and resources
- Facilities; Library, Canteen, Printing
- Learner Support; Student Experience Leader, Exam supports etc.
- Programme Team and points of contact for example academic operations, librarian, programme leader

Learners who undertake a course in Further Education are offered academic support by our Head of Library, IS and Enhancement through referencing classes and one-to-one sessions throughout the academic year. All learners are encouraged to develop their employability by partaking in Dorset College Jobs Club, Clubs and Societies as well as social trips.

Assessment & Verification Further Education

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

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

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

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

Internal Verification

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

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

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

External Authentication

Dorset College ensures that all assessments and grades thereto are externally authenticated after the completion of IV by the College to ensure objective and authoritative confirmation of level appropriate, authentic, fair and consistent assessment for all learners across all modules comprising a programme. Dorset College ensures the appropriate external authenticator has access to all IV reports and provisional results as generated by the Exams Officer prior to the EA visit to authenticate results.

Results Verification

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

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

Marks are then sent forward by the Exams Office to QQI via QBS for official certification.

After each assessment period there is a programme team meeting to ensure the learner outcomes are in line with the Programme Learning Outcomes and Module Learning Outcomes and do a comparative grade analysis and to ensure appropriate feedback is provided to all learners.

Process

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

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

Group Work Policy

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

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

Group Work refers to where two or more learners work together as part of formative and summative assessment. (Note: Only summative assessment is credit bearing as per Dorset College Policy on assessment). Dorset College categorise Group Work as learner-led or lecturer-led, and whatever method is used, the learner should be advised of the rationale and how this relates to the level (for example Level 6) and the overall construct of the module and the related MIMLOs as aligned to the MIPOs of the programme. The programme team will look at the advantages and disadvantages of each approach.

Assessment Goals

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

Grading

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

Conflict

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

The programme team endeavour to conciliate but advise the group that conflict is inherent in all group projects and it is part of the assessment to self-manage the group dynamic. The programme or a particular member of faculty in conjunction with the Academic Team will exercise academic judgment should such conflict compromise the assessment and may intervene in a more formal way. Formal intervention may include but is not limited to the following:

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

Learner Support

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

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

- College Website
- Application form;
- Induction;

- throughout the academic year to any one of the following persons
 - Admissions Lead
 - Academic Operations Lead
 - Module Leader
 - Programme Leader
 - QA Lead & Examinations Officer
 - Student Experience Leader

Learner Support Application/ Admissions Process

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

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

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

Learner Supports

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

- Dorset College have a designated person, Head of Library Information Systems and Enhancement, who provides extra classes both general (Referencing etc.) and specific (Spelling and Grammar etc.) throughout the year. Details of this are available on our VLE Moodle and our Website as part of the Student Hub.

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

Academic Term - Induction & Re-Induction

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

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

The induction pack contains the following;

- Learner Handbook which contains information on Learner Supports and related application forms such as examination supports;
- Academic Team Profiles and Contact Details;
- Wi-Fi Codes for the respective Buildings;
- Facilitates information such as Opening Hours for the Library and Canteen;
- Moodle and Office 365 Instructions;
- Programme Handbook specific to the relevant Programme which includes credits, module descriptors, Assessment Schedule and all programme relevant material

Guidance and Pastoral Counselling

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

The Student Experience Leader is fully trained in Mental Health First Aid and is available at designated times to signpost learner to confidential, impartial and supportive counselling to learners experiencing personal

difficulties. For those presenting every effort shall be made to identify the appropriate professional help available.

Assignments

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

Examination Provision

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

Exams Support

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

3.0 Learner Resources and Support

Library, student social and study facilities

Library Services

Dorset College is very proud to have a teaching librarian who was awarded a Level 9 MSc Library and Information Studies in 2019 and is now managing enhancement of all programmes . She teaches on the programme on a weekly basis to ensure academic excellence is engendered and promoted.

Physical Resources

Dorset College library is situated in the basement of 7 Belvedere Place. The collection consists of over 1,200 books and covers the full range of modules of degree courses offered by Dorset College (IT, Law, Ethics, Business, Montessori, pre-Nursing and Marketing & Sales) The collection also hosts a number of study & referencing books for short courses. For the English Language School, the Library has several easy reading series, audiobooks, music and films.

Next to the collection the library provides access to Moodle, several EBSCO databases and Internet both via desktop computers as well via Wi-Fi for laptop users. There is also a facility to print, scan and copy. Students can purchase copy-cards at reception.

Library Services

Research Skills and Techniques – Support and guidance with regards information and academic research ensuring academic poverty is highlighted and minimised ensuring effective and efficient information gathering and research.

Academic Mentoring – In relation to provided services: the librarian is available to assist students on a one-to-one basis with whatever questions they might have. This can be related to their study, assignments, but also queries about visa, jobs and/or just a listening ear. The Head of Library, Information Systems and Enhancement organizes several Master Classes for the BB4 Part-time students and for Foundation, BB4 Full-time and Semester

Abroad students a 12 week “Academic Writing” module (see below). These classes on academic writing and referencing are planned to be expanded in some sort to other groups in the future.

Book Exchange – “Bring a book, take a book” initiative. The library in conjunction with the Student Experience Manager, have developed a book exchange club. The library hosts a “bring – a- book, take – a – book” initiative, where students & staff can take a book in change for another book. This initiative has already gained traction and the Library hopes to see the success of this grow as it engenders positivity around reading and library usage for academic and personal enjoyment.

