

Portobello Institute

Quality Assurance Manual

24/01/09

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Section 1 - General

1.1 Introduction

This document provides a comprehensive guide to the quality assurance policies and procedures in place at Portobello Institute.

1.2 Scope

The Quality Assurance Procedures described in this document are in accordance with the provisions of the Qualifications (Education and Training) Act 1999. Portobello Institute's Quality Assurance procedures meet all the requirements of the Qualifications (Education and Training) Act, 1999 and no exclusions are applied.

The procedures for the design, delivery and assessment of programmes in Portobello Institute and other designated locations throughout Ireland are covered in this document.

1.3 Documentation and modifications rules

All documentation relating to the Quality Assurance Procedures is controlled to guarantee accuracy and consistency. The Quality Assurance Manual is maintained by the Registrar, who ensures only the most up-to-date versions are available. Any modifications to procedures should be requested in writing to the registrar with supporting reasons for modifications included. The Registrar seeks approval from the Academic Council for changes to the Quality Assurance Procedures. The Registrar is the only person authorised to make changes to the Quality Assurance Procedures Manual and it is his/her responsibility to ensure all updated versions are issued to all relevant parties with changes highlighted. An up-to-date version of the Quality Assurance Procedures is available via the college intranet.

Section 2 - Background to Portobello Institute

2.1 History of Portobello Institute

Portobello Institute was founded in 1981 by Delia Lyons. She pioneered the training of Childcare professionals in the college's original home along the canal in South Richmond Street. The college moved to its current home in Dublin 1 in 1991, having gained recognition from City and Guilds of London Institute for the very high standards of training being delivered in the area of childcare. This move allowed for expansion of the college. Courses outside the specific area of childcare were introduced and successfully offered and further recognition by international awarding bodies including the International Therapy Examining Council (ITEC), Joint Examining Board (JEB) and the Institute of Commercial Management (ICM) was gained. Courses available in Portobello Institute range from Montessori Teaching through to Beauty Therapy, Design and Facilities Management. All of these are delivered in newly refurbished premises located in the heart of Dublin.

Portobello Institute recognised the need and demand for the delivery of some of its programmes in locations outside of Dublin and in 1995 the college commenced offering programmes in regional locations around Ireland. Today, the college offers courses to learners in over 50 locations throughout Ireland.

Portobello Institute gained national recognition of its quality assurance policies from FETAC in 2005 and, through the FETAC process of recognising locally developed modules, the college gained national accreditation for its programmes in Montessori Teaching and Special Needs Education at levels 5 and 6 on the National Framework of Qualifications.

Each year over 2000 learners from all over the world study with Portobello Institute. The college currently employs a core management and administrative staff of 30 and it also has a lecturing team of approximately 100.

2.2 Range of Programmes

The current range of programmes available in Portobello Institute includes the following courses listed by department:

Department of Montessori & Special Needs Education Studies

Montessori Teaching, Special Needs Education, Day Care Management

Department of Business and Travel Studies

Travel & Tourism, Airline Operations, Travel Agency Practice, Computerised Reservations Systems, Facilities Management, E-Business, ACCA Accounting Technician, Marketing

Department of Sports Studies

Sports Therapy, Personal Trainer, Fitness Therapist, Diet and Nutrition

Department of Creative Studies

Make-Up Artistry, Fashion Buying & Merchandising, Interior Design

Department of Beauty Studies

Beauty Therapy, Non-Surgical Cosmetic Enhancements, Nail Technology

2.3 Mission and Values

2.3.1 Portobello Institute's mission is

“To continue to develop as an accessible third level educational institute, offering academic standards of quality and excellence in the further education of adults for awards at levels 5 through to 8 on the national framework.”

The College seeks to fulfil this mission by sustained actions in the following:

- providing full and part time, high quality, easily available courses of study with a skills based orientation and largely comprising nationally validated programmes at certificate, diploma and ordinary degree levels in the areas of Montessori Teaching and Special Needs Education, Business and Travel, Sports and Health related Fitness Therapies, Beauty Therapy, and Creative Studies.
- ensuring graduate competence and learner satisfaction by establishing and maintaining internal quality assurance and quality enhancement procedures with external views for the purpose of further improving and maintaining the standards of quality and excellence
- evaluating and ensuring success for the further education of the individual learner by meeting the overall aims, objectives and intended learning outcomes of the programmes being delivered.

2.3.2 Values

Portobello Institute believes that by conducting its interactions with all stakeholders through the following values, we will achieve our primary aim of preparing the learner for optimum achievement in the course they have chosen to study and the career they are going to follow. Portobello Institute is committed to doing this with the utmost consideration for the learner's social, emotional and physical welfare. We believe that the values that will support this include Integrity, Respect, Trust, Professionalism, Innovation and Continuous Improvement. So that these values are intrinsic in everything we do, we recruit management, administrative and lecturing staff with these values in mind. Portobello Institute also provides on-going support to further develop these values within our organisation through the coaching and people development programmes.

2.4 Strategic Plan for 2009 through to 2010

Portobello Institute has developed a strategic plan for the two calendar years commencing 2009 through to 2010. This plan has been developed in alignment with the mission, values and aims of the college over the three years. The strategic plan is reviewed and updated for the next three year period during the meeting of the Academic Council in December of each year.

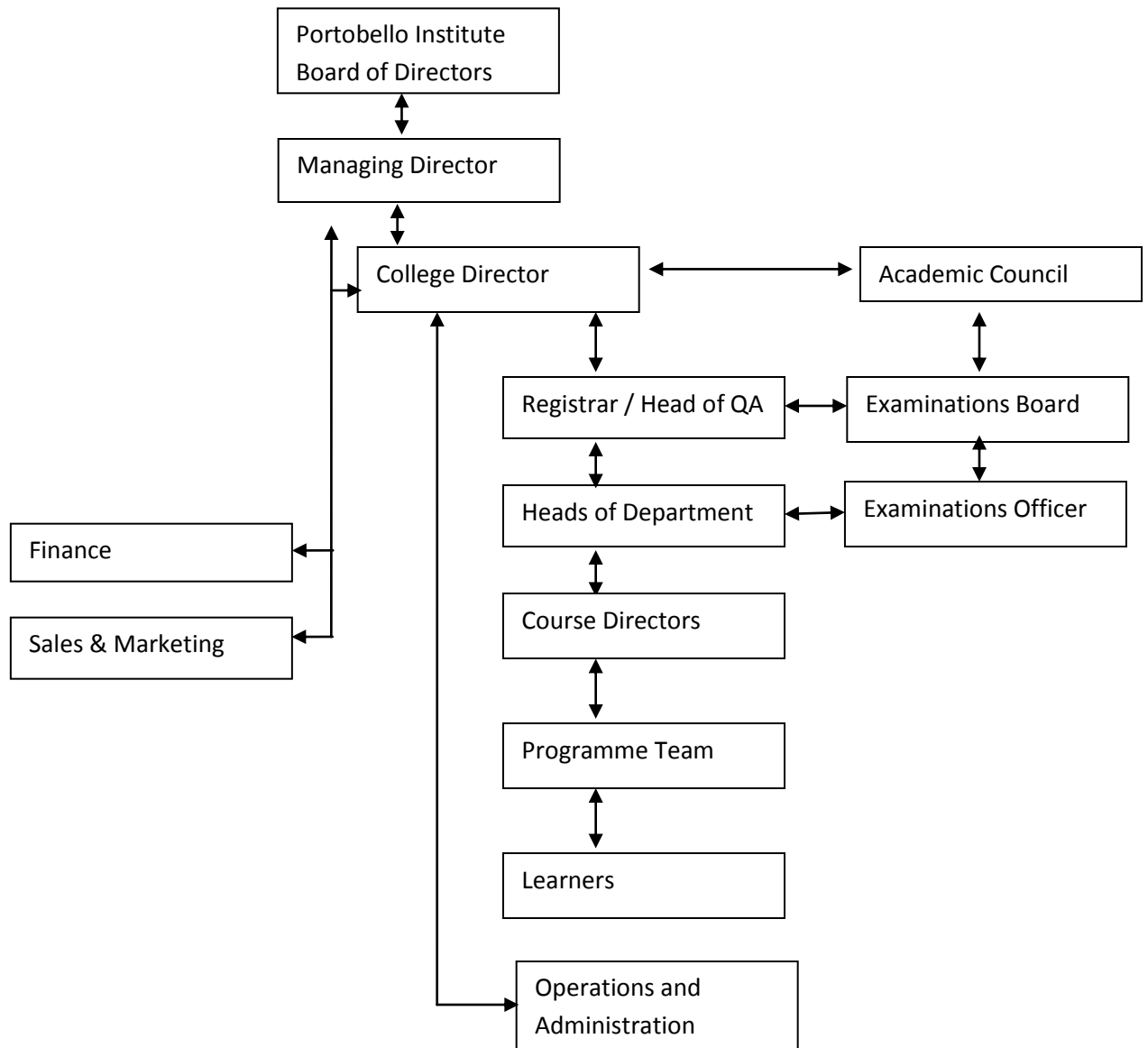
STRATEGIC PLAN TIME LINE 2009		
Date	Detail	Department
Jan 2009	Information and Training Days to be held for all Special Needs Ed Lecturers on new Special Needs Assisting programme	Human Resources
	Launch of Special Needs Assisting Programme – FETAC Level 5	Special Needs Ed
	Launch of New Distance Learning Programmes	Special Needs Ed, Montessori & Marketing
	Launch of marketing campaign aimed at students overseas studying in Ireland	Marketing
Jan-Mar 2009	Regional open evenings with keynote speakers aimed at existing and potential special needs education and Montessori students	Marketing
	Launch of weekend workshops	All departments
	Customer Focus training days for all core staff	Human Resources
Feb 2009	Launch of ABA programme in Galway	Special Needs Ed
Apr - Jun 2009	Key Skills training for all key staff	Human Resources
	Regional Tutor Group Sessions	Human Resources
May 2009	Launch of Results On-Line for Montessori and Special Needs Ed students	Montessori , Special Needs Ed and IT
Aug 2009	Replacement of all carpet in training rooms in 43 Lr Dominick St. Overhaul of all computer equipment and replacement of same, where required.	Facilities and IT

Sept 2009	Commencement of ISSA Sports Trainer Programme	Sports
	Exhibition of Creative Student Work	Interior Design, Make-up Artistry and Fashion
Oct 2009	Commencement of Level 7 Degree programme in Montessori Teaching	Montessori
Nov 2009	Keynote speaker evenings to be held in Dublin for part-time students	Business, Travel and Sport

STRATEGIC PLAN TIME LINE 2010		
Date	Detail	Department
Feb 2010	Extension of Results on-line to include Business and Travel students	Business and Travel
	Regional open evenings with keynote speakers aimed at existing and potential special needs education and Montessori students	Marketing
Mar - Apr 2010	Task Skills training for all staff	Human Resources
	Regional Tutor Group Sessions	Human Resources
Aug 2010	Review and replacement of all training equipment for Beauty and Sports departments	Facilities, Beauty and Sports
Sept 2010	Commencement of ISSA Sports Fitness Programme	Sports
	Exhibition of Creative Student Work	Interior Design, Make-up Artistry and Fashion
	Commencement of 2 nd year of level 7 degree programme in Montessori Teaching	Montessori
Oct 2010	Commencement of international students on programmes	Marketing
Nov 2010	Keynote speaker evenings to be held in Dublin for part-time students	Business, Travel and Sport

2.5 Organisation Structure and Management

The college is managed with two functions in mind, academic performance and commercial performance. This section outlines the responsibilities and the lines of communication between departments and the two functions.



2.5.1 The Board of Directors

The Board of Directors is comprised of three members, the chairperson, company secretary and another director

2.5.2 Commercial Management

The Managing Director has overall responsibility for academic and commercial management of Portobello Institute and reports the performance of both of these functions to the Board of Directors. The commercial management includes the finance and sales and marketing functions of the college. The managing director is also a member of the academic council.

2.5.3 Academic Management

The academic performance of Portobello Institute is managed by the College Director. This includes operational matters. The College Director is a member of the Academic Council. In relation to Quality Assurance, the roles and responsibilities of the academic council can be found under section 3.

2.6 The Academic Council

To ensure that the policies and strategies required for the effective planning, co-ordination, development and overseeing of the academic and operational matters of Portobello Institute are in place, an Academic Council is appointed by the Board of Directors.

2.6.1 Membership of the Academic Council

The Academic Council is made up of the following members:

- Managing Director
- College Director (Chair)
- Registrar
- Heads of Department
- 2 full-time members of lecturing staff, elected by the staff
- 2 student representatives, elected by the students
- 1-2 Industry Representatives

2.6.2 Purpose of the Academic Council

The primary aim of the Academic Council is to maintain and promote high academic standards across all courses through review, recommendation and implementation of appropriate quality assured procedures. The Academic Council has the following purposes:

1. Portobello Institute continually strives to offer an up-to-date range of programmes that are in-line with the demands and needs of industry and learners alike. The Academic Council has responsibility for the approval of the development of new programmes and major amendments to existing programmes. The Academic Council can appoint sub-committees to work on individual projects such as preparation of new programme proposals or reporting on the monitoring and evaluation of existing programmes. Procedures involved in new programme proposals are detailed in section 4, and details of the monitoring and evaluation of existing programmes are also covered under section 4. The day to day management and monitoring of all programmes within a department currently running is the responsibility of

- the Head of Department with Course Directors reporting to him/her on individual programmes.
2. One of the terms of reference of the Academic Council is to ensure that Portobello Institute's commitment to delivering high standards is maintained through the operation of the college's quality assurance procedures. The Registrar reports to the Academic Council on the operation and monitoring of the quality assurance procedures. The Academic Council reviews these reports and may make recommendations for the improvement of these procedures. Further detail on the monitoring of Quality Assurance procedures is detailed in section 4. The day to day operation of quality assurance procedures is the responsibility of all staff in their relevant areas.
 3. The Examinations Board reports directly to the Academic Council on matters relating to examinations, awards and regulations. Further details on procedures and matters relating to examinations are available in section 4.

2.6.3 Meetings of the Academic Council

The Academic Council meets four times a year, generally in March, June, September and December or as otherwise deemed necessary by the Council. Additional lecturing staff may be invited to attend any of these meetings. The purpose of their attendance will be to gather further insight and evidence relating to the performance of a particular programme.

The September meeting is held to ensure full programme planning has taken place for all programmes due to commence during the upcoming year. Requests for approval of any additional resources are decided upon. A review of the report from the examinations board is conducted with recommendations for any new procedures evaluated and decided upon. Any issues dealing with the appointment of External or Internal examiners are dealt with.

The December meeting is scheduled to review the academic progress of programmes, to ensure recommendations are being implemented and to address any matters that may arise since the commencement of the programme. The strategic plan for the year gone by is reviewed and a plan for year 3 developed.

