13 Other Parties involved in Education and Training

13.1 Policy for Engagement with Other Parties Involved in Education and Training

Quality assurance Area (s)	Public Information and Communication
Applies to	☒ Staff only ☐ Learners only ☐ Staff and learners
Policy Owner	Director of Academic Affairs and Undergraduate Programmes

13.1.1 ESG Standard 1.8: Public Information

Institutions should publish information about their activities, including programmes, which is clear, accurate, objective, up-to date and readily accessible. All collaborative arrangements or other relationships with external bodies, both in Ireland and abroad, offered through or by the College are organised with reputable bodies and are subject to appropriate internal and external Quality assurance procedures.

13.1.2 Purpose

This policy sets out the principles that the College adopts for the effective management of its relationships with other parties in higher education and its use of appropriate external expertise, including advisors, expert panellists and examiners.

13.1.3 Scope

This Section details the policy and procedures which could be followed for the development, approval and ongoing quality management of the following:

- Programmes operated in collaboration with other organisations nationally or internationally.
- Engagement of external expertise, including advisors, expert panellists, and examiners.

13.1.4 Policy

While the College has established partnerships with TU Dublin, Tallaght Campus and Griffith College, it is conscious that in its new development phase, it will require additional ongoing external mentoring support. In this regard, it has established key independent roles in its major units of governance, the Board of Directors and the Academic Council. In the case of the Board of Directors a non-executive Director has been appointed, while the Chair of the Academic Council is also external and independent. In both cases, the persons appointed are independent external experts, with a long track record at senior level in higher education. The Board of Directors will also appoint an external chair to the Industry Advisory Board. External expertise will also be sought, as required and appropriate, at significant junctures in the College's development and growth, for example, in preparation for validation of programmes of education and training.

In all cases where external persons are engaged, including independent chairs of units of governance, external examiners, advisors, the College shall require that they make a Conflict of Interest Declaration and sign a confidentiality form.

The College's overriding imperative is to establish procedures and processes, in this regard, that minimises any potential risk to it. It will ensure that all such arrangements also maximise opportunities for existing or new learners.

13.1.5 Related Legislation, Regulation or Guidelines:

- Core Statutory Quality Assurance Guidelines, 2016 (QQI)
- Sector Specific (Independent/Private) Statutory Quality assurance Guidelines 2016 (QQI).
- Collaborative Programmes, Transnational Provision and Joint Awards, 2016 (QQI).

13.2 Procedure for Engagement with Other Parties Involved in Education and Training

13.2.1 Approval for Collaborative Arrangements

In proposing collaborative arrangements, the College implements an approval process to mitigate any reputational risk to the College, the sector and /or the national qualifications system associated with particular prospective providers, awarding bodies and other third parties.

All collaborations regarding the delivery of academic programmes must be approved by the Academic Council and the Board of Directors. In reaching its decision, the Board of Directors will be advised by the Executive Management Team on strategic development and risk assessment aspects of the proposal. Clear and appropriate policies and procedures for the quality assurance of collaborations with clearly articulated responsibilities must be agreed and underpinned with a formal agreement.

Collaborative arrangements will vary in nature from delivery of programmes developed in partnership with an awarding body, to a study centre arrangement. The application for approval by the Academic Council is prepared by the Head of Academic Programmes or the function proposing the collaboration. All applications for approval must be arranged to cover the following key headings

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

The due diligence exercised must take account of the overall suite of education and training provision offered by the proposed collaborator. The Registrar is responsible for academic due diligence. The President is responsible for undertaking financial and legal due diligence. All due diligence reports and associated paperwork are submitted to the Academic Council with the final proposal for approval. Following approval by the Academic Council, the proposal is forwarded to the Board of Directors for final approval.

Where a collaborative arrangement is agreed procedures must be put in place to monitor and review the effectiveness of those arrangements. Any review agreed with a collaborating body, must be periodic, two-way and there should be a facility to schedule a review where there is a doubt or concern regarding the quality of the arrangement.