Library Induction and Class Visits

At the start of each academic year each learner will be invited to induction which will include library induction on the following:

- Library Tour
- Library Databases
- Lending facilities
- Inter-Library Loans
- Academic propriety and referencing
- Copyright
- Turnitin
- Plagiarism
- Moodle –support

Since September 2020 this has taken place online (via Zoom), due to the closure of the library following government instructions in relation to CoVid-19

IT infrastructure

The College has four computer labs, all of which are located in No. 8 Belvedere Place campus. These labs cumulatively house 120 computers, which are used for the delivery of relevant modules and are available for learners, outside of scheduled class times, to assist in their studies. The computer labs are accessible whenever it is free during college hours. All computers have internet access. Learners can also gain internet access through the College’s Wi-Fi, which is available throughout each of our campuses.

OFFICE 365

Learners are provided, upon registration, with an Office 365 account. Learners are introduced to their Office 365 account at induction and the library also helps all students who wish to have additional IT Support. Students can contact the library for this support at any time.

MOODLE

The College utilises a Virtual Learning Environment, Moodle. This serves as a prime communication device between the learners and the College and allows the College to ensure that learners have access to the requisite information that they need for their studies. It also allows the College to ensure that learners are aware of relevant policies and procedures, and pastoral support mechanisms which the College provides. Dorset College VLE, Moodle, will be used extensively to distribute material relevant to this module (content of the lectures, readings and other informative readings and supplemental material).

Moodle is also used as an integrative teaching tool and enables learners individually and within their teams to post, discuss, and interact with material. Moodle will also be used, where appropriate, as an assessment tool for example through quizzes and it is mandatory for all assignments to be uploaded through Moodle ensuring quality assurance and an automatic Turnitin report.

The Head of Library, Information Systems and Enhancement manages Moodle for learners and academic operations as follows:

Learners are provided with Moodle support throughout their studies regarding the following:

- ▮ Access to their modules
- ▮ Attendance
- ▮ Grade overview

Academic Operations and Faculty are also provided support regarding the following:

- ▮ usage overview
- ▮ locked or suspended access
- ▮ various statistics

Mahara

Since the beginning of September 2020 Mahara (online e-portfolio platform) has been incorporated via Moodle. Students and Staff with a Moodle account can access Mahara directly via their Moodle Dashboard with a single-sign-on.

EBSCO

The online research databases from EBSCO currently available in the college are:

- ▮ Business Source Elite
- ▮ Business Database

- ▣ Full text of over 1,000 business publications (from 1985 onwards)
- ▣ Plus 10,000 substantial company profiles from Datamonitor
- ▣ Updated daily by EBSCOhost
- ▣ Computer Source
- ▣ Full text of nearly 300
- ▣ Abstracts of nearly 450 publications
- ▣ Latest information and current trends in high technology
- ▣ Regional Business News
- ▣ Comprehensive full text coverage for regional business publications
- ▣ More than 80 business publications
- ▣ Covering all metropolitan and rural areas within US.
- ▣ Business Source Premier
- ▣ Full text of over 2,300 journals
- ▣ Full text of over 1,100 peer-reviewed titles
- ▣ From 1886 onwards
- ▣ Searchable cited references since 1998
- ▣ Related disciplines: marketing, management, MIS, POM, accounting, finance and economics
- ▣ Updated daily by EBSCOhost
- ▣ eBook collection EBSCOHost
- ▣ eBook ITCore
- ▣ More than 2,200 titles
- ▣ Covering key subjects in IT
- ▣ Desktop and office applications
- ▣ Enterprise computing
- ▣ Networking
- ▣ Programming
- ▣ Cybersecurity
- ▣ Web Design and developmente
- ▣ Books for FE/HE Collection
- ▣ multidisciplinary e-books selected for Further Education (FE) and Higher Education (HE)
- ▣ 11,000 ebooks
- ▣ Updated Quarterly

Online training in how to get the most out of these databases is available. Also, in the 12-week modules this information is shared.

Academic Learning Supports

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

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

IT support

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

Study support skills

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

English language support

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

Library services support

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

IT Support

The College has dedicated ICT personnel who provide technical support for learners. This technical support is available as a drop-in service, or learners can make an appointment with the College's IT staff through Moodle. The IT support covers all aspects of how learners interact with their programme through the use of technology. 227 Academic Learning Supports DORSET COLLEGE DUBLIN This would include support for the use of IT hardware provided by the College, access issues that the learner may experience when trying to logon from their IT equipment to eResources provided by the College, downloading and use of software related to the programmes that they are studying in the College.

Non-Academic Learning Supports

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

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

Given the diverse nature of the supports on offer, the College recognises the importance of ensuring that the supports are integrated and that learners are regularly informed of these supports. To ensure this cohesion and information, the academic learning supports are co-ordinated by the Admissions Lead and the Quality Assurance Lead. Having a single person in charge of the co-ordination of these learning supports helps ensure a clarity for learners as to where to request any support and a cohesion of the supports that are offered.

Furthermore, the College is committed to ensuring its learners are fully informed of these supports and will promote these through the College induction and VLE, as well as through its learner handbook.

