
5. Teaching & Learning

Policy Title	Teaching & Learning
Date Approved	17/12/2018
Effective From	02/01/2019
Monitor	Dean of Academic Affairs / QA Committee
Summary	This policy provides an overview of the policies directly related to the teaching and learning activities of the College. This encapsulates both the learning experience and the learning environment offered by the College.
Related Policies	
Revision History & Commencement Date & Date of Next Review	Version 1 – 2019 Commencement Date (Version 1): 02/01/2020 Date of Next Review: Following Independent Assessment from Re-engagement process



Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to provide an overarching framework to ensure the quality of the learning experience offered by the College. The learning experience is inclusive of the learning facilitated in the classroom (and supplemented through the College's Virtual Learning Environment, Moodle), how programmes are taught and delivered by the College, as well as the learning environment offered by the College. This policy will also provide clarity of the College's provision to its learners.

Scope

This policy applies to all assessments as part of the Further Education and Higher Education programmes as well as English Language education at Dorset College.

Policy Statement

Dorset College recognises that the teaching & learning of its programmes is integral to its educational provision. Therefore, the College is cognisant of the need to ensure that it maintains a high standard of teaching and learning. It is also cognisant of the importance of its learning experience and environment, which support the teaching and learning efforts of the College.

5.1

Monitoring the Learning Experience

The maintenance of the quality of the learning experience is central to the ethos of the College. To ensure this, the College recognises the need to continuously monitor and improve the learner experience that it offers.

The College will monitor its learning experience as follows:

- _ Quantitative feedback, by way of anonymous survey, from learners twice per semester; mid-way and at the end of each semester;
- _ Qualitative feedback from class representatives once per semester;
- _ Faculty feedback collected through Programme Boards and quantitative feedback for example an anonymous survey twice yearly;
- _ Technical assessment of the virtual learning environment twice per year;
- _ Feedback received in the External Examiner's Report(s);
- _ Review of the College's Teaching, Learning & Assessment strategy once per year.

Furthermore, the College will ensure that it is kept abreast of developments in the area of teaching & learning by ensuring its staff interact with relevant communities of practice. This may entail one or more of the following on an annual basis:

- _ Staff and/or faculty attending conferences on teaching & learning. Such as those hosted by HECA, National Forum for the Enhancement of Teaching & Learning, and the International Conference on Engaging Pedagogy.



Monitoring the Learning Experience

_ Staff and/or faculty presenting papers at conferences on teaching & learning. Such as those hosted by HECA, National Forum for the Enhancement of Teaching & Learning, and the International Conference on Engaging Pedagogy.

_ Staff and/or faculty reviewing contemporary literature on teaching & learning.

_ The College facilitating a workshop on teaching & learning approaches for staff and faculty.

5.2

Teaching, Learning & Assessment Strategy

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

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

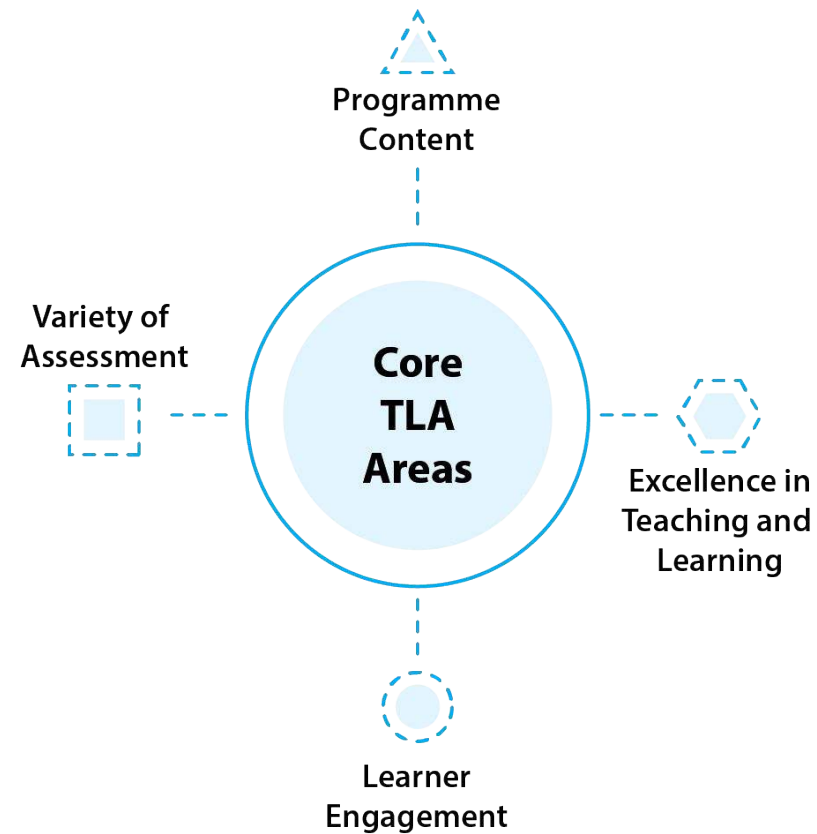
Dorset College is committed to developing a strategy on digitally enhanced learning as part of the overall development of the College. The College will engage with relevant stakeholders to ensure that any such development is appropriate and relevant to the particular field of learning and learner and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