The Director of Academic Affairs and Undergraduate Programmes is responsible for maintaining all formal agreements and Quality assurance arrangements and agreeing a schedule of review.

The College does not currently offer any formal collaborative, transnational programmes, or joint awards validated or awarded by QQI. However, the College is informed by QQI polices on Transnational, Collaborative Provision, and Joint Awards, when considering collaborative provision.

13.2.2 Collaborative Arrangements with the TU Dublin, Tallaght Campus (TUD) and Griffith College Dublin (GCD)

The College has a collaborative partnership with TUD and GCD for validated provision, in which curricula are developed by the College, in liaison with either TUD or Griffith College, for approval through that provider's quality assurance systems.

To achieve this, the College complies with TUD and GCD's relevant quality assurance processes, and meets all financial, legal and academic due diligence requirements, as defined in their Quality Handbook and collaborative provisions requirements.
The following documents define the collaborative arrangements and agreed policy and procedures for the delivery of validated programmes:

- Memorandum of Understanding
- TUD / GCD Quality Handbook
- All documents and agreements are retained by the Director of Academic Affairs and Undergraduate Programmes office.
- The overall arrangement for the collaborative partnership between the College and TUD or GCD is subject to review at least every five years.

13.2.3 Management and Monitoring of Collaborative Arrangements

The College maintains a range of collaborative and third-party relationships in support of programme delivery, learner access, funding and quality assurance activities. These may include awarding bodies, higher education institutions, funding agencies and other approved external organisations.

Regardless of the awarding body, funding source or collaborative partner, learners are supported through the College's established academic, learner support, administration, quality assurance and digital learning infrastructure. This ensures a consistent learner experience and supports the effective delivery of blended learning provision across all collaborative arrangements.

The infrastructure supporting collaborative and third-party arrangements includes:

Function	Infrastructure / Responsibility
Governance Oversight	Board of Directors, Academic Council and Executive Management Team
Academic Oversight	Director of Academic Affairs and Undergraduate Programmes, Registrar and Programme Leads
Programme Monitoring	Programme Boards, Annual Programme Monitoring Reports and Annual Programme Review processes
Learner Support	Learner Support Team and Programme Management Teams
Learner Engagement Monitoring	Attendance monitoring, Learner Engagement Tracker and VLE analytics
Digital Learning Infrastructure	Innoskills (Moodle), Zoom, Articulate Rise, Vyond and associated digital learning tools
Administrative Support	Regional Programme Administration Managers and Academic Administration Team
Technical Support	Internal IT support services and approved third-party providers

Quality Assurance Monitoring	Learner feedback, External Examiner reports, progression, retention and completion data
Collaborative Partner Liaison	Scheduled meetings and operational communications with awarding bodies, funding agencies and collaborative partners

Collaborative and third-party relationships are monitored through scheduled liaison meetings, quality assurance processes and periodic review activities. Where issues, risks or concerns are identified, these are addressed through the appropriate governance and escalation processes. Collaborative arrangements are subject to periodic review to ensure they continue to meet the requirements of learners, the College, partner organisations and relevant regulatory bodies.

13.2.4 Collaborative Partnership Review

The overall arrangement for the collaborative partnership between the College and TUD and / or GCD is reviewed by the College at least every five years. The partnership review focuses on the partnership, rather than on an individual programme. The purpose is to review the general operation of the partnership, including the operation of regulations and procedures, the monitoring and development of the programmes, the assessment of learners and the enhancement of quality and standards.