The March meeting is scheduled to ensure Quality Assurance procedures are being followed and to deal with any issues that may have arisen since the meeting held in December. Academic progress of programmes is discussed at this meeting, as is the progress of examination submission to the External Examiners.

The June meeting is scheduled to conduct a comprehensive review of the programme evaluations carried out by Heads of Department, Course Directors and the Registrar. Recommendations made are for implementation for the next academic year. Department budgets are set for the upcoming academic year. End of year examination results are reviewed.

2.7 The Examinations Board

The Examinations Board, which comprises the Registrar, Heads of Department, Course Directors and relevant Internal and External Examiners, reports directly to the Academic Council on matters relating to examinations, awards and regulations. The Examinations Board approves learner results and ensures the validity and integrity of assessments. The Examinations Board reviews proposed assessments and ensures alignment with learning outcomes and standard of the programme. The Examinations Board advises the Academic Council on the administration and organisation procedures of examinations and awards.

The Examinations Board makes recommendations for approval by the Academic Council for appointment of external and internal examiners. The Examinations Board reviews and decides on any appeals lodged and also on any extenuating circumstances or unusual events that may have occurred during the examinations. The content of all meetings held by the Examinations Board are held with discretion and strict confidentiality.

The Examinations Board meet three times per year, in February, June and September and the board comprises of the registrar, heads of department, course directors, relevant internal and external examiners. External examiners are usually only in attendance for the June meeting. The primary function of the February meeting is to review and discuss the draft examination papers due to be submitted to the external examiners for ratification. The June meeting approves the results of the end of year examinations and the September meeting approves the results of the repeat examinations held in August. Further details on procedures and matters relating to examinations are available in section 4.

2.8 Role and Responsibilities of the College Director

The College Director reports to the Managing Director and the Board of Directors of Portobello Institute. The role and responsibilities of the college director include the following:

- Overall responsibility for the day to day running of the college
- Chairing the Academic Council
- Management of the day to day implementation of the learning and teaching programmes
- Establishing, promoting and maintaining highest academic standards through development, implementation and monitoring of academic and quality assurance policies, procedures and practices within the college
- Developing and overseeing the implementation, with the registrar and heads of department, of long and short term academic goals for each department
- Overseeing the operational management of the college and ensuring the human and physical resources are in place to meet optimal running of the college on a daily basis
- Overseeing the development and implementation of learner support services and physical resources
- Overseeing staffing, financial planning and budget control
- Overseeing and managing the external examiner processes

- Liaising and developing relationships with other educational institutions, associations and awarding bodies

2.9 Role and responsibilities of the Registrar

The Registrar reports to the College Director and the Managing Director. The Registrar is a member of the Academic Council, chairs the examinations board and participates on any sub-committees appointed by the Academic Council.

The Registrar's responsibilities include the following:

Quality Assurance

- Planning, co-ordinating, implementing, supervising and monitoring of Portobello Institute's Quality Assurance policies and procedures through measurement of key performance indicators, relevant statistical data and review of feedback surveys and reports from learners, college staff and external stakeholders
- Assessing and monitoring the quality of programmes, relevance and achievement of learning outcomes, assessments – achievement levels and processes
- Ensuring effective implementation of long or short term changes to Quality Assurance policy and procedures
- Reporting to the Academic Council, College Director and Managing Director on the performance of the Quality Assurance policies and procedures
- Liaising with external awarding bodies on all matters relating to quality assurance and academic arrangements
- Ensuring Portobello Institute's Quality Assurance procedures are up to date and reflect best practice, as recommended by the Academic Council, HETAC and/or other relevant awarding bodies and are in accordance with the provisions of the Qualifications (Education and Training) Act 1999 and any amendments that may be made to that act.

Academic Matters

- Agreeing programme schedules with heads of department, ensuring that all programmes are following the timetable, meeting the learning outcomes planned, assessments are taking place as planned and are in alignment with learning outcomes and standard of the programme
- Overseeing, with Heads of Department, the development, validation and accreditation of new programmes
- Overseeing with the Examinations Officer and Heads of Department the efficient and transparent running of the Examinations function.
- Ensuring accurate maintenance of programme, learner and academic records.
- Management of careers' advisory to learners
- Ensuring learners' welfare and academic needs are being met

Operational Matters

- Overseeing the day to day operation of the library
- Ensuring MIS meet the operational needs of the college, and overseeing the development of MIS, where required
- Ensuring relevant facilities and physical resources are of appropriate standard and available, as required
- Together with financial department, assisting in setting and management of department budgets
- Identifying resources and facilities for improvement and liaising with the college director and finance department for planning and implementation of same.

Strategic Planning

- Assisting the development of strategic planning for the college as a whole
- Co-ordinating and assisting in the strategic planning and development of individual departmental goals and objectives
- Ensuring the strategic alliance and deliverance of department goals within the strategy of the college

2.10 Role and Responsibilities of the Head of Department

The Head of the Department is responsible for the day to day management of the department and the implementation of the quality assurance procedures within the department. The role includes engaging in curriculum development and continuously monitoring the programme for the quality of the curriculum, which includes determining the learning outcomes and subject matter relating to those learning outcomes; teaching and learning processes and assessments. The day to day operation of the programme is the responsibility of the Course Director as detailed under section 2.11 below.

Each Head of Department has the following responsibilities:

- Advising the academic council on relevant academic matters, which includes making recommendations for changes to the course and further development of facilities
- Monitoring the teaching, learning and research in the subject areas for which he/she is primarily responsible
- Monitoring the academic progress and welfare of learners registered on the programmes
- Submitting names of approved external examiners to the Academic Council, through the Registrar, for the college's programmes, for which he/she holds responsibility
- Preparing and submitting an annual report on his/her work to the Academic Council
- Monitoring reports on quality assurance to ensure implementation of the college's quality programme
- Carrying out a three yearly programme review

- Self-evaluating the effectiveness of policies and procedures within the department and recommending development strategies
- Encouraging and promoting standards of excellence throughout the department
- Recruitment of academic staff
- Management of resources within the department to ensure best use of financial, human and academic resources towards achievement of college strategy

Heads of Department may develop sub committees and working parties, which may include members from outside of the college, subject to the approval of the Academic Council and in consultation with the Course Director.

2.11 Role and Responsibilities of the Course Director

The Course director has the direct responsibility for the day to day operation of programmes within Portobello Institute. These include the following responsibilities:

- Ensuring the effective day to day management of the programme
- Implementing short term changes in response to feedback from stakeholders
- Making recommendations to the Head of Department with regard to long term changes to the programme
- Monitoring learner progression, identifying and supporting borderline learners
- Monitoring the on-going operation of the programme
- Carrying out a yearly review of the programme and report on same to the Academic Council
- Monitoring the quality of the learner's learning experience
- Monitoring learner satisfaction and progress
- Reviewing employment opportunities available to new graduates
- Carrying out a 3 year programme review
- Implementing recommendations from other boards and bodies
- Ensuring adherence to the course document and Marks and Standards
- Ensuring the Learner Handbook is updated annually
- Ensuring the alignment of the assessments with the learning outcomes
- Ensuring the modular learning outcomes facilitate progression
- Ensuring alignment of modular outcomes with programme objectives
- Evaluating adequacy, quality and effectiveness of support services
- Recommending use of resources and services and making recommendations for changes or additions to the programme
- Providing support to potential applicants at open days, school visits etc.
- Interviewing applicants
- Assisting with the recruitment and selection of lecturers associated with the programme
- Chairing the programme committee and ensuring it meets its responsibilities
- Liaising with the examinations officer regarding all aspects of exam administration

- Updating programme documentation, such as module descriptors, to be lodged by the Head of Department with the Registrar and external awarding bodies arising from the annual review process

2.12 Role and Responsibilities of the Programme Team

The programme team is a sub-committee set-up by the Head of Department with primary responsibility for developing and operating the college's programme. It includes all the lecturers teaching on a programme, with the Course Director as its chairperson. It consults with external experts and external examiners. It is responsible for the development of the existing programme within the constraints of resources. The programme team develops the academic vision, overall objectives and learning outcomes and future direction of the college's programme.

2.13 The Library

Portobello Institute has a library that provides access for learners to a range of books, journals, case studies, reference materials, study area and internet access. All core texts for programmes are available from the library. Books and reports in the library are organised by classification.

The library is located in the ground floor of Rear 40, Lower Dominick Street and is open during the academic terms from Monday to Wednesday 9am to 6.30pm, Thursday and Friday 9am to 5pm. On demand, the library will open outside these times. Further information relating to opening times is posted on the library door.

All lecturers and students of Portobello Institute have a right to use the library and its services. Members may borrow books for a maximum of 5 working days at a time and a fine is imposed if books are held past their due return date.

Section 3 - Quality Management Systems and Policies

3.1 Portobello Institute's Policy on Quality Assurance

Portobello Institute has developed an inclusive strategy to quality assurance of its programmes and administration. We are dedicated to delivering this comprehensive quality assurance strategy so that all of our processes will be in line with international best practice. Staff, learners and other stakeholders all have a role to play in the development of these processes and we are committed to making the results of our quality assurance processes available in an accessible and easy to understand format. The policies and practices of our quality assurance document cover the following areas:

- Communication with all stakeholders
- Equality
- Health and Safety
- Staff recruitment and development
- Access, Transfer and Progression
- Programme development, delivery and review
- Fair and consistent assessments
- Premises, equipment, facilities and services
- Protection of Learners
- Self-evaluation

3.2 Aims of the Quality Assurance System

The aims of the Quality Assurance System are as follows:

- To define quality standards for programmes delivered in Portobello Institute
- To communicate clearly with all stakeholders
- To ensure quality standards are maintained across all processes
- To identify, understand and respond to the needs of all customers – internal and external and to ensure this corresponds with best practice
- To develop our staff to deliver standards in line with our quality standards
- To identify strengths and weaknesses of procedures and programmes, to applaud strengths and to implement improvement plans to address any matters that arise as a result of weaknesses.
- To ensure the integrity and veracity of all assessments conducted in Portobello Institute

3.3 Roles and Responsibilities in relation to Quality Assurance

All staff of Portobello Institute have a role in delivering Quality Assurance, however the overall responsibility lies with the Academic Council. It is the duty of the Registrar, College Director and Managing Director to ensure the policies and procedures are followed. The Academic Council appoints a

sub-committee, the Quality Assurance Committee, to take general responsibility for developing, monitoring and implementing the college's overall quality assurance procedures for the validation of new programmes, programme review and programme evaluation procedures. Further details of this sub-committee are available under section 3.4.

External bodies such as HETAC and FETAC, and industry and learner focus groups ensure the college's quality assurance systems are subject to external review and are in compliance with best practice nationally and internationally.

The Quality Assurance systems of Portobello Institute are updated annually and more frequently, where deemed necessary. Feedback is continually sought through on-line and paper surveys, via focus groups and on-going consultation between the various management and organisational structures within the college. These include the following:

- The Academic Council
- The Quality Assurance Committee
- Programme Team
- Heads of Department
- Course Directors

The effectiveness of the quality Assurance policies and procedures of Portobello Institute is reported on annually to the Academic Council. Recommendations for change at any stage throughout an academic year will be reviewed by the Quality Assurance Committee with recommendations made to the Academic Council. The Quality Assurance systems will reflect any changes approved by the Academic Council.

3.4 The Quality Assurance Committee

The Quality Assurance Committee reports directly to the Academic Council and has general responsibility for the development and implementation of the overall quality assurance procedures of the college. The committee constitutes the following members:

- Registrar
- Heads of Department
- Course Directors
- 2 members of Lecturing Staff
- Learner Representative
- Industry Representative

3.4.1 Roles and Responsibilities of the Quality Assurance Committee

The Quality Assurance Committee meets 3 times per term and its main areas of responsibility include the following:

- Policy and Procedures for Quality Assurance

- Approval, monitoring and periodic review of programmes and awards
- Assessment of students and monitoring academic progress
- Monitoring quality of examination scripts and overall examination performance
- Monitoring the smooth implementation of the examination procedures
- Quality Assurance of Lecturing Staff
- Monitoring learning resources and support services
- Management Information Systems
- Monitoring on-going smooth running of the programme
- Monitoring the implementation of short term changes to the programme in response to feedback from stakeholders
- Reviewing policies and procedures and making recommendations for change
- Reviewing employment opportunities available to new graduates
- Carrying out 3 year programme review
- Ensuring adherence to course document and marks and standards, which includes the alignment of the module outcomes with programme goals and alignment of assessments with the modular learning outcomes
- Monitoring the implementation of the teaching, learning and assessment policy and strategy
- Evaluating adequacy and effectiveness of support services and making recommendations for change
- Communication of information to and from stakeholders
- Continually reviewing the effects changes have made

3.5. Quality Assurance Policies

3.5.1 Policy on Communications

Portobello Institute is committed to circulating up-to-date information between learners, lecturers, management and all other stakeholders in an effective and accurate manner. Information is gathered in an open, high quality and consistent manner and then shared and made available as part of our drive towards excellence. We aim to ensure that our communications are positively evaluated by all those with whom we communicate and that we respond to feedback with improvements. In all communications, we present a positive image and demonstrate our objectives in a clear and consistent manner using plain English, so that it may be understood by all.

Academy is the college's intranet service and this provides all staff with access to up-to-date information on schedules, assessments, class information etc. A college newsletter reporting changes, developments and news within the college and its courses is delivered to all stakeholders quarterly. The college also keeps up-to-date information on news and events via its website and relevant stakeholders are informed to look out for appropriate updates on the website via email and/or web text.

Portobello Institute uses communication with learners and staff to create an environment of trust and loyalty in which excellence is valued and encouraged.

3.5.2 Policy on Equality

Portobello Institute is committed to eliminating unlawful discrimination and to promoting equality of opportunity by fostering an atmosphere of mutual harmony and respect among all its potential and existing learners and staff regardless of gender, colour, marital status, disability, race, nationality, ethnic origin, learning difficulty, religion, belief, sexual orientation or age. Full details of the college's policies, procedures and plans in relation to the following are available in the "HR Handbook on Policies and Procedures" within the college:

- Gender, Disability and Race
- Culture, Religion and Beliefs
- Complaints Procedure
- Confidentiality
- Sexual Orientation
- Bullying

3.5.3 Policy on Health and Safety

Portobello Institute has a fully up-to-date and comprehensive Health and Safety Statement and Procedures. The health, safety and welfare of all students, staff and visitors is of primary concern to the college and procedures are in place to ensure the well-being of all, who pass through the doors of the college.