Pastoral Care

The College is aware of the adjustment that learners can face in transitioning into a further or higher education programme, whether they are coming from secondary school, returning to education or transitioning to the Irish education system from another country. Furthermore, learners may also struggle during their academic career as their coursework proves challenging or personal circumstances impede their ability to complete their academic tasks as competently as possible.

Therefore, the College has in place pastoral care support, which assists the learner with their transition to further or higher education, as well as supporting learners during their studies with the College. The Student Experience Leader is trained in Mental Health First Aid.

Learners with Additional Learning Needs or Disabilities

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

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

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

Teaching:

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

Learning:

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

Assessment:

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

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

Class Representative Support

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

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

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

Dorset College is part of NStEP and all our Class Representatives undergo training.

International Learners

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

Additional Supports

As a direct result of COVID-19 our Student Experience Leader has created a Dorset Community with the following supports;

- Wellness Ambassadors
- Well Good Podcast
- Class Representative Weekly Meetings
- Social and Cultural events online and in person in line with Public Health Guidelines

Healthcare

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

Protection of Enrolled Learners (PEL)

Dorset College is a member of the Higher Education College's Association (HECA) and this programme is covered by the HECA PEL Scheme. Protection of Enrolled Learners

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

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

4.0 QA of Research Activities and Programmes

N/A

5.0 Staff Recruitment, Development and Support

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

- During a staff recruitment process, the College will ensure a rationale is provided if the recruitment is for a new position.
- If the new position is an academic appointment, this rationale must be approved by the Dean of Academic Affairs and ensure the College has the financial resources to support the appointment of the new position. If the new position is a non-academic appointment the Managing Director must approve recruitment for the new position and ensure the College has the financial resources to support the appointment of the new position.
- Devise a job description that will be approved by the Senior Management Group and if the recruitment is intended to fill a vacancy in a current position, the job description will be reviewed to assess if it requires updating.

The job description will include:

- Position title as well as essential skills, qualifications, and experience necessary of someone to be eligible to fill the position.
- Desired skills, qualifications, and experience of someone in the position.
- Key roles and responsibilities of the position.
- A summary of the work activities that the position will be expected to perform.
- The duration and terms of employment of the position.

The college ensures that all applicants are treated fairly and without bias or prejudice during the recruitment process. It recruits using these methods:

- Advertise a position both internally and externally to ensure that the best candidate is chosen for the job.
- Use a national recruitment media, typically a recruitment website, when advertising a position externally. The information provided of the position on these recruitment media must be approved by the member of the College management who approved the rationale for the recruitment.
- Screen all applicants for the position based on the stated essential criteria detailed in the job description. Where the number of applications is large, the applicants will also be screened based on the desired criteria.
- After the screening process, shortlist a minimum of two candidates for the advertised position.
-
- Ensure that a member of the Senior Management Group will appoint the interview panel for the position being advertised. This will ordinarily be the same member of the College management who

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

Staff Management

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

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

- Review all job descriptions on an annual basis as part of employee appraisals to ensure their continued relevancy and currency. Such reviews will be particularly cognisant of developments within the area of the job. This review will be conducted by the line manager responsible for the person occupying a role.
- Encourage staff to join professional bodies that are related or relevant to their job. The College will also pay any associated membership fee for a professional body, where this is previously agreed and there is a demonstrable benefit to the College's activities. Joining a professional body may be done at the request of the employee or suggested by their line manager. Where it is at the request of an employee, it must be approved by their line manager. The Managing Director must also approve it from a financial perspective.
- Encourage staff to attend academic conferences where the topic of the conference is of relevance to their job role. The College will also pay for any cost of attending the conference and any associated travel expenses. These should be agreed prior to registration for the conference.

Attending a conference may be done at the request of the employee or suggested by their line manager. Where it is at the request of an employee, it must be approved by their line manager. The Managing Director must also approve it from a financial perspective.

Teaching & Learning Development

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

- All new staff hired by the College will serve an initial probationary period of 6 months, at the end of which time the performance of the individual will be reviewed by their line manager. Depending on the performance of the individual during this probationary period, the line manager may:
 - Allow the probationary period to end and inform the individual of this. The individual will be informed that they have successfully completed their probationary period. In practice, the individual's role will not change.
 - Extend the period of probation for a further 5 months.
 - Due process will be followed if the decision is to terminate the employment of the individual due to roles and responsibilities of the job not been met (other terminable offences are outlined in the Code of Conduct policy). This would be an untypical outcome and would only occur after repeated notifications to the employee that their job performance has not met the expected standard.

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

Appraisal & Staff Development system

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

- An annual appraisal of all staff by their line manager.
- Review the work performance of the staff member in the previous year and set goals for the staff member for the following year.
- To ensure coherence between staff training and development activities and the strategy of the College.
- To ensure the learner voice is considered through review of the learner feedback of staff.

The College commits to the development of its staff and the importance of the concept of staff development. However, it also acknowledges that the resources that it has to commit to staff development are finite. Therefore, the College must review applications for continuous professional development (CPD) and determine which applications merit commitment of resources. The College makes this decision with regard to the following criteria:

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

Staff Code of Conduct

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

The central pillars of the Staff Code of Conduct are:

1. Integrity

- Staff should act with honesty and integrity in all aspects of their work. Staff will respect the privacy of colleagues and stakeholders, unless there is a legal or ethical imperative necessitating disclosure to a relevant person and/or authority.
- Staff must avoid conflicts of interest that could arise between their role with the College and their private interests. Where there may be such a conflict, it is the staff members responsibility to notify their line manager of this.