13.2.5 Validation of Programmes

TUD is an awarding body in its own right, while GCD has a degree of autonomy in validating programmes. Regardless of which awarding body we are dealing with, all programme development at the College is informed by QQI's Core Validation Criteria.
Validation of New Programmes with TUD or GCD is subject to the approval of College Academic Council. Once agreed in principle the Director of Academic Affairs and Undergraduate Programmes is responsible for liaising with TUD or GCD in the first instance. The process of programme validation is overseen by the Programme Development Committee of the Academic Council, and undertaken in accordance with the requirements set out in the Quality Assurance Handbook.
The process results in:

- Definitive Programme Document
- Curriculum document:
- Overview of the programme
- Employment Roles and Employability
- Links with Other Organisations
- Programme Details
- Module Details
- Resource information document
- General learning and teaching resources
- Specific and/or specialist learning and teaching resources
- Staffing resources

- Programme of Study Handbook – produced by Head of Academic Programmes and subject to sign off by the Director of Academic Affairs and Undergraduate Programmes. In addition to the requirements of TUD or GCD all such documents are subject to the College's own policies on public information.

Every programme is subject to revalidation (major review) at least once in every five years. The College proposes a schedule for a major review indicating whether or not there are plans to make substantial changes to those programmes. The procedure for the review is defined by either TUD or GCD.
Minor changes to programmes are agreed with TUD or GCD Academic Quality and Standards Committee which has oversight of all programme modifications to ensure that academic quality and standards are maintained, and to enable the Academic Office to maintain accurate, definitive records of all programmes.
The Director of Academic Affairs and Undergraduate Programmes is responsible for ensuring all programmes at the College awarded by TUD or GCD are delivered in accordance with the agreed conditions as laid out in the documents referred to in this Section.
The Director of Academic Affairs and Undergraduate Programmes is responsible for ensuring that all programmes delivered are properly validated, for maintaining all associated documentation, ensuring the integrity of the data produced and keeping adequate records.

13.2.6 External Expertise

The College engages external, independent, national, and international experts from time to time. These include:

- Membership of the Board of Directors
- Chair of the Academic Council
- Membership of the Industry Advisory Board
- Membership of Committees
- External Subject Matter Expert Report for new programme development
- Expert Panels
- Internal Review
- Programme Review with Awarding Bodies
- External Examiners.

External Examiners and panel members for programme review are subject to the approval of the Academic Council.
For external review processes, the College engages with, and is guided by, the procedures for the relevant awarding body for the appointment of experts.
The key considerations when selecting and proposing external experts are independence and appropriate expertise and experience.
Generally, the College has a firm policy of not appointing persons to above roles in any case where there is any foreseen possibility of conflict of interest. Even the appearance of conflict of interest, where none exists, can damage the credibility of the person selected and the particular role.
All person so appointed are required to have completed the 'Conflcit of Interest Form' outlined in Appendix 15.A of section 15 of this QAM, prior to their appointment.

The Director of Academic Affairs and Undergraduate Programmes is responsible for maintaining a record of the names and affiliations of expert panellists, examiners and other external experts associated with the College.

13.3 Policy Control Sheet

Policy and Procedure Title	Public Information and Communication
Responsible Officer(s)	Director of Academic Affairs and Undergraduate Programme
Issuance Date	4th September 2020
Effective Date	4th September 2020
Last Revision Date	October 2026
Supersedes	10.0
Next Revision Date	October 2027
Designated Reviewers	Board of Directors, Executive Management Team, Academic Council
Scope	All programmes

13.3.1 Revision History

Revision	Approval Date	Revision Description	Originator	Approved by
New Policy	Sept 2019	New policy	Director of Academic Affairs and Undergraduate Programmes	Academic Council
Version 1.1	October 2019	Updated to include additional members on Expert Panel Review	Director of Academic Affairs and Undergraduate Programmes	Academic Council
Version 2.0	27th June 2020	The procedure for Collaborative Arrangements has been incorporated into the QAM	Director of Academic Affairs and Undergraduate Programmes	Academic Council
Version 3.0	4th September 2020	Section 12.2.5 has been expanded with additional detail supporting the Colleges Conflict of Interest policy	Director of Academic Affairs and Undergraduate Programmes	Academic Council

14 Self-Evaluation, Monitoring and Review

14.1 Policy for Self-Evaluation, Monitoring and Review

QA Area (s)	• Programmes of Education and Training • Governance and Management of Quality • Documented Approach to QA
Applies to	☐ Staff only ☐ Learners only ☒ Staff and Learners

Policy Owner	Director of Academic Affairs and Undergraduate Programmes

14.1.1 ESG Standard:

ESG Standard 1.9: On-going Monitoring and Periodic Review of Programmes

Institutions should monitor and periodically review their programmes to ensure that they achieve the objectives set for them and respond to the needs of students and society. These reviews should lead to continuous improvement of the programme. Any action planned or taken as a result should be communicated to all those concerned.

ESG Standard 1.10: Cyclical External Quality Assurance

Institutions should undergo external quality assurance in line with the ESG on a cyclical basis

14.1.2 Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to set out the framework for Self-Evaluation, Monitoring and Review at the College, in alignment with Core Statutory QA Guidelines.
This policy and the associated procedures guide all staff and learner representatives involved in the ongoing self-evaluation and monitoring of quality, including review of programmes. This monitoring process therefore relates to the organisation and operation of the programme as a whole.

14.1.3 Scope

This policy applies directly or indirectly to all members of the College community, inclusive of learners, and staff holding teaching, administrative, management or support roles.

14.1.4 Policy

The College is committed to maintaining robust and systematic processes for review and self-evaluation as part of the College's overall quality assurance framework. Internal self-monitoring and self-evaluation processes are systematically integrated within the College's overall Quality Assurance Framework. Responsibilities for activities pertaining to this are clearly delineated within the Terms of Reference for various units of governance at the College and within the individual role descriptions outlined in the governance and management structure in Section 2 Governance and Management of Quality. These are particularly emphasised within:

- Terms of Reference for Board of Directors
- Terms of Reference for Academic Council
- Terms of Reference for Programme Boards
- Role and responsibilities: Head of Academic Programmes
- Role and responsibilities: Head of Quality Assurance and Admissions
- Role and responsibilities: Learner Support Coordinator
- Role and responsibilities: Programme Lead

Monitoring and evaluation are crucial to the success of programmes, the enhancement of the learner experience, and are essential to the continued quality of services. The on-going monitoring reports created provide information for the evaluation of programmes, services and quality assurance policies and procedures, as part of internal and external processes and contributes to the enhancement of the learner experience and programme quality in the College.

It is the policy of the College to carry out regular programme monitoring and review, based on a process of self-evaluation, in order to:

- ensure that programmes remain relevant and fit for their intended target market;
- inform updates of programme content; delivery modes; teaching and learning methods;
- learning supports and resources; and information provided to learners;
- identify the impact of interventions, services or development;
- Identify issues for further learning enhancement or corrective action;
- identify best practice for further dissemination;
- ascertain the quality of the experience of stakeholders and act upon them accordingly;
- evaluate the appropriateness of practices;
- review learner progression and completion rates;
- ensure that academic and labour market requirements of the learner are fulfilled;
- embed and promote a culture of quality and enhancement in which all stakeholders play a role;
- meet the changing terms and conditions of approved external validating body;
- review quality assurance arrangements that are specific to that programme;
- analyse the performance and services of the College and its programmes to inform future actions and developments.

The aims of self-evaluation include identifying appropriate quality measures, setting objectives and gathering evidence of achievement of those objectives. The Programme Boards and the Academic Council ensure that objective setting and prioritising are carried out appropriately, transparently and are reported back to those entities. This ensures that findings are acted on and feed into ongoing quality enhancement through a Quality Enhancement Plan which sets out a schedule of actions to be undertaken following internal evaluation and identifies the person(s) responsible for actions and follow-up.