3.5.4 Policy on Staff Recruitment and Development

Portobello Institute is committed to ensuring that all staff employed to deliver programmes are relevantly qualified and have a minimum of 3 – 5 years industry experience. Lecturers must have the skills to deliver lectures in an informative and interesting manner using appropriate aids and potential lecturers will be required to display their presentation skills during the recruitment process. Lecturers new to the lecturing team will be required to attend induction training and all lecturers must attend a "Train the Trainer" workshop annually. Other workshops are developed ad hoc to introduce staff to any new policies, procedures and/or documentation and relevant staff are given the time to attend. New administrative staff attend an induction programme, which includes an overview of the college, its courses, structure, information systems, policies and procedures etc.

In order that lecturers may deliver up-to-date information, all staff are encouraged to attend relevant training programmes to keep their skills up to date. Reviews of staff performance are conducted annually and include key performance indicators. Feedback based on surveys from learners, peers, internal examiners, course directors and heads of department forms part of the review.

All programmes are headed by the relevant head of department. Coaching and training are provided for heads of department to ensure they have the leadership skills and the programme knowledge to lead a team of lecturers through the course. The head of department's role includes supporting the lecturing

team and ensuring their needs are met so that they may deliver their lectures in a stress-free environment with the maximum support and guidance they require.

3.5.5. Policy on Access, Transfer and Progression

Portobello Institute is committed to providing potential learners with full and clear information about a programme, so they may make an informed decision regarding the programmes available. Prerequisite knowledge, skills and competencies required to successfully complete a programme are set out clearly in the programme brochure and on the college website. Prior learning will be recognised without any impediment put in the way of the potential learners progressing to a programme of their choice. Every reasonable effort will be made by the staff and lecturers of Portobello Institute to ensure learners have the opportunity to successfully complete the programme of their choice. Learners will be advised of further studies appropriate to them and every effort will be made to assist them to transfer or progress to another programme either within the college or offered by another provider.

3.5.6 Policy on Programme Development, Delivery and Review

Portobello Institute is committed to providing education that meets a very high standard in comfortable surroundings. Programmes are designed to give the skills a learner requires to meet the current and future needs of industry. This is done at the outset when designing the programme and the factors taken into consideration include the needs and demands for the programme from industry and from learners. The aims, objectives and desired outcomes for the programme take into account the demands of industry and the profile of the learners seeking to study the programme. Content, delivery techniques, assessment methods, entry requirements and programme structure are then developed in the context of the needs and demands of industry, the aims and objectives of the programme and the desired outcomes for the learners.

Programme delivery facilitates transfer and progression of the learner with appropriate assessment that has been clearly defined from the outset. Programmes adhere to a schedule that has been set prior to commencement and that has been issued to all learners so that they may fully understand the demands of the programme from the start. All records are kept in a clear and unambiguous manner and these are available for review and external evaluation. All learners are kept up to date on their progress during a programme.

Programmes are appraised and reviewed on a continual basis to ensure that the content is up to date and appropriate to meet the needs of industry and the learner, that the assessment is fair and that the programme is being delivered in a manner that allows the learner to achieve to the maximum of his/her ability. A full analysis of programmes is conducted annually by the academic council during the self-evaluation process. Programme aims and objectives are evaluated in the context of the learning outcomes, core skills and path of knowledge progression required for graduate success on the programme and in industry.

3.5.7 Policy on Fair and Consistent Assessments

Assessment of the learner must promote learning and empowerment of the learner. Assessments are an integral part of the learning process and the learner must be confident that a fair, consistent and reliable assessment will be conducted. In order that the evaluation will be successful for both learner and lecturer, the assessment criteria must be unambiguous and clear and the learner must have a full understanding of the expectations and circumstances prior to the assessment. All assessments have relevance to the learning outcomes, aims and objectives of a programme. This is done to enable the learner develop his/her abilities to achieve the standard required for the award he/she is seeking. A variety of assessment methods may be used and these include written, practical, oral examinations, projects, reports, skills demonstrations, practical work placements and continuous assessment. Guidelines for the implementation of Portobello Institute's policies and procedures relating to fair and consistent assessments are made available to all staff and learners through staff and learner introduction packs.

Internal moderation ensures that marking is consistent across modules and that it is transparent. Responsibility for internal moderation is overseen by the Registrar and is reported to the Examinations Board and External Examiner. Feedback is provided to the learner following assessment; this feedback pinpoints strengths, provides clear and constructive information on weaknesses with suggestions for improvement, where appropriate. Lecturers are aware that they should be sensitive and constructive as any assessment has an emotional impact and this can have both a positive and negative impact on the learner's confidence and enthusiasm.

Following assessment learners must understand the next goal and how to achieve it. All lecturers must encourage learners to develop the capacity for self-assessment so they can become reflective and self-managing.

Where special assessment arrangements have been made for a learner due to illness, disability, learning difficulties or English as a second language, it is imperative to ensure unfair advantage is not given to that learner. The validity and reliability of the exam must not be affected in any way in order to protect the integrity and credibility of the qualification.

Portobello Institute is committed to ensuring that all learners have access to appropriate and consistent assessment opportunities to demonstrate their achievements and realise their goals.

3.5.8 Policy on Premises, Equipment, Facilities and Services

Portobello Institute ensures that its premises are suitable for the purposes of education and meet all relevant health and safety requirements. An up-to-date health and safety statement is available from the operations manager and all health and safety procedures are the responsibility of the operations manager. A health and safety audit is completed weekly by the operations manager. Rooms are equipped with the necessary requirements such as whiteboards, overhead projectors and flip charts. Classes are timetabled to rooms taking into consideration class size and any specific training requirements such as equipment or spatial needs. Lecturers have access to and may request the use of digital projectors, audio visual equipment, digital cameras and other lecturing aids available on site.

Course specific equipment such as Montessori materials, plinths, drawing boards etc. are stored in purpose built storage units in specific training rooms.

Course Directors are given an annual materials budget, where relevant, and this directly correlates to learner numbers. Course Directors have direct responsibility for ensuring the availability, quality and quantity of additional materials required for specific training purposes. All standard electrical equipment is audited monthly to ensure it is in correct working order and lecturers are requested to notify the operations manager of any faulty equipment that comes to their attention in the interim.

It is the policy of Portobello Institute to make available the most up-to-date and pertinent literature relevant to each course. A budget is allocated annually to the head of each department for the purposes of adding to the books and reference materials available in the college library. Learners also have the opportunity to conduct research and source course relevant websites and articles on-line in the college's computer room. A copy of all course texts, recommended and essential reading books are available in the college library. The library is open daily to ensure all learners have access to it. Opening times are posted on the library door. Lecturers may request additional library time through the heads of department.

3.4.8 Policy on Protection of Learners

Portobello Institute is committed, in accordance with Section 43 of the Qualifications Act, that, in the event of a cessation of training by the college, the learner will suffer the least amount of disruption possible. Where another college undertakes to complete the course for the learners, that provider will receive training schedules, details and records of learners and any other relevant facts required with the maximum reliability of information and the minimum inconvenience to the learner and alternate provider. Where it is not feasible for another provider to complete the course for the learners, Portobello Institute undertakes to have arrangements in place to refund to a learner the moneys most recently paid in respect of the programme.

Portobello Institute currently has in place protection for learners' agreements with Dorset College, Dorset Street, Dublin 1 and the College of Progressive Education, Blackrock, Co Dublin.

3.4.9 Policy on Self-Evaluation

Portobello Institute's major goal is to promote a positive change in learners in an environment where all the elements are conducive to this change. Learning is an active process and a team approach with learner involvement is essential when we are evaluating our efforts to achieve this goal. All programmes are evaluated by learners, heads of department, lecturers, an external examiner, other stakeholders and industry experts to facilitate on-going improvements in the areas of programme content, teaching methods, assessments, college staff and services. It is our policy to adopt an open and receptive approach to the evaluation process so that we may build on our strengths, correct our deficiencies and improve our overall service to our learners.

Section 4 – Quality Assurance Procedures

4.1 Procedures for Design and Approval of New Programmes, Subjects and Modules

Overview

It is the responsibility of the Heads of Department, together with the Registrar, to expand the course offering in Portobello Institute in line with the strategic plan for the college. Each department has a programme development committee made up of the head of department, course directors, lecturer representatives, the sales and marketing manager, a consultant with expertise in the relevant subject area and external examiner(s). The development team reports to the Registrar, and then to the Managing Director and to the Academic Council. The procedures outlined below guide staff and external assessors involved in the approval and validation of new programmes. These procedures and guidelines also apply to any significant changes to existing programmes.

The purpose of these procedures and guidelines is to ensure the proposed programme -

- is consistent with the College's Strategic Plan and contributes to achieving the College's aims and objectives
- offers a valuable educational experience to learners
- is consistent with the College's resource planning
- takes cognisance of the National Framework of Qualifications and implements the procedures of the NQAI in relation to access, transfer and progression
- complies with HETAC standards and is in line with HETAC policy and procedures on programme submission and quality assurance

The process of design, institutional approval and validation involves:

- a proposer, individual or group
- a developer, individual or group
- Heads of Department
- Academic team to deliver the course, organised as course board or otherwise
- Sales and Marketing Manager
- External Consultants
- External Examiners
- Academic Council
- Registrar
- College Director
- Managing Director
- Board of Directors
- HETAC

4.1.1 Phase 1 – Proposals for New Programmes

Proposals for new programmes can emanate from many sources. These may include proposals for new courses, proposals for changing existing courses and proposals for discontinuing existing courses.

Proposals must be considered both on their own merit and within the framework of the overall college policy. The most frequent source and channel for individual proposals on course development is likely to be academic staff through structured meetings at course level and with Heads of Department. New proposals may also be introduced directly through the Academic Council.

Portobello Institute requires that proposers of new programmes submit an outline of the programme for approval prior to the development of a full submission. This outline approval arrangement facilitates time management during the process.

- The outline proposal should be submitted to the Registrar for consideration by the Programme Development Committee.
- They will examine the outline proposal in terms of the college's Strategic Plan and the college's resource planning. The Programme Development Committee will compile a report, which will be forwarded by the Registrar, together with the outline proposal, to the Academic Council.
- The proposal for outline approval must conform to the requirements of the validating body on new course evaluation. The outline should include the following:
 - ***Demand from industry***
 - ***Demand from prospective students***
 - ***Institute and Department Strategy***
 - ***Aims and Learning Outcomes - general details***
 - ***Course Design - subjects, learning outcomes, teaching methodologies and assessment methodologies***
 - ***Course Schedule - examination subjects, component subjects, contact hours, credit rating and level, marks per subject***
 - ***Resources - accommodation implications, staffing implications.***
 - ***Similar Programmes at other Institutions***
- The outline proposal shall not include detailed syllabi, readings lists, equipment lists etc
- The Academic Council will decide whether to grant outline approval to the proposed programme based on its own deliberations and any recommendations of the Programme Development Committee taking into account the report from the Registrar.
- The Academic Council may attach conditions to the outline approval of a new programme proposal.
- A proposed programme that is granted outline approval will be identified with a specific department and provision will be made for structured meetings of the academic staff involved. In the case of a multi-disciplinary course, one of the departments concerned will be identified as the base department and staff from the various disciplines will be included in the course board.

In the case of a proposed new programme, such groupings will be provisional pending validation of the programme and finalisation of the staffing arrangements.

There can be three outcomes to the outline proposal submission, as follows:

1. Granted – proposed development plans for programmes can now progress to full development phase.
2. Further Information Required – in order to progress to full development further information is required. The programme development application – phase 1 - must be re-submitted giving details in the areas sought.
3. Refused – it is deemed that the proposal is not suitable for progression to full development at this time.

Phase 2 commences when a programme development application – phase 1 - is granted and a programme development application- phase 2 is developed by the programme development committee for submission to the Registrar.

4.1.2 Phase 2 – Stages in the Development of the Proposed Programme for Validation

- The arrangements and the personnel for the necessary research and for the preparation of the submission for course approval will be determined through a consultation process involving the relevant Heads of Department and the provisional Course Board.
- The Guidelines for New Programme Development (*Appendix 1*) must be considered when submitting the phase 2 proposal and it is under these guidelines that the Registrar and Academic Council will consider the next proposal.
- While the research, preparatory work and drafting will be shared, one person will normally assume a coordinating and editing role.
- A new programme proposal with outline approval will normally be developed by the provisional course board into a full programme in close liaison with the Programme Committee taking into account any conditions imposed by the Academic Council.
- The Programme Development Committee will examine the proposal against the college's guidelines and the procedures and guidelines of the approved validating body – see *Appendix 1 - Guidelines for New Programme Development*.
- The Programme Development Committee, with the approval of the Registrar, will normally consult with an External Specialist(s). The Programme Development Committee and the External Specialist(s) will hold at least one meeting with the Registrar, but normally it will be more.
- The Programme Development Committee will provide an update on new programme proposals to each meeting with the Registrar. This stage of the process may be iterative with the Registrar making recommendations to the Programme Development Committee and the Programme Development Committee resubmitting amended drafts to the Registrar.

- When the committee is satisfied that the proposal document meets the requirements of both the College and HETAC, the committee will ask the Academic Council, with the approval of the Registrar, to convene a Panel of Assessors to examine the programme further.
- The composition of this Panel will usually constitute the following members;
 - 2 Senior academics familiar with the HETAC programme validation process
 - Head of Department
 - Programme Director
 - External Expert
- The Academic Council, through the Registrar, will facilitate the Panel's consideration of the proposed programme prior to meeting the college's staff. The Panel of Assessors will examine the proposal in terms of HETAC requirements and also the National Framework of Qualifications.
- The Panel may present a short report at the end of their visit to the relevant Head of Department and Registrar. The recommendations will comprise both matters for consideration at Department level and matters for consideration at College level.
- The Registrar will bring the interim report of the Panel of Assessors to the notice of the Academic Council. Where the Panel recommend a re-submission, the college's procedures detailed above will apply.
- The Head of Department in conjunction with the Programme Development Committee will address the Panel's recommendations on college issues. The Registrar will consider any recommendations from the Panel that have college wide implications and ensure that the proposal still complies with the college's Strategic Plan and resource planning. The relevant Head of Department will ensure that responses to the Panel's interim report are brought before the Academic Council.
- The Registrar will liaise with the Chair of the Panel, on behalf of the Academic Council, to ensure the issues raised by the Panel have been addressed. The Academic Council, through the Registrar, will forward the submission amendments and the college's responses to the Chair of the Panel of assessors for consideration by the Panel.
- In cases where the Panel needs to meet as a group, or meet again with the course board, the Registrar will facilitate the required meeting(s).
- The secretary to the Panel, in conjunction with the Chair, will complete an agreed Final Report of the Panel of Assessors. The Academic Council will consider this final report and may request additional changes to the submission document.
- Where the Academic Council recommends the programme, the Registrar will apply for external accreditation for the programme to HETAC. Before this application is submitted, it is the final responsibility of the registrar to ensure the programme standards are compliant with internal procedures. In the case where external accreditation is sought for a programme, it is the final responsibility of the registrar to ensure the programme design and standards are compliant with the requirements of HETAC.