- Staff will not accept gifts from external individuals, stakeholders or learners without the consent of their line manager. All gifts received will be accounted for with College Management. Cash gifts are not acceptable in any circumstances.

2. Values And Relationships

- Staff will be fair, reasonable and honest in their interactions with peers, learners, management, and stakeholders.
- Staff will be committed to equality and inclusion and respect the diversity of peers, learners, management, and stakeholders.

3. Conduct

- Staff will uphold the reputation of the College and not bring its name into disrepute.
- Staff will act in a manner that helps ensure the health and safety of peers, learners, management, and stakeholders.
- Staff will not intentionally act or behave in a manner that infringes upon legislation or regulations that govern their job role.
- Staff will report any incident they witness where the welfare of a peer, learner, management or stakeholder is put at risk.
- Staff will be professional, courteous and respectful in all communications with peers, learners, management and stakeholders.
- Staff will not intentionally have in their position material, in any format, that is inappropriate or offensive to others.
- Staff will not present to work in a manner that impedes their ability to perform their role as expected.
- Staff will respect the confidentiality of information that they may receive during the course of their duties with the College.
- Staff are encouraged to be open and transparent in sharing their opinions of the management, operations and governance of the College. Such opinions shall be discussed in a collegial, respectful and professional manner, and can be made by the staff member without fear of reprisal.

4. Practice

- Staff will fulfil the duties assigned to them to their best of their ability.
- Staff will communicate to the relevant person in a timely manner if their availability for a scheduled task/duty/event has changed.
- Staff will work in a collaborative and collegial manner, when required, to effectively meet the goals of the College.
- Staff will support the College, in as much as is reasonable, in improving and enhancing its education provision.
- Staff will act in the best interest of the College.

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

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

Where misconduct has been identified from a staff member, but is deemed minor, a staff member may be reprimanded, but the nature of this reprimand will be informal and done verbally by their line manager. Where misconduct has been identified in relation to a staff member, and is deemed to major, a staff member will be reprimanded through the disciplinary process outlined below. Ordinarily, staff will progress through the stages of the disciplinary process in order unless there is justifiable reason to skip a stage(s).

Staff Development

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

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

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

For new members of staff, the college commits to:

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

Review of Staff Recruitment, Management & Development Policies and Procedures

The College will review these Staff Recruitment, Management & Development policies and procedures on an annual basis. The following individual(s) will be involved in this review:

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

6.0 Information and Data Management

Information Systems

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

The College will:

- Ensure that both its Learner Management System (LMS) (CLASS) and Virtual Learning Environment (VLE) Moodle are maintained securely, kept up-to-date and remain fit for purpose.
- Responsibility of this resides with the College's IT Lead (CLASS) and the Head of Library, Information Systems and enhancement (Moodle).
- Ensure that its LMS and/or VLE can produce pertinent statistics, or that these statistics can easily be derived from the LMS or VLE.
- Utilise data-driven reports to inform its decision-making.
- Utilise data-driven reports to inform reviews and improvement to its quality assurance policies and procedures.
- Produce annual data-driven reports (Annual Monitoring Reports) for each programme. These reports will contain:
 - Learner satisfaction rates.
 - Learner progression/attrition/dropout rates.
 - Learner completion rates.
 - Learner graduation/certificate rates.
 - Grade analysis of learner performance (benchmarked to best available national statistics)
 - Career paths of graduates.
 - Produce reports on learners as required by external regulatory bodies.

Management Information Systems

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

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

The Academic council will consider the Annual Monitoring Reports for each programme and will action follow-ups that arise from these. The Academic Council will also assign ownership to these actions.

The Academic Management Group will consider, and action follow-ups that arise from, statistics related to the ongoing performance of learners and this will typically be in conjunction with the relevant Programme Board.

This will include:

- Learner attendance.
- Learner assessment performance (to date).
- Learner feedback.

The College's Senior Management Group, Academic Council as well as the Risk Management Committee will consider, within their respective capacities, learner attendance, academic performance and learner attrition when forecasting its capacity for future academic years. This will inform decisions such as whether it should seek additional capacity and its minimum and maximum number of learners per programme.

The statistics and reports outlined above will be monitored by the Dean of Academic Affairs and will be produced collaboratively by the Quality Lead, Admissions Lead, IT Lead, Academic Operations Lead and various departments if required.

The Academic Council will annually review the usability of the College's LMS and VLE and how easily these facilitate the generation of relevant statistics and data-driven reports. The Academic Council will then determine whether these systems require further investment or if they should be replaced by a system that is more fit-for-purpose.

Records Maintenance and Retention

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

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

Type of Personal Data	Duration
Annual Leave and Public Holiday records	6 Years
Carer's Leave records	8 Years
Parental, Leave records and Force Majeure Leave records	8 years (Parental Leave Acts, section 27)
Hours Worked and related information such as breaks, annual leave and public	6 years (3 years required of The Organisation of Working Time Act, 1997, Section 25, and the Organisation of Working Time (Records) Prescribed Form and Exemptions, Regulations 2001). 6 years in

	line with College policy.
Payslips	6 years (3 year required of National Minimum Wage Act, Section 22). 6 years in line with College policy.
Employment Permit records	5 years or for the duration of the employment (whichever is the longer)
Employment records of young persons under 18	6 years
Collective redundancy information	6 years
Taxiation Records	6 years (Companies Acts and Taxes Consolidation Act)
Accidents	10 years from date of an accident (the Safety health and Welfare at Work; General Applications Regulation 1993, section 60)
Employee contract	6 years from the date of termination of the employment
CV and interview notes of unsuccessful interviewees	6 years (3 year required of National Minimum Wage Act, Section 22). 6 years in line with College policy.
Signed Documents	6 months
Other HR details (not included above)	1 year

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

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

Deferral, withdrawal and applications for transfer	Duration of Studies + 1 years
Board of Examiners meeting records	Permanently retained
Annual Monitoring Reports	Permanently retained

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

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

Privacy Policy

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

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

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

The College uses cookies as part of its website maintenance.