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

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

Teaching, Learning & Assessment Strategy

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






The Core Teaching, Learning, and Assessment areas

Programme Content Goals

Programme Content

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

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




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

Teaching and Learning Goals

Excellence in Teaching and Learning

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

- 1.To ensure that faculty are informed of teaching and learning theories, and effective teaching strategies.
- 2.To facilitate faculty in furthering their knowledge in this area, through providing continuous professional development opportunities.




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

Learner Engagement Goals

Learner Engagement

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

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




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

Assessment Goals

Variety of Assessment

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

1. To ensure a variety of assessments are utilised at each stage of a programme;
2. To recommend learners have a proportionate number of examinations within the overall context of the MIPLO's and the programme assessment strategy;



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


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

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

_ monitor its teaching and learning approach on an annual basis. This monitoring will incorporate learner feedback and lecturer feedback on existing and new approaches to teaching and learning adopted by the College. It will also review assessment marks, attendance and participation at classes where a new teaching and learning approach is adopted.

_ send a contingent of its staff to conferences on teaching and learning annually.

_ facilitate at least one teaching and learning workshop for its faculty annually.



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

Assessment & Moderation

Assessment-Role of Examiners

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

_ Prepare assessments in consultation with the Moderator (please see page 125), in accordance with the approved module descriptor, learning outcomes and aligned to the level and MIPLOs;

_ Submit examination papers, solutions and marking schemes, in consultation with the Moderator, to the Examinations Office where they are forwarded to the External Examiner(s);

_ Alongside the Programme Leader, take account of suggestions, deletions, additions or amendments proposed by the External Examiner (s) and implement as recommended or provide a rationale for non-implementation


_ Mark the assessments and arrange for moderation within the College time-frames and submit marks to the Examinations Team via the means specified; Moodle;

_ Prepare a sample of marked continuous assessment, in conjunction with the moderator, for the External Examiner and return to Examinations Team or ensure appropriate access to Moodle for review of course-work, grades and feedback;

_ Return scripts and any associated forms to the Examinations Office;

_ Receive feedback from the External Examiner(s) and, in conjunction with the Programme Leader agree the marks being awarded to each candidate (prior to the meeting of the Board of Examiners);

_ Attend meetings of the Examination Board, to verify marks and contribute to the deliberation of grades and awards.



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

Assessment & Moderation

Assessment-Role of Moderator

A Moderator is appointed for each module by the Dean of Academic Affairs and the relevant Programme Leader.

Any such appointment is made on the basis of experience as an educator in the particular subject or a related area, normally including at least 2 years teaching and assessment or other curriculum-related experience within the last 5 years at the same level on the framework as the subject which is being moderated.

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

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

Assessment is appropriate, consistent, fair and transparent and does not discriminate against any learner;

_Assessment has been set in line with learning outcomes of the module;


_An assessment has been marked in line with the expressed aims and learning outcomes of the assignment/examination, and in terms of marking criteria fairness of marking and the equality of treatment of each learner;

_Internal consistency of assessment within a module;

_Comparability of standards across modules within a subject area;

_Assessment is appropriate to the level at which it is taught;

_A detailed guide to assessment and moderation is provided to each member of faculty.