- The Registrar will maintain a file on each proposal for course approval. This file will certify that all necessary approvals have been received and will identify resource requirements and how it is proposed to meet them within available resources.
- No offers of places will be made on a course through its inclusion in the college prospectus or otherwise without the final awarding body approval.
- The Academic Council will review adherence to conditions of course approval up to completion of the new programme by the first cohort of learners.

4.2 Procedures for the Assessment of Learners

Portobello Institute has in place a number of procedures to ensure fair and consistent assessment of learners and to ensure standards are consistent and compliant with the national framework of qualifications. These procedures are as follows:

4.2.1 Procedures for Coordinated Planning of Assessments

Coordinated planning of assessments is essential to ensure all parties have full and prior knowledge of the aims of the assessments to be carried out and that assessments are consistent with the learning outcomes of the programme. All assessments are the overall responsibility of the Registrar and the Registrar must ensure the following procedures are carried out:

- Assessments are completed as agreed so that learners have the opportunity to prepare fully and make the best use of any assessments planned.
- Assessment methods are agreed in accordance with the skills requirement of the learner, the learning outcomes of the programme and the depth of knowledge required by the learner at this level of the programme.
- Weighting of assessments is aligned with the objectives of the programme and is in accordance with a progressive learning path for the learner.
- Planning meetings are held prior to the commencement of the programme, during which the content of assessments, corresponding solutions and marking schemes are developed by the Course Director in cooperation with the lecturers. These are discussed and approved by the Head of Department. Assessments must adequately assess the intended learning outcomes and should include a range of methods to test the learner's depth of knowledge. Worked solutions with appropriate marking schemes should accompany all assessments. Clear and concise instruction, where appropriate, is included on an assessment information cover sheet.
- Programme team meetings are held prior to the commencement of the programme with the scheme of work including planned methods of assessments, weighting of assessments and schedule of assessments agreed. Monthly schemes of completed work are submitted to the Head of Department by lecturers and cross checked with the agreed schedule to ensure assessments are taking place as planned.
- Assessments take place in accordance with the examination and invigilation regulations.

4.2.2 Requirements of Learners for Assessments

Learners must meet the following criteria in order to be eligible for assessment:

- Learners must have met all the criteria of the programme to be admitted to assessments
- In accordance with the programme schedule, awards will only be made to candidates, whose performance has been monitored and approved by the external examiner

4.2.3 Information to Stakeholders on Assessments, Assessment Timetables and Methods

Procedures are in place to ensure learners have all the information they require to successfully complete assessments, apply for accommodation and/or appeal, where appropriate.

Information issued to Learners includes the following:

- Programme Assessment Criteria
- A programme schedule detailing assessment dates
- Assessment brief including title, duration, examiner, weighting, number of sections/ questions per section, style of questions i.e. short or long structured questions, multiple choice questions etc.
- Assessment methods i.e. theory, skills based etc
- Weighting criteria and relevant marking scheme, description of expected standards for each grade
- Appeals procedures
- Processes for applying for reasonable accommodation
- Processes for applying for recognition of prior learning
- Assessment regulations
- Breach of assessment regulations
- Marks and Standards

Information issued to Internal Examiners includes the following:

- Marks and Standards
- A programme schedule detailing assessment dates
- Guidelines for internal examiners on setting and marking assessments
- Weighting criteria and relevant marking scheme, description of expected marks and standards for each grade
- Assessment regulations applying to internal examiners
- Breach of assessment regulations

Information issued to Internal Moderators includes the following:

- Marks and Standards
- Assessment regulations applying to Internal Moderators
- Guidelines on moderation of assessments

- Course documentation with modular outcomes

Information issued to External Examiners includes the following:

- Marks and Standards
- Assessments Regulations
- Course documentation with modular outcomes
- Internal examiner and internal moderator guidelines

4.2.4 Procedures for Reasonable Accommodation

Procedures are in place to ensure all learners have access to fair and reliable assessment. These procedures are as follows:

- Learners must forward a request through the “Application for Reasonable Accommodation” form to the Course Director, where possible on commencement of the programme, but in any case a minimum of two weeks before the date of the assessment or assignment due date. This application should include documentary evidence supporting the reasons why the extension is necessary.
- The request is considered by the Registrar, Head of Department and Course Director during a specially convened meeting to consider such applications. A decision is made and the learner is informed of the outcome.
- Arrangements are put in place to facilitate, where possible, learners requiring special consideration. The type of arrangements may include extension of deadline dates for assignments, extra time during an assessment, a scribe or any other reasonable accommodation, as deemed necessary.
- An action plan, to include any extension of deadlines, extra time allocated during assessments etc. for learners with special consideration is retained on the learner’s file and in a log book for all learners with special considerations. The log book is reviewed prior to examinations to ensure any necessary arrangements have been put in place. Examination invigilators are fully briefed in relation to learners with special requirements.
- The longest extension available is 2 weeks. Assessments will be marked without penalty due to the extension of time.
- It is the responsibility of the learner to ensure that the new agreed date for submission of assessments is met.

Examples of extenuating circumstances are as follows:

- Learner with long/short term illness/disability
- Learner with learning difficulties
- Learner who has experienced a close family member’s death during the course
- Learner with English as a second language

Work and holiday commitments are not considered to be extenuating circumstances.

4.2.5 Deferral of Assessments

Learners may seek a deferral of assessment by submitting by email a “Request for Deferral of Assessments” to the registrar. Any supporting documentation such as medical certificates should be attached. Deferrals are granted at the sole discretion of the Registrar, having referred to the list of acceptable reasons for deferral (eg. illness, supported by a medical certificate, death or serious illness of a family member).

4.2.6 Consistency of Marking between Lecturers

Procedures are in place to ensure the fair and consistent marking across all assessments by all internal examiners. Internal examiners are members of the lecturing staff and are appointed by the Registrar to evaluate learner’s achievements during assessments. In the case of HETAC programmes the internal examiners are the lecturers on that programme. All internal examiners receive guidelines outlining marking by internal examiners, assessment schedules, grading criteria, weighting criteria and relevant marking and solution schemes. Assessments are corrected in accordance with internal assessment marking guidelines.

Internal examiners must ensure and report to the Head of Department that the following criteria have been met:

- Provide and make available to Head of Department, Internal Moderator and External Examiner draft assessments together with appropriate marking schemes and worked solutions and or/ assignment briefs with quantitative marking schemes
- All assessments adequately examine the learning outcomes and that this is clearly recorded on the draft assessment cover sheet
- A range of assessment styles are used and match the level of knowledge being assessed
- Ensure the marking and weighting criteria is appropriate to the assessment level and learning outcomes being tested
- Ensure that the varying levels of learner abilities are considered when devising assessments
- Ensure that the language used is appropriate and correct and assessment instructions are clear, correct and appropriate
- Ensure that an appropriate feedback method is in place to provide feedback to the learner on his/her performance in the assessment
- Be available during the assessment period to respond to any queries that may arise, in the rare event that there is something ambiguous in the assessment.
- Take into consideration the various grading levels including the minimum pass mark when assessing learner scripts and that marks awarded are in line with the marking scheme devised and approved for the assessment
- Evaluate assessments in an objective and transparent manner and in the context of the approved marking solutions and schemes

- Return all marked assessments and results within the time specified to the Examinations Officer.
- Assessments should indicate clearly the marks awarded to each part of the assessment in red. Any comments for the learner to be written on the front cover sheet in the space provided. All writing must be legible and feedback must be encouraging and motivating with examples given, where appropriate. Commentary must be restricted to the criteria of the assessment and the marking scheme
- Be available to attend and participate at Examination Board meetings relevant to the Internal Examiner
- Submit an Internal Examiner's Report detailing the validity, reliability and standard of the assessment. Any proposed changes, with justification for same, should be included. Learner feedback should be considered when drafting this report.
- Be available to carry out re-check of assessments, meet with learners, if requested to do so by Course Director, attend Examination Appeals meetings, if requested

An internal moderator is a member of the lecturing team and is appointed by the Registrar. His/her role is to support and evaluate drafting of assessments, respective marking schemes and ensure marking schemes of HETAC programmes are adhered to. The internal moderator also monitors examination scripts to ensure that marking is fair and consistent. This is done as follows:

- Mark a sample of assessments prior to the Internal Examiners to ensure validity of marking schemes. Suggest and agree changes, if necessary, with Internal Examiner and Head of Department following the sample marking.
- A sample of 15% of the total end of term assessments, where results fall in the lower or higher category of a grade, is moderated by the internal moderator to ensure fair and consistent marking standards are adhered to across all internal examiners.
- An internal moderation report is compiled taking into consideration the evaluation of examination papers, congruence of marking of solutions with marking schemes and assessment method in the context of the learning outcomes. This report is discussed with head of department and registrar with necessary changes agreed for future assessments.

The External Examiner oversees the duties of the internal moderator and further ensures consistency of marking between internal examiners through review of the internal moderation report, draft examination papers, worked solutions and marking schemes. External examiners may suggest deletions, additions and/or amendments to assessments, worked solutions and marking schemes as they deem appropriate. The external examiner signs the Return of Assessment Marks Form to show agreement with the marks attained by learners during the assessment process.

4.2.7 Compiling of Marks

Assessment marks and scripts must be returned to the Examinations Officer within 10 days of receipt of assessments together with the Return of Assessment Marks Form. Internal examiners must have

concern for clarity and accuracy in calculating marks and completing the Return of Assessment Marks Form. This form must also be signed off by the external examiner.

This form details each candidate, allocation of marks per assessment, overall total of marks achieved and grade awarded. All marks are considered to be provisional until ratified by the Examinations board.

The Examinations Officer issues this form to the administrator, who inputs the results onto the college MIS "Academy". This is completed, where possible, a minimum of 2 weeks in advance of examination board meetings, but this is not always possible for HETAC programmes.

The Heads of Department oversee the administration of the "Examination Board Results Approval Report" for discussion at the examinations board meeting. This is distributed to attending members of the FETAC examinations board 2 days prior to the scheduled meeting. For HETAC Examination Board Meetings copies of the examination broadsheets of results are only distributed during the meeting and are returned to the chair of the meeting, for shredding, before the end of the meeting.

4.2.8 The Examinations Board Meetings

The examinations board meet three times a year in February, June and September and the board comprises of the registrar, heads of department, course directors and relevant internal and external examiners. The examinations board also meet on an ad hoc basis to review any appeals lodged.

- The examinations board reviews and agrees the final results compiled
- All decisions by the examinations board are taken by majority vote. In the event that there is an equality of votes, the registrar will have the casting vote.
- In the event of disagreement by an examiner to a vote, this opinion is recorded in the minutes of the meeting and brought to the attention of the Academic Council and or relevant awarding body. The decision of the awarding body will be considered to be final in relation to any dissenting examiner votes.
- Extensive and candid discussion should take place on any borderline cases and final decisions should be made on the basis of collective decision of the examinations board members.
- A review and discussion of statistical evidence, such as the average marks achieved, highest and lowest marks achieved etc. from the assessment, takes place to identify any issues that may have arisen in individual assessments and possible causes of these issues
- The overall quality of the assessment is discussed as part of the assessment review. The internal moderator reports, where appropriate, are considered as are the external examiners reports.
- Any examination appeals or extenuating circumstances are discussed, reviewed and decided upon by the examinations board.
- Any breach of examination regulations are reported and decided upon by the board.
- The "Examination Board Results Approval Report" or "Broadsheet of Results" is signed by all members of the examinations board. This is then issued to the Academic Council and relevant awarding body by the registrar for final ratification.

- As a result of the meeting of the Examination Board members, an “Examinations Board Report” is drawn up and submitted to the Academic Council for consideration at the end of the academic year.

4.2.9 Notification of results

All results are usually issued to learners in writing within four weeks of the assessment dates and end of year results are available within two days of the Examinations Board Meeting.

- Results sheets include assessment feedback from internal examiners.
- All learners are invited to an assessment feedback class session held by the lecturer within 5 working days of the results being published.
- Learners are given five working days by which they may request an individual feedback session with their course lecturer to discuss their results and any relevant commentary. This is done by completing the “Request for Individual Feedback Form” and submitting via email to the Course Director. The individual feedback meeting date will take into consideration the availability of the lecturer, learners, attendance of the assessment feedback class session and the time frame of the appeals process.
- Lecturers may request the learner’s assessment script/assignment from the Course Director for the individual feedback session. This may only be collected on the date of the meeting and must be returned the same day.

4.2.10 Appeals

A learner who feels that his/her work has been marked unfairly, may appeal a result by filling out the appeals form within two weeks of the date of receiving the assessment result or within 7 days of receiving the results of HETAC end of year examinations and submitting this by email to the Examinations Officer.

Prior to submitting an appeal, learners must discuss their results with the appropriate staff and feedback must be given so that the learner may understand the context of the result attained. Appeals may only be submitted by the learner involved and following the individual feedback consultation process.

Learners may request a re-check whereby the calculation of the mark issued is re-checked to ensure accuracy or they may request a review whereby an assessment or part of an assessment is remarked.

The appeals form is submitted to the Examinations Officer who will take a record of the date of receipt.

4.2.10.1 Procedures for a Re-check

- The Examinations Officer cross-checks that the correct result has been issued by examining the assessment material and any calculations involved.
- The learner shall be informed in writing of the outcome of the re-check process. Where an error has been made, the correct result will be issued.

4.2.10.2 Procedures for a Review

Learners must include on the Appeals Form all the information they wish to be taken into consideration when applying for a review. This includes the part or parts of the assessment to be reviewed and the reasons for the request. Any supporting documentation should accompany the Appeals Form.

These are the procedures in the case of a review:

- The appeals form with any supporting documentation is passed to the Head of Department, who will meet with the Registrar to discuss the validity of the appeal and whether to grant the review.
- The grounds for a review normally fall under the following headings:
 - a. Portobello Institute has failed to implement the examination regulations
 - b. The learner's situation falls outside the parameters of the examination regulations
 - c. Medical or compassionate circumstances prevailed of which the college was aware of but the examinations board were not
- The Examinations Board is informed that there is an appeal in process.
- The Examination Appeals Committee meets to discuss the review request. This committee consists of the Registrar, Head of Department, Course Director and relevant Internal Examiner. The learner shall have the opportunity to appear before the Examinations Appeal Committee.
- The Examination Appeals Committee shall reach its decision by majority vote. In the case of a tied vote, the registrar shall have the deciding vote.
- The Academic Council and the Examinations Board shall be informed of the outcome of the Appeal.
- The outcome of the review will be deemed final and the learner will be informed in writing.