14.1.5 Responsibility

- The Academic Council is responsible for approving this policy and associated policies and procedures and making recommendations to the Board of Directors on Self-Evaluation, Monitoring and Review.
- The Director of Academic Affairs and Undergraduate Programmes, Registrar, Head of Academic Programmes, Head of Quality Assurance and Admissions and Learner Support Coordinator are jointly responsible for making recommendations to the Academic Council pertaining to Self-Evaluation, Monitoring and Review.
- The Head of Quality Assurance and Admissions is responsible for monitoring and maintaining the overall alignment of the College's policy and procedures pertaining to Self-Evaluation, Monitoring and Review to QQI's guidelines and policy statements.

14.1.6 Cyclical Review

QQI published a policy for Cyclical Review of Higher Education Institutions in 2016.
The review has a three-fold purpose:

- It evaluates the **effectiveness** of the institution-wide quality assurance procedures for the purposes of establishing, ascertaining, maintaining and improving the quality of education, training, research and related services the institution provides.
- It measures institutional **accountability** for compliance with European standards for quality assurance, regard to the expectations set out in the QQI quality assurance guidelines or their equivalent and adherence to other relevant QQI policies and procedures as established in the lifecycle of engagement between the institution and QQI.
- It explores institutional **enhancement** of quality in relation to impacts on teaching, learning and research, institutional achievements and innovations in quality assurance, alignment to the institution's mission and strategy and the quality-related performance of the institution relative to quality indicators and benchmarks identified by the institution.

QQI regularly publishes a schedule of reviews. This schedule covers the universities, institutes of technology and the RCSI. The College will continue to monitor this schedule and comply with QQI when further information and guidelines become available for the Independent/Private College sector.

14.1.7 Related Legislation, Regulation or Guidelines

- Core Statutory Quality Assurance Guidelines 2016 (QQI).
- Sector Specific (Independent/Private) Statutory Quality Assurance Guidelines 2016 (QQI).
- Policies and criteria for the validation of programmes of education and training 2017 (QQI)
- Policy and Criteria for Making Awards 2014 (QQI)
- Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG, 2015).
- Assessment and Standards, Revised 2013 (QQI).
- Policy for Determining Awards Standards – QQI, 2014
- NFQ Awards Standards
- European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System (ECTS) User Guide –2015
- International Standard Classification of Education (ISCED) – UNESCO, 2011.
- Policy for Cyclical Review of Higher Education Institutions 2016 (QQI)

14.2 Procedure for Self-Evaluation, Monitoring and Review

QA Area (s)	• Programmes of Education and Training • Governance and Management of Quality • Documented Approach to QA
Applies to	☐ Staff only ☐ Learners only ☒ Staff and Learners
Policies this Procedure relates to	Policy for Self-Evaluation, Monitoring and Review

14.2.1 Procedure

The Director of Academic Affairs & Undergraduate Programmes is responsible for preparing the College's Annual Self-Assessment Report (ASAR), compiled from the various self and external evaluation activities, benchmarking, data analysis and the following reports. The ASAR includes findings and recommendations for improvement with an improvement or action plan detailing how and when the College will address the recommendations made in the self-assessment report.
A range of monitoring, self-evaluation and review processes are carried out to in the College including:

- Report on Admissions, including RPL admissions.
- Examination Board Report including learner attainment, rechecks, reviews, appeals and academic conduct matters.
- Annual programme monitoring including learner retention and withdrawal.
- Annual Student Services Report.
- QA policy monitoring and review.
- Graduate survey.
- Marketing Report.

This Report is submitted to the College President for review.

14.2.2 Annual Programme Monitoring Report

A comprehensive annual monitoring report is completed each year for each programme by the Programme Lead, in consultation with the Programme Board. The report is based on the following:

- Programme Board minutes
- External examiner reports
- Learner appraisal of programmes
- Faculty feedback
- Student enrolment, progression and award statistics

- Survey of employers
- Ongoing learner monitoring reports

14.2.3 Annual Learner Support Report

This is completed by the Learner Support Coordinator annually and referred to the Director of Academic Affairs and Undergraduate Programmes. The report should review the services offered over the year, including details of take up of individual services.

14.2.4 Admissions Report

An admissions audit is conducted annually for all programmes by the Registrar to determine if admissions decisions have been made in accordance with College policy. A report on the audit is submitted to the subsequent meeting of the Director of Academic Affairs and Undergraduate Programmes.

14.2.5 Examination Board Monitoring

The Registrar, or their nominee, attends at the Examination Board as an observer. They compile a report that should answer the following questions:

- How complete and accurate was the data presented to the Board?
- Was the management of the meeting appropriate?
- Was the process of decision-making appropriate and in accordance with the College Marks and Standards as well as QQI and programme regulations?
- Did the examiners, internal and external, contribute effectively to the decision making in the board and were their contributions given appropriate weight?

Examination Board monitoring is applied to progression and award Boards only and is required to cover at least one Board annually.
The report is submitted to the Director of Academic Affairs and Undergraduate Programmes.

14.3 QA Policy and Procedure Review

The Academic Council oversees an annual review of the Quality Assurance Manual. It is the responsibility of the Director of Academic Affairs and Undergraduate Programmes to undertake this review with input from the various units in the College.
The purpose of the annual review is to:

- Evaluate the effectiveness of the College's QA procedures.
- Examine the College's compliance with QQI's requirements.
- Ensure the review of the Quality Assurance Manual is transparent and informed by stakeholder feedback.
- Make recommendations for additions to, or enhancements of the Quality Assurance Manual, on a rolling Section by Section basis, with the complete Manual being reviewed over a two- year period.

Any recommended revisions or updates of the Quality Assurance Manual are reviewed by the Academic Council who have final approval.

14.4 Learner Appraisals

14.4.1 Learner Appraisal of Modules

A formal learner appraisal of modules is undertaken on two occasions during module delivery, in mid and end semester, using the *Learner Module Survey*. The survey is designed to elicit the learners' views on:

- the resources available;
- the content of modules;
- delivery of modules;
- communication;
- general evaluation and suggestions.

Learners are given the opportunity to appraise the module anonymously.

14.4.2 Learner Appraisal of Programmes

A formal learner appraisal of the entire programme is undertaken towards the end of the academic year using the *Learner Programme Survey*. The survey gathers learner feedback on:

- learner attendance;
- resources available;
- organisation and content of modules;
- communication;
- general evaluation and suggestions.

It is the responsibility of the Programme Lead to have the questionnaires administered towards the end of each academic year and ensure that they are analysed for the first meeting of the respective programme boards in the next academic year.

14.5 Graduate Survey

The graduate survey is issued to graduates in the year immediately following the completion of their studies. In order to ensure a good response rate, it is ideally carried out at the Annual Conferring Ceremony by the Student Services department.
The results are used to strengthen and develop the services provided by the College that in their entirety contribute to the learner experience. The survey also gives information on the preparedness of graduates for the job market.

14.6 Marketing Monitoring Report

The Marketing Manager completes this report on an annual basis. It should appraise the effect of changes adopted from previous year and propose new initiatives. It should also analyse the correlation between marketing campaigns and learner enrolment.
The report is submitted to the Executive Management Team for a value-for-money adjudication and for resource allocation purposes. It is also presented to the Director of

Academic Affairs and Undergraduate Programmes for information and for consideration of any academic issues.

14.7 Quality Improvement Plan

A key element of monitoring is to identify areas for further development. The Registrar and the Head of Academic Programmes consolidates the results of the various monitoring activities into the College Quality Improvement Plan (QIP) and take responsibility, under the direction of the Director of Academic Affairs and Undergraduate Programmes, for monitoring the implementation of the QIP and reports on this to Academic Council.