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

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

Data Protection Policy

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

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

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

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

This is consistent with the College's obligations under the terms of its contract with its Data Processors. This policy provides the guidelines for this exchange of information, as well as the procedure to follow in the event that a College staff member is unsure whether such data can be disclosed.

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

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

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

These six criteria for lawful data processing are:

1. Consent

Where students have given full, free and explicit consent.

2. Contract

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

3. Legal Obligation

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

4. Vital Interests

Where processing is needed to protect the life of the data subject.

5. Public Interest

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

6. Legitimate Interests

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

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

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

- Processing of assessment information.
- Appeals of assessment results.

- Incidents of academic impropriety.
- Ensuring accessibility to course content.
- Informing students of developments relevant to their programme of study.
- Recording minutes of formal meetings that are specified within the College’s quality assurance structures
- Maintenance of the learner record (to provide insights on a student during the studies with Dorset College) However, it is not sufficient to claim that legitimate interest can cover all aspects of the data processing done by the College. For example, the College may periodically use learner data for statistical analysis of academic performance, to alert them to other programmes of study that the College may think a learner might be interested in. This example would not be covered by the legitimate interest criteria and could not be considered critical to the effective provision of the College’s core functions. In such instances, the College will seek consent for the processing of data from its data subjects.

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

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

Furthermore, in certain instances, the College does process data in compliance with **legal obligations**.

This is typically to ensure compliance with regulatory specifications, such as retention of data for specified periods, but is also required for its provision of international (non-EEA) students.

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

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

Subject Access Requests Policy

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

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

An individual is entitled to make a formal application to the College, asking if the College holds any personal information about them. This request is limited to just clarifying if data is held or not and a description of the

personal data and does not include details of the type or scope of the data held, if that is the case. There is no fee for this request.

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

Specifically, the following will be provided to the individual:

- A copy of their personal data.
- The purposes for processing the data.
- The categories of personal data concerned.
- To whom the data has been or will be disclosed.
- Whether the data has been or will be transferred outside of the EU.
- The period for which the data will be stored, or the criteria to be used to determine retention periods.
- The right to make a complaint to the Data Protection Commissioner.
- The right to request rectification or deletion of the data.
- Whether the individual has been subject to automated decision making.

7.0 Public Information and Communication

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

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

The College will ensure its public communication is:

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

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

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

The College will review the Public Information and Communication policies and procedures on an annual basis. This review will assess the adequacy and effectiveness of the policies and procedures.

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

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

8.0 Monitoring and Periodic Review

Self-evaluation

The College's Self-Evaluation is focused on the impact to learners rather than specifically on a review of policies and procedures. Self-Evaluation has a broader purview than Internal Self-Monitoring, as it requires the College to engage with external stakeholders and has a broader and more systematic focus. The College will ordinarily engage in a self-evaluation every three years, or more frequently if requested by the Academic Council.

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

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

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

The College will review the Self-Evaluation, Monitoring and Review policies and procedures on an annual basis. This review will assess the adequacy and effectiveness of the policies and procedures.

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

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

Dorset College

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

Appointment of Programme Leads

In February 2022, the college established the role of Programme Lead. The roles were given an extensive list of responsibilities in the management of programmes, with the intention of improving programme delivery.

In the first 12 months, the impact of the programme leads has been observed primarily in increased engagement with learners and improved examination board meetings.

Over the past 12 months, programme leads have regularly met with learners and their representatives to identify issues in the programmes and agree on corrective action. Programme leads have reported a stronger sense of community within the programme arising from more consistent learner engagement, and a willingness among learners to proactively come forward with issues and suggestions. Programme leads have also reported that this engagement has been useful in resolving conflicts in group work settings.

The appointment of programme leads has led to efficiencies and enhancements in the examination board meetings; a greater oversight of issues in the programme has ensured less time is spent resolving and explaining issues.

New programme lead for professional and Springboard courses[Text Wrapping Break]

In January 2022 the college created the role of Professional Courses and Springboard lead. Previously these programmes were overseen by the Admissions Lead and programme tutors, however this role had become overloaded with non-admissions work. This role was created to bring consistency to the management of professional and springboard courses while also allowing the Admissions Lead to focus on core responsibilities.

Prior to the creation of this role, the college did not have a specific point of contact for professional courses and experienced poor communication between learners, tutors, and the college. A key goal of the role is to bring the same level of consistency in QA and programme management as in the college's HE programmes.

The new lead will have oversight of all processes from admission to graduation in the area of professional programmes, Springboard programmes, and Further Education programmes.

It is anticipated that this role will enhance the admissions process for these programmes. They will evaluate applications and make admissions decisions by checking entry requirements are

met, organising and conducting interviews, and enrolling new learners to the Student Information System.

Additional responsibilities include:

- € Responsibility for coordinating the relevant processes relating to examinations including scheduling and logistics, exam paper delivery, exam paper security, invigilation, arrangements for learners with additional needs, and conferring of awards.
- € Responsibility for managing all aspects of the administrative processes across all Further Education programmes. This includes communication with lecturers, learners and staff regarding programme matters such as lectures, deadlines, assessment submissions and answering queries about policies and procedures.
- € Supporting the monitoring and enhancement of programmes by arranging and facilitating programme team meetings.
- € Acting as a point of contact for accreditation bodies such as QQI, PMI, and CIPD
- € Offering pastoral support to learners and handling their queries

1.2 Update on Planned QA Objectives identified in Previous AQR

No.	Planned objectives (Previous AQR)	Update on Status
1	Update QA manual of policies and procedures	Pending

The college underwent a period of disruption in the second half of the reporting period due to an expected changeover in a senior academic management role. The primary planned QA objective identified in the previous report - an update to the college's QA manual - was not completed and has been deferred to Q2 2022.

Following a period of reflection and internal evaluation, the college is reporting an ambitious but achievable set of QA objectives for the 2022-2023 reporting period. These are outlined in section 3.1.

1.3 Governance and Management

1.3.1 QA Governance Meetings Schedule

Body	Meeting dates
Senior Management Group	18/02/2021 10/03/2021 14/04/2021 24/09/2021 16/02/2022
Academic Council	08/04/2021 10/09/2021
Academic Management Committee	Monthly until 05/05/2021 Twice monthly since 05/05/2021
Programme Boards	BSC 14/01/2021 15/04/2021 24/06/2021 09/09/2021 02/11/2021 BB 29/06/2021 08/09/2021 BB4 30/06/2021 09/09/2021
Academic Impropriety Committee	28/01/21 18/02/21 21/04/21 07/05/21 01/06/21

	11/06/21 08/06/21 14/07/21 26/01/22 03/02/22
Board of Examiners	05/02/2021 – All groups 04/06/2021 – BB4, BB, BSC, Semester Abroad 30/06/2021 – Semester Abroad, Foundation and Pre-Masters 23/08/2021 – Foundation and Pre-Masters 07/09/2021 - BB4, BB, BSC, Semester Abroad 03/02/22 - BB4, BB, BSC

1.3.2 QA Leadership and Management Structural Developments

The college's Dean of Academic Affairs left her role in October 2021. She was replaced by an experienced lecturer, programme leader, and quality assurance leader who had previously been employed as Deputy Head of the Graduate Business School in Griffith College.

The college created the role of programme lead for professional courses (encompassing Springboard courses) and in January 2022 and hired an experienced member of staff to fill the role.

The programme leader for the semester abroad programme changed in December 2021.

1.4 Internal Monitoring and Review

1.4.1 Overview of Periodic Reviews

Unit of review	Date of completion/reason for conducting review
Admissions	The review was undertaken to improve practice in admissions based on an internal evaluation by staff. It was completed in Q2 2021 and its findings were implemented in time for the next intake. Details are included in this report.
Programme Management	The review was undertaken to improve programme management and delivery on an internal evaluation by staff. It was completed in Q4 2021. Details are included in this report.
Student Experience	The review was undertaken to improve the student experience and reform the role of Student Experience lead. Details are included in this report.

1.4.2 Expert Review Teams/Panels³ involved in IQA

The college has not undertaken any periodic reviews of its programmes in the reporting period. Its QQI-validated programmes are due for formal review as part of a re-validation application in the coming months. The college recognises the value of the externally moderated panel of peers in ensuring quality in its programmes and wishes to involve more external experts in its year-to-year internal quality assurance.

Accordingly, the college is planning to involve external experts in its IQA on a planned, considered basis and in particular in years where no QQI validation panel or other process is scheduled to take place. Details of these proposals are included in section 3.1.

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

2.0 IQA System – Enhancement and Impacts

Admissions

In the reporting period, the college implemented a number of enhancements to the admission process. The enhancements arose from the experience of the administrative, sales & marketing, and programme teams and an internal evaluation of the process.

These enhancements include:

Improved follow-up with students based abroad
The college has a high proportion of international learners. Programme teams had reported a concerning number of international learners not attending until late in the semester, often because of delays in acquiring a visa. This had put learners in a difficult position and required them to catch up with a significant amount of work.

In response to this, the admissions team implemented an additional check-in with learners coming from abroad. This allowed the college to monitor their readiness to start the programme on the correct date and communicate deadlines with agencies. Whereas previously at least 5 learners were required to defer in these circumstances, no learner was required to defer on these grounds during the reporting period.

The introduction of a deadline for provisional offers

The team had observed that some applicants who received a particularly early provisional offer (e.g. an offer issued in January for the September intake) were “pending” having not accepted the offer for a long period of time.

In our experience, these learners were often “pending” because they had accepted another offer, or no longer wished to enrol on the programme, but had not yet formally rejected the offer.

In advance of the September 2021 intake, the admissions team implemented a one-month deadline for acceptance of provisional offers. Offers not accepted within a month were cancelled, although the applicants remained eligible to apply again *ab initio*. As a result of this change, the number of cancellations increased by 17 year-on-year which resulted in more timely offers for other applicants.

Improved engagement with agencies

In advance of the September 2021 intake, the college created a role in the Sales & Marketing Department to manage and improve the relationship with international admissions agencies. The college had noted a high number of applications through agencies that required additional work or demonstrated a lack of familiarity with the college admissions process.

Since May 2021, the agency liaison has been working to improve the quality of agency applications. This has primarily taken the form of training modules to familiarise agents with the college's admissions criteria and process. Further, at the end of every month the Sales & Marketing Department "rates" the agents with whom they have interacted based on understanding of the admissions process and the quality of applications submitted through them. Those agents rated three stars or below are contacted for further training.

To date, the Sales & Marketing Department has observed a high quality of application from agencies, which has improved the flow of applications and the turnaround time from initial application to decisions.

Online support and events

In a hybrid or online-only environment, most learners have less face-to-face contact with both other learners and members of college staff. Through its previous experiences in the early stages of the COVID-19 pandemic, the college was aware of the need to provide additional support to learners.

During the reporting period, the Student Experience Lead established and facilitated a peer support group encouraging learners to support each other and to share information as to approaches to wellbeing that helped them. The group's activities also included events such as 5k runs, charity walks, raffles, and in-person meetups where possible.

The group provided an important opportunity for learners to maintain social contacts through a period of restrictions, and to access information relating to health and wellbeing.

The group now meets twice a month to provide participants with the relevant skills to offer basic support to their peers and to refer each other to the appropriate college and external support services.

Return to in-person teaching

Between September and December 2021, the college operated on a hybrid teaching basis. Smart touch screens, high-quality cameras and sound systems were installed in all classrooms to facilitate effective delivery.

In accordance with public health guidelines, the college “re-opened” in January 2022 to facilitate primarily in-person teaching. A wide variety of enhancements were made to the physical learning environment in order to ensure the safety of staff and learners. They include:

- € Installation of UV lights in all classrooms, for use between classes
- € Installation of air purifiers in classrooms and in common areas
- € Improved cleaning schedule to ensure screens and tables would be cleaned between each use of a classroom
- € Training for staff members (either for the first time or on a “refresher” basis)

In order to ensure that learners would not be disadvantaged if they were required to isolate or remain at home, all in-person classes are available for simultaneous remote attendance. On average, 20% of those attending any given class are doing so remotely using technology.

During the first week of fully “in-person” teaching, the college made a particular effort to welcome learners and to have staff available to offer guidance and directions. College staff members wore conspicuous branded hoodies and made themselves available to answer questions and to show learners where classrooms are located.

In order not to disadvantage or exclude any learner who must attend a class virtually, attendance is taken via Zoom. All learners attending the class in person are asked to briefly log into the Zoom room using their phones, which allows for a full attendance list to be captured.

While the college is in the early stage of a full return to in-person teaching, and it is possible for public health restrictions to change again in future, there are significant benefits to the investments made during the pandemic. Lecturers are now highly familiar with the use of virtual learning environments and tools, which will ensure the college can facilitate remote participation where necessary. An improved level of engagement from learners has been reported since it has been possible to return to physical classrooms. Learners have reported a high degree of comfort in the physical environment as a result of the modifications implemented to ensure their safety.

Learner Feedback

The college is proactive in seeking feedback from its learners throughout the academic year on a wide variety of subjects.

On an informal basis, the close relationship between lecturers and learners has facilitated ongoing enhancement throughout the year. On a semi-formal basis, the Student Experience Leader has worked with the newly appointed programme leads to maintain an ongoing quality dialogue between learner representatives and programme teams. This approach has led to timely, actionable feedback where learners are part of the solution and treated as partners in their education.

Formally, the college seeks feedback from all learners once per semester as to their experience of the module. Feedback is collected at such a time where the findings of the surveys can be implemented in a timely manner to close the feedback loop. Feedback throughout the reporting period has been largely positive. Feedback reports are available for programme leaders to assess and discuss with lecturers and learner representatives.

Formal feedback during the reporting period was generally complimentary of the college's adaption to online and hybrid learning, even though many learners prefer in-person learning. Response rates to formal online feedback are not exceptionally high and a new format will be investigated in the context of in-person teaching and learning over the coming months. #

HECA Participation

The college is a member of the Higher Education Colleges Association (HECA) and is represented in its Quality Enhancement Forum (HAQEF) through the Student Experience

Lead. This group has provided a valuable opportunity to share information about best practices and for collaborative work on areas of common concern. In March 2021 the college co-facilitated with Hibernia College a webinar entitled *Supporting Wellbeing through Online Learning Communities*. Staff in the college have also attended workshops exploring approaches to academic integrity in the context of the global challenge of increased online learning and assessment and professional cheating services.

2.1 Initiatives within the Institution related to Academic Integrity

During the report period, the college's Academic Impropriety Committee has been highly active. Its purpose is to consider issues of academic propriety integrity and to hold panel meetings in cases of suspected academic misconduct. Typically, in a case of suspected academic misconduct, the learner is invited to a viva voce style meeting and given the opportunity to explain their perspective on the allegation. The meeting format provides an opportunity to do side-by-side comparisons of work with significant similarities.

These meetings are also useful in cases of suspected "contract cheating". The college has identified a small number of cases in which learners had engaged third-party services to complete assignments and used the opportunity to learn about the circumstances and the details of the parties engaged.

Across the higher education sector, the online and hybrid learning environments have presented challenges to academic integrity. The environment has presented opportunities for collaboration through learners working closely together in the same environment or sharing work with friends.

The college makes use of plagiarism detection software (TurnItIn) to check for similarity in submissions, excessive use of uncited sources, and correct referencing. The college has made increased use of randomised multiple-choice questionnaires through Moodle to prevent collaboration. Further, the small class sizes facilitate the programme teams in identifying when a submission reflects a level of English not previously demonstrated. Similarly, small programming labs on computing programmes are helpful in charting a learner's progression.

3.0 QA Improvement and Enhancement Plans for Upcoming Reporting Period

3.1 QA and QE supporting the Achievement of Strategic Objectives

No.	Relevant objectives	Planned actions and indicators
1	Implement new Customer Relationship Management (CRM) Tools for Admissions	The college plans to implement a new CRM tool to improve its admissions process. It should be implemented in Q1 2022 and will lead to quicker decisions on admissions applications.
2	Enhance the programme teams	The college plans to further enhance its programme teams by introducing new structures, roles and resources to the programme management units.
3	Strategically enhance the learner experience	The college plans to further enhance the experience of learners and further review and enhance its own arrangements to support learner success. An external expert will be engaged in Q2 2022 to provide guidance and support.
4	Expand lecturer panel and increase opportunities for external stakeholders	The college plans to expand its panel of lecturers as part of an increased engagement of external stakeholders in the college in general.
5	Review the QA manual	The college plans to complete this incomplete objective from the previous reporting period

Implement new Customer Relationship Management (CRM) Tools for Admissions

The college is in an advanced stage of implementing a CRM tool (Salesforce) to manage the admissions process from March 2022. At present the admissions process relies on manually inputting applicant data into spreadsheets, resulting in unnecessary delays in

decision-making. Many of the manual aspects of admissions will be automated by the implementation of a Salesforce product, resulting in efficiencies.

Enhance the programme teams

Following on from the appointment of programme leads, the college intends to further develop the role of programme lead and the available supports. This includes:

- € Creating new structures and roles, such as faculties with a faculty administrator
- € Creating the role of Teaching & Learning Champion to drive teaching and learning enhancement within their discipline(s)
- € Providing additional administrative resources to the programme
- € Providing ongoing training and support for programme leaders
- € Revising the QA policies and procedures relating to the management and administration of programmes

Strategically enhance the learner experience

Within the upcoming reporting period, the college intends to implement a number of strategic measures to enhance the learner experience. These include:

- € Defining the scope of enhancement initiatives for the coming years
- € Creating a dedicated learner space within new college facilities, with robust planning to ensure fitness for purpose on an ongoing basis
- € Engagement of an external expert to evaluate the quality of the learner experience in the college

Expand lecturer panel and increase opportunities for external stakeholders

Within the upcoming period the college intends to expand its panel of lecturers as part of an increased engagement of external stakeholders in the college in general. While it is important to increase the number and profile of lecturers in the delivery of programmes, there is also a clear role for increased external involvement in QA processes and governance.

Some planned measures include:

- € Recruiting research-active associate lecturers
- € Recruiting a careers advisor with responsibility for liaising with industry
- € Establishing and employers' panel for our Business and Computing programmes
- € Reviewing the internal annual programme reporting arrangements and associated QA
- € Increasing engagement with external advisors beyond external examiners

3.2 Reviews planned for Upcoming Reporting Periods

Unit to be reviewed	Date of planned review	Date of last review
Student Experience (external review)	Q2 2022	N/A
Quality Assurance Manual (internal review)	Q2 2022	2019 (re-engagement)
Bachelor of Business (Honours) in International Business	Q2 2022	2017
Bachelor of Business	Q2 2022	2017

3.2.2 Reviews planned beyond Next Reporting Period

Bachelor of Science in Computing (last intake August 2024)

4.0 Additional Themes and Case Studies

Supporting student-led activities: Dorset Social Crew

During the reporting period, the college has expanded and enhanced the role of the Student Experience Lead. The purpose of these changes was to improve student engagement and deliver an enhanced student experience in the context of hybrid delivery.

In October 2021 the Student Experience Lead conducted an audit of events run over the previous 12 months. This audit considered the popularity of events and their attendance, the similarity between events being organised, and feedback from learners as to their quality and suitability.

Prior to the audit, events had been led by the Student Experience Lead. It had been observed that a significant amount of time was being spent organising events, and that engagement was on occasion poor. The events were being organised and led by the Student Experience Lead, who accordingly had to attend them to bring learners together. At the same time, the role of Student Experience Lead was gradually expanding to encompass engagement with learner reps and pastoral support work.

Feedback from learners had identified a willingness to lead and take responsibility for social events. On that basis, the college established the Dorset Social Crew, allocating a small budget to pay crew members to organise, promote and run events that provide social engagement opportunities for its learners. The Dorset Social Crew concept is based on a similar initiative at the University of Auckland, which has proven successful in improving the quality of events and learner engagement with them.

To date, the initiative has proven successful. While maintaining oversight, the Student Experience Officer has freed up significant hours to manage the delivery of student support and services. Learner feedback suggests that the events organised have been more relevant, and they have been better attended. The college has found that the opportunity to organise social events on behalf of their peers appeals to a different character than the traditional class representative role, and as such this has diversified the voices that engage most closely with the college.