4.2.11 Role of the Examinations Officer

The general examination regulations relate to all assessments that take place leading to an award on a Portobello Institute programme. While the Registrar has overall responsibility for the conduct of examinations, the Examinations Officer is responsible for the day to day issues. Any changes to the examination regulations must be approved by the Registrar and the Examinations Board. The Examinations Officer must ensure the following procedures are followed:

- All examination entries are securely processed and recorded
- Invigilation processes are adhered to
- The guidelines for the preparation of assessments are followed
- Assessment timetables are made available to all stakeholders in a timely manner
- Assessment regulations are available and issued to all stakeholders
- Arrangements are in place for learners with extenuating circumstances
- Ensure internal examiners follow guidelines for preparation of assessments
- Ensure all prepared assessment packs are submitted 10 days prior to assessment date
- Assessment scripts are marked by internal and external examiners

- Accurate records of all assessments are maintained
- Results are processed as per the guidelines for compiling marks
- All results are available for the Examinations Board to review in a timely manner
- Timely communication of outcome of Examinations Board Meetings to the Academic Council

4.2.12 Assessment Preparation and Security

The Registrar has overall responsibility for ensuring the timely preparation of assessments, however Course Directors have the responsibility for the coordinated planning and organisation of assessments. Assessments are prepared in accordance with the following procedures and guidelines:

- All learners receive the guidelines pertaining to assessments in the learners' handbook given to them at the start of the course. This includes assessment schedules giving details of timings and locations. A reminder giving confirmation details is issued to learners by email 6 weeks prior to end of year assessments and 3 weeks prior to all other assessments.
- The location of assessments must be suitable for the assessment type and number of learners being assessed.
- The HR department must be notified of the number of invigilators required, based on the assessment type and number of learners involved.
- All master copies of assessment materials must be checked.
- Assessment packs must include invigilator certificates, invigilator guidelines, assessment guidelines, instructions for candidates, assessment materials and answer scripts, assessment front cover sheets. These packs must be prepared a minimum of 10 days prior to the assessment date and be retained in the assessment materials secure storage unit.
- The examinations officer must be informed in a timely manner of the schedule of assessments including detail on assessment type, location, timing and learner numbers.
- The security and integrity of assessments is of paramount importance and is maintained by ensuring assessments are handled and produced by a minimum number of people.
- Where assessments are produced by external awarding bodies, the Examinations Officer is responsible for the secure retention and distribution of these assessments.
- The Examinations Officer has the responsibility for direct distribution of assessment packs to invigilators 30 minutes prior to on-site assessment locations and 3 days prior to off-site assessment locations.

4.2.13 Role and Responsibilities of the Internal Examiner

Internal Examiners are appointed from the college's lecturing staff. In the case of HETAC courses, the lecturers are the internal examiners. Details of the roles and responsibilities of the Internal Examiner are included in Appendix 4 (page 72).

4.2.14 Role and Responsibilities of External Examiners

4.2.14.1 Selection process

External examiners are nominated by Heads of Department, selected by the Registrar and recommended for appointment by the Examinations Board, with final approval of appointments made by the Academic Council. Heads of Department must nominate a greater number of candidates than vacancies exist to ensure maximum choice and objectivity in the selection process.

External examiners drawn from academia must hold a minimum of a qualification at a level above that which they will examine i.e. Level 8 honours degree if examining level 7 ordinary degree. They must also hold recent relevant experience in teaching and assessing at a third level institution or with relevant industry or professional experience.

Appointments are considered in the context of the ability of the external examiner to assess the full range of modules across the programme.

The strategic development of the department is also taken into consideration when appointing an external examiner.

Candidates employed by Portobello Institute within the previous 5 years will be deemed ineligible to apply as external examiners.

When the Academic Council approves the appointment of a candidate to the position of external examiner, a letter of appointment together with appropriate contract is issued from the HR department. The term of office is normally for 3 years. There may be a possibility to extend the contract for a further term of 3 years. An external examiner cannot then be re-appointed for a period of at least 6 years.

The number of external examiners appointed depends on the assessment of awards being fairly and consistently assessed and ensuring that the performance of the learner can be moderated in its entirety.

Following appointment, the Registrar will ensure the External Examiner receives all necessary documentation and is familiar with the operational structure of the college and the requirements of the position.

4.2.14.2 Role of the External Examiner

The main role of the external examiner is as follows:

- Oversee the work of the Internal Examiner
- Ensure the integrity of the assessment process
- Ensure results are awarded fairly and impartially
- Monitor academic content and standards and ensure these are on par with best practice in Ireland and internationally.
- Membership of the Examinations Board

- Guidance and advice on new programme submissions and existing programme evaluations
- Guidance and advice on the evaluation of the effectiveness of quality assurance policies and procedures.

4.2.14.3 Responsibilities of the External Examiner

Details of the responsibilities of the External Examiner are outlined in Appendix 5 (page 73).

4.2.15 Exam Regulations

Exam regulations are issued to all stakeholders by the examinations officer. The term examination should be interpreted to include all types of oral, aural and written assessments, assignment work, project work, dissertation work and any other type of assessment approved by the college to be an assessment of the learner's performance in a programme of study.

4.2.15.1 Exam Regulations for Candidates

All learners are issued with a Learner Handbook incorporating detailed Examination Regulations at the start of each academic year. It is their responsibility to ensure they are familiar with the regulations. Details of these regulations are included in Appendix 6 (page 75).

4.2.15.2 Procedures for dealing with Breaches of Examination Regulations

In the event that a learner is found to be in breach of the Examination Regulations, the following procedures occur:

During actual assessment

- Any breach of examination regulations by candidates during assessments shall be brought to the attention of the candidate at the time. The learner is informed that a suspected breach of examination regulations has occurred and that the incident is going to be reported to the Examinations Officer.
- The learner is allowed to finish the assessment.
- Any suspect evidence is collected and a report is drawn up by the Invigilator and submitted to the Examinations Officer at the end of the assessment.
- The matter is investigated during which time, the learner, together with a representative, will be allowed to give his/her version of events during a meeting with the Disciplinary Committee.
- The Disciplinary Committee will take action as detailed in section 4.2.15.3

During marking of assessment

- If plagiarism or copying is suspected, the internal examiner will bring the matter to the attention of the examinations officer and this will be reported to the Disciplinary Committee who will take action as detailed in section 4.2.15.3

4.2.15.3 The Disciplinary Committee

- The Disciplinary Committee is appointed by the Academic Council and shall constitute the following members:
 - Registrar
 - 2 members of Academic council
 - Learner Representative
 - Examinations Officer to record details

In the event of the unavailability of any of the members of the disciplinary committee, members may nominate a substitute member

- In the event that a breach of examination regulations is suspected, the circumstances will be fully investigated by the Disciplinary Committee with a recommendation of penalty, if applicable, made to the Examinations Board. Penalties may, but are not limited to, include any of the following:
 - Reduction of Learner marks
 - Learner deemed not to have passed assessment
 - All assessments taken by the learner at the same sitting be deemed void
 - Other forms of assessment taken by the learner during the programme be deemed void
 - The learner should be suspended from the college for a period of time
- The outcome of the disciplinary meeting is made know to the Course Director and Head of Department immediately after it has been held.
- The Head of Department will inform the candidate of the outcome of the Disciplinary Committee meeting.
- The Examinations Board will make the final decision on any breaches of examination regulations and this decision must be ratified by the Academic Council.
- The candidate may appeal the decision to the Appeals Committee.

4.2.15.4 The Appeals Committee

The decision of the Examinations Board on any breaches of examination regulations may be appealed to the Appeals Committee.

- The Appeals Committee is appointed by the academic council and shall constitute the following members:
 - College Director
 - 2 members of Academic council, who did not sit on the Disciplinary Committee
 - Learner Representative, who sits on the Academic Council, but did not sit on the Disciplinary Committee
 - Examinations Officer to record details

In the event of the unavailability of the college director, she may nominate a substitute.

- A written appeal must be lodged within 10 working days of the final decision of the Examinations Board on a breach of examination regulations. The written appeal must be submitted by email to the Examinations Officer.
- The appeals committee will review the appeal. The candidate may be invited to attend with a representative to make his/her case.
- The Appeals committee will endeavour to reach a decision, if a breach of examination regulations has been made and the appropriate penalty imposed by majority vote. In the event that consensus cannot be reached, the College Director shall have the casting vote.
- The decision of the appeals committee is final, once ratified by the Academic Council.

4.2.15.5 Penalties

Where it is decided by the disciplinary committee, the appeals committee or the registrar to impose a penalty on a learner, they may choose one or a combination of penalties. The penalties available are set out as follows:

- The candidate is innocent of all charges - the examinations board will reconsider his/her assessment in the normal manner
- Issue a written warning to the candidate notifying him/her that he/she has been in breach of examination regulations
- Deem the candidate to have failed all or part of the assessments for the stage or year of the programme. The candidate will be informed when he/she may apply to re-take the assessment/s
- Suspend or expel a learner from the college
- Request the learner to complete additional work or attend additional lectures.
- Learners on HETAC programmes, who are found guilty of breaching examination regulations, will normally have all examinations/assessments deemed null and void for that stage of the programme and will not be allowed re-sit the examinations/assessments until at least one year has passed.

4.2.16 Role and Responsibilities of Invigilators

The number of invigilators is dependent on the type of assessment and number of learners taking the assessment. The HR department appoints invigilators and these are usually selected from a panel of invigilators recruited and trained for invigilation of end of year assessments.

The primary concern of the invigilator is to ensure the validity and integrity of the assessment and to ensure no inappropriate activities take place. It is the direct responsibility of the invigilator to ensure learners have the materials required, that no unfair advantages are afforded to any candidates and that invigilator certificates are completed in full. Instructions for invigilators are outlined in Appendix 7 (page 77).

4.2.17 Feedback to Learners

Procedures are in place to ensure learners are kept up to date with their progress and understand their performance in the context of the programme and level of award for which they are studying. Feedback should be positive, forward looking and task specific. Feedback can be qualitative or quantitative.

- Results of assessments or course assignments are given to the learner with a feedback form detailing strengths and areas for improvements with general comments, where appropriate.
- Full-time learners receive an end of term report detailing their progress to date. Included in this will be academic scores, placement report result and a general comment from either the Head of Department or the Course Director or the Main Course Lecturer. Full-time learners have a one-to-one meeting with the Main Course Lecturer, Course Director or the Head of Department once per term to discuss their progress on a practical and academic level. Any assessments, assignments, placement reports etc that have been returned during this time are discussed with the learner.
- Part-time learners are given appropriate feedback as it arises. Lecturers may request a learner to come to the college a ½ hr early to discuss his/her progress during the course or conversely a learner may request to meet a lecturer, course director or head of department at a time convenient to both parties. This meeting will be facilitated at any time during a learner's programme of study.

4.3 Procedures for ongoing Monitoring of Programmes

Portobello Institute has procedures in place to monitor the quality and standard of programmes in the context of current demands of industry, the learner's needs and the learning outcomes of the programmes. The standards being achieved by learners in the context of the level of the award and the knowledge progression path are monitored as are the delivery by lecturers, facilities of the college, appropriateness of the content, and assessments of the programme.

Programmes are evaluated through reports from the following:

- Learner evaluation of the programme
- Learner evaluation of assessments
- External examiner's report
- Internal examiner's report
- Examinations Board's report
- Programme evaluation survey
- Lecturer reports on subject/module appraisals by learners
- Staff survey
- Course Director's Programme Monitoring Report

4.3.1 Monitoring the Quality and Standards of Delivery, Facilities and Learner Feedback

The Course Director has the responsibility for the day to day management of the programme and on-going evaluation of the programme, the delivery of same and any operational issues, which may arise. This is achieved through regular consultations with learners and lecturers. Learners and lecturers are advised of the opportunity to comment objectively and anonymously on programme appraisal forms via the college website at any time. Structured procedures for monitoring occur as follows:

Learner evaluation of the programme

- Learner appraisal forms are drafted seeking feedback on communications, resources, services, teaching standards and programme content. Learners are requested to complete these during week 8 and 16 of the programme. This can be done via paper collection or on-line.
- The quantitative and qualitative data obtained from these surveys is reported by the Course Director to the Head of Department, who reviews the results with the individual lecturers involved.
- Course Directors meet focus groups of learners once per term and provide a platform for open discussion on the quality of the programme including content, assessment methods, delivery methods, facilities, learner support and services. Course Directors form reports as a result of these meetings and issue them to the Head of Department and Programme Team.
- Course Director Feedback reports arising from learner appraisals and focus group consultations are delivered to the Head of Department by the Course Director. A record is retained in the programme records of appraisals, consultations and subsequent feedback discussions.
- Outcomes of appraisals and consultation meetings are discussed during programme team meetings held once per term. Minutes of these meetings and programme records are retained and are available for review by external examiners and during the self-evaluation process.
- An improvement plan is put in place. Short term issues are addressed immediately and monitored for effectiveness. Long term issues such as curriculum development are discussed with a longer ranging improvement plan put in place and the item placed on the agenda for the programme review meeting held at the end of the programme.
- The Course Director monitors the outcomes to ensure intended short terms adjustments occur and are effective.
- The Head of Department is responsible for ensuring longer term issues are addressed and resolved.

Learner evaluation of assessments

- Learners are invited to evaluate assessments immediately after they have taken place and towards the end of the programme
- Post assessment evaluation takes the form of a short open-ended questionnaire providing the learner with the opportunity to comment on the strengths and weaknesses of the assessment.
- These are available by request from the invigilator and submitted to the course director.

- During focus group meetings, assessments are a topic for discussion and learners are invited to discuss and comment on individual modules, the assessment used and the extent to which it assisted their learning. Learners are also asked to discuss the quality of the assessment briefs, feedback from assessments, time frames and any other issues they feel may be relevant.
- Collected data is discussed at examination board meetings and assists with decisions on the validity of the assessment. This is recorded as an attachment with minutes of the examination board meeting and presented as part of the programme director's report to the academic council at the end of the year.

External Examiner's Report

The External Examiner is appointed in accordance with the marks and standards and is required to submit a report following any assessment he/she has been involved with. Further details of this report are available under section 4.2.14.3. This report is used for on-going monitoring of assessments and the effectiveness of internal moderation systems, standard of programme and identification of any issues relating to the development of the teaching, learning and assessment of learners.

Internal Examiner's Report

The internal examiner, upon completion of marking a set of assessments, compiles a report that is submitted to the Head of Department confirming that the assessment was valid, reliable and manageable. Proposed changes should be included with a rationale for the change. Learner feedback should be taken into consideration when drafting the report. This report is discussed at the Examination Board meetings.

Examinations Board Report

This report is presented at the final Academic Council meeting of the academic year and consists of recommendations made by the Examinations Board in relation to proposed changes to the programme's assessments, policies and procedures. These recommendations occur as a result of discussions on the alignment of assessments with intended learning outcomes, the extent to which different examiners award the same marks and the extent to which the assessment provided useful feedback to the learner. The Internal Examiner's Report, the External Examiner's Report and learner feedback are all considered while compiling this report. Deviations from the intended learning outcomes are identified with suggested corrective actions.

Programme Evaluation Survey

A survey is conducted seeking information from graduates regarding their career paths and plans for further study. This survey also seeks information from the graduate on how they would evaluate the course in terms of personal/professional aims and ambitions, value for money, strengths and weakness of the programme.

This survey is available on-line and graduates are sent an email requesting them to complete the survey. The information is analysed and the results are discussed at the Academic Council meeting.

Lecturer reports on subject/module appraisals by learners

Lecturers complete an end of term report demonstrating how feedback from learners was considered and acted upon. This report is submitted to the Course Director and makes up part of the Course Director's end of programme report. Specific information may be used as a rationale for curriculum changes for the following year.

Full Staff Survey

In January and May of each year, all staff are invited to participate in an on-line survey and to share their views on organisational and management issues. The second survey aims to review the actions taken as a result of the first survey and also elicits lecturers' views on issues relating to timetabling, time allocation, estimated learner effort, level of learner achievement, learning outcomes and recommendations.

This information is analysed and reported by the HR department to the Academic Council at the end of academic year meeting with suggestions for improvements based on the information from the staff survey.

Course Director's Programme Monitoring Report

Each Course Director prepares an evaluation report that focuses on the evaluation of the current curriculum and proposed changes for the coming year. The report outlines the extent to which the assessments measured the intended learning outcomes and the overall alignment of the modular learning outcomes with the programme goals. Feedback from a variety of sources is used in the preparation of this report and includes analysis of lecturer reports, programme evaluation surveys, full staff surveys, external examiners' reports, internal examiners' reports and recommendations from the examinations board. This report is submitted to the Head of Department who presents it to the Academic Council at the end of academic year meeting.

4.3.2 Monitoring of Programme Schedules

The procedures for monitoring programme schedules are as follows:

- Lecturers submit a monthly programme report to Course Directors. This report details the average standard being achieved by the specified group, the scheme of work completed to date, assessments completed to date, any resource requirements or recommendations and any critical issues requiring attention.
- Course Directors cross check lecturer monthly reports with programme schedules to ensure the programme is on schedule and that the completion of the learning outcomes and knowledge

progression paths are on target. If required, extra class time can be scheduled or assessments postponed depending on the criterion.

- Course Directors can identify recommendations made for any learners requiring extra support and put arrangements in place, as required. Any possible critical issues can be pre-empted and a proactive approach taken to resolve any difficulties that either lecturers or learners are experiencing.
- Course Directors are required to report any critical issues or deviations from planned schedules to Heads of Department and/or the Registrar immediately. The status of the programme in relation to the programme schedule is discussed during programme team meetings held once per term.
- Minutes of these meetings and programme records are retained and are available for review by external examiners.
- Course Directors are required to submit to Heads of Department and the Registrar an end of term report. Part of this report includes information confirming the status of the programme schedule in the context of work completed to date and assessments completed to date.

4.4 Procedures for Evaluation of each Programme at regular Intervals

While a mini evaluation of each programme is conducted on an annual basis, there is a major review done every five years. This major review can be carried out in less than the five years, should circumstances dictate that (changes in IT systems, changing demand in industry etc). What is of paramount importance is that the programme remains relevant and continues to fulfil the needs of the learners.

It is the responsibility of the Head of Department to conduct and report on the findings of the self-evaluation of programmes to the Academic Council. This report is prepared as follows:

- Programme lecturers, learners, graduates, industry representatives and other relevant stakeholders are invited to participate in the process through participation in on-line and paper surveys. A survey is drawn up by the marketing department for employers and career guidance teachers in terms of the appropriateness of the content and assessment of programmes in the context of the demands of industry and international best practice. Learners are requested to complete a questionnaire relating to their programme, college facilities, support services, quality assurance methods used etc. This information is collated by the marketing department into a report for further action and issued to the Head of Department. The parameters of these surveys are set by the Head of Department.
- Lecturers, administrative and ancillary staff are invited to a one day workshop where all aspects of the programmes, their content, delivery methods, learning outcomes, practical support services and the quality assurance methods used are discussed.
- International best practice is also discussed and recommendations from all elements of the workshop are noted. The workshop is conducted by the Head of Department and the Marketing Manager.

- A joint report from this workshop is compiled by the Head of Department and the Marketing Manager with further actions and recommendations detailed.
- The industry representatives are asked for feedback in relation to international best practice, programmes, content, delivery and appropriateness for industry demands. A report is compiled with findings from these discussions and issued to the Head of Department by the Marketing Manager.
- External Examiners are invited to review and make recommendations on the basis of the survey reports from employers, learners and lecturers.
- Copies of survey results, feedback reports, minutes of relevant meetings etc. are submitted to the programme evaluation committee for discussion and review. This committee includes the Head of Department(s), Registrar, representatives of the lecturing staff and an external expert.
- The programme evaluation committee, with the aid of all of the feedback reports, surveys etc., evaluates the programme taking the following into consideration:
 - Review of the programme content – what is still valid and what needs to be updated in light of developments over the five year period?
 - Review of the delivery of the programme – was the programme well delivered; could any improvements be made in this area?
 - Review of the assessment methods used in the programme – did they provide fair and consistent evaluation of the learners; are any changes needed to provide a more accurate assessment of the learners?
 - Review of the learning outcomes – how have the learning outcomes met the requirements of the learners over the five years; do the learning outcomes need to be adjusted in light of the current market place needs?
 - Review of facilities used and required for the programme – were there any deficiencies in the facilities required for the successful delivery of the programme; are any new facilities required to deliver the updated programme?
 - Review of staff involved in the delivery of the programme – were there any shortcomings involving the staff on the programme; will there be any different staffing requirements for the new programme?
 - Review of the demand for the programme over the five year period – did the demand go up or down; what was the cause of this; what changes need to be made to ensure a growth in demand over the next five year period?
 - Review of links with business and industry – what links were established over the last five years; what changes to the programme are needed, if any, to further expand and improve these links?
 - Review of all QA procedures in relation to the programme – were there any shortcomings in relation to the programme over the five years; what improvements are needed for the successful delivery of the new programme?
- Having considered all of the above, the programme evaluation committee draws up a revised programme.

- The revised programme is submitted to the Academic Council, who evaluates the submission on the basis of the needs of industry, international best practice, the learning outcomes of the programme and the level of award being issued.
- Following ratification from the Academic Council, the revised programme is submitted to HETAC for approval.
- Once approval has been granted, an action plan is developed and implementation of this action plan is the responsibility of the Head of Department. Any changes made are highlighted for Course Directors to monitor and report on during on-going monitoring of the next programme.
- The Head of Department reports back to the Academic Council on the effectiveness of the changes made to a programme.

4.5 Procedures for Selection, Appointment and Appraisal of Staff

4.5.1 General Selection Procedures

Portobello Institute has a comprehensive set of procedures to ensure that all staff have the appropriate skills to fulfil the role they are being recruited for. The procedures for the general selection and appointment of staff are as follows:

- A job description is drawn up in conjunction with the relevant Head of Department, Registrar and/or Manager.
- The position is advertised internally on the college web-site and on other recruitment websites.
- Candidates are screened and selected based on the suitability of their qualifications, experience and other pertinent information to fulfil the position required.
- A full record of all candidates, who applied for the position, is retained together with details of the screening process used.
- First round interviews are held by the HR department with a full record of the interview recorded and retained on the candidate's file.
- Second round interviews are held by the relevant Head of Department, Registrar and/or manager and external consultant with expertise in the subject area being recruited for. The HR department is informed of the successful candidate after ratification from the Academic Council
- Successful candidates are contacted by email with a job offer confirming the position, salary, contract terms etc.
- Unsuccessful candidates are notified in writing

A full manual "Portobello Institute HR Policies and Practices – June 2008" detailing all the HR policies of the college is available.

4.5.2 Lecturer selection

All lecturers are required to have a minimum academic qualification, depending on programme criteria, and 3-5 years industry experience. Candidates called for interview will initially be interviewed by the HR department. Candidates will be required to make a presentation on the subject on which they are

applying to lecture. A standard interview format is used with all candidates to ensure fair opportunity is given to all candidates. A variety of scenarios will be put to each candidate to test his/her skills in programme delivery, dealing with difficult learners, motivating learners etc. Suitability to deliver a programme of lectures will be established at the first round of interviews and candidates, who are requested to return for a second interview, will be interviewed by the Head of Department, Registrar and external consultant. During the second interview, a candidate's depth of knowledge and experience will be tested again using a standard format to ensure all candidates are given a fair opportunity.

4.5.3 Head of Department Selection

Candidates for the role of Head of Department must have a relevant academic qualification, a minimum of 3-5 years industry experience and a minimum of 3 years lecturing experience. A process similar to that of lecturer selection is used with emphasis being put on the team leadership skills etc. The second round interview will be with the Registrar, College Director and external consultant.

4.5.4 Internal Allocation

Where appropriate, vacancies are filled internally. A circular with vacancies and recruitment criteria is circulated and put up on the staff notice board and the college website. Positions are allocated on the basis of seniority, experience and proven track record.

4.5.5 Induction

The induction procedures for staff are as follows:

- All new staff receive a college prospectus, handbook and induction training. The handbook includes information on the organisation, equality policy, ethos of the college, health and safety, general staff guidelines, appraisal and evaluation procedures, appeals procedures etc.
- All staff are given induction training on the day they commence. This includes a short history of the college and the various courses running, the organisational chart, equality procedures, health and safety procedures, training guidelines, examination guidelines, Director's availability, programme content and delivery guidelines.
- Staff receive specific job training for the position they are expected to fill from their line manager during the first week. Depending on the role, on-going mentoring takes place over the initial 3 – 6 months.
- A record of staff attendance at induction training is retained on each member's HR file.

4.5.6 Staff Training and Development

The on-going professional and personal development of the staff of Portobello Institute, within the budgets available, is a priority. Staff training must meet the needs of enhancing the delivery of the college's services and furthering the strategic development of the college's goals. The college hold "Train the Trainer" workshops before the commencement of each academic year and all lecturing staff are required to attend annually. Other ad hoc seminars are held on an on-going basis and relevant staff are encouraged to attend.

A coaching programme is in place for all administration and management staff to support and improve their soft skills in team leadership, conflict management etc.

All staff are required to attend equality training and relevant elements of health and safety training annually.

The general procedures in place for staff training and development are as follows:

- The HR manager is allocated a training and development budget on an annual basis.
- A training plan is developed, with the budget allocated between mandatory training (such as fire safety, occupational first aid etc) to meet the needs of legislation and then also training to further develop staff members to meet the demands of their roles in line with the strategic needs of the college.
- All staff training and development is recorded on the employees' files.
- Feedback is sought from all participants and line managers. The effectiveness of staff training and development is reviewed and the allocation of resources is assessed through on-line and paper feedback, open consultation etc. The outcome of this review forms part of the HR Manager's report to the College Director annually during June.

4.5.7 Staff Appraisals

Portobello Institute has in place a performance management system for all staff. The objective of the system is to help staff manage their own performance and development and in doing so help the college reach its strategic goals. These are the general procedures:

- All staff attend appraisal meetings twice annually with their line manager - an annual appraisal meeting followed up by a six month review.
- Feedback provided by a variety of stakeholders including learners, peers and line managers is discussed.
- Training and development needs are also discussed and a plan implemented, where appropriate.
- Staff members are encouraged to take responsibility for their performance and to implement any feedback for improvement given. On-going support is provided by line managers.
- All appraisal meetings are documented and records are retained on employees' files.

4.5.8 Review of HR Policies

HR policies on the selection, appointment and appraisal of staff are reviewed annually to ensure they are effective, compliant with employment legislation and that best practice is implemented in the management and motivation of staff at all levels. This is done as follows:

- Evidence is sought through review of staff feedback, appraisal meetings, review of training plans and effectiveness of same.

- This is conducted by the HR Manager during June of each year and reported to the College Director in the HR Annual Report. Methods used for gathering staff satisfaction levels, training and development needs include on-line surveys of staff, focus group meetings and information resulting from bi-annual appraisal meetings.

4.6 Procedures for Evaluating Premises, Equipment and Facilities

Procedures are in place to ensure that the necessary resources and requirements needed for the successful delivery and achievement of the learning outcomes by lecturing staff and learners are available.

4.6.1 Coordinated Planning of Resources

The procedures in place for the coordinated planning of resources are as follows:

- Budgets are allocated on an annual basis for each department.
- The Head of Department takes responsibility for ensuring materials and resources directly related to programmes in the department are available for the effective delivery of the programme.
- A budget is allocated to the Operations Manager for the purposes of improving and maintaining premises, equipment and facilities.
- Prior to the commencement of programmes, resource requirements are noted during programme planning meetings and the Operations Manager is informed to ensure booking, sourcing and availability of same.
- In the case of books, an annual budget is allocated to each department. Heads of Department can use this budget to request a listing of books for use by learners in the library.

4.6.2 Procedures for Evaluation of Premises, Equipment and Facilities

Portobello Institute is committed to obtaining feedback in all areas including the evaluation of premises equipment and facilities. The procedures for doing this are as follows:

Physical Environment and Maintenance

- Learner and lecturer appraisals are completed during week 8 and 16 of a programme. These seek information on the suitability of the environment for the provision of lectures on the programme. Cleanliness, temperature, canteen facilities etc are evaluated during these appraisals.
- Outcomes and recommendations of appraisals are reviewed by the Operations Manager and, where appropriate and where department budgets allow, extra resources may be procured and an improvement plan put in place, where necessary.
- Weekly maintenance audits are carried out by the Operations Manager to ensure all premises, equipment and facilities meet the day to day operational requirements.

- Monthly health and safety audits are carried out by the Operations Manager to ensure all premises, equipment and facilities meet the requirements of the health and safety statement.
- The health and safety statement is reviewed by an external expert on an annual basis and all fire equipment is inspected and upgraded as per the requirements of the health and safety statement. This is the responsibility of the Operations Manager.
- The Operations Manager reports to the Academic Council at the end of the academic year on the suitability of the premises, effectiveness of the facilities and services available to staff and learners. Recommendations for improvements are made within this report and the Academic Council have responsibility for deciding to implement or defer implementation of these recommendations. These decisions will be made in the context of the importance of the proposed improvements to the effective delivery of the programme and experience of the learner and of budgetary restrictions.

Information Technology

- The IT technicians carry out on-going maintenance on computers and servers to ensure that optimum performance of these services is available for staff and learners. Any critical issues are reported to the Operations Manager.
- Learner and lecturer appraisals are completed during week 8 and 16 of a programme. These seek information on the availability and suitability of IT services both from the learner's and the lecturer's perspective.
- Staff are surveyed on an annual basis for their opinion of the College MIS. They are asked for feedback on the suitability of and suggestions for improvements to the "Academy"
- Outcomes and recommendations of appraisals are discussed with the Operations Manager and at programme team meetings at the end of term and, where appropriate, extra resources may be procured.
- Recommendations for improvements to computer equipment, website services, alternative software etc are made in a report to the Academic Council. The Academic Council decides whether to pursue the options outlined in this report.

Course Specific Equipment

- Heads of Department conduct an end of year review with Course Directors of the effectiveness and availability of resources, equipment and services available.
- A review of course material including learner information handbooks, the college website, brochures and other learner services is also carried out at this time by the Head of Department and the Marketing Manager.
- Learner and lecturer appraisals and consultations carried out during the academic year form the basis of establishing the effectiveness of all department and college resources, equipment and services.

- This is reported to the Academic Council at the end of the academic year and the Academic Council will decide on and allocate budgets for any proposed improvements or additions to resources, equipment and services.

Library

- Heads of Department conduct an end of year review with Course Directors of availability and suitability of books and services available in the college's library.
- Learner and lecturer appraisals and consultations carried out during the academic year form the basis for establishing the effectiveness of the library service.
- This is reported to the Academic Council at the end of the academic year and the Academic Council will decide on and allocate budgets for any proposed improvements or additions to the library.

4.6.3 Procedures for Evaluating other Services

Procedures are in place to ensure all services are evaluated and reported to the Academic Council at the end of the academic year.

Learner Support Services and Materials

- A review of course material including learner information handbooks, the college website, brochures and other learner services is carried out at the end of the academic year by the Marketing Manager.
- Methods used to communicate with Learners are reviewed to ensure effectiveness and suitability e.g. text messaging versus email.
- Learner and lecturer appraisals and consultations carried out during the academic year form the basis of establishing the effectiveness of communication methods and learner support services.
- This is reported to the Academic Council at the end of the academic year by the Marketing Manager and Heads of Department and the Academic Council will decide on and allocate budgets for any proposed improvements or additions to resources and services.

Administration Procedures

- The heads of each department with the Operations, HR and Marketing Managers conduct a review meeting of the effectiveness of administrative procedures including the maintenance of learner records, processing examinations and results, non academic administrative support such as processing visa requests, processing receipts etc.
- Learner and lecturer appraisals and consultations carried out during the academic year form the basis of establishing the effectiveness of the administration service.
- During this meeting, learner and lecturer inductions are discussed, the effectiveness of communication processes with learners such as email, web text, phone etc. and the availability,

suitability and effectiveness of support services such as the library, canteen facility, other programme specific supports are reviewed.

- A report is compiled with comments and recommendations and this is presented to the Academic Council at the end of academic year meeting.
- An annual review of the software used to operate the administrative services and computer services available is carried out by the IT department and reported to the Academic Council at the end of the year. Recommendations for improvements to computer equipment, website services, alternative software etc. are made in this report and the Academic Council decide whether to pursue the options outlined in the report.

4.7 Procedures for Access, Transfer and Progression and Recognition of Prior Learning

Eligibility criteria for gaining entry to programmes run in Portobello Institute is clearly outlined in course brochures and on the college website. The following procedures apply to admission and processing of applications:

4.7.1 Admissions Procedures – Direct Application to the college

- Learner applies directly to college with relevant deposit of fees
- Application entered on MIS Academy, student ID granted and application processed by Admissions office within 2 working days of receipt of application
- Learner informed of acceptance on course in writing within 2 working days of receipt of application with information on start date, venue, tutor etc included
- Where a student is waiting for Leaving Certificate results, before a decision can be made on his/her acceptance, his/her application is accepted pending results and the student is told that his/her place can only be confirmed when the results are forwarded to the college.

4.7.2 Admissions Procedures – Direct application to college, admission based on interview

- Learner applies directly to college
- Interview time allocated within 10 days and applicant is informed
- Interview conducted by Course Director. All details and feedback are recorded on the standard Interview Form and attached to application. Outcome is recorded
- Application returned to admissions office within 2 working days of interview
- Applicant informed of the outcome of the interview and, if invited to accept a place on a course, has 10 days to return “Acceptance Form” with relevant deposit of fees
- When “Acceptance Form” is received with relevant deposit, application is entered on MIS Academy, student ID granted and application processed by Admissions office within 2 working days of receipt of application
- Learner informed of acceptance on course in writing with information on start date, venue, tutor etc included

4.7.3 Recognition of Prior Learning

Where a learner seeks recognition of prior learning, RPL, that may exempt him/her from part of the qualification, it is the learner's responsibility to provide documentary proof that the qualification or part thereof has been obtained. The following procedure takes approximately 4 weeks to complete:

- Learner submits "Application for Recognition of Prior Learning". This must be accompanied by the following documentation:
 - Title of award/qualification for which the exemption is sought
 - The name and code of the modules for which the exemption is sought
 - The Institute where the certified learning was undertaken
 - The dates and duration of study
 - The mode of study
 - Details of learning outcomes, syllabus content, assessments, marks achieved
 - Proof of successfully completing the certified learning or part thereof.

- This application will be forwarded to the RPL team – a sub-committee of the Examinations Board. Its membership consists of the Head of Department, an Internal Examiner and an External Examiner and it is responsible for the following:
 - Determining if exemption should be granted in the case of recognition of prior certified learning
 - Determining the level of specific credit and the exemptions to be awarded to a learner in the case of a submission for RPL
 - Forwarding to the External examiner and examinations board a statement detailing the number of credits, which are recommended for award at each level
 - Ensuring that the integrity of the academic standard of the award is observed

The Head of Department is responsible for:

- Co-ordinating all aspects of the RPL process
- Communicating on behalf of the RPL team with the learner

The Internal Examiner is a member of the academic staff with subject expertise in the area of the submission and has responsibilities as follows:

- Examining the documentation, or other material, which has been presented and interviews the learner
- Establishes whether academic learning has taken place and ensures that it is current
- Present to the RPL team the recommended credits/exemptions to be awarded. These are subject to ratification by the Examinations Board.

The External Examiner will not always be directly involved in the RPL process. In straightforward cases, where his/her expertise is not required, the recommendations will be forwarded to him/her. In cases,

where his/her expertise is required, his responsibilities will be the same as those of the Internal Examiner.

The Examinations Board

All recommendations of the RPL team have to be ratified by the Examinations Board. Full details of credits/exemptions are then formally entered on the learner's record.

Appeals

An appeal may be submitted only if the learner believes there has been material irregularity in the processing of his/her application. All such appeals must be made in writing to the College Director.

4.7.4 Procedures for Transfer and Progression to Further Studies

- It is the responsibility of the Heads of Department and Course Directors to have a full understanding of the transfer and progression routes from programmes in Portobello Institute to those offered by other institutions.
- When new courses are being developed, it is borne in mind what courses the students will be able to transfer to upon completion of their studies in Portobello Institute.
- When prospective students enquire about courses at Portobello Institute, not only is the course explained to them, but they are also told where the course leads.
- During their studies, learners are invited to discuss progression routes with Course Directors during term tutorials. Requests for further information can also be communicated by email to Course Directors and/or Heads of Department.
- Students wishing to transfer to other institutions are given guidance on which course might best suit their needs and also how to go about applying to transfer/enrol at the other institution.

4.8 Procedures for Evaluating the Effectiveness of Quality Assurance Policies and Procedures

While policies and procedures are monitored and evaluated on an on-going basis, Portobello Institute has in place procedures to ensure a full self-evaluation of the college and its quality assurance procedures (4.1 – 4.7 above) is carried out on a 3 yearly basis initially. In time this will change to a 5 yearly basis. The self-evaluation committee is constituted of the following members:

- Representatives from the Academic Council
- Registrar
- Heads of Department
- Course Directors
- Staff Representatives
- Learners Representatives
- External Examiners
- External Experts

Examination of action plans, modifications to the quality assurance system and implementation of new policies and procedures forms part of the review undertaken by the above committee. Identifying and reviewing any subsequent issues that arose and the reasons for these will give understanding as to how quality procedures failed and the need to improve to protect against future repeat occurrences. Quality assurance policies will also be reviewed to ensure relevance to any changes in industry, trends or legislation. External examiners and external awarding body audit reports are reviewed for the period and any recommendations implemented or discounted are reviewed for significance on quality assurance policies and procedures.

Some of the questions asked during the review of quality assurances policies and procedures include the following:

- Is there a quality ethos imbedded in all policies and procedures throughout the college? If not, what needs to be done to rectify this?
- Are all policies and procedures in keeping with national and international standards?
- Are accurate records kept of the implementation of all policies and procedures?
- How successful has the ongoing monitoring of quality assurance been?
- Where deficiencies have been found, what corrective action has been taken?
- What follow-up takes place when corrective action is implemented?
- Is relevant information passed on to stakeholders? Is this done in a timely fashion?

A quality assurance policies and procedures review report is issued by the Registrar and presented to the Academic Council outlining policies and procedures that are effective, those that are proving unsuccessful in their aims and suggested recommendations for improving and implementing new policies and procedures. The Academic Council decide on the recommendations, the Registrar amends the quality assurance document and ensures all relevant parties receive an updated version highlighting any changes that have occurred. Where necessary, training days/workshops are held to inform and train staff on the implementation of new policies and procedures. Where appropriate, approval will be sought from HETAC for any changes to the policies and procedures of the quality assurance system.

Appendix 1 Guidelines for New Programme Development and Evaluation

1.1 Aims

The Evaluation of a New Programme is concerned with the total design and proposed implementation of the programme with particular reference to its aims and learning outcomes, subject content, facilities required and staff deployment.

1.2 Objectives

1.2.1 Evaluate the aims and general learning outcomes of the programme in the context of the relevant HETAC standard.

1.2.2 Evaluate the learning experience to be provided in terms of learning outcomes, syllabus content, teaching methods, and curriculum.

1.2.3 Evaluate the assessment instruments proposed and ensure they are in line with HETAC policy on fair and standard compliant assessment of learners.

1.2.4 Evaluate the curricula vitae of academic staff to be deployed in teaching the course.

1.2.5 Evaluate the physical facilities being provided.

1.2.6 Assess whether the processes in place for access, transfer and progression are in line with the policies of HETAC and the NQAI.

1.3 Proposed Programme Document

The Proposed Programme Document should contain detailed information on the proposed educational programme as follows:

1.3.1 Aims and General Learning Outcomes

This section should consist of a general statement of intent relating to the goal of the programme of learning, with particular reference to career/employment related applications.

1.3.2 Learning Experience and Assessment

1.3.3 Learning Outcomes

The decisions on the goals of a programme of learning in the form of a statement of detailed outcomes can be a most important step, as the definition of the outcomes can be used to guide the construction of the whole programme.

1.3.4 Syllabus

This should consist of a description of the content of the programme of learning.

1.3.5 Teaching/Learning Methodologies

A description of the methods and materials to be used in the programme of learning.

1.3.6 Assessment Methodologies and Instruments

This should consist of a description of the techniques to be used to measure the degree to which the learning outcomes have been realised e.g., assignments, objective tests, final examinations, open book examinations, oral/aural examinations, continuous assessment, etc.

1.3.7 Curriculum and Time/Staff Allocation

A table giving details of the contact-hours to be devoted to each subject in terms of the breakdown of this between laboratory, practical, workshops, studio, tutorials, lectures, etc. should be given. The staff member(s) to deal with each subject should be listed.

1.3.8 Physical Facilities

This should give as much detail as is deemed appropriate to enable an evaluation to take place of laboratory/studio/workshop/other accommodation facilities to be available to students participating in this course. This does not imply a list of individual items of equipment.

1.3.9 Curricula Vitae

The curricula vitae of the staff to teach on the course should be provided.

1.3.10 Draft Course Schedule

A draft course schedule to include listings of Examination Subjects, component subjects, contact hours, credit ratings, marks per subject in accordance with HETAC requirements.

1.4 Subject Matter of New Programme Evaluation

The Panel of Assessors must be satisfied that the proposal adequately addresses the following criteria:

(1) Education and Training Requirements

The programme is consistent with the college's mission, avoids redundant provision and makes efficient use of resources (collaborating where this is beneficial).

Particular elements for consideration:

- compatibility with the College's Strategic Plan and Mission
- compatibility with Department Planning
- demand by employers for graduates of a programme of this nature
- opportunities graduation offers learners

- support for the programme from industry, commerce, government agencies and associated professional bodies
- consultation on the proposal with relevant stakeholders and peers
- research on similar or related programmes offered by other providers
- impact on the programmes currently offered by the Institute and particularly the proposing School

(2) Unity

There should be an underlying unifying theme and the modules should be bonded by interactions which are either implicit or explicit. The proposal should demonstrate how the standard (of knowledge, skill and competence), determined by HETAC for the named award to which the programme proposes to lead, evolves throughout the programme as a whole.

Particular elements for consideration:

- the level of the programme, the degree to which the programme challenges the learner
- an appropriate balance in regard to the breadth and depth of the individual curricula and the academic and practical requirements of the programme
- sufficient emphasis on promoting the intended learning outcomes together with details of how achievement of the learning outcomes will be measured
- the development of the curriculum imposing increasing demands on the learners as they progress through the programme
- the personal development of the learner must be central to the programme

(3) Teaching and Learning

The proposed approach to teaching and learning should be clearly indicated and justified.

Particular elements for consideration:

- the development of the curriculum – through appropriate learning outcomes, teaching methodologies and assessment techniques – imposing increasing demands on the learner as they progress through the programme
- the appropriateness of the total contact hours and the breakdown of these hours into lectures, practical, tutorials etc.

(4) Learner Assessment

The learner assessment methods should be fully elaborated and consistent with HETAC's policy on fair and consistent assessment. The assessment methods should be capable, among other things, of demonstrating attainment of the standards of knowledge, skill or competence, determined by HETAC, for the related award.

Particular elements for consideration:

- the workload of the learner in terms of assessment requirements, reading, researching, studying etc.
- planned feedback to students on assessments
- assessment schedule, assessment criteria, and referencing protocols
- procedures for promoting the timely submission of assessment material

(5) Resources

The proposed staffing levels should be appropriate and the levels of qualifications and competence of the staff sufficient to deliver the programme.

The necessary facilities should be available in terms of accommodation, equipment, library and information technology resources to support the proposed programme.

(6) Quality Assurance

The proposal should demonstrate how the college's quality assurance procedures have been applied in the development of the proposed programme and that satisfactory procedures exist for the ongoing monitoring and periodic review of programmes.

(7) Programme Title and Award Title

The award title should be consistent with the named awards determined by HETAC. The programme title should be clear, accurate, succinct and fit for the purpose of informing prospective learners and other stakeholders.

Particular element for consideration:

- an award title at an appropriate level and in keeping with the intended learning outcomes

(8) HETAC Standards

HETAC determines, for each named award, the specific standard of knowledge, skill and competence that must be acquired by the learner before that award can be made. The learning outcomes of the programme must be stated in such a way that compliance with the appropriate HETAC standard is demonstrated.

(9) Access Transfer and Progression

Programmes submitted for accreditation should incorporate the procedures for access transfer and progression that have been established by the NQAI. Consistent with the policy of HETAC, awards should accommodate a variety of access and entry requirements.

Level and number of Credits sought (if any):

(Note: **Professional Body** Programmes should not be assigned a Level or Credits)

Level of course

Number of modules.....

Credits per module

Total number of credits.....

Part C Demand for Course

Summary statement of demand for the course (please attach relevant documents detailing market or other surveys carried out by you or used by you or copies of correspondence from course sponsors/external proposers).

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Support for the Course from industry/business/community

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(Attach copies of relevant documentation/letters of support etc)

Part D Admission Requirements/Equivalencies

Minimum entry requirements

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Part E Course Description (Use additional pages as appropriate).

Where Professional Body Courses or Vendor courses are involved refer in part E to syllabi and programme documents provided by the Professional Body or Vendor, which must be attached as an appendix to the submission.

Learning Outcomes

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Module Description (use additional pages as appropriate)

Learning Outcomes

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Module Content

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Required reading or other learning media

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Recommended reading or other learning media

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Assessment methods (including WBL, assignments, essays, projects, practical, formative testing, summative testing etc.)

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Part F Resource Requirements

1. Accommodation

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2. Staff requirements

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3. Award Sought

Minor

Special Purpose

Supplemental

4. Justification for seeking an award

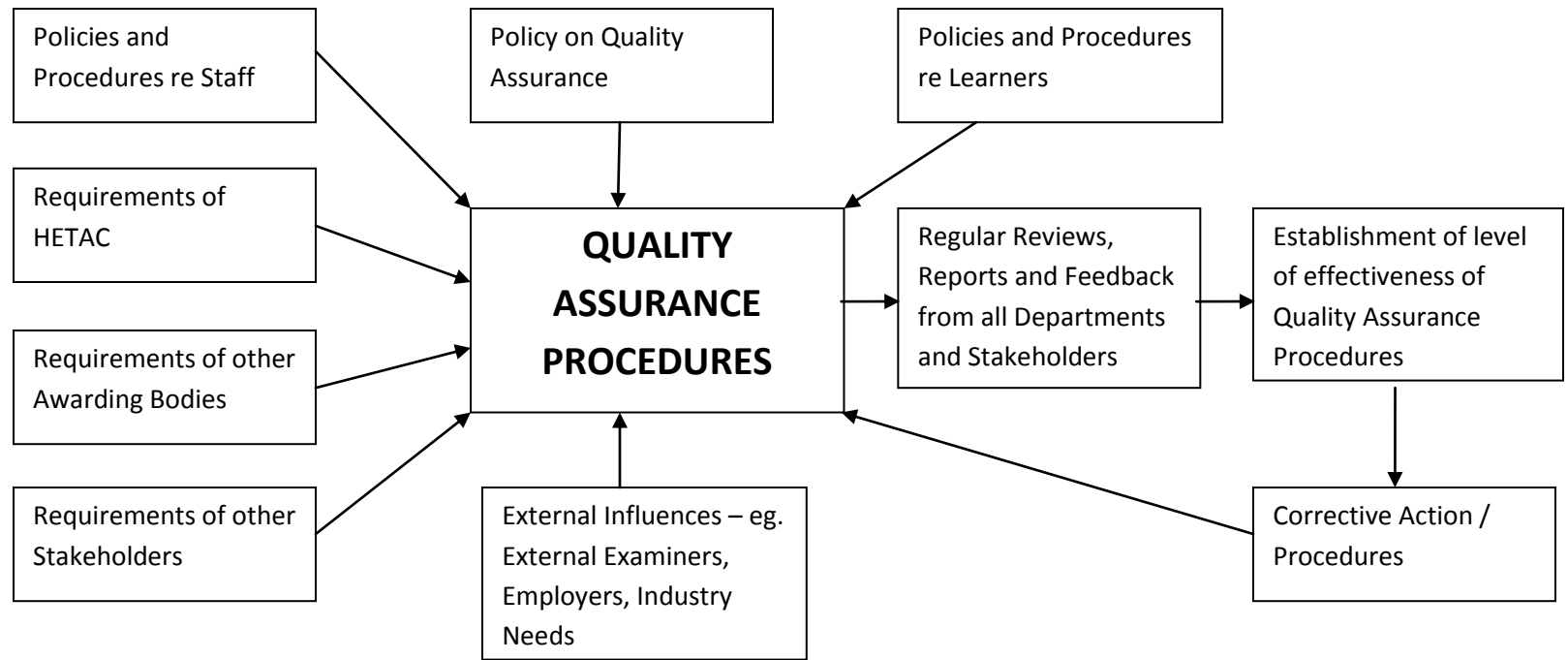
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Part G Progression or Transfer Opportunities

In This Institute/Elsewhere:

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Appendix 3 Flow Chart – Overview of Quality Assurance Procedures



Appendix 4 Role and Responsibilities of the Internal Examiner

The role and responsibilities of the Internal Examiner include the following:

- Preparation of the format of assessment. This must include information on programme title, subject being assessed, time and date of assessment, time allowed, instructions to candidate, additional materials required, attachments required.
- The internal examiner must submit all assessment documentation to the Registrar, who will forward it to the External Examiner for approval. This must include the format of assessment information, assessment detail, preparation of clear and concise worked solutions and appropriate unambiguous marking schemes with clear instruction.

Assessments must be prepared taking into consideration the following guidelines:

- Clear and concise instructions pertaining to the completion of the assessment by the candidate
- Ensure assessments are checked for accuracy and ensure the use of unambiguous language and instructions
- Clear and concise instructions pertaining to the requirement of additional materials required by the candidate to successfully complete the assessment. This information must be made available at least 10 working days prior to the scheduled assessment
- Protect the integrity of the assessment by ensuring differentiation of assessment questions from year to year
- Ensure assessments are prepared in the context of the subject, standard of programme and learning outcomes being assessed
- Ensure draft end-of-year examinations are issued to external examiners a minimum of 10 weeks prior to the date of the examination and act, where appropriate, on feedback given by the external examiners.

Marking of assessments

- Internal examiners are requested to collect assessments for marking within 2 working days of completion of the assessment. Assessments should be marked and returned within 10 days of receipt of assessments. Completion of "Return of Assessment Marks" must be included with returned assessments to the Examinations Officer. With end of year examinations, the marked scripts may need to be returned in a short time, depending on the date of the Exam Board Meeting.
- The Internal Examiner shall, when marking assessments, ensure that marks are awarded in adherence to the marking scheme submitted and approved for the assessment.
- All marks awarded must be clearly indicated and red pen should be used for ease of identification by the external examiner.
- The Internal Examiner is required to submit an "Internal Examiner's Report" to the Head of Department confirming the assessment was valid, reliable and manageable. Proposed changes should be included with rationale for change. Learner feedback should be taken into consideration when drafting the report.

Appendix 5 Responsibilities of the External Examiner

The External Examiner has a variety of responsibilities including the following:

Approval of Assessments Papers and other materials

- It is the responsibility of the external examiner to approve final drafts of assessments, worked solutions and marking schemes. This is done in the context of the relevance of the assessment to the syllabus, learning outcomes and stage of the programme.
- The external examiner has authority to select the nature and content of assessment material he wishes to assess – this request is processed by the course director who will make it available in a timely fashion.

External examiners in consultation with Internal examiners

- Agree the exact details of the assessment to be used
- Agree procedures for evaluating the internal moderation system in relation to marking of assessments.
- The external examiner may make suggestions for changes to assessments and the internal examiners will make the necessary adjustments
- Following assessment, external examiners are required to review a sample of assessments including best result, a number of borderline cases and a random sample of the remaining. A copy of the assessment criteria, worked solution, marking scheme and actual marks sheet for each candidate's assessment must be included for the external examiner's attention.
- Provide a written report on his/her findings in relation to each assessment evaluated to include findings on standard of assessment achieved by the learners, assessment tools used, conduct of assessments and general operation of programme.

External examiners role in relation to Appeals

External examiners may be invited to attend the Examinations Appeals committee to review an assessment, where an appeal is lodged. The appeals process is explained in full detail under section 4.2.10.

External examiner's role with the Examination Board

- Prior to examination board meetings, external examiners are required to review a sample of assessments including borderline cases
- In the event of a lack of consensus between the external examiner and the internal examiner an effort should be made to achieve agreement with regard to proposed amendments in advance of the examination board meetings.
- Achieve consensus of the examinations board when a change of assessment marks for a group of learners is proposed

- If the external examiner's opinion is not accepted by the examinations board as a whole, his opinion will be recorded in the minutes of the meeting

Communication and Reporting Arrangements

- A schedule of all upcoming assessments, meetings and any other issues requiring the attention of the external examiner will be made available in a timely fashion by the registrar.
- External examiners are required to submit reports on any assessments they have been involved with to the registrar by an agreed deadline. The registrar will circulate this report to appropriate academic staff including the academic council and examinations board with details of proposed action plans. Issues raised by the external examiner are addressed including measures/actions to be taken and their effect. The external examiner's report will include the following information:
 - The extent to which assessment issues have been appropriately addressed from the previous year
 - Issues relating to the development of the teaching and learning and assessment of learners
 - If procedures and regulations applied were consistent and fair
 - Standard of overall programme in comparison to similar programmes available in Ireland and Europe
 - Observations arising and agreed actions for the coming year
 - Any other activities completed by the external examiner

Evaluating Effectiveness of Quality Assurance Policies and Procedures

- External examiners are involved in the self evaluation process within the college.
- The external examiner will give feedback on his/her experiences in dealing with the college in all aspects of his/her role
- The external examiner will give his/her views on how policies and procedures can be improved, where necessary

Review of existing programmes and development of new programmes

- It is the external examiner's duty to give feedback in relation to his/her experience of existing programmes
- It is the external examiner's duty to guidance and advice in the planning of new programmes

Appendix 6 Examination Regulations for Candidates

Below are the main examination regulations for candidates:

- Any attempt at any of the following by one or more candidates will be deemed to be a breach of examination regulations:
 - Possession of copies of assessment questions or papers in advance of the assessment being held
 - Cheating
 - Misrepresentation
 - Bribery
 - Falsification
 - Impersonation or any other form of deception
 - Plagiarism
- Candidates are required to be available 15 minutes before the advertised start of the assessment. They are not permitted to enter the assessment location until advised to do so by the invigilator.
- Smoking is not permitted on the college premises. Eating or drinking in the assessment location is not permitted except with the prior approval of the registrar.
- All materials, including computer equipment, mobile phones, bags etc, must remain outside the assessment location. No pencil cases are permitted. Candidates found to be in possession of any of these items will be deemed to be in serious breach of examination regulations.
- Candidates are not allowed to borrow anything, such as red biro, tippex etc, during the course of the assessment.
- Candidates are requested to read all relevant instructional documentation for the assessment, when advised to do so by the invigilator
- Candidates must comply with the instructions of the invigilator at all times
- Candidates will not be permitted entry to the assessment location thirty minutes after the advertised commencement time of the assessment
- Candidates will not be permitted to leave the assessment location within thirty minutes of the advertised completion time of the assessment
- Candidates must remain seated at the end of the assessment until the invigilator has completed the collection of all assessment material
- Communication between candidates is considered a serious breach of exam regulations. Candidates should raise their hand to draw the attention of the invigilator, should they require any assistance during the assessment
- Invigilators have the authority to inspect any material in the possession of the candidate during the assessment period. Any unauthorized materials will be deemed to be in serious breach of the examination regulations and will be retained by the invigilator and reported to the examinations officer
- All rough work should be included with assessment answer scripts

- Candidates may not retain any materials from the assessment unless authorized to do so by the invigilator
- Candidates wishing to leave the assessment location for the purposes of a toilet break or for other medical reasons may only do so in the company of an invigilator
- Candidates who are deemed to have violated the examination regulations in anyway will be referred to the Disciplinary Committee and the Academic Council.
- Results are issued to learners in writing within 4 weeks of the assessment date to the address listed on the College MIS Academy. Learners should ensure this address is correct. Results will not be delivered by any other means.

Appendix 7 Instructions for Invigilators

- Invigilators are required to be at the assessment centre a minimum of twenty minutes prior to the commencement of an assessment to ensure that the centre is set up correctly.
- It is the responsibility of the invigilator to ensure that candidates do not enter the room more than 15 minutes prior to the scheduled time of the examination/assessment.
- Invigilators must ensure that no unauthorised materials, bags or mobile phones are located in the assessment room. The only materials permitted on the learner's desk are the assessment and writing materials.
- Invigilators are required to distribute assessment materials prior to the commencement of the assessment.
- Invigilators announce the commencement and completion time of the assessment. Candidates may not turn over the examination paper or commence the assessment until the invigilator announces the commencement time. The invigilator will announce when there is only five minutes of the assessment remaining.
- Invigilators must walk around the assessment location surveying for any improper actions.
- If an invigilator is suspicious of a candidate's actions, but has no conclusive proof of inappropriate behaviour, then this must not be addressed until the end of the assessment. The invigilator must inform the candidate as they are leaving the examination room of their suspicions and inform them that a report will be made on the occurrence. This report must be included with the invigilator's certificate. If, however, a candidate's conduct is causing unnecessary disruption to others, the invigilator may ask the candidate to leave the assessment location.
- If an invigilator catches a candidate breaking any of the examination regulations, he/she must inform the candidate that a report on this will be written up and given to the Examinations Officer. The candidate must, however, be allowed to finish the examination.
- At the end of an assessment, it is the responsibility of the invigilator to collect all assessment materials from candidates and to record same. Invigilators should ensure candidates have completed the assessment cover sheet correctly and included any additional materials and/or used/unused scripts. These must be checked against the signature of the candidates and placed in the Assessment Completion Envelope together with the invigilator certificate and returned as planned to the examinations officer. Scripts should be returned in the order they are documented on the invigilator certificate.
- The Invigilator Certificate must be completed with the following information:
 - Time, date & location of assessment
 - No of candidates present
 - No of candidates absent
 - Signature of each candidate present
 - Number of scripts distributed
 - Number of scripts collected

- Any queries raised by learners during the assessment
- Any corrective action taken
- Any breaches of the examination regulations
- Signature of invigilator