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

Teaching and Learning

Further Education

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

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

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

- _Learner surveys;

- _Learner Focus Groups;

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

Surveys include questions which relate to:

- _Programme Content;


- _Delivery Modes;

- _Teaching and Learning and Teaching Modes;

- _Assessment;

- _Information and Support Services.

- _Learner Supports



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

Teaching and Learning

Further Education


Learning Resources

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

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

Learners who undertake a course in Further Education are offered academic support by our Head of Library, IS and Enhancement through referencing classes and one-to-one sessions throughout the academic year.

All learners are encouraged to develop their employability by partaking in Dorset College Jobs Club, Clubs and Societies as well as social trips.



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

Assessment & Verification

Further Education

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

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

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

_Assessment instruments and schedules;

_Expected Certification date specifically should the programme entitle a learner to apply for Higher Education through the CAO;

_Assessment Briefs and Grading Criteria;

_Appeals;

_Repeats;

_Learner Supports available;

_Assessment and Workplace Assessment;

_Award Classifications.

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

Assessment Verification & Authentication

Further Education

Internal Verification

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


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

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

External Authentication

Dorset College ensures that all assessments and grades thereto are externally authenticated after the completion of IV by the College to ensure objective and authoritative confirmation of level appropriate, authentic, fair and consistent assessment for all learners across all modules comprising a programme.

Dorset College ensures the appropriate external authenticator has access to all IV reports and provisional results as generated by the Exams Officer prior to the EA visit to authenticate results.



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

Results Verification & Process

Further Education

Results Verification

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

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

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

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

Process

_ Module Leader submits their assessments and marks sheets for IV at least four weeks prior to submission of marks to QQI;


_ IV process takes place and is to be completed at least 10 days prior to EA;

_ Provisional Results (PR) are generated by the Exams Officer and released to learners;

_ Learners are advised of their right of appeal within 4 days of the release of PR;

_ EA verifies the results pursuant to a site visit and review of coursework, IV Reports, Provisional Results and Authentication Reports;

_ Marks are put forward for Certification to QQI via QBS by the Exams Officer.



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

Group Work Policy

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

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

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


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

Group Work Policy

Group Work refers to where two or more learners work together as part of formative and summative assessment. (Note: Only summative assessment is credit bearing as per Dorset College Policy on assessment).

Dorset College categorise Group Work as learner-led or lecturer-led, and whatever method is used, the learner should be advised of the rationale and how this relates to the level (for example Level 6) and the overall construct of the module and the related MIMLOs as aligned to the MIPLOs of the programme. The programme team will look at the advantages and disadvantages of each approach.

Teacher-Led		Learner-Led	
Advantages	Disadvantages	Advantages	Disadvantages
Closely aligned employment scenario	Feelings of loss of control	Increases motivation	May lead to different levels or perceptions regarding individual contributions
Stimulates diverse groups and learning experiences	Lecturers may not be aware of inter-personal issues	Creates friendships and alliances within a group.	Learners may see power struggles emerging and learner exclusion



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


Group Work Policy

Assessment Goals

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

Grading

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




The Core Teaching, Learning, and Assessment areas for Dorset College Group Work Policy

Conflict

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

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

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




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

Learner Support

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

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

- College Website
- Application form;
- Induction;
- throughout the academic year to any one of the following persons
 - Student Experience Leader
 - Academic Operations Lead
 - Module Leader
 - Programme Leader
 - Examinations Officer
 - Quality Assurance Lead



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

Learner Support Application/ Admissions Process

Application/Admissions Process

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

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


— specific educational supports will be discussed such as the requirement of readers in braille or a loop system in a classroom or indeed access requirements are discussed;

— Information is provided regarding facilities and supports available in the College during the Academic year and regarding examinations; ;

— An individual orientation of the College building(s) and in particular of the rooms the learner will be attending for example labs or traditional flat classrooms which may well involve a consultation with the Academic Operations Lead and/or Operations Lead as to suitability of rooms and evacuation processes etc;

— An appraisal by the Academic Lead of the programme, assessments and exams, which may require consultation with the examinations officer and/or Quality Assurance Lead, and to advise the applicant of accommodations which are available thereto;

— The Admissions Lead will then inform the Quality Assurance Lead and Academic Operations Lead of any specific learning supports needed to ensure a consistent and supportive approach from the college. The appropriate lead will advise the relevant Programme Leader (once the consent of the applicant is obtained) with the consent of the applicant. The applicant will then fill in a Learner Support Form which is available on the College website and the Learner Handbook.



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

Learner Support

Learner Supports

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

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


_Learners will have access to the Library and Computer Laboratories each week and there is WI-Fi throughout each building;

_Learners have access to the Virtual Learning Environment (VLE) Moodle for details of course content, timetables, examinations, course notes, contact details of further supports, advice, tips on taking exams, stress, presentations etc

_Learners have access to additional information through the Learner Handbook.

_Programme Leader(s), Academic Operations Lead, Quality Assurance Lead, teaching staff and administrative staff as well as the Student Experience Leader are available to talk to learners by appointment to deal with any issues relating to academic support

_Reception: Learners have access to a reception desk Monday – Thursday up to 9.30pm and Friday up to 5.00 pm where they can arrange language exchanges/classes where appropriate.



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

Learner Support

Academic Term

Induction & Re-Induction

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

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

The induction pack contains the following;

_Learner Handbook which contains information on Learner Supports and related application forms such as examination supports;


_Academic Team Profiles and Contact Details;

_Wi-Fi Codes for the respective Buildings;

_Facilities information such as Opening Hours for the Library and Canteen;

_Moodle and Office 365 Instructions;

_Programme Handbook specific to the relevant Programme which includes credits, module descriptors, Assessment Schedule and all programme relevant material.




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

Learner Support

Guidance and Pastoral Counselling

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

The *Student Counsellor* is available at designated times to offer confidential, impartial and supportive counselling to learners experiencing personal difficulties. For those presenting every effort shall be made to identify the appropriate professional help available.



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


Learner Support

Assignments

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

Examination Provision

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



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

Exam Supports

_Extra time/Rest-Periods: to complete each exam paper: the amount of time a candidate will be allowed will be assessed on a case-by-case basis and the Quality Assurance Lead and the Examinations Officer will ensure the assessment/examination is achievable in the time-frame;

_Dictation to an amanuensis: (someone to whom you can dictate the learner's exam answers). An amanuensis should have a good working knowledge of the subject matter being examined and be in no way connected personally or professionally to the learner;

_A reader: will read and re-read the entire or any part of the examination paper as well as any part of the candidate's text as requested.

_Enlarged print to A3 size/Paper: this is common for candidates who are partially sighted. Examination papers and other relevant documents are enlarged to a readable size or put onto yellow paper for example;

_Assistive Technology and/or a separate exam room: candidates may request the use of a computer etc. in conjunction with any of the other supports and such a request must be medically supported.

_Defer or an Extension of deadlines: must be negotiated and agreed in consultation with the Module Leader and the Quality Assurance Lead/Examinations Officer on a case-by-case basis and in line with the supports required and reasonably available to Dorset College;

_Other: some candidates may have specific requirements that are not known to the College. In this instance it is the responsibility of the learner to inform the Student Experience Leader and Examination Officer of these requirements well in advance of the exam.

5.3

Flexible Learning Pathways

As stated in policy 5.2 in this section, the College adopts a primarily face-to-face teaching approach, which is supported by technology through its VLE. However, the College is cognisant that this teaching approach is not appropriate or best suited to all learners. Furthermore, the College also recognises the limits to the education provision that it can offer to the necessary quality standard.

Therefore, the College commits to:


_providing flexible learning pathways where it can. Ordinarily this would include allowing learners to defer part of a programme (subject to the mitigating circumstances being documented and accepted by the College), and providing learners with alternative assessment instruments where needed

_allowing learners to undertake a programme using an alternative teaching approach where that teaching approach has been validated by the College for the delivery of that programme

_providing learning material and/or resources that may be required to assist the learning experience

_utilise technology to assist the learning experience, such as interactive whiteboards, library services and laptops in the classroom

_having dedicated personnel in place to co-ordinate learning supports, such as supplementary academic writing classes, mathematics classes and assessment workshops.



Flexible Learning Pathways

_facilitating learners to meet with their lecturers outside of the scheduled classroom times (appointment only) which forms part of their contract of employment.

5.4

Mutual Respect in Learner-Teacher relationship

The College is committed to providing an educational provision that is learner-centred. This means that the operation and management of the College is ultimately influenced by first considering how the learner is best served. Being learner-centred, the College is conscious of ensuring that the learner is treated with dignity and respect during their studies with the College. However, the College also recognises the responsibilities of the learner. These responsibilities include developing an autonomy over their learning, being responsible for their learning, and having respect for those who are assisting them in their studies.

The learner-teacher relationship is arguably the most critical relationship in the learning experience. A harmonious relationship can greatly assist the learning process, and help the learner achieve their potential, but a fractious relationship can become a significant hindrance.

Therefore, the College will:

_Develop a charter of mutual respect between learners and teachers with input from both parties.

_Ensure that both learners and teachers are aware of the policy and charter of mutual respect that it insists upon. This will be achieved through reference in the Learner Handbook and Employee Handbook.



Mutual Respect in Learner-Teacher relationship

Investigate all instances reported from either learners or teachers where the counterpart was not deemed to act in a mutually respectful manner. Where it is found that either the learner or the teacher infringed on the ideal of mutual respect, the College's disciplinary procedure will be followed.



5.5

Learner Complaints & Appeals

As previously stated, Dorset College is a learner centred educational institute. Hence, it tries to ensure learner involvement with the development and review of as much of its policies as is appropriate. The College also realises that there may be instances where its ideals of learner centric, mutual respect and inclusion are not met. For such instances, the College has procedures in place for Learner Complaints and Appeals.



Learner Complaint Procedure

	Procedure Stage	Responsibility	Evidence
1.	<p>Written Complaint: If a learner wishes to make a formal complaint about their experience in the College, they will be advised that such complaints should be made in writing and sent to the Academic Operations Lead. The appropriate form shall be found in the Learner Handbook, on the College website and the VLE, Moodle.</p> <p>The complaint should include as much detail as possible as to the nature of the complaint. Where it is about College facilities, these should be specifically detailed, and their alleged inadequacies and/or deficiencies highlighted. Where a complaint relates to a member of the College's staff/faculty, the incident that is the focus of the complaint should be detailed, with the alleged behaviour of the staff/faculty member clearly outlined.</p>	<p>Learner</p> <p>Academic Operations Lead</p>	Written Complaint

Learner Complaint Procedure

	Procedure Stage	Responsibility	Evidence
2.	<p>Investigation of complaint: All complaints are investigated under the auspices of the AMC. The AMC will ordinarily assign an individual to co-ordinate this investigation. An investigation will explore the nature and details of the complaint.</p> <p>If the complaint is in regard to College facilities, the investigator will review these facilities to assess if they are fit for purpose.</p> <p>If the complaint is in regard to a member of the College's staff, the investigator may interview the staff member to whom the complaint has been made against and/or anyone else (learner or staff member) who may have witnessed the incident that provides the context for the complaint.</p>	<p>Academic Management Committee</p>	

Learner Complaint Procedure

	Procedure Stage	Responsibility	Evidence
3.	<p>Report of investigation: The investigator shall submit their report of the investigation into the complaint to the AMC. Where a member of the AMC is the subject of the complaint, that person will be omitted from the circulation of the report.</p> <p>The AMC will then consider the report at its next meeting. The report will have a recommended outcome that the AMC will consider, but not necessarily adopt. The AMC has the ultimate authority on how to respond to this complaint.</p>	<p>Academic Management Committee</p>	<p>Investigation Report</p> <p>Minutes of AMG</p>
4.	<p>Outcome of investigation: The AMC must have a 2:1 majority for a valid decision. The AMG has discretion as to what potential outcomes they may decide. All decisions must be evidence based and supported by the investigative report. Typically there are 10 working days from a learner complaint to the AMG decision which may be extended, on notice to the learner, if necessary due to the complexity of a complaint/availability of information.</p>	<p>Academic Management Committee</p>	<p>Minutes of AMG</p>

Learner Appeals Procedure

	Procedure Stage	Responsibility	Evidence
1.	<p>Written Appeal: If a learner is not satisfied with the outcome of their complaint as determined by the AMC, they are entitled to appeal this outcome to the Appeals Committee within 5 working days from the decision of the AMC.</p> <p>The appeal must detail the reason for the appeal. Specifically, it must state the reason for their dissatisfaction with the outcome from the AMC. If an appeal does not include this, it will not be considered by the Appeals Committee.</p>	Appeals Committee	Written Appeal
2.	<p>Review of appeal: The Dean will give each appeal an initial</p>	Appeals Committee	

Learner Appeals Procedure

Procedure Stage

Responsibility

Evidence

screening to assess if it merits investigation. Where an appeal is made without sufficient evidence or support for why the learner believes the initial outcome was dissatisfactory, the appeal will not be progressed and the learner will be notified of this.

If the Appeals Committee deems the appeal to have merit she/he will review the AMC decision and can:

1. Request additional information from the parties;
2. Dismiss the Appeal; or
3. Uphold the Appeal.

3.

Uphold the Appeal:

Where the appeal is upheld a fresh investigation will be conducted by the AMC. This investigation will be conducted by a different investigator who reports back to the Appeals Committee who ensures all such appeals and actions are reported to the Academic Council as part of annual reporting.

Appeals Committee

**Review Report
Minutes of AMC and
interview parties.**



5.6

Learning Environment

The College recognises *learning environment* as a descriptive term that encapsulates a broad array of its infrastructure and facilities. Its learning environment includes its physical infrastructure as well as that of any potential outreach centres owned by another party, or off-campus environments such as work placements.


The College will:

_Ensure all classrooms are fully equipped with the requisite hardware, such as a computer, projector and speakers, and furniture for learners.

_Ensure that Wifi is available throughout its buildings.

_Ensure that all programmes or modules that have an ICT component will be taught in a computer laboratory.

_Ensure that all of its computer laboratories are equipped with a sufficient number of computers for a class cohort. Thus, the ratio of computers to learners will be at least 1:1.



Learning Environment

_ Increase the e-resources available in its library to include more eBooks.


_ Maintain the operational efficiency of its virtual learning environment and continue to improve the learner experience of this platform through adoption of plug-ins that will enhance the virtual learning environment.

_ Have staff available to support its learning environment. This includes the College librarian, IT manager, and programme administration staff.

_ Consult with learners on an annual basis to enquire as to the effectiveness of the learning environment. This will help inform the continued improvement of its environment.

_ Review its learning environment on an annual basis to ensure they are maintained to an appropriate standard and that additional facilities and/or supports can be added to its learning environment.

The College does not currently teach in outreach centres or engage in collaboration with other providers for the delivery of its awards. However, where the College to commence such arrangements, it would commit to the policy details outlined above that cover its learning environment.



Learning Environment

The College currently offers work placement as an optional component on some of its programmes. Although the College does not foresee significant changes in its provision of work experience in the short-term (such as having work experience/placement as a larger component of a programme), it is still conscious of the need to ensure the appropriateness of the environment where existing learners may gain ECTS credit for learning acquired in the workplace.

Therefore, the College will:

- _ Ensure that each company that is facilitating work experience for a learner is fully informed on what is entailed. This would ordinarily entail an email communication to the appropriate person in the company with details of the requirements of the work experience.
- _ Visit the facilities of each company that is facilitating work experience to ensure they are appropriate and fit for purpose.
- _ Have a designated liaison person internally for the learner to contact with work placement queries.
- _ Request that the work placement provider informs the College and learner of a nominated contact in their organisation for work placement queries.



5.7

Review of Teaching & Learning Policies and Procedures

The College will review these Teaching and Learning policies and procedures on an annual basis. The following individual(s) will be involved in this review:

	<u>Dean of Academic Affairs</u>	<u>Programme Leader</u>
<u>1 Lecturer</u>	<u>Quality Assurance Lead</u>	<u>1 Learner</u>