International College for Personal and Professional Development

An Coláiste Idirnáisiúnta d'Fhorbairt Pearsanta agus Proifisiúnta

Quality Assurance Manual
Lámhleabhar Dearbhaithe Cáilíochta

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SECTION A GOVERNANCE AND STRATEGY

Chapter 1 International College for Personal and Professional Development (ICPPD)

1.1 Introduction to ICPPD

The **International College for Personal and Professional Development** (ICPPD), was founded in 2009, by Christine and Tom Moran having evolved out of New Beginnings Counselling Ltd, a professional, compassionate, confidential not-for-profit counselling service provider to individuals, couples and other professionals in the Midlands area for over fifteen years. New Beginnings Counselling Ltd had traditionally provided personal development courses, therapeutic workshops, training for trainers, residential retreats, and other in-house training which attracted participants from all over Ireland. The company had also received invitations from community and statutory organisations to deliver training within these organisations both locally and nationally.

ICPPD was founded to further develop these training and education services, while allowing New Beginnings to focus on offering counselling and supervision services. ICPPD has become a leader in the field of personal and professional development for members of the public and for professionals in the caring and helping arena.

ICPPD adheres to a similar ethos as established by its sister company, rooted in the experience of its founders, and holds at its heart - respect, integrity, inclusivity, ethical and professional practice. The College welcomes the presence, participation and contribution of programme participants who value these attitudes and believes that ICPPD attracts people who appreciate a holistic perspective to helping and healing. Courses at ICPPD are integrative and include a body mind spirit philosophy.

The philosophy of the College embraces a holistic approach to the person. The programmes offered are deeply rooted in the humanistic tradition and a commitment to support learners develop as whole persons - body, mind and spirit in order to achieve their full potential. The focus is on meeting the learner on a physical, cognitive, emotional, spiritual and behavioural level. Respect, integrity, inclusivity and professional and ethical behaviour underpin and support this philosophy.

ICPPD provides an academic framework in personal and professional development that is designed to meet the future statutory regulation requirements for psychological therapies in Ireland. The purpose of offering this framework is to build capacity in the knowledge base of psychotherapeutic and helping practices and inquiry at various levels. The College's programmes are also suited to other professionals and helpers right across the area of caring and support.

ICPPD has positioned itself as a premier provider of training and education through the careful selection of programmes, key personnel, background research and development activities, emphasis on learner support and development, and attention to detail.

1.2 ICPPD's Mission and Strategic Plan

The International College for Personal and Professional Development's (ICPPD) mission is to achieve, and maintain, a standard for excellence in our programmes and learners, and in our staff as educators, through a

combined commitment to a person-centred, holistic approach for the individual learner.
ICPPD sets out to:

- establish a dynamic and engaging academic community.
- foster a climate of critical thinking, ethical deliberation and responsive action.
- provide an intellectual climate and a supportive atmosphere for personal and professional development to a diverse learner body.
- develop an awareness of the need for life-long learning and the value of continuing to seek opportunities for personal and professional growth.
- enable learners to develop their fullest potential through a transformation process that challenges the learner intellectually, emotionally and professionally.
- promote personal growth by providing experiences that encourage self-examination and an openness to the perspective of others.
- emphasise the appreciation and celebration of the similarities and differences of others.

The College seeks to achieve this mission by providing

- an integrated approach whereby the learner is understood to be an active participant in the relationship between the College, the tutor and the learner.
- tutors regarded as leading educators, clinicians and researchers in their chosen areas.
- an engaging learning and teaching environment.
- flexible, high-quality programmes of education and training in accordance with the ALTITUDE - The National Charter for Universal Design in Tertiary Education (AHEAD Educational Press) and principles of Universal Design and accessibility.

1.1.1 Strategic Planning at ICPPD

ICPPD's strategic planning is led by the Board of Directors, which is responsible for the development, approval, and oversight of the College's strategic plans.

These plans set out the College's mission, objectives, and priorities and provide a framework for institutional development and quality enhancement.

Once approved, the plans are implemented across the College through the Executive Management Team and relevant governance structures, with progress monitored and reported to the Board. Performance against strategic objectives is measured through defined key performance indicators (KPIs) and supported by regular reporting and review processes to ensure effective implementation and continuous improvement.

To support transparency and public information requirements, current strategic plans are published and made accessible via the College website.

1.3 Guiding Principles at ICPPD

In the conduct of its operation, ICPPD applies the following guiding principles for behaviour:

- ***Inclusiveness:*** Creating a culture where learners feel valued and respected by the college and where the input of all stakeholders is sought and welcomed in relation to college programmes and developmental activities.
- ***Openness:*** Transparency in the purpose, work and methods of the College and in all information relating

to college activities.

- ***Application:*** Developing and delivering training courses that are directly relevant to Learners.
- ***Learner-Centredness:*** The learner is viewed as the primary stakeholder and all College activities are designed with the learner at the core.
- ***Responsibility:*** Ensuring that the college is using its resources effectively and with probity; conducting its work with integrity.
- ***Accessibility:*** Ensuring that learners have easy access to college personnel including management and ancillary staff as requested or needed.

1.4 Holistic Ethos at ICPPD

The holistic ethos at ICPPD is underpinned by the idea of interconnectedness – the interconnectedness within the person of the mind, body and spirit and the connectivity of the person with nature and the environment.

Summarising Dunn *(Holistic Healing - Theories, Practices and Social Change, 2019, Canadian Scholars)*, there are several common principles of holism, which include Connection, Interdependence, Linkages and Integration, Reciprocity and Mutuality, Wholeness, Balance, and Harmony, Change and Social Change. This is reflective of the description of the ICPPD logo which is designed to reflect the holistic philosophy of the college. The logo is the circle in which there are seven interlocking discs. The circle illustrates and symbolises the idea of cycles, a continuous journey. The interlocking discs depict the holistic emblem of connection, inclusion, nurturance, empowerment, integration, community, and interconnectedness. It also represents the many aspects of the self and the concept of balance and wholeness, and more. This supports the holistic ethos and philosophy of ICPPD.

1.4.1 Holistic Counselling and Psychotherapy

The aim of holistic counselling and psychotherapy is to appreciate the complexity and context of the unique lived experience of each person including experiences related to developmental and acute trauma, social privilege, bias, and oppression, as well as issues pertaining to spiritual meaning, purpose, vision, creativity, and non-normative states of consciousness" (Maller et al. in Dunn, 2019: 85).

The Holistic Approach underpins all programmes and is specifically woven into the content of some programmes:

- BA (Honours) in Holistic Counselling and Psychotherapy
- Introduction to Holistic Counselling and Psychotherapy
- Diploma in Supervision Across Professions – a Holistic Approach

1.5 Policy for Quality Assurance

The **Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG)** states that:

'*Institutions should have a policy for quality assurance that is made public and forms part of their strategic management. Internal stakeholders should develop and implement this policy through appropriate structures and processes, while involving external stakeholders.'*

The Qualifications and Quality Assurance (Education and Training) Act 2012 Part 3 requires providers to establish quality assurance procedures and to agree these procedures with Quality and Qualifications Ireland

(QQI).

The quality assurance framework within ICPPD applies the ESG as its primary quality assurance standard, and is implemented in accordance with QQI's Quality Assurance (QA) Guidelines

- Core Statutory Quality Assurance (QA) Guidelines: Statutory QA Guidelines developed by QQI for use by all Providers April 2016
- Sector Specific Quality Assurance (QA) Guidelines: Statutory QA Guidelines developed by QQI for Independent/ Private Providers coming to QQI on a Voluntary Basis April 2016
- Statutory Quality Assurance Guidelines For Providers of Blended and Dully Online Programmes October 2023

This Quality Assurance Manual outlines the College's quality policies and practices under the 10 areas identified in the ESG, namely:

1. Policy for Quality Assurance *(to include Organisation and Governance)*
2. Design and Approval of Programmes
3. Learner-Centred Teaching, Learning and Assessment
4. Learner Admission, Progression, Recognition and Certification
5. Teaching Staff
6. Learning Resources and Learner Support
7. Information Management
8. Public Information
9. On-Going Monitoring and Periodic Review of Programmes
10. Cyclical External Quality Assurance

This Quality Assurance Manual, and associated documentation, has been developed by ICPPD to clearly articulate the College's approach to supporting quality assured academic practice. The QA Manual sets out the agreed policy and procedures in operation within the College, to demonstrate compliance with Part 3 of the Qualifications and Quality Assurance (Education and Training) Act 2012 , and the ESG requirements, and defines how this policy is communicated, implemented, managed, measured, and evaluated.

The manual also describes how continual improvement is supported within the College and defines the key objectives and relevant performance indicators which will be used within the College to measure the success. While every effort has been made to ensure that the practices identified and described have been grounded in best practice, it is envisaged that these systems will develop with testing through practice and mature reflection within the College.

All ICPPD activities are subject to the College's quality assurance policies and procedures including, but not limited to:

- the identification and development of new programmes/courses
- elements of ICPPD instructional models
  - workshops, tutorials, seminars, lectures and retreats

  - learner academic and pastoral support
  - assessment procedures
  - appropriate modes of delivery
- consultation with learners, stakeholders and representative bodies
- staff development and support
- stakeholder involvement
- management and administration
- equipment and facilities (and outreach)
- ancillary College activities.

These processes are outlined and described within this manual and will be modified to meet the requirements of QQI when/as required.

The feedback loops which are being engaged to inform, modify, and improve the quality and standards of the ICPPD academic and training programme provision are also outlined. These mechanisms have been implemented on a per module basis and will broaden in their approach as the programme portfolio and learner numbers increase within the College.

The Quality Assurance Manual and associated documentation have been developed through the College's academic and management approval processes, with final approval through the Academic Board. These academic and management committees have been charged with responsibility to continue to evolve these processes with the evolution of the College.

All policies and procedures are well-documented, and they are accessible and routinely communicated to staff, learners, and other stakeholders. As the college has increased in scale offering more programmes across more geographical locations, quality assurance policies, and technology-enabled education and communication systems have been developed and resourced to support online and blended delivery of programmes.

The implementation of a successful quality assurance system within ICPPD is evidenced through self-evaluation, external review, and the transfer of information to/from stakeholders, enhancing public confidence in the College's higher education and training provision.

The College aims to deliver high quality standards in all aspects of its functions and conducts effective quality process review as part of on-going organisational practice.

1.5.1 Audit/Review of Quality Assurance Policy

Formal reviews of all quality procedures take place on an annual basis.

The Quality Assurance and Enhancement Committee is responsible for monitoring and reviewing QA processes, Quality indicators and reporting outcomes to the Academic Board, which retains final approval authority.

ICPPD endeavours to continuously review the process on an annual basis so that the best practice is always applied to Quality Assurance. This review will be conducted by the Quality Assurance and Enhancement Committee.

Chapter 2. Organisation and Governance

2.1 Overview of ICPPD Management Boards

ICPPD is governed through a structured framework of boards and committees responsible for ensuring effective strategic, academic, financial, and operational oversight of the College.

The Board of Directors holds ultimate legal responsibility for the governance, strategic direction, and overall performance of the College. It delegates authority to the Executive Management Committee and the Academic Board while retaining accountability for governance oversight and compliance.

The Executive Management Committee is responsible for the day-to-day operational, administrative, and financial management of the College, operating within the authority delegated by the Board of Directors.

The Academic Board is the highest academic authority within ICPPD and is responsible for maintaining academic standards, overseeing programme quality, and ensuring the integrity of teaching, learning, assessment, and academic governance processes.

All governance bodies operate under defined terms of reference, which set out their responsibilities, decision-making authority, and reporting relationships to ensure transparency, accountability, and effective institutional oversight.

ICPPD operates in compliance with all relevant statutory and regulatory requirements, including but not limited to data protection, employment law, health and safety legislation, equality legislation, and applicable quality assurance and educational regulatory requirements.

The College maintains appropriate governance structures to support accountability, risk management, and continuous quality improvement across all academic and operational activities.

The governance structures are diagrammatically represented in Figure 2.1 and Figures 2.2 below.

The roles and responsibilities each of these boards and committees in the overall management and strategic development of the College are defined in the following sections of this chapter.

Figure 2.1: ICPPD Organisation Chart – Boards and Committees

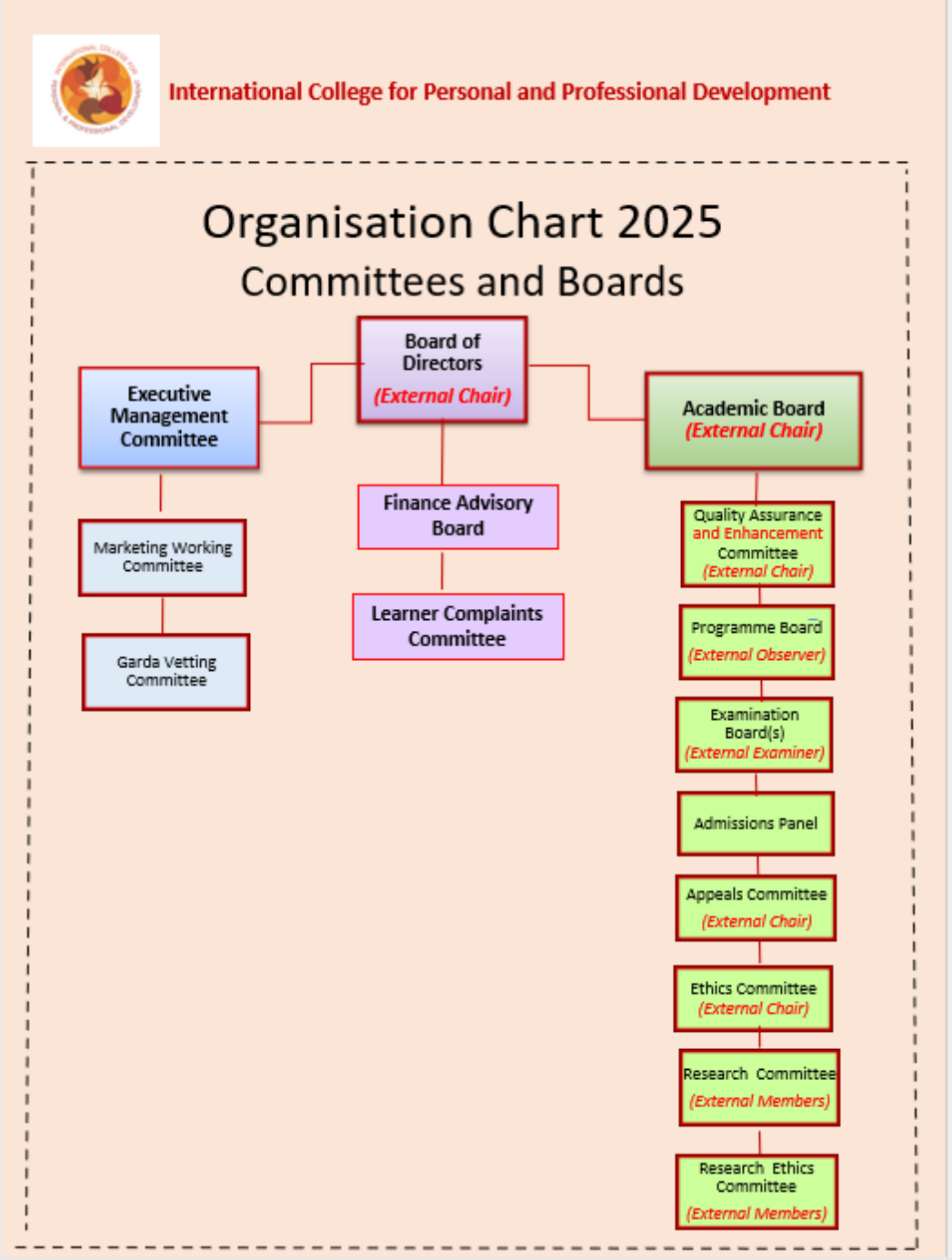
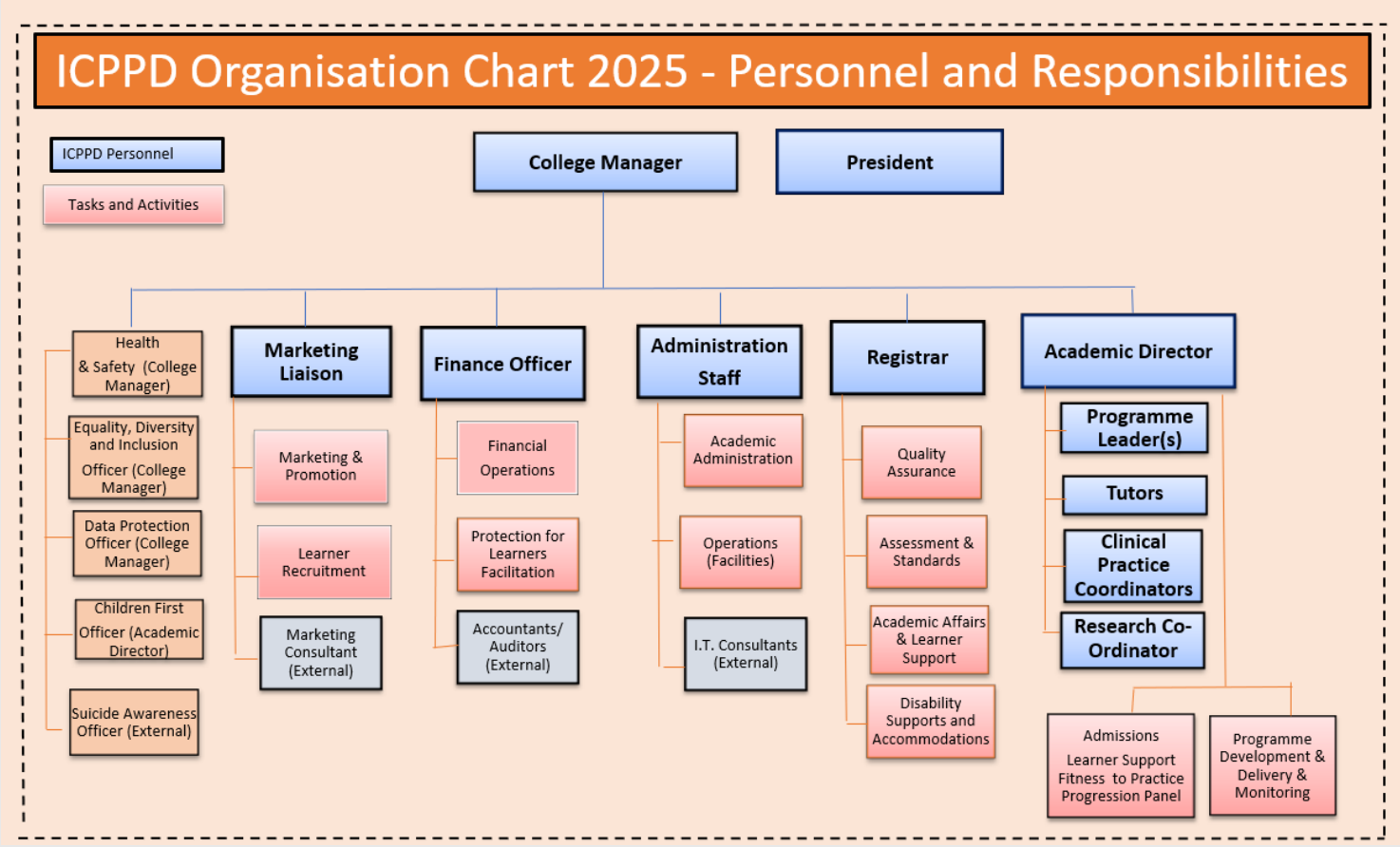


Figure 2.2: ICPPD Organisation Chart – Personnel and Responsibilities



2.2 Terms of Reference for Boards and Committees

2.2.1 Terms of Reference for Board of Directors

Membership	Chair, Executive Directors, Non-Executive Directors The Finance Officer acts as minutes' secretary to this Board. The chair may invite any party deemed relevant to the business of a meeting
Chair	Non-Executive Director
Remit / Function	The Board of Directors is appointed to act on behalf of the shareholders to oversee the day-to-day financial affairs of the business and provides the company (ICPPD) with strategic direction. The Board of Directors is responsible for setting values and standards within ICPPD through its decisions regarding strategy, policy and internal control systems. It is the responsibility of the board to ensure that the College fulfils its mission, and in doing so, sets the overall policy objectives. The objects of the company have been defined in the Memorandum of Association and regulations are laid out in the Articles of Association.
Breadth of Responsibility	ICPPD's Board of Directors maintains effective corporate governance. It has authority over the Academic Board and the Executive Management Committee. The Board of Directors has reserved functions and so is not involved in the delivery of the managerial functions of the College. Its principal function is the management and control of the financial affairs and property of the College and has overall responsibility for approving ICPPD financial and academic policy. The Board of Directors focuses on the overall direction and strategic and financial management of the College and delegates responsibility for day-to-day management to the College Manager. Items falling within the Board's remit include approval of all major changes to the overall policy and nature of the College, the annual audited accounts and annual estimates, and approval of future plans, including acquisitions and disposals, major investments and capital projects, treasury and risk management policy, and approval of major contracts. It also ensures that ICPPD is fulfilling its strategic purposes, operating in accordance with its statutory obligations and that appropriate reporting systems are in place to support it in meeting its responsibilities. The Board of Directors is responsible for ensuring adequate resourcing for the provision of programmes in terms of facilities, teaching staff, technological infrastructure, training and development. This ensures quality of provision of ICPPD's Programmes. The Board of Directors considers risks as described in the college's Risk Management Policy.
Quorum	50%
Agenda	Set by Chair
Frequency of Meetings	Monthly

2.2.2 Terms of Reference for Academic Board

Membership	**Ex Officio members:** Academic Director, Registrar **Nominated/appointed members:** External Advisors (Academic) (2) with significant higher education experience and/or

	experience of development and delivery of online/blended programmes ICPPD Academic Staff Members (2), Graduate Representative (1), Public Interest (Community/Employer) Representative (1), Profession/Industry Representative (1), Learner Representatives (2) Members of the Academic Board are appointed for a period of two (2) years. The learner representatives are appointed on an annual basis. Members are eligible for re-appointment at the expiry of their terms of office. The College President is an ex-officio member of Academic Board, may attend meetings in observational roles and does not sit on sub-committees. An Administration Staff member acts as minutes' secretary to this Board. The chair may invite any party deemed relevant to the business of a meeting
Chair	The Chair of Academic Board is appointed by the Board of Directors and will be external Academic member with significant Higher Education experience.
Remit / Function	The Academic Board is the most senior academic authority within ICPPD, with responsibility for the College's strategic academic direction, policy and standards. In particular, the Academic Board considers and advises the Board of Directors on matters relating to ICPPD programmes – specifically: - the educational character and objectives of the College - the academic elements of the Strategic Plan - academic regulations and policy - quality assurance and enhancement procedures - programmes development - assessment policy, practices and procedures - agreements with partners - communications with professional and awarding bodies - institution-wide self-reviews and evaluations. The Academic Board advises the Board of Directors on the development of ICPPD education strategy and maintains a high-level of oversight of this strategy and its implementation within the College, including policy development and effectiveness review. The Academic Board ensures that ICPPD initiatives are undertaken within an appropriate framework of academic standards, policies, and processes.

Breadth of Responsibility	All programmes run by college and any college activity which may impact on these programmes. The Academic Board - ensures a major review of all programmes is conducted at least once every five years, while facilitating input from stakeholders such as the community, industry, training organisations, professional providers and other education providers. - monitors all courses each year through annual programme reports compiled in relation to all ICPPD programmes. - approves the academic aspects of all documentation, including programme development proposals, for submission to external accreditation, validation and/or audit agencies. - is accountable for the development and on-going review of academic quality assurance measures and academic standards, and for ensuring compliance with its policies and procedure. - ensures that ICPPD policies for access, transfer and progression; admission; assessments,

	examinations and awards; and staff development are fair, equitable and consistent. - reports the outcomes of all reviews and propose actions to the Board of Directors or nominated committee. - advises on the implementation of continuous improvement and national and international benchmarking. - has an important role in the development of policies that promote possible applied research opportunities, and particularly professional practice research, at ICPPD. - has an over-arching responsibility to ensure that all programmes, wherever delivered, apply and adopt consistent standards in terms of teaching, learning and assessment policies and procedures. - has oversight of Learner Appeals and Disciplinary Processes
Reporting Responsibility	The Academic Board makes reports to the Board of Directors in relation to all aspects of academic governance at the end of each academic year, and may be requested to report more frequently, on an ad hoc basis.
Quorum	50% + 1
Agenda	Set by the Registrar and Academic Director in consultation with the Chair
Frequency of Meetings	3 times per year Sub-Committee – ad-hoc basis as required

2.2.3 Terms of Reference for Executive Management Committee

Membership	Chair of Board of Directors College Manager Academic Director Registrar Senior Administration Officer The President may attend meetings in an observational role.
Chair	College Manager

Remit / Function	The role of the ICPPD Executive Management Committee is to ensure effective coordination and integration of all aspects of academic management and operations throughout ICPPD. An important function of the Executive Management Committee is the establishment of a shared culture, shared values and a shared understanding of roles throughout ICPPD.
Breadth of Responsibility	In the performance of its duties, the Executive Management Committee: - implements academic objectives, plans, priorities and standards to support the mission of the college. - clarifies executive responsibilities for implementation of plans. - monitors academic management and operations throughout ICPPD, including review of operational reports and monitoring operational performance. - monitors academic quality and standards and promoting standards of excellence. - reviews provision of resources to ensure programme quality e.g., tutoring staff, technological infrastructure, online teaching and learning resources. - monitors academic developments and implementation of special projects. - reviews academic and operational issues, agreeing appropriate responses and ensuring that corrective action is taken in a timely and effective manner. - develops and supports effective cooperation between members, and effective liaison between staff and Learners. - approves plans and proposals, as and when appropriate, for consideration by internal and

	external partners and collaborators. - identifies and implements the staff training and development policy.
Reporting Responsibility	The activities which routinely are linked to the operation of the College are reported to the Board of Directors through the College Manager.
Quorum	50% + 1
Agenda	Set by Chair
Frequency of Meetings	Monthly

2.2.4 Terms of Reference for Finance Advisory Board

Membership	Chair of Board of Directors, President, a minimum of one other director.
Remit / Function	A sub-committee of the Board of Directors nominated to examine in detail aspects of financial budgets and accounts.
Breadth of Responsibility	The Finance Advisory Board is responsible for exploration and support of the accounting processes in line with strategic plans. The responsibility of the Finance Advisory Board is to scrutinise and advise on precise financial details in line with the overall financial plans and proposals of the Board of Directors.
Reporting to	Board of Directors
Quorum	N/A
Agenda	Set by Chair
Frequency of Meetings	Ad hoc

2.2.5 Terms of Reference for Programme Boards

Membership	Academic Director (Chair), Registrar, Programme Leaders, Programme Tutors Learner Representatives attend for 1 meeting per year. The Academic Director and Registrar are ex officio members of the Programme Board(s). The President may attend meetings in an observational role. A designated administration staff member acts as secretary to Programme Boards. The chair may invite any party deemed relevant to the business of a meeting e.g., External Observer (to meet IACP course accreditation requirements).
Chair	Academic Director
Remit / Function	Programme Boards are operational committees constituted per programme which support the relevance and quality of the curriculum through a process of feedback and periodic review, consistent with the academic calendar. Leadership and responsibility for effective Programme Boards are under the aegis of the Academic Director.
Breadth of Responsibility	- A Programme Board - reviews all matters relating to the provision and conduct of the academic programme. - deliberates on academic policy, maintenance of standards, and administration of the relevant programme(s), with particular focus on consistency across delivery sites. - Reviews/monitors learner performance at each meeting and advises on appropriate corrective measures as required. - encourages staff to reflect on their teaching practices and on the quality of the learner experience. - considers the appropriateness of the mode of delivery (blended, face-to-face or fully online) to the related subject matter and content. - ensures that the aims and objectives of the course are clearly defined and examines

	progress towards these. - reviews detailed syllabi, ensures co-ordination across teaching programmes, and reviews arrangements for teaching, learning, assessment, examination and evaluation, access, transfer and progression. - advises on relevant resources: staffing, teaching environment – physical space and online platforms, academic supports, and learner scheduling and workload. - prepares and reviews documentation to support institutional and programmatic reviews and monitoring processes. - discusses issues relevant to liaison with relevant organisations and professional bodies, and appropriate client work sessions. - reports annually to the Academic Board (in particular through the compilation of the annual programme report). - obtains feedback from tutoring staff regarding any College or other developments relevant to syllabuses and assessments. - proof-reads and reviews assessment material. - determines and implements appropriate actions for issues identified in the external examiners report(s).

Reporting Responsibility	Programme Boards submit annual programme reports to the Academic Board at the end of each academic year, and may be requested to report more frequently, on an *ad hoc* basis.
Quorum	50% + 1
Agenda	Set by Chair
Frequency of Meetings	**BA Programme:** Twice per year for Full Programme Board Twice per year for Faculty Meetings **Other ICPPD programmes:** Annually

2.2.6 Terms of Reference for Examination Boards

Membership	Registrar (Chair), Academic Director, Programme Leaders, Programme Tutors External Examiner(s), Administration Staff The President may attend meetings in an observational role.
Chair	Registrar
Remit / Function	An Examination Board is established for each programme for which the College conducts assessment of learners, on a bi-yearly basis. The composition of the Examination Board is determined by and in accordance ICPPD procedures which have been based on current regulations and requirements of the relevant validating body, where appropriate. The number and composition of individual Examination Board varies depending on the nature of the academic programme. The Examination Boards consider and ratify the results of assessments conducted for the relevant programmes. Matters to be discussed by the Examination Boards include: • Determining if learners have been appropriately graded and classified. • Consideration of borderline grades/awards

	• Determination of eligibility for progression
Reporting Responsibility	Reporting to Academic Board
Agenda	Set by the Chair
Frequency of Meetings	Twice yearly – Summer and Autumn. Dates set at start of academic year.

2.2.7 Terms of Reference for Quality Assurance and Enhancement Committee

Membership	External QA Consultant, Registrar, Academic Director
Chair	Registrar
Remit / Function	The Quality Assurance and Enhancement Committee ensures that the ICPPD's approach to supporting quality assured academic practice permeates all academic and academic support functions and that programmes are delivered in accordance with robust Quality Assurance procedures.
Breadth of Responsibility	The QA and Enhancement Committee: - evaluates, reviews and revises Quality Assurance procedures within ICPPD. - monitors and reviews all processes designed to improve academic standards. - ensures ongoing quality processes are incorporated into the academic programmes.
Reporting Responsibility	To Academic Board by Registrar
Agenda	Set by the Chair
Frequency of Meetings	Annually or ad hoc as required.

2.2.8 Terms of Reference for Appeals Committee

Membership	External Chair (member of Academic Board), 1 other Academic Board member. Faculty member not involved with the appeal deemed suitable by Chair. A person external to ICPPD may sit on an Appeals Committee, subject to their suitability as assessed by the Chair. Minutes secretary.
Chair	External Chair as appointed by Academic Board
Remit / Function	In accordance with the Assessment Appeals Policy (QA Manual, Section C, Chapter 6) where an appeal is warranted, an appeals committee is established. The responsibility of the committee is to hear the learners request for an appeal and assess the appeal in the context of QA policies and procedures and ensure fair assessment processes and outcomes.
Breadth of Responsibility	To review, evaluate and uphold the QA policies while conducting and attending fairly to the appellant/learner grievance.
Reporting Responsibility	The appeals committee secretary (nominated by the external chair above) informs the Registrar of the outcome of the committee's deliberations in writing.
Agenda	Set by Chair in accordance with QA Manual/appeals policies.
Frequency of Meetings	As required

2.2.9 Terms of Reference for Internal Complaints Committee

Membership	Complaints Investigating Officer plus one other member of Executive Management Committee.
Remit / Function	In accordance with the Learner Complaints Policy – *Stage 2 Formal Process,* a Complaints Committee considers the complaint and the findings from the investigation to determine a fair resolution.
Reporting Responsibility	Outcomes from Learner Complaints are documented by the College manager. A report is compiled annually for the Board of Directors.
Frequency of Meetings	As required

2.2.10 Terms of Reference for Complaints Appeals Board

Membership	Chair (member of Board of Directors) Two other members of staff/boards/committees (administrative roles or academic roles depending on the nature of the complaint). An external person may be appointed at the discretion of the Board of the Directors.
Chair	Chair as appointed by Board of Directors
Remit / Function	The Complaints Appeals Board is a sub-committee of the Board of Directors which is convened by the Chair of the Board of Directors in the event of a request for appeal against the outcome of a Learner Complaint, as deliberated on in accordance with the Learner Complaints Policy – Stage 2 Formal Process.
Breadth of Responsibility	In accordance with *Learner Complaint Formal Process -Stage 3- Appeals Stage,* a Complaints Appeals Board is convened to review and consider whether a Learner Complaint meets the threshold for an appeal. Where grounds exist for an appeal, the Complaints Appeals Board conducts the appeal according to the Learner Complaints Policy.
Reporting Responsibility	The appointed committee reports directly to the Board of Directors through the appointed chair.
Frequency of Meetings	As required

2.2.11 Terms of Reference for Ethics Committee

Membership	No less than three representatives drawn from members of Academic Board or members of academic staff and others if required.
Chair	As nominated from within the members
Remit / Function	The Ethics Committee is a sub-committee of ICPPD's Academic Board and is convened when necessary to consider ethical issues as they arise.
Breadth of Responsibility	To ensure that the procedures for implementing and monitoring ethical policies are current and user friendly.
Reporting Responsibility	Registrar
Agenda	As agreed prior to meeting
Frequency of Meetings	As necessary

2.2.12 Terms of Reference for Research Ethics Committee

Membership	Academic Director, Programme Leader, Research Tutor, External Research Expert,

	Professional/Legal Expert (if required)
Chair	Academic Director
Remit / Function	The remit of the Research Ethics Committee is to - - oversee ICPPD learners research plans and projects. - approve research topics subject to ethical consideration, sensitivity and support for all involved. - support the learner in garnering appropriate research questions for their chosen research that is concurrent with counselling and psychotherapeutic practice and evolving trends.
Breadth of Responsibility	Identify and support the learner to ethically conduct research in accordance with good practice and ICPPD's Code of Conduct and those of validating and professionally bodies.
Reporting Responsibility	Academic Board
Agenda	N/A
Frequency of Meetings	At least once during academic year

2.2.13 Terms of Reference for Garda Vetting Committee

Membership	College Manager, Academic Director, Garda Vetting Officer – a designated Administration staff member.
Chair	College Manager
Remit / Function	To review and oversee Garda Vetting procedures and to ensure that ICPPD learners are approved prior to Fitness to Practice Meetings and commencement of Clinical work.
Breadth of Responsibility	The Garda Vetting Committee considers any Garda Vetting disclosures which may have implications for learners' progression on ICPPD programmes.
Reporting Responsibility	Academic Board
Frequency of Meetings	Annually

2.2.14 Terms of Reference for Marketing Working Group

Membership	College Manager, Marketing Co-Ordinator, President, Academic Director
Chair	College Manager
Remit / Function	Oversight of marketing campaign and recruitment strategies, marketing and promotion activities of ICPPD and programmes offered.
Breadth of Responsibility	The Marketing Working Group - is responsible for promoting ICPPD as a national reputable third level provider. - monitoring the marketing budget - liaising with contractor marketing experts - supports the Marketing and Recruitment Consultant to ensure ICPPD's marketing campaigns are effective and meet set targets. - conducting college Information Evenings - maintaining a public profile and presence on relevant advertising mediums, monitoring website and social media effectiveness, - conducting competitor analysis
Reporting Responsibility	Board of Directors by College Manager.
Frequency of	Bi-Monthly or as necessary

Meetings	

2.2.15 Terms of Reference for Admissions Panel

Membership	Academic Director, Programme Leaders, Programme/Core Tutors, Registrar, Administration Staff members.
Chair	Academic Director
Remit / Function	The Admissions Panel - monitors, reviews and develops selection systems including those based on prior learning and transfer policies. - has oversight of admissions procedures. - evaluates and reviews entry requirements as per the agreed Validation and Accreditation documentation. Academic Staff are the members of the BA Interview Panels.
Breadth of Responsibility	The Admissions Panel monitors practice, patterns and trends of admission and makes recommendations to Academic Board. Admissions Panel recommendations are made in the context of the requirements of the relevant awarding body (QQI) and professional body (IACP).
Reporting Responsibility	Academic Board
Frequency of Meetings	Annually to plan for anticipated admission and review admission policies post-intake.

2.3 Management and Staff Roles and Responsibilities

2.3.1 College President

The President's primary responsibility is to uphold the vision and ethos of ICPPD College and provide continuous leadership and direction for the planning and operation of all aspects of the College's programmes and services in collaboration with the Board of Directors. The President, with the Board of Directors, is responsible the advancement the organisation's strategic goals and priorities. The president will lead the organisation in the acquisition of resources, focusing particularly on the development and implementation of initiatives to attract new sources of financial support.

As the college leader, the president collaborates with a wide range of internal and external stakeholders to define the vision and set the direction for the organisation. As the champion of its reputation, the president articulates the strategic goals, vision and messages of ICPPD in order to build broad support for and ownership of aspirations among its many constituents, including faculty, staff, learners and alumni, local communities, government, business and industry employers, the media, and the general public.

The President promotes and develops good governance within the College compatible with and supportive of overall college governance structures and policies and leads the strategic development of the College in line with ICPPD's Strategic Plan. As President he supports the College budget, the enhancement of research, the attainment of national visibility and recognition for the College.

The President is an ex officio member of all Boards and Committees at ICPPD. Due to the College President being one of the Founders of ICPPD, and to separate the commercial and academic activities of the organisation, the president is an executive member of the Board of Directors and has a vote on

this Board. However, in relation to the academic processes at ICPPD the President can attend any Board/Committee/Meeting as an observer only.

In the role of College President, he holds the honorary position at the Conferring and Awards Ceremony and Graduation of Learners each year on behalf of QQI validated and internal programmes.

2.3.2 College Manager

The College Manager has responsibility for the efficient and effective management of the college. The College Manager is a member of, and accountable to and provides administrative support to the Board of Directors, and manages and directs ICPPD's academic, administrative and financial business. The College Manager takes the lead role in new business generation and promotion, and the development of strategic partnerships and community liaison.

The key responsibilities of the College Manager are to:

- manage the day-to-day business of the college prioritising Board of Directors policies and procedures, implement actions outlined by the Board of Directors and prepare a monthly report for the Board of Directors monthly meeting.
- work in partnership with the college team and with the board of directors to develop a strategic plan and subsequent yearly business plans.
- with the College Finance Officer, monitor the annual budget and report on potential budget variances.
- implement human resources best practices for the recruitment, retention, training and development and monitoring of all ICPPD staff.
- co-ordinate liaison arrangements between management and the College's staff.
- develop, implement, evaluate and modify, as required, job descriptions and contracts for all staff.
- promote the academic management and academic development of the College ensuring that ICPPD meet the requirement of Professional Academic Quality and Standards.
- develop and enhance the academic framework, infrastructure, standing, reputation and resource base of ICPPD.
- ensure technical support and training is provided to college staff, learners and tutors in the use of technology platforms e.g. Moodle, Zoom, Turnitin.
- manage academic operations, resources and relationships with collaborative partners.
- work in partnership with both in-house and external finance stakeholders to ensure profitability of courses offered and ensure value for money.
- manage for the leases, insurance, utility providers etc. of the premises utilised by ICPPD.
- procure and manage the IT infrastructure to align IT infrastructure with current and future business requirements and goals and with programme provision requirements, ensuring that all services provided have appropriate contracts/Service Level Agreements.
- to develop processes to ensure that required systems are being adhered to, that data collection provides demonstrable evidence of a Quality Approach and that the voice of all stakeholders is core to personal and professional academic programme delivery.
- ensure implementation of Health and Safety policies, and Equality, Diversity and Inclusion policies of the College.

2.3.3 Academic Director

The Academic Director is the academic head of ICPPD with key responsibility for the leadership of the academic direction of the College. The Academic Director ensures that all aspects of the College's academic portfolio continue to develop, by motivating and engaging staff at all levels, communicating proactively, and influencing internal stakeholders and external partners on behalf of ICPPD.

Specific responsibilities of the role include to:

- provide academic leadership, direction and management.
- coordinate and support the academic management and academic development of ICPPD.
- coordinate and support liaison arrangements between academic programme management and the college's administration/registrar's offices.
- lead and coordinate liaison arrangements with collaborative partners.
- oversee academic planning, development, delivery and monitoring of all programmes.
- develop and enhance of the academic framework, infrastructure, standing, reputation and resource base of ICPPD.
- uphold academic quality and standards and the academic integrity of programmes.
- ensure staff planning, development and scholarly activity.
- oversee college academic resources, in particular library and tutor training budgets.
- link with professional bodies, support professional accreditation to meet national requirements.

2.3.4 Registrar

The Registrar has responsibility for academic affairs within ICPPD, including responsibility for academic administration, academic regulations, academic quality and standards, academic records and liaison with accrediting bodies, which includes responsibility for co-ordinating academic relationships, validation events, programmatic reviews, College reviews and reporting arrangements.

The Registrar has responsibility for

- all aspects of academic administration, including admission and registration of learners; programme organisation and administration; coordination of learner assessment.
- organisation of examinations and examination board; recording, processing and communication of results
- communication and liaison with collaborative partners and accrediting bodies in relation institutional academic quality assurance practices
- academic regulations, in particular regulations governing learner admission, progression and graduation and teaching, learning and assessment; updating regulations as required and monitoring compliance with the requirements of accrediting bodies and the terms of programme approval.
- academic records, including responsibility for maintenance of academic files and records (digital and hard copy) and has ultimate responsibility for the reliability and integrity of all academic records.
- promoting and safeguarding Academic Integrity in assessment activities
- promoting and safeguarding Academic Integrity in assessment activities
- advise staff and collaborate with them in relation to academic developments, quality enhancement initiatives and continuing development of programmes, and promotion of the highest academic standards.

2.3.5 College Administration Staff

The College Administration Staff have operational responsibility for the administration function within the College. Duties of the College Administration Staff include:

- front-line support to learners and teaching staff
- supporting the College Manager and Academic Director with all College-related communications
- supporting the Academic Director and Registrar to uphold standards in relation to academic issues and QA policies.
- communicating with tutors and learners in relation to commencement, learner attendance,

timetables, programme delivery, assessment schedules, and general enquiries.
- processing, screening and administration of admissions practices for ICPPD programmes.
- co-ordination of academic processes and liaison with relevant stakeholders.
- secure and confidential maintenance of learner records.
- provision of instruction and support to learners and tutors in the use of technology platforms e.g. Moodle, Zoom, Turnitin.
- supporting ICPPD staff induction programme, particularly that for new Tutors with regards to college processes and procedures.
- procurement of college and general office requirements.
- liaison with external facilities for provision educational and academic resources
- administration support to the Academic, Programme and Examination Boards.
- General office administration duties.

The Administration Staff are members of the Executive Management Committee and perform the secretary roles to the Programme Boards, Academic Board and the Examination Boards.

2.3.6 Finance Officer

The Finance Officer has operational responsibility for the administration of the financial functions within the College. Reporting of monthly, bi-monthly and / or annual accounts to the Board of Directors is a critical to this role. Working with the College Manager and the Board of Directors, the Finance Officer will ensure that the college is run in a financially sound manner and will support the management of the company's financial planning and risk management by preparing and presenting monthly financial reports, cashflow, budgets, forecasts and analysis.
Key responsibilities include:

- monitoring budgets and reporting to the College Manager to address variances or issues arising.
- day-to-day bookkeeping and management of ICPPD cash and current accounts, including maintaining computerised accounts and management of cashflow.
- liaising with ICPPD's company accountants, auditors, banks revenue and other relevant organisations.
- monitoring of income/expenditure
- managing credit control and debit control.
- Processing of learner fees and payment plans.
- management of the College's petty cash system.
- administration of the payroll system and tax returns (including PAYE returns) including managing statutory sick pay and pensions in line with government regulations
- management of payments for the college, general office requirements and facilities.
- undertake any other duties as requested by the College Manager or Board of Directors.

2.3.7 Marketing Support & Recruitment Officer

The Marketing and Recruitment Officer is responsible for promoting ICPPD as a third level education provider and for marketing the programmes it offers.
The Marketing and Recruitment Officer has responsibility for ensuring ICPPD's presence on Social Media, for updating the ICPPD Website, for providing Competitor Analysis, arranging Information Evenings, collation and distribution of ICPPD's Encounter Newsletter and identifying other events that promote ICPPD as an organisation of excellence. The marketing support and recruitment officer is employed to perform a number of duties in relation to college promotion, including:

- development and delivery of a communications and marketing plan and promotional campaign for programmes within budget for the College.

- liaison with the college's external marketing contractor to ensure ICPPD programmes are promoted effectively through the website and social media platforms.
- maintenance and updating of the ICPPD website.
- promotion of the College's public profile and levels of awareness by the local community, the general public, partners, agencies, decision-makers and the media.
- ensuring the media, general public, and potential learners are aware of the College's academic and training programmes, and latest developments, through the distribution of press materials.
- gathering high-level and local intelligence, and to support the corporate utilisation of this information to further the aims and mission of ICPPD.

2.3.8 Clinical Practice Co-Ordinator(s)

The Clinical Practice Coordinator is responsible for the overall delivery and administration of the Clinical Practice module.
This includes:

- delivery of class content and advisory sessions
- feedback to trainee counsellors/psychotherapists, relevant College staff, and appropriate clinical practice organisations' representatives
- administration of clinical practice, including the storage of confidential reflections on practice/files (in accordance with the College's record management policies)
- monitoring learners' client work and supervised work
- conduct site-visits/evaluations of counselling venues/clinical practice organisations.
- collation of all reports including monitor external supervision log and provide feedback on trainees' development as counsellors/psychotherapists.
- conduct assessment and completion of clinical practice feedback sheets.

The Clinical Practice Coordinator is also a support person for the trainee counsellor/psychotherapist and is in regular contact to offer clarity and encouragement. They are also available to offer emergency supervision when required. The Clinical Practice Coordinator is supported by the relevant Programme Leader and accountable to the Academic Director.

2.3.9 Programme Leaders

The Programme Leader at ICPPD is a key support faculty member involved in the delivery of a specific college programme and with central involvement in admission, theory, skills' training, supervision and assessment, as relevant. The Programme Leader (as a Core Tutor) has central involvement in admission, course management, theory, skills' training, supervision and assessment. The Programme Leader supports the other programme staff including other Tutors, Clinical Practice Coordinator and In-house Supervisors (who are responsible for meeting criteria of professional bodies/professional accreditation).

Responsibilities of the Programme Leader include:

- teaching and assessment of the programme, preferably a minimum of 1 module with the cohort of learners for which they are programme leader.
- reporting to the Academic Director on programme-related and learner-related matters.
- on-going liaison with and support of learners.
- with the Core Tutor, facilitating Learner Support, Fitness-to-Practice and end of year Progression meetings with learners and any ad-hoc individual learner meetings, as necessary.
- leading the learner induction for the relevant programme/cohort.
- supporting the college policies and procedures.
- contributing to programmatic review processes.

- being familiar with the current versions of the relevant Professional Bodies' Codes of Ethics.

2.3.10 Core Tutors

Core Tutors at ICPPD are essential in providing support to students throughout the course. Core Tutors have central involvement in admission, course management, theory, skills training, supervision and assessment. They are crucial to the professional formation of the trainee Counsellors/Psychotherapists and as such undertake the bulk of training and assessment.

Core tutors are expected to be available to support the admissions process at interviews and support the Programme Leader in conducting Learner Support Meetings, Fitness-to-Practice (Year 2) and end of Year Progression Meetings.

To ensure that individuals are appropriately qualified to become Core Staff members there are a number of requirements for individuals to fulfil in accordance with IACP course accreditation criteria:

- That the individual has substantial experience of supervised counselling for at least five years after qualifying and be currently practicing.
- Has trained as a trainer.
- Has at least 4 years' experience in counselling training.
- Has regular external supervision and external consultation on training work.
- Has had personal therapy either individual or group.
- Has an accredited theoretical background.
- Has a commitment to ongoing professional development.

2.3.11 Programme Tutors

Tutors are employed by the college and are selected on the basis of their academic and professional qualifications, teaching and clinical experience and person-related skills. All Tutors are required to attend a college induction seminar (and any subsequent induction/training sessions, as required by Academic Director and Academic Board).
In the performance of their duties at ICPPD, Tutors are required to:

- engage with college processes including the induction and staff development processes.
- assist in the development of modules and attend programme development events with relevant accrediting bodies.
- prepare for, deliver and assess modules/programmes.
- collect and provide feedback to Programme Leaders, Academic Director and other staff as required.
- support the College's quality assurance and monitoring activities, including attendance at institutional and programmatic review meetings.
- attend College meetings where required.

Tutors are highly appropriately and experienced in their field of expertise and may deliver training at various levels in the College. They are responsible for the day-to-day delivery of programmes at ICPPD, and for ensuring the quality of the delivery of those programmes, under the guidance of the Academic Director and the respective Programme Boards.

2.3.12 Disability Officer

The role of the Disability Officer is to ensure that the Quality Assurance procedures, standards and documentation are inclusive and accessible to individuals with disabilities.

The responsibilities of the role include:

- coordinating and delivering support services for students with disabilities, ensuring that the college meets its obligations under the Equal Status Acts 2000–2018, the Disability Act 2005, and relevant national policies on access and inclusion in higher education.
- assessing the individual needs of students who disclose a disability, coordinating and implementing reasonable accommodation and supporting inclusive teaching and learning practices.
- working in close collaboration with academic and support staff to promote a universally designed learning environment

2.3.13 Suicide Awareness Officer

The role of the Suicide Awareness Officer is to provide support, training and information related to suicide prevention, intervention and postvention to the ICPPD community – learners, tutors and staff.
The responsibilities of the role include:

- facilitation of workshops/information seminars on topics suicide and self-harm prevention and intervention, as well as suicide bereavement.
- provision of support to individuals, groups or cohorts affected by recent suicide bereavement.
- advising ICPPD Board of Directors on best practice in relation to suicide awareness

The Suicide Awareness Officer provides this service as required by the college and therefore can be contacted through the College Manager or Academic Director.

2.3.14 Data Protection Officer (DPO)

At ICPPD the role of DPO is assumed by the College Manager.

Role and Responsibilities of the DPO:

1. Ensure GDPR Compliance

- Oversee the implementation of data protection policies, privacy notices, and data retention schedules.
- Monitor day-to-day compliance across all departments (admissions, teaching, HR, finance, alumni relations, online platforms).
- Online Learning Platforms: Ensuring platform providers are GDPR-compliant, including video conferencing tools, LMS systems, and third-party apps.
- Ensure that external service providers (processors) also meet GDPR standards.

2. Advise on Key Processing Activities

- Guide management and staff on lawful bases for processing, consent management, data subject rights, and DPIAs.
- Review international data transfers and ensure safeguards are in place (Standard Contractual Clauses, adequacy decisions, etc.).

3. Facilitate Data Subject Rights - Manage subject access requests, data rectification, erasure requests, and other rights requests from students, staff, or third parties.

4. Liaison with Supervisory Authority - Act as primary point of contact for the Irish Data Protection Commission (DPC), including managing any potential data breaches.

5. Training & Awareness Conduct training sessions for academic staff, administrative personnel, and management to foster a data protection culture.

Chapter 3 Recruitment, Selection, Development, Support and Management of Staff

3.1 Human Resources Policy and Procedures

ICPPD's HR procedures support ICPPD management to maximise staff and organisational performance to achieve the College's vision and objectives. ICPPD has a duty of care to implement effective policies and procedures for safeguarding the welfare of its staff and learners in accordance with all relevant statutory requirements and guidelines. In order to achieve this ICPPD ensures that College staff are carefully selected, screened, trained, supervised and supported.

3.1.1 Review/Audit of HR Policies and Procedures

Human Resource processes are fully integrated into ICPPD's Quality Assurance system to ensure alignment between staff management, programme delivery and learner outcomes.

ICPPD is committed to ensuring that HR Policies and procedures are adhered to and used in a proper and adequate manner. It endeavours to continuously review the process on an annual basis so that the best practice is always applied. This review will be conducted by the Board of Directors through the College Manager.

3.2 Staff Selection

ICPPD engages in recruitment processes to:

- replace an existing/approved position, including maternity/sick leave cover, etc.
- establish a new position.

The College Manager prepares a rationale/justification for the proposed post (including academic posts), taking into consideration the necessity for the current proposed post, the tasks to be undertaken within the role, and the skills required to undertake the job.

The proposed post is discussed within the Executive Management Committee and then proposed to the Board of Directors to ensure that it will meet both present and future needs of ICPPD, and to determine if the role specification attached will bring optimal benefits for the College.

The recruitment process is overseen and administered by the College Manager. A recruitment file is opened for each vacancy to be advertised. Information kept on a recruitment file includes

- correspondence relating to the justification/approval for filling the post.
- description of the post (job description), including minimum selection requirements (personal specification – experience, qualifications and training, required knowledge, skills, competencies and personal attributes), reporting responsibilities, and salary scale.
- a copy of the advertisement and a record of where it was placed (the advertisement must be in accordance with the requirements of ***Section A: Chapter 4, 4.2, ICPPD as an Equal Opportunities Employer.***
- all the application forms/CVs submitted.
- any notes made as part of the short-listing, pre-selection, and interview processes.
- correspondence regarding reference checking
- correspondence regarding approval of the appointment, and a copy of the letter of appointment

Relevant material is retained on file, after the date of appointment in accordance with ICPPD's record

management policy (reference ***Section C, Chapter 10, Data Protection, Record Management and Retention at ICPPD).***

The job description and information about the organisation, are provided to each applicant. Applications may be shortlisted, as appropriate, by the function head in consultation with the College Manager. Criteria used for shortlisting reflect the job specification.

Candidates who appear to meet all shortlisting criteria are invited to interview as soon as possible after the advertised closing date (the interview must be conducted in accordance with the requirements of ***Section A: Chapter 4, 4.2, ICPPD as an Equal Opportunities Employer.***

A selection panel containing at least two members, one of whom is an appropriate member of college management, is established to carry out the selection interview process, to explore the information stated on the application form, and to assess the applicant's suitability for the post. (Every effort is made to facilitate gender balance within the selection panel composition.)

A letter of regret is sent to any applicant whose application is received after the closing date, to those who are not successful in the short-listing phase, and to those unsuccessful at interview.

An offer letter is sent to the successful candidate. The College Manager, in consultation with the Board of Directors, must approve any appointment before any formal offers are made, and this offer is subject to the receipt and confirmation of relevant supporting documentation (including reference checks and confirmation of qualifications/experience).

On offer of the post, applicants are expected to supply the names of two referees, who shall be contacted to testify as to the individual's character, suitability to the role, and any issue which may impact on their ability to perform the required tasks. Specifically, the referee will be requested to provide confirmation that the applicant held a particular position, for a particular duration, as stated on their application form, whether their service was satisfactory, and whether the employer would re-employ the applicant.

The proposed staff member is issued with individual specific terms and conditions of employment within an employment contract.

ICPPD maintain all information supplied by the applicant in a confidential manner, and it may be viewed only by persons directly involved in the recruitment procedure.

3.2.1 Academic Staff Selection

Additional criteria relating to the selection of academic staff in adherence with IACP course accreditation criteria in relation to Course Staff and Core Staff.

Tutoring staff are required to:

- Have substantial demonstratable experience in the relevant area of expertise.
- Understand the principles of adult education and have trained as trainers.
- Have a demonstrable commitment to ongoing professional development.

To be considered as a Core Tutor, the following criteria must be met:

- Substantial experience of supervised counselling / psychotherapy for at least five years after accreditation and be currently practicing.
- Understand the principles of adult education, how adults learn.

- Have trained as trainers.
- At least 4 years' experience in counselling / psychotherapy training.
- Attend regular external supervision and external consultation on training work.
- Have had Personal Therapy.
- Commit to ongoing personal and professional development.

Core staff must be familiar with and agree to work within the current version of the IACP's Code of Ethics and Practice.

3.3 Probation Period

All staff appointments are conditional on the successful completion of a trial period, the length of which should be decided at the outset, based on post duration (usually 6 months). This period provides ICPPD with an opportunity to assess the suitability of a new worker to work within the College and to determine their commitment to the organisation.

If there are performance issues during the probation period, a meeting is held between the staff member and the College Manager. This meeting provides an opportunity for either party to seek clarification on any issue or address any problems that may be hindering the probationer's performance. The outcome of this meeting may be to put corrective actions in place, to extend the probation period, or to terminate the probationer's employment.

Where the employee's Garda clearance is outstanding on their taking up a post at ICPPD, the outcome of this vetting process is monitored through the probation process. An additional meeting may be scheduled to address the outcome.

On conclusion of the probation period, a meeting is held between the staff member and the College Manager. If the probationer's performance is considered satisfactory to date, this meeting will result in the conclusion of the probation period. If there are performance issues during the probation, it provides an opportunity for either party to seek clarification on any issue or address any problems that may be hindering the probationer's performance. The outcome of this meeting may be to put corrective actions in place, to extend the probation period, or to terminate the probationer's employment.

Records in relation to a member of staff's probation period are retained on the staff member's file, in accordance with the ICPPD's record management policy (reference ***Section C, Chapter 10, Data Protection, Record Management and Retention at ICPPD***).

Owing to the nature of the Tutor appointments (6-weeks' teaching plus assessment and feedback period), the administration and management of probation is handled differently to full-time/part-time staff. Tutor performance is monitored through a number of ICPPD processes including

- consultation between Academic Director and College Manager
- informal communication with learners
- formal learner feedback
- Programme Board discussions
- overall performance and reliability as evidenced during their time at ICPPD, through consultation with the Academic Director

On conclusion of the Tutor's module delivery, a review meeting is held between the staff member and the Academic Director and College Manager. If the Tutor's performance is considered satisfactory to date, this meeting will result in further contracts for the Tutor, subject to module schedules and areas of expertise. If there are performance issues during the initial module delivery, it provides an opportunity for either party to seek clarification on any issue or address any problems that may be hindering the Tutor's

performance. The outcome of this meeting may be to put corrective actions in place, to extend the probation/review period, or to terminate any further engagement of the Tutor by ICPPD.

3.4 Induction

ICPPD is committed to the induction of staff to facilitate their effective integration into/across the College for the mutual benefit of both parties. Once the successful applicant takes up their position at ICPPD, they are required to undertake the induction programme. All staff, both full- and part-time, at all levels within the College and those returning from long-term absence/leave are required to undertake this training.

In accordance with best practice, ICPPD's induction programme contains the following elements

- the organisation's history/vision/mission, its programmes/services, its culture and values
- orientation (physical) - where the facilities are, including outreach venue details, if/as appropriate
- orientation (organisational) - how the employee fits into the team, relevant reporting structure(s), and how the role fits with the organisation's strategy and goals
- roles and responsibilities of other functions within the organisation, and how the employee fits within that, including cross-functional responsibility (meet in person or through the use of technology)
- academic and administrative procedures and regulations
- health and safety information and requirements
- explanation of terms and conditions of employment, including HR and CPD policies, procedures and regulations
- a clear outline of the job/role requirements.

Records in relation to a staff member's induction programme participation are retained on the staff members file, in accordance with the ICPPD's record management policy (reference ***Section C, Chapter 10, Data Protection, Record Management and Retention at ICPPD***).

3.4.1 Induction of Teaching Staff

Faculty Induction Sessions are scheduled at the commencement of each Academic Year for all members of faculty, new and existing, to embed policies and procedures relating to the programme delivery, teaching and learning strategies, assessment strategies etc.

Individual Tutor Induction Sessions - All newly recruited tutors attend an individual Induction Session with the Academic Director to provide specific focus on their module. Where a new tutor has been recruited for a module, any tutor currently teaching this module at another centre will participate in the induction session for the new tutor, providing valuable mentoring and support and helping to ensure consistency across centres and cohorts.

3.5 Staff Development Plan including Continuous Professional Development (CPD)

ICPPD is a 'learning community' where all are involved in a continuous process of improvement and enrichment. Staff Continuous Professional Development (CPD) is an essential element of the College's policies and procedures. ICPPD has a policy of supporting staff with a variety of training, educational and development opportunities, and the College is committed to fostering a positive climate for continuous learning.

ICPPD is committed to maintaining a structured and strategic approach to staff development to support the effective design, development, delivery, and quality assurance of its programmes, including those delivered through blended learning modalities. The Staff Development Plan is devised in the context of the ***ICPPD Strategic Plan 2026-2030*** incorporating the ***Blended Learning Strategy 2026-2030***. This ensures that all staff and tutors maintain the competencies required to deliver high-quality teaching, learning,

assessment, and learner support in both face-to-face and online environments.

Staff development at ICPPD encompasses induction, probation, appraisal, and Continuous Professional Development (CPD), and is coordinated to ensure ongoing enhancement of staff capability at individual, team and institutional levels.

3.5.1 Objectives of the Staff Development Plan

The objectives of the Staff Development Plan are to:

- Ensure that all staff are appropriately qualified, competent, and supported to undertake their roles
- Support the development of staff competencies in blended learning, including online pedagogy and the effective use of digital technologies
- Align staff development activities with institutional strategic objectives, including those named in the Blended Learning Strategic Plan.
- Promote a culture of continuous improvement, reflective practice, and lifelong learning
- Ensure that staff remain current in their discipline, professional practice, and teaching methodologies

3.5.2 Roles and Responsibilities for Staff Development

Responsibility for staff development is clearly defined as follows:

- **Board of Directors:** Approves overall staff development strategy and associated resourcing.
- **Executive Management Committee:** Oversees implementation of the Staff Development Plan and ensures alignment with institutional Strategic Plans.
- **Academic Director:** Identifies academic staff development needs, particularly in relation to teaching, learning, assessment, and blended learning delivery; designs the annual CPD programme in consultation with Programme Boards and tutors.
- **College Manager:** Coordinates implementation of staff development initiatives, including resource allocation and operational planning.
- **Programme Boards:** Identify programme-specific development needs, including those arising from learner feedback, programme review, and external developments.
- **Tutors and Staff Members:** Engage in required staff development activities, maintain records of CPD, and ensure ongoing professional competence, including in blended learning delivery.

In order to fulfil these roles effectively, staff are required to demonstrate specific competencies, particularly in the context of blended learning delivery.

3.5.3 Teaching Competencies and Requirements for ICPPD Faculty

Staff competence in face-to-face, blended and online teaching is evidenced through induction completion records, CPD participation, peer review, learner feedback, and annual appraisal outcomes.

Teaching competencies are not static and are subject to ongoing monitoring through the College's Quality Assurance processes, including programme monitoring, learner feedback, peer observation (where

applicable), and annual appraisal. Where development needs are identified, appropriate support, training, or performance improvement measures are implemented to ensure continued fitness to deliver teaching, learning, and assessment in blended and online environments.

Staff who do not currently meet these requirements will be supported to undertake appropriate training prior to or during their engagement in blended learning delivery.

Detailed operational requirements, including minimum competency thresholds and mandatory training, are specified in **Section C, Chapter 4 - 4.3.10.**

3.5.3.1 Teaching Competencies for face-to-face contexts

ICPPD requires that all staff involved in the delivery of face-to-face programmes demonstrate competence in the following areas:

- Principles of classroom-based pedagogy, andragogy, and participatory learning approaches
- Effective facilitation of in-person teaching sessions, including classroom management and learner engagement
- Planning and delivery of structured, interactive, and inclusive face-to-face lessons
- Use of appropriate teaching resources, materials, and classroom technologies
- Communication and interpersonal skills to support diverse learner needs and promote active participation
- Design and implementation of fair, valid, and reliable assessment methods in a face-to-face context
- Awareness of accessibility, inclusivity, and learner support requirements within physical learning environments

3.5.3.2 Teaching Competencies for Blended Learning contexts

ICPPD requires that all staff involved in the delivery of blended learning programmes demonstrate competence in the following areas:

- Principles of online and blended pedagogy, andaragogy and paragogy
- Effective facilitation of synchronous online classes
- Use of the Virtual Learning Environment (e.g. Moodle) and associated digital tools (Zoom)
- Online learner engagement and communication strategies
- Design and delivery of online and blended assessments
- Awareness of accessibility, inclusivity, and learner support requirements in online environments

3.5.4 Continuous Professional Development (CPD)

CPD forms a core component of the Staff Development Plan and includes any activity that enhances staff knowledge, skills and professional practice.

CPD refers to structured and informal learning activities undertaken by individuals, teams or organisations to improve skills, knowledge and abilities in the workplace and to enhance professional effectiveness.

Faculty are required to maintain a high level of currency in both aspects of the teaching role and are

supported, where appropriate, through the Training and Development Fund, to access CPD at subject and specialist level.

CPD also supports collaborative learning and professional engagement across the College community and contributes to institutional development at individual, team, and organisational levels.

CPD Mechanisms include:

- Pursuing formal qualifications using taught and/or research models (including doctoral research)
- Attendance and participation in conferences and seminars both national and international
- Participation in short courses relevant to their subject area/discipline or area of responsibility in the College
- Representation on external working groups, boards or committees relevant to the College's academic activity
- Internal training in teaching, learning, assessment, and digital education
- Regular staff monitoring and professional engagement activities

An annual CPD programme is developed and costed by the Executive Management Committee and approved by the Board of Directors. This programme reflects identified institutional and programme-level needs, including those relating to blended learning.

All staff are required to participate in CPD activities. Engagement in CPD is considered mandatory and is supported, where appropriate, through the College's Training and Development Fund.

All tutors have access to a "Tutor CPD Resources" Folder in Moodle to facilitate the sharing of professional development materials including videos, journals, articles and training resources. This resource supports continuous professional development by enabling access to curated learning materials and peer-shared content. Engagement with these materials complements, but does not replace, formal CPD activities recorded through the College's Staff Development Register, ensuring that staff maintain currency in their professional and pedagogical practice as ICPPD tutors.

The CPD programme supports development across all College functions and is designed to align with professional standards, quality assurance requirements, and institutional values of respect, integrity, inclusivity, diversity, innovation, and excellence.

The College strives to provide short courses or seminars internally or externally on various topics related to pedagogy, assessment, quality enhancement, or Equality, Diversity and Inclusion awareness etc. ICPPD encourages the use of resources and training events provided by *National Forum for the Enhancement of Teaching and Learning in Higher Education* or the *Association for Higher Education Access & Disability* to provide an opportunity for staff training and development.

3.5.4.1 CPD in Teaching and Learning Approaches

The aim of staff development in teaching and learning approaches is to enhance the quality of the learning experience for all learners and to support continual enhancement of teaching practice at ICPPD, including the effective use of technology.

Academic Staff who do not hold a formal qualification in teaching will be supported to undertake appropriate training in consultation with the Academic Director and College Manager. All such training must be aligned with the Learning, Teaching and Assessment Strategies.

3.5.4.2 Research (Academic Staff)

ICPPD recognises the importance of Research within an institution of higher education and facilitates and encourages. ICPPD sees engagement with research as an opportunity to update staff knowledge, which benefits the College as a whole, and supports the development of theory and practice within the field of counselling and psychotherapy, and in applied academic practice.

The majority of ICPPD Tutors are engaged in their own personal research, to meet their professional CPD objectives. This ongoing research informs Tutors' teaching and practice on the programme and, thereby, supports the College's teaching and learning strategy.

Approval for proposed Research projects is required from Academic Board in relation to research by staff or research which proposes to use ICPPD learner feedback. While ICPPD is conscious of its limits in relation to its right to control the personal research of contract staff; potential conflict between personal research and 'ICPPD led' research and/or ICPPD's mission, is identified at the time of contract engagement and during annual staff appraisal process (reference ***section 3.6*** below), and the Academic Board arbitrate in relation to any potential conflict identified.

All research procedures, and associated College activity, are monitored and reviewed by the Executive Management Committee, and must ultimately be approved by the Academic Board. ICPPD has established a Research Ethics Committee to oversee the College's stakeholders' research activities. ***(See Section A, Chapter 2, 2.2.11 – Terms of reference of Research Ethics Committee)***

Research activity undertaken by staff is separate from contractual employment obligations unless explicitly specified in role descriptors.

3.5.5 Planning, Monitoring and Review

Staff Development needs are identified through:

- Annual staff appraisal processes
- Programme Board discussions
- Learner feedback
- Programme monitoring and review activities
- Strategic and environmental analysis

A Staff Development Register is maintained to record all staff development activities, including CPD participation and compliance with professional requirements.

Staff are required to maintain individual records of external CPD and provide updates to the College on a regular basis. Staff CVs are updated annually to reflect relevant development.

The effectiveness of the Staff Development Plan is reviewed annually by the Executive Management Committee to ensure alignment with institutional objectives and evolving requirements in blended learning and higher education practice.

3.5.6 Supporting Blended Learning Delivery

ICPPD provides targeted staff development to support blended learning, including:

- Training in the use of digital platforms and tools

- Guidance on online teaching methodologies and learner engagement
- Support for the design and development of digital learning resources
- Opportunities to share best practice and resources through internal platforms (e.g. Moodle staff resources)

This ensures that staff are equipped to provide an equivalent and high-quality learning experience across both online and face-to-face components of programmes.

3.5.7 Integration with Blended Learning Quality Assurance Framework

The Staff Development Plan operates as part of ICPPD's broader Quality Assurance framework.

Staff engaged in blended or online delivery are required to maintain ongoing fitness to teach in digital environments, including adherence to professional ethics, safeguarding requirements, and digital conduct standards. Compliance with these requirements is monitored through staff development records, learner feedback, appraisal processes, and programme quality assurance mechanisms.

Operational requirements are detailed in associated policies, including ***Section C, Chapter 4 - 4.3.10*** and related procedures, relating to:

- Programme delivery
- Staff competencies
- Learner support
- Digital resource development

Together, these policies ensure a coordinated, consistent, and institution-wide approach to the effective design, delivery, and support of blended learning programmes.

The Staff Development Plan is reviewed annually through the Executive Management Committee and is formally integrated into ICPPD's Quality Assurance cycle, including Programme Boards, Annual Monitoring, and Academic Board reporting.

3.6 Staff Appraisal

All College staff are supported in identifying and developing their professional learning and development needs in line with the requirements of a higher education teaching and learning environment and the College's Quality Assurance Framework, including QQI expectations for teaching, learning, assessment, and programme delivery in blended and/or flexible learning contexts.

ICPPD operates a structured annual appraisal and professional development process. This is conducted by the College Manager and the Academic Director. The appraisal provides a formal, confidential, and developmental forum for reflective dialogue on performance, achievement of agreed objectives, and contribution to teaching, learning, assessment, research, administration, student support, and quality assurance activities.

Within this process, particular attention is given to staff capability and effectiveness in blended, online, and technology-enhanced learning environments, including engagement with digital learning platforms, online pedagogies, and assessment practices appropriate to blended delivery modes in line with QQI expectations and good practice guidelines.

The appraisal process also provides an opportunity to identify any factors affecting professional performance and to agree appropriate supports, development actions, or resources required to enhance staff effectiveness.

Individual staff development needs identified through appraisal or ongoing professional dialogue are considered in the development of the College's annual Continuous Professional Development (CPD) plan. CPD priorities are aligned with institutional strategic objectives, programme delivery requirements, learner needs, and quality assurance obligations, including the ongoing enhancement of blended learning provision.

Approved CPD activities are incorporated into the staff development plan and supported within the College's staff development budget, where appropriate and feasible, in order to ensure sustained capacity building and quality enhancement across all modes of delivery.

3.7 Consistency of Approach

ICPPD applies a consistent set of HR policies, procedures, and quality assurance safeguards to all staff recruitment and appointment processes, regardless of whether staff are employed on a permanent, fixed-term, temporary, or contract basis.

These safeguards are applied uniformly to ensure fairness, transparency, and compliance with organisational and regulatory requirements, including those relevant to higher education provision.

Where staff are engaged through external recruitment agencies, ICPPD ensures that such appointments are subject to the same HR standards and quality assurance requirements as directly recruited staff. The College requires that agencies verify and provide appropriate supporting documentation, including (where applicable) evidence of qualifications, references, and Garda vetting confirmation in accordance with Irish statutory requirements and College policy.

This approach ensures that all staff, regardless of recruitment route, meet the required standards of suitability, competence, and compliance necessary for participation in the delivery of higher education programmes.

3.8 Personnel/HR Files

All procedures for staff development, and associated requests, are monitored and reviewed by the Executive Management Committee, and must ultimately be approved by the Board of Directors.

The College Manager maintains all necessary records, including copies of certification, information on training courses and other relevant training materials, verification of training attended and budget allocation for training and development of staff, in accordance with the College's Record Management policy *(reference **Section C, Chapter 10, Data Protection, Record Management and Retention at ICPPD**)*.

Individual staff members are required to maintain their own records in relation to any CPD programmes they may have undertaken externally and provide this information to ICPPD on a regular basis. Staff CVs are updated on an annual basis to reflect any relevant new academic, professional, QA or administration qualifications or CPD.

Chapter 4 Policies under the Remit of the Board of Directors

4.1 Equality, Dignity and Inclusion Policy

In accordance with the Employment Equality Acts 1998-2015, ICPPD will not discriminate as an employer on the grounds of gender, marital status, religious belief, sexual orientation, family status, age, disability, race, and membership of the traveller community.

This Policy applies to all ICPPD programmes and activities, regardless of delivery mode, including face-to-face, blended, synchronous online learning and extends to all associated academic, administrative and support functions.

The nature of ICPPD programmes promotes a non-judgemental attitude and acceptance of the uniqueness of each individual. ICPPD undertakes to develop awareness among all participants in the educational process of the need to promote dignity and respect for all current and future staff and Learners.
Strategies to achieve this goal include:

(a) encouraging the eradication of stereotyping and discrimination through a co-ordinated action plan to raise awareness of these issues

(b) setting up a programme of obligatory staff development which will ensure that individual employees
- are obliged to co-operate with any measures introduced by ICPPD to promote equal opportunity
- must not themselves, either directly or indirectly, discriminate against any fellow employees, job applicants or learners or harass or intimidate them in any way

(c) providing assertiveness, stress management training and other relevant supports for staff to enable them to interact with greater confidence in engaging with staff and Learners.

In accordance with the Employment Equality Acts 1998-2015 and the Equal Status Acts 2000- 2015 , ICPPD as an educational and training provider, will not discriminate on the grounds of gender, marital status, family status, age disability, sexual orientation, race, religion, and membership of the Traveller community, in the provision of goods and services (including professional or trade services; access to education; facilities for cultural activities).

The Equal Status Acts (2000-2015) places certain requirements on schools and educational institutions in relation to how they deliver their services. The Equal Status Acts specify four areas in which an education institution must not discriminate:

1. the admission of a learner, including the terms or conditions of the admission of a learner,
2. the access of a learner to a course, facility or benefit provided by the school,
3. any other term or condition of participation in the school and
4. the expulsion of a learner or any other sanction.

ICPPD undertakes to encourage learners to have a non-discriminatory, non-stereotyped view of themselves, of society, and their roles within it. Strategies to achieve this goal will include

(a) encouraging a widening of learners' educational experiences

(b) eradicating persistent stereotypes from textbooks, teaching materials and guidance by establishing guidelines for in-house production and through replacement of material containing stereotypes by non-stereotyped material

(c) encouraging learners to diversify their career choices on a non-stereotyped basis

(d) ICPPD undertaking to make every effort to eradicate incitement to hatred and violence towards any group in whatever form it takes

(e) ICPPD demonstrates its commitment to equality, diversity and inclusion by using inclusive, non-discriminatory and gender-neutral language in all internal and external communications. This includes ensuring that language and imagery reflect and respect diversity across gender, race, ethnicity, disability, age, sexual orientation and cultural backgrounds. The College will actively strive to ensure that all materials—such as documents, posters, promotional content and publications—portray individuals in a fair, respectful and non-stereotypical manner, and are accessible to a wide range of audiences.

ICPPD undertakes to ensure the implementation of these objectives, which will be subject to monitoring, evaluation and revision as appropriate.

4.1.1 Definitions

(a) **Discrimination:** Discrimination can be either direct or indirect (reference the Employment Equality Act, 2004).

Direct Discrimination: Less favourable treatment for people that is explicitly related to any of the discriminatory grounds outlined in the legislation.

Indirect Discrimination: Discrimination is indirect where a person is obliged to comply with a requirement or condition of employment normally applicable to all employees which is not however essential to the job and which a substantially higher proportion of persons of the other sex or otherwise not a member of the relevant protected category is able to comply.

(b) **Victimisation:** This clause prohibits a person being penalised or treated less favourably because of pursuing their rights to equal treatment, supporting action or giving notice of intention to take or support action under equality legislation.

4.1.2 Policy Statement

1. ICPPD is committed to providing a safe working and learning environment in which all employees and learners have the opportunity to fulfil their potential with dignity. Such an environment should be free of all forms of bullying, harassment and discrimination The scope of this policy extends to all delivery locations and learning environments, including off-site locations and virtual or online learning environments and to college staff attendance at conference or trade shows

2. It is recognised by ICPPD that bullying, harassment and discrimination in the working or learning environment can seriously damage a person's mental and physical health and well-being. Accordingly, ICPPD regards any complaint of alleged bullying, harassment or discrimination as a serious matter which may, if substantiated, lead to the College disciplinary procedures being invoked.

3. ICPPD recognises the importance of balancing the freedoms of expression and intellectual enquiry, which are part of the ethos of higher education, with ensuring that these freedoms are not abused so as to leave members of the College community feeling bullied, harassed or discriminated against.

4. Once a complaint of bullying, harassment or discrimination has been made, any form of victimisation

arising out of the complaint will be taken seriously and can itself lead to disciplinary action.

5. Complaints which are malicious and unfounded may also be subject to disciplinary procedures.

6. This policy applies to all ICPPD staff and learners and all visitors and contractors and to all ICPPD events and activities, whether in the Athlone building or off site.

7. In formulating this policy ICPPD has had regard to the relevant legislation and publications including the Employment Equality Act, 1998 (Code Of Practice) (Harassment) Order, 2002, SI 78, the Industrial Relations Act, Code Of Practice Detailing Procedures For Addressing Bullying In The Workplace, Order, 2002, SI 17, and the Code Of Practice On The Prevention Of Bullying At Work Under The Safety, Health and Welfare At Work Act, 1989.

8. Using the ICPPD procedure will not affect the complainant's right to make a complaint under the Employment Equality Acts 1998-2015.

9. An employee will not be victimised or subject to sanction for making a complaint in good faith or for giving evidence in proceedings.

4.1.3 Aims of the Dignity and Equality Policy

Through the implementation of this policy, ICPPD aims to:

1. Foster a working and learning environment where individuals and groups treat one another with dignity and respect.

2. Eliminate all forms of offensive conduct, raise awareness of the effects of such conduct on individuals and their environment, and provide a climate in which employees and learners feel able to raise complaints of bullying, harassment or discrimination without fear of ridicule or victimisation.

3. Ensure that all employees and learners are aware of behaviour that may constitute bullying, harassment or discrimination and their responsibilities for avoiding and/or preventing such behaviour.

4. Ensure that all employees and learners understand that bullying, harassment and discrimination are unacceptable; that such behaviour will be challenged, and that disciplinary action may be taken in circumstances where informal attempts at resolution have failed, and a formal complaint is upheld.

5. Provide arrangements to enable complaints of alleged bullying, harassment or discrimination to be fully investigated in a manner that recognises the sensitivity of the issues raised and the rights of the parties involved.

6. Ensure that all complaints and allegations are dealt with fairly and equitably with the appropriate confidentiality.

7. Encourage internal and informal resolution of complaints.

4.1.4 The Legal Framework

The Employment Equality Acts, 1998-2015 and the Equal Status Acts 2000-2015 outlaws harassment (any act or conduct which is unwelcome and reasonably regarded as offensive, humiliating or intimidating)

and discrimination (less favourable treatment) of persons on 9 specified grounds, which are – gender, marital status, family status, sexual orientation, religion, age, disability, race (including colour, nationality, ethnic and natural origin), and traveller community membership. ICPPD as an employer is legally bound to comply with these Acts.

Potential harassment includes but not limited to spoken words, gestures, or the production, display, or circulation of written material/pictures. It is important to remember that the term 'harassment' describes unfair or prejudicial behaviour, decisions or assessments. Additionally, harassment may be of a sexual, racial, personal or physically violent nature.

Bullying is also considered a type of harassment comprising repeated inappropriate behaviour, direct or indirect, whether verbal, physical or otherwise, conducted by one or more persons against another or others, at the place of work and/or in the course of employment, which could reasonably be regarded as undermining the individual's right to dignity at work. Some examples of bullying are:

- picking on people and criticising them in front of others
- punishing people by refusing to delegate responsibilities to them which they are competent to fulfil
- unfounded criticism of the performance of work tasks
- horse play or other unwanted physical contact
- shouting at people to get things done.

Harassment or bullying does not include fair and reasonable feedback on performance or addressing issues of staff or learner misconduct or poor performance in an inappropriate manner.

Nothing within this policy prevents the learner/staff member from exercising their legal rights at any time.

4.1.5 Responsibilities within ICPPD

Regardless of status, everyone at ICPPD is expected to treat colleagues with mutual dignity and respect. Everyone has a responsibility to read and be aware of this Policy and associated Procedures and to ensure they do not behave in a way that could be intimidating or offensive to others.
In meeting its responsibilities under this policy, the College:

- Communicates this policy to all learners and employees and ensure that those with responsibilities for learners and employees are aware of their responsibilities within its remit
- Ensures that complaints of alleged bullying, harassment or discrimination are dealt with promptly, seriously and with an appropriate level of sensitivity and confidentiality
- Establishes structures and provide specific and appropriate training for those involved in the operation and implementation of this policy
- Appoints a senior manager (College Manager) as Equality Officer to oversee the application of the policy
- Reviews the effectiveness of the policy and procedures regularly and reports annually to the Board of Directors via the College Manager.

All Employees and learners have responsibility to

- contribute to achieving an environment free of bullying, harassment and discrimination by ensuring that their own behaviour does not cause offence.
- if they feel able to do so, make it clear, if they observe others behaving in a harassing, bullying or discriminatory way that such behaviour is unacceptable.
- With the consent of the individual being subjected to such treatment, bring their concerns to the

attention of the Equality Officer.

Under the remit of this policy, the College's Equality Officer's role involves

- Developing a policy for maintaining respect and dignity at work
- Overseeing the implementation of this policy, including dissemination to learners and staff, and training for frontline staff
- Keeping abreast of changes in the legislative framework
- Assisting in the informal resolution of disputes
- monitoring formal cases
- Providing an annual report to the Board of Directors
- Overseeing the implementation and monitoring of equality, dignity and inclusion measures in blended and online learning environments, in collaboration with academic and quality assurance staff.

4.1.6 Equality and Inclusion in Blended and Online Learning

ICPPD recognises that teaching and learning may be delivered through blended, synchronous and online learning environments. The College is committed to ensuring that the principles of equality, dignity and inclusion are embedded within the design, delivery and quality assurance of all online and blended programme components.

These commitments are intended to ensure equitable, consistent and standardised learner experience across all programmes and delivery modes, in line with the College's Quality Assurance framework.

In line with the College's Quality Assurance framework, the following measures will be implemented to support inclusive participation in online learning:

1. Accessible Participation in Online Learning

Accessible participation refers not only to access to learning platforms, but to a learner's ability to engage meaningfully, safely and with dignity in online learning activities.

ICPPD will ensure that learners participating in the online elements of programmes can access learning activities and materials in an equitable manner. This includes:

- ensuring digital platforms and virtual learning environments are accessible and compatible with assistive technologies
- providing learning materials in accessible formats where required
- supporting captioning, transcripts or alternative formats where appropriate
- providing reasonable accommodations for learners with disabilities or additional learning needs.

2. Inclusive Blended Synchronous Delivery

Blended synchronous learning activities will be designed to ensure equitable participation for learners attending both online and face-to-face classes. Teaching staff will employ inclusive teaching strategies to promote engagement, respect diversity and encourage participation from all learners regardless of mode of attendance.

This includes:

- ensuring that participation requirements and learning opportunities are equivalent and clearly communicated for learners attending online and face-to-face

3. Quality Assurance and Standardisation

ICPPD will strengthen its Quality Assurance policies and procedures to ensure consistency and standardisation in the delivery of blended synchronous learning across all programmes.

This includes:

- guidance for programme teams on the delivery of blended and online teaching
- consistent standards for learner engagement and participation
- monitoring of learner access, engagement and learning outcomes across delivery modes.

Findings from such monitoring will inform programme review, staff development and continuous improvement processes.

4. Staff Training and Development

ICPPD will provide staff with appropriate training and professional development to support inclusive and accessible online teaching practices, including awareness of equality obligations, accessibility standards and strategies for supporting learners in digital environments. This training will be reviewed periodically to ensure ongoing alignment with legislative requirements, sectoral guidance and evolving best practice.

5. Learner Support

Learners participating in online learning will have access to academic, technical and wellbeing supports equivalent to those available for face-to-face learning. Information on available supports will be clearly communicated to learners.

6. Monitoring and Review

The effectiveness of equality and accessibility measures in blended and online learning will be reviewed as part of programme monitoring and periodic review processes in accordance with ICPPD's Quality Assurance procedures.

Improvements will be implemented where necessary to ensure equitable access and participation for all learners.

4.1.7 Special Situations Relating to the Academic Environment

In view of the importance of the assessment process, ICPPD recognises that fairness within this process must be evident. Concerns about bullying, harassment, discrimination or victimisation which might have an impact on assessment performance or results should be brought to the attention of the Registrar.

The Registrar informs the Academic Director who takes steps to ensure that the specific learner has not been disadvantaged. This resulting action includes ensuring that the learner's assessments are seen by the external examiner, thereby, the Registrar aims to ensure that Tutors are protected against spurious, malicious or unsupported claims.

This procedure does not interfere with the learner's normal rights to appeal the result of their assessment results as defined in **Section C, Chapter 6, Assessment Review and Appeals' Procedure**.

4.1.8 Action to be taken by an individual being harassed, bullied or discriminated against

Allegations of bullying, harassment or discrimination arising within online or blended learning environments, including virtual classrooms, learning platforms or digital communications, are subject to the same procedures, protections and standards of confidentiality as complaints arising in face-to-face contexts.

Any difficulty in defining what constitutes bullying, harassment or discrimination should not deter staff, learners, visitors or contractors from complaining of behaviour which causes them distress. Nor should anyone be deterred from making a complaint because of embarrassment or fear of intimidation or publicity.

All members of the ICPPD community have a right to make a complaint if they feel they has been harassed, bullied or discriminated against. ICPPD respects the particular sensitivity of bullying, harassment and discrimination complaints and the consequences as well as the need for the utmost confidentiality.

A complaint from a member of staff should be made to the College Manager.

Learners are requested to consult their Programme Leader.

The following mechanism for making complaints and resolving alleged incidents of harassment, bullying or discrimination has been developed

4.1.9 Internal Procedure for individual being harassed, bullied or discriminated against

As a general rule, an attempt should be made to address an allegation as informally as possible. The objective of this approach is to resolve the difficulty with the minimum of conflict and stress for the individuals involved. Attempting to use the informal procedure does not preclude a complainant from using the other options available.

While in no way diminishing the issue or the effects of harassment, sexual harassment, bullying or discrimination on individuals, an informal approach can often resolve matters. Most recipients of harassment simply want the bullying or harassment to stop.

With this in mind, ICPPD has developed the following informal process to address allegations of bullying and/or harassment within the College.

Informal Process

Information on the process

Staff members or learners may, in confidence, seek information from a member of the College's senior staff or the Equality Officer. If the complainant considers it appropriate/necessary, they may be accompanied at such a meeting by a sympathetic colleague, friend or representative.

The purpose of this meeting is to discuss the alleged bullying, harassment or discrimination and to try and find a solution. Following this meeting further action involving the complainant is not normally taken without their express permission, in particular, the person about whom the complaint is being made will

not be informed of the complainant's identity without their express permission.

- **Medical Assistance,** if necessary

If the nature of the alleged harassment is such that it puts the complainant under stress, threat of injury, or makes complainant unwell, then they are recommended to attend their doctor.

- **A record of the incidents**

The complainant is advised to make and keep an accurate record of the date and time of any alleged incidents, which could form part of any future investigation, including the name of anyone who was around at the time and may have seen what happened.

- **Identifying Inappropriate Behaviour**

If possible, the complainant is recommended to explain, simply and directly, to the person in question that they find certain behaviour unwelcome or offensive and that if such behaviour or similar behaviour is repeated it may be necessary for the complainant to make a formal complaint. The complainant may wish to be accompanied by a third-party such as a friend or colleague, while speaking directly to the alleged harassing/bullying individual.

An alternative approach may be for the complainant to put their concerns in writing. This letter should explain what it is about the alleged behaviour that is upsetting and ask for it to stop. The letter should state clearly that it is part of the informal procedure under the ICPPD Dignity and Equality Policy. If the complainant decides to tackle the problem by writing to the person, they should keep a copy of the letter or memo and any response.

Additionally, the complainant needs to be prepared to address any response from the alleged transgressor. A personal approach or a letter/memo may be effective where someone does not realise that their behaviour has been objectionable, and the alleged offending behaviour may stop as soon as it is aired as an issue.

- **Individual's Response to Informal Alleged Complaint**

If a person is informed verbally or in writing that someone finds some aspect of their behaviour inappropriate, they should treat the matter very seriously. They are recommended to reflect carefully on the alleged issue and take time to consider a response. While the alleged transgressor may have had no intention to bully, harass or discriminate against their colleague, if they perceive their behaviour as unwelcome, threatening or intimidating, then it must be considered carefully. The alleged transgressor may seek advice from a friend, colleague, a member of the College's senior staff, or the Equality Officer, in this consideration.

Where the alleged transgressor's behaviour has caused offence, unintentionally or otherwise, they are requested to apologise to the complainant and subsequently modify their behaviour accordingly. It should be borne in mind that the complaint is being dealt with under the informal procedure and if matters are resolved, no disciplinary action is taken.

An alleged transgressor who does not accept the validity of the complaint is afforded the opportunity to present their account of the issue to the complainant. This communication may require facilitation or mediation to address the issue in a non-confrontational manner.

Mediation

Workplace mediation is a means of resolving disputes by taking the matter to a third party – a mediator.

The process requires the voluntary participation and co-operation of both parties. A mediator is an independent facilitator, usually from outside ICPPD, who is trained in such matters. Either party can withdraw from this process at any time. Successful mediation results in a mutually agreed solution. Again, if mediation fails a complainant has the right to invoke the formal procedure.

Formal procedure

If an informal approach or mediation is considered inappropriate, or if the matter cannot be resolved by the informal procedure or mediation, the formal procedure may be invoked.

Guiding Principles:

Formal complaints may be made where all attempts to resolve the matter informally have failed or where the conduct is deemed too serious for the informal route. By its nature, bullying or harassment may make the normal channels of complaint difficult to use because of embarrassment, fears of not being taken seriously, fears of damage to reputation, fears of reprisal or the prospect of damaging the working or learning environment, or owing to the small staff numbers operating within the College.**4**

When a formal allegation of bullying, harassment or discrimination is made, ICPPD are committed to handling the matter with a suitable level of sensitivity and confidentiality, to ensure that the reputation of all interested parties is protected in so far as possible. Disclosure is on a need-to-know basis only.

The decision to make a formal complaint is a very serious one for all concerned and should not be taken lightly. Any complaint, whether upheld or not, is likely to adversely reflect on the reputation of the person against whom the complaint is made. Malicious or intentionally unfounded complaints or breaches of confidentiality will be treated as disciplinary matters. In view of the seriousness of a formal complaint, a person who is considering this route is strongly advised to discuss it in advance with a trusted friend, colleague, a member of the College's senior staff, or the Equality Officer.

When a complaint is made, the College Manager considers whether any party should be suspended with pay from all or part of their duties or requested not to attend the College on a voluntary basis, pending this investigation.

This decision is based on the seriousness of the complaint and for the protection of all parties (i.e., the complainant, the witnesses and the person against whom the allegation has been made).

The steps involved in making and responding to a formal complaint are set out below.

1. Written Complaint

The complainant is required to make a formal written complaint to the Chair of Board of Directors. The complaint should be confined to precise details of the allegation(s).

2. Rights of the Alleged Transgressor

The alleged transgressor(s) is notified in writing that an allegation of bullying, sexual harassment, discrimination or harassment has been made against him/her. They are given a copy of the complainant's statement and advised that they will be afforded a fair opportunity to respond to the allegation(s).

3. Initial Examination

The complaint is subject to an initial examination by a designated member of management nominated by the President, who is considered impartial (or an appropriate third-party if necessary), with a view to determining an appropriate course of action. An appropriate course of action at this stage, for example, could be exploring a mediated solution or seeking to resolve the issue informally. Should either of these

approaches be deemed inappropriate or inconclusive, a formal investigation of the complaint will take place with a view to determining the facts and the credibility or otherwise of the allegation(s) and, in appropriate cases, the imposition of a disciplinary sanction.

4. Terms of Reference

Any investigation is governed by clear terms of reference, determined by college management following their consultation with the complainant and the alleged transgressor(s). Depending on the nature of the complaint, and the parties involved, the investigation is conducted by either of the following, as determined by the Chair of Board of Directors

- a senior manager of the college
- a small group of staff from ICPPD who work in different areas from the parties involved (gender balance should apply)
- an external investigator or
- any other arrangement which is agreed in advance with all concerned parties.

5. Investigation

(a)Both the complainant and alleged transgressor(s) are informed in writing

- What the formal procedure entails and the relevant time limits. That both parties have a right to be accompanied and/or represented, by appropriate persons (no more than 3) of their choice at meetings
- That the alleged transgressor is to be given full details in writing of the nature of the complaint including written statements and any other documentation or evidence including witness statements, interview notes or records of any meetings held with the witnesses.
- That the alleged transgressor is to be given time to consider the documentation and an opportunity to respond
- That confidentiality is to be maintained throughout any investigation to the greatest extent consistent with the requirements of a fair investigation
- That a written record is to be kept of all meetings and investigations
- That the investigation, having considered all of the evidence submitted and the representations made to it, is required to produce a written report to both parties outlining its findings and the reasons for its final decision
- That if the complaint is upheld against an employee the report will recommend whether a disciplinary sanction should be imposed.

b) In the course of investigating a complaint, ICPPD makes no assumptions about the guilt of the alleged transgressor. The investigation is conducted thoroughly, objectively, with sensitivity, utmost confidentiality, and with due respect for the rights of both the complainant and the alleged transgressor(s).

c) The investigator(s) meet with the complainant, the alleged transgressor(s) and any witnesses or relevant persons on a confidential basis with a view to establishing the facts surrounding the allegations(s).

d) Every effort is made to carry out and complete the investigation as quickly as possible and preferably within a mutually agreed timeframe.

e) On completion of the investigation, the investigator(s) is required to submit a written report to the Board of Directors containing the findings of the investigation.

f) Both parties are informed in writing of the findings of the investigation and are given the

opportunity to comment on these findings before any action is decided upon by college management.

On completion of the formal investigation process, complaints are dealt with in one of three ways depending on whether the complaint is made against a member of ICPPD staff, a non-employee/non-Learner such as a visitor or contractor, or a learner.

4.1.10 Outcome of Breach of Equality/Dignity Process

In the case of ICPPD staff
Should the investigator(s) advise that the complaint is well-founded, the alleged transgressor(s) is formally interviewed by ICPPD management to determine an appropriate course of action. Such persons will be entitled to be accompanied and/or represented by appropriate persons (no more than 3) of their choice this at meeting.
The gravity of the resulting findings determines the level of disciplinary action to be taken, which could, for example, involve counselling and/or monitoring and/or the imposition of a disciplinary sanction.

If it is considered that the complainant has brought charges improperly, the complainant is formally interviewed to determine an appropriate course of action, which could, for example, involve counselling and/ or monitoring and/or the imposition of a disciplinary sanction. If there is damage to reputation, there is an onus on the complainant to attempt to make reparation.

Any individual who misinforms the investigator(s) (e.g., witnesses) may be subject to penalties.
Before any proposed action is taken, both parties are fully informed of the outcome of the investigation and the action recommendation. Each party has the right to appeal any decision, which should be made to the Chair of the Board of Directors within two weeks of receiving notice of the outcome and recommendation. An appeals officer, agreed with both parties, will be appointed to review the results of the investigation and the decision. The decision of the appeals officer is final.

In the case of an ICPPD non-employee or non-Learner
If a complaint is upheld against a non-employee, the report will recommend appropriate sanctions against the non-employee or their employer which could extend where appropriate in the circumstances to

- exclusion of the relevant individual from the premises
- transfer of ICPPD operations from a particular premise
- suspension/termination of a contract or service

The outcome of this process is discussed by the Board of Directors to determine the most appropriate course of action to take.

In the case of Learners
When a learner is accused of bullying, harassment, sexual harassment or discrimination, the matter is referred to the College's learners' disciplinary process under ICPPD's Learner Code of Conduct.

4.1.10.1 External Procedures (Statutory Rights)

The following external processes are additionally available to all parties under in relation to alleged transgressions under the College's Dignity and Equality Policy.

(i) Equality Tribunal
Using the complaints procedure does not affect the complainant's right to make a complaint of sexual harassment or harassment to the Equality Tribunal, under the Employment Equality Acts 1998-2015. Any such complaint must be filed within six months of the alleged offence(s) being committed (this

may be extended to 12 months if exceptional circumstances prevented the bringing of the complaint within the initial 6-month period). The Equality Tribunal may utilise Mediation or appoint an investigator who will call a hearing, investigate and issue a decision. Either concerned party can appeal the resulting decision to the Labour Court.

(ii) Legal Redress
Nothing in this Policy prevents the complainant from exercising their legal rights at any time. A description of these is beyond the scope of this policy, and it is advised that anyone seeking legal redress should seek legal guidance/support.

4.1.10 Confidentiality

All individuals involved in these procedures are required to maintain absolute confidentiality on the matter.

4.1.11 No Victimisation

An employee will not be victimised or subject to sanction for making a complaint in good faith, or for giving evidence in proceedings, or by giving notice of intention to do so.

4.1.12 Audit/Review of Dignity and Equality Policy

ICPPD is committed to ensuring that the Dignity and Equality Policy and procedures are adhered to and used in a proper and adequate manner. It endeavours to continuously review the process on an annual basis so that the best practice is always applied. This review will be conducted by the Board of Directors.

4.2 ICPPD as an Equal Opportunities Employer

ICPPD is an equal opportunities employer and is committed to the introduction and development of employment policies, procedures and practices which do not discriminate on grounds such as gender, marital status, religious belief, sexual orientation, family status, age, disability, race, and membership of the Traveller community.

ICPPD pledges itself to the development of a positive action programme and will promote equality of opportunity in all the College's activities.

4.2.1 Responsibilities of ICPPD as an employer

- ICPPD recognises that responsibility for ensuring the provision of equality of opportunity rests primarily within the College as an employer.
- The Board of Directors is responsible for the management and control of all the affairs of the College.
- The College Manager is responsible for ensuring that all employment policies and practices of the College reflect both the provisions of legislation and the College's policy in relation to equal opportunities, and has overall responsibility for the design, development, implementation and review of progressive HR policies and practices.

4.2.2 Staff Selection

- All employees are selected, promoted and treated on the basis of their abilities and merits only, and according to the requirements of the job. All employees will have the opportunity to show ability and to progress within the College.
- A record of each decision made throughout the selection process is retained as appropriate for one-year after the conclusion of the process.

- All advertisements will carry the statement of the College's commitment to equal opportunities.
- Application forms only require information deemed necessary for selection purposes.
- No question suggesting discrimination against persons will be asked in advance of appointment.

4.2.3 Shortlisting and Interviewing of Staff

- Shortlisting is done by matching the details of applicants to the requirements of the job.
- More than one person (both sexes where possible) conducts the shortlisting process, to avoid the possibility of gender bias.
- ICPPD does not tolerate bias against candidates on any grounds in relation to their suitability for any type of work.
- Shortlisting questions only relate to the requirements of the job.
- The personal background of candidates is only pursued in so far as it is deemed relevant to the candidate's fitness for the appointment. Where it is essential to assess if personal circumstances will affect performance, applicants will be asked only if they are aware of anything that might hinder their performance of the job.
- To avoid the possibility of bias all interviews are conducted by more than one person, and both sexes will be represented on the interview board, when possible.
- Applicants will be assessed at the end of their interview on pre-set criteria.

4.2.4 Training

- Training where appropriate to the needs of ICPPD and is available to all relevant staff. This means that in addition to training immediately relevant to the current job all workers may avail of training to upgrade skills or enhance promotional prospects.
- Assumptions about domestic responsibilities do not influence training decisions.
- Special training initiatives are developed to prepare employees for non-traditional roles.
- Stereotyping is eliminated from all training materials, e.g., visual aids, manuals, etc.

4.2.5 Work-Life Balance

ICPPD promotes working arrangements which facilitate, combining work and family responsibilities. These include initiatives such as the provision of job sharing, flexible working practices, career breaks and family responsibility leave.

Maternity leave (under the Maternity Protection Acts 1994-2004), parental leave (under the Parental Leave Acts 1998-2006), adoptive leave (under the Adoptive Leave Acts 1995-2005), and carer's leave (under the Carer's Leave Act 2001) are provided without prejudice to promotion prospects.

All employees (including part-time, temporary and contract staff) are informed of their entitlements under relevant legislation, within their particular contract of employment.

4.2.6 Audit/Review of ICPPD as an Equal Opportunities Employer

ICPPD is committed to ensuring that policies and procedures of ICPPD as an Equal Opportunities Employer are adhered to and used in a proper and adequate manner. It endeavours to continuously review the process on an annual basis so that the best practice is always applied. This review will be conducted by the Board of Directors through the College Manager.

4.3 Process for Resolution of Staff Grievances / Disputes with ICPPD

ICPPD is committed to the development and maintenance of a positive working environment for all staff; to the encouragement of communication between staff and management on all issues of concern; and to

ensuring there is a rapid management response to issues raised by staff.

4.3.1 Purpose

It is the policy of the College to encourage staff to resolve problems and handle complaints informally and quickly, without recourse to formal disputes or grievance procedures. ICPPD endeavours to foster a working environment and working relationships in which the informal resolution of differences is the norm.

It is recognised, however, that from time-to-time issues may arise which need more formal arrangements to ensure a satisfactory and effective solution. In such cases, the following Grievance Procedures will be utilised.

This Grievance Procedure provides effective and fair processes by which staff can seek redress of grievance.

4.3.2 Principles

This grievance procedure provides a comprehensive method for the resolution of grievances in the interests of the avoidance of conflict. Issues raised will be processed in accordance with the principles of full consultation during the process, and in accordance with the general principles of natural justice and fair procedures including that:

- the employee concerned has the right to a fair and impartial determination of the issues concerned, considering any relevant or appropriate evidence, factors or circumstances
- the employee concerned is given the opportunity to avail of the right to be represented during the procedure
- (an) employee/s will not be penalised in any way for making a complaint in good faith, regardless of whether or not the complaint is upheld
- every effort will be made to adhere to the time limits prescribed in the procedure. The time limits laid down may be extended only by mutual agreement of the parties concerned
- all relevant documentation concerning the grievance will be made available, to all relevant parties, at each of the meetings at each of the stages of the procedure
- an employee may withdraw a complaint at any stage of the procedure.

4.3.3 Scope

- This procedure shall apply to all staff of the College who may wish to raise a grievance, either individually or collectively.
- Cases of bullying and harassment should be dealt with through the College's bullying and harassment/dignity at work policy.
- Staff aggrieved by an action or decision taken in relation to the recruitment/selection process should appeal that decision to the College Manager.
- Any employee aggrieved by a legitimate work instruction, given by a manager should carry out such instruction under protest and refer it for processing through the appropriate channels i.e., Grievance Procedure.

4.3.4 Procedures for Resolution of Grievances

Management and staff opinions may be at variance on occasion, but most routine complaints are capable of being resolved on an informal basis, without recourse to the formal grievance procedure. Where a complaint arises, the parties concerned are encouraged to strive to understand the other party's position and should seek, as far as possible, a mutually acceptable solution through informal means.

Without prejudice to their right to invoke immediately the Formal Grievance Procedure, an employee who

believes they has been treated unjustly or unfairly is encouraged to raise their grievance through an informal approach with their immediate manager as a matter of first instance.

The stages set out are for use if there is a possibility of the issue in question being resolved at that stage. If it is clear that it will not be possible to resolve the issue, the stage(s) in question may be omitted, with the process moving to the next appropriate stage. In certain circumstances, the parties may agree to proceed immediately to stage 3 of this procedure if agreement cannot be reached at stage 1.

4.3.4.1 Prior to invoking the Grievance Procedure

A grievance may be defined as a complaint which a staff member has concerning their terms and conditions, working environment or working relationships. Such issues are normally raised with the College Manager, and an attempt should be made to resolve the matter in this manner.

The Grievance Procedure may be formally invoked by an individual employee where such informal process fails to resolve the issue or where such a process in not appropriate. [In certain circumstances where both parties are agreeable, the matter may be referred to mediation.]

The aggrieved employee may be accompanied or represented at each stage by a representative/s or a work colleague who may make representations on their behalf.

4.3.4.2 Stage 1

This grievance procedure must be formally invoked. The individual employee should formally do so in writing setting out for the College the nature of the grievance.

A meeting will normally be held within six working days of the grievance procedure having been invoked.

The meeting will normally be between the complainant (their representatives or colleague) and the person whom the complaint is made against, who may be accompanied by an appropriate member(s) of the College's management.

If the matter is not resolved at the meeting or fails to be resolved or progressed to the satisfaction of the complainant, the matter may be referred to a Stage 2 meeting by the employee within six working days of College's management's response, or Stage 2 may be formally invoked immediately and subsequently confirmed in writing.

4.3.4.3 Stage 2

This stage will take place involving the complainant (with their representative or work colleague) and with the College Manager. The College Manager ensures that they are fully familiar with the issue(s) concerned.

This meeting takes place within six working days of the referral of the matter to it.

If the matter is not resolved at the meeting or fails to be resolved or progressed to the satisfaction of the complainant, the matter may be referred to a Stage 3 meeting by the complainant where possible within six working days following management's response or Stage 3 may be invoked immediately and subsequently confirmed in writing. Otherwise, the complainant shall, except in circumstances agreed as exceptional, indicate their position within

twelve working days following management's response thereby concluding the internal stage of the procedure.

4.3.4.4 Stage 3

If the matter remains unresolved to the satisfaction of complainant, they have the option of referring the matter to the Labour Relations Commission/Rights Commissioner Service/Conciliation service of the Labour Relations Commission or an alternative agreed third party as soon as practicable.

4.3.5 Audit/Review of Resolution of Grievances / Disputes Policy

ICPPD is committed to ensuring that policies and procedures relating to the Resolution of Grievances / Disputes are adhered to and used in a proper and adequate manner. It endeavours to continuously review the process on an annual basis so that the best practice is always applied. This review will be conducted by the Board of Directors through the College Manager.

4.4 Safety Statement / Health & Safety Policy

4.4.1 Introduction

ICPPD is committed to a policy of co-operation and compliance with any directives issued on behalf of the Health and Safety Authority (HSA) - the body charged with the enforcement of health and safety care at work. To this end ICPPD will:

- facilitate and co-operate with inspectors of the HSA during visits or inspections
- take immediate corrective action to comply with improvement notices or prohibition notices
- report to the HSA all prescribed accidents and dangerous occurrences
- seek the advice of the HSA where necessary in matters of health, safety and welfare at work
- stay up to date with health and safety legislation, codes of practice and guidance issued, through use of HSA website- www.hsa.ie, UK HSE website www.hse.gov.uk and health and safety consultants
- implement codes of practice, or guidance documents issued by the HSA.

ICPPD has prepared a Safety Statement to detail the activities and processes which have been implemented within the College to meet its statutory requirements in relation to safety, health and welfare at work. This safety statement deals in the main with the health and safety issues that fall within the remit of ICPPD's premises and operations. The master Safety Statement is held in the Front Office with a copy in the library

4.4.2 Statement of Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Policy

It is the policy of ICPPD, so far as is reasonably practicable, to ensure the safety, health and welfare at work of all employees and to protect learners, visitors, and other persons who may be affected by the College's activities from risks to their safety and health.

In accordance with Section 8 of the Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Act, 2005, ICPPD is committed to providing and maintaining a safe and healthy working and learning environment. This will be achieved through the provision of appropriate resources, organisational structures, and procedures to identify hazards, assess risks, and implement effective control measures.

This Safety Statement is based on the identification of hazards and the assessment of risks associated with the College's activities and is supported by detailed risk assessments.

ICPPD recognises the importance of consultation and communication with employees and will support the role of safety representatives in accordance with legislative requirements.

All staff and learners are required to cooperate with this policy and associated safety procedures and to carry out their responsibilities in compliance with relevant legislation, including Section 13 of the 2005 Act. Staff members with specific responsibilities for safety, health and welfare must ensure appropriate delegation in their absence.

Each employee is required to familiarise themselves with the ICPPD Framework Safety Statement and to participate in relevant training, instruction, and supervision as required.

Failure to comply with safety procedures may result in disciplinary action in accordance with ICPPD policies.

ICPPD is committed to the ongoing review and continuous improvement of its safety, health and welfare practices. This policy and associated Safety Statement will be reviewed on a regular basis, or as required in response to changes in legislation, work practices, or risk profile.

4.4.3 Audit/Review of Health and Safety Policy

ICPPD is committed to ensuring that Health and Safety policies and procedures are adhered to and used in a proper and adequate manner. It endeavours to continuously review the process on an annual basis so that the best practice is always applied. This review will be conducted by the Board of Directors through the College Manager.

4.5 Disability Policy and Supports for Staff and Learners with Disabilities / Additional Learning Needs

4.5.1 Definition of Disability

The Employment Equality Acts 1998–2015 and Equal Status Acts 2000-2018 as amended, defines disability as follows:

- the total or partial absence of a person's bodily or mental functions, including the absence of a part of a person's body
- the presence in the body of organisms causing, or likely to cause, disease or illness
- the malfunction, malformation or disfigurement of a part of a person's body
- a condition or malfunction which results in a person learning differently from a person without the condition or malfunction, or
- a condition, disease or illness which affects a person's thought processes, perception of reality, emotions or judgement or which results in disturbed behaviour.

4.5.2 Disability Awareness Training

Disability awareness training is incorporated in the College's annual staff development programme and all staff are required to participate on an annual basis. Additional specialised training will be made available to individual staff members if/as necessary.

4.5.3 Action on Disability

ICPPD Disability Policy applies to, but is not limited to, all employment and learner recruitment practices within the College. ICPPD endeavours to make all reasonable accommodations for the functional limitations of applicants, employees, contract staff and learners with disabilities.

Applicants, employees, contract staff and learners with disabilities at ICPPD are protected from coercion, retaliation, interferences, or discrimination for filing a complaint or assisting in an investigation of a complaint.

All complaints are handled in a confidential and respectful manner.

4.5.4 Application Support for Learners

ICPPD welcomes applications from learners with disabilities and is committed to ensuring that every effort, where possible within financial and practical limitations, is made to facilitate learners' access to and participation on college programmes whether delivered face-to-face or online.

ICPPD is committed to promoting inclusive access to all programmes and recognises that some learners attending training may present with a specific need or require additional support to enable them to participate fully.

Applicants with a disability or who may require additional learning supports are provided with pre-entry information on their course of choice, if/as requested. This information includes an outline of the demands of the relevant programme to facilitate the learner deciding their suit- ability/ability for the programme.

Learners with a disability or who require additional learning supports, are invited to indicate this either at application stage or registration stage of the admissions process to ensure that the College can evaluate any additional supports required.

If a learner with a disability or who requires additional learning supports does not make themselves known to the College until the beginning of the academic year, or, during the academic year, the College will endeavour to ensure that appropriate reasonable accommodations are put in place as soon as practicable.

This information is compiled and dispatched by the administration office, in liaison with the Registrar's Office and/or the relevant Programme Leader/Academic Director.

While there is no obligation on any learner to disclose their disability, non-disclosure has the obvious effect of potentially limiting the provision of appropriate services and facilities and may impact on the learner's ability to fully engage with their academic programme.

Applications and admissions information is made available in alternative formats if requested, where possible

4.5.5 Reasonable Accommodation of Learners

ICPPD adopts the AHEAD Charter for Inclusive Teaching and Learning and reflects this in the admissions, teaching, learning and assessment practices of the College.

Reasonable accommodation means that modifications will be made to the academic or learning environment to support the creation of equal educational opportunities, where feasibly possible to do so.

4.5.5.1 Training Facilities

ICPPD takes into consideration the requirements of all learners when sourcing off-site educational

facilities to provide 'reasonable accommodation'. Training Venues are readily accessible for learners with physical disabilities, including wheelchair users. ICPPD will discuss any accessibility issues with all prospective learners. Once prospective learners formally disclose to ICPPD any disability or special requirements they may have, their requirements are considered in detail, and the college can determine what additional supports it may be possible to provide.

4.5.5.2 Additional Learning Supports – Personal Support Plan

Personal Support Plan:

When registering on a programme any documentation to support their requirements should be forwarded to the college registrar. Learners meet with the Academic Director and the registrar to discuss their needs and how the college can help to meet their needs. A Personal Support Plan is devised in collaboration with the learner and communicated to any faculty with whom the learner will engage with over the duration of their studies.

This may include where appropriate:

- support to assist with workload planning including time extensions for assignments
- a review of assessment tasks and any issues that arise for the learner with reference to the programme schedule
- study skills and learning support
- advice on appropriate assistive technology

Note: Written Examinations are not currently an assessment mode utilised by ICPPD on any programmes offered. Should this change appropriate supports will be made available to learners with specific learning needs.

4.5.6 Learner Orientation

All applicants with disabilities are offered the opportunity of an individual orientation with a designated member of college staff, prior to or on commencement of their programme. This is an opportunity to discuss their needs and to become familiar with the layout of the main building and/or delivery venue.

In so far as is possible, College staff endeavour to support learners with disabilities to meet their full academic potential.

The primary role of these services is to support students with disabilities and ensure they can participate fully in all aspects of student life as well as to help minimise the impact of their disability on their learning.

4.5.7 Audit/Review of Disability Policy

ICPPD is committed to ensuring that the Disability Policy and related procedures are adhered to and used in a proper and adequate manner. It endeavours to continuously review the process on an annual basis so that the best practice is always applied. This review will be conducted by the Board of Directors through the College Manager.

4.6 Risk Management Policy

4.6.1 Purpose

ICPPD is committed to embedding a culture of proactive risk awareness across all aspects of its governance, operations, and academic provision. Effective risk management supports the achievement of the objectives set out in the ICPPD Strategic Plan 2026–2030 and helps maintain the standards of quality, integrity, and learner-centredness that underpin all College activity.

The purpose of this Risk Management Policy is to establish a structured and consistent framework for the identification, assessment, management, monitoring, mitigation, and reporting of risks across the College.

Table 4.6.4 – Categories of Risk and Governance Ownership outlines ICPPD's institutional risk governance framework. The framework identifies key institutional risk categories and assigns governance responsibility for oversight and operational management. Each risk category is assigned a primary owner with overall accountability and a secondary owner responsible for day-to-day monitoring, mitigation, and escalation of risks where appropriate.

The Risk Management Framework operates as part of the College's broader Quality Assurance and governance systems and is reviewed annually by the Executive Management Committee and approved by the Board of Directors. The framework is designed to provide reasonable assurance that the College's strategic, academic, operational, and regulatory objectives are effectively supported, including those relating to the delivery of face-to-face, blended, and online programmes.

The policy is designed to:

- support the achievement of the College's Strategic Plan 2026–2030 and operational objectives
- support effective governance, accountability and informed decision-making
- protect learners, staff, stakeholders, and the reputation of the College
- support compliance with applicable legal, regulatory, professional, and quality assurance requirements, including QQI standards, IACP criteria, and Data Protection/GDPR obligations.

4.6.2 Aims

ICPPD aims to:

- Embed a risk-aware culture across all levels of the organisation
- Ensure a consistent and transparent approach to risk management
- Integrate risk management into strategic planning, academic provision, and operational processes
- Support informed decision-making through timely identification and assessment of risks
- Ensure risks are managed within defined risk appetite and tolerance levels
- Protect the quality and integrity of programme development, delivery, and assessment, including blended and online learning

4.6.3 Scope

This policy applies to all areas of ICPPD, including:

- Academic provision (design, delivery, assessment, review)
- Operational and administrative activities
- Financial management
- Governance and compliance
- Digital infrastructure and online learning platforms

Risk management is embedded within:

- Strategic planning processes
- Quality assurance systems
- Operational management practice
- Staff induction and training emphasising that all staff have a role in identifying and managing risk within their areas of responsibility.

4.6.4 Risk Governance at ICPPD

Risks, by their very nature, may or may not occur and fall into a variety of categories, some of the most common being:

Table 4.6.4 – Categories of Risk and Governance Ownership

Risk category	Primary owner	Secondary owner
1. Strategic risks Achievement of institutional objectives Long-term sustainability and scalability of programme provision Capacity to respond to sectoral and technological change	**Board of Directors**	**Executive Management Committee**
2. Financial risks Financial planning and cost-modelling Provision for investment in digital infrastructure and staff development Sustainability and resource allocation Risk of under-recruitment or excessive delivery costs	**Board of Directors**	**Executive Management Committee**
3. Academic and Quality risks Programme design and delivery aligned with QQI, IACP and future statutory regulation (CORU) Assessment, Academic Integrity and use of Artificial Intelligence Consistency of learner experience Achievement of Learner outcomes and progression	**Academic Board**	**Quality Assurance and Enhancement Committee**
4. Compliance risks Legal, regulatory and statutory obligations GDPR and data protection Accessibility legislation (e.g. Web Accessibility Directive) Compliance with awarding body and professional body requirements Intellectual property and digital content licensing	**Board of Directors**	**College Manager**

Risk category	Primary owner	Secondary owner
5. Reputational risks Public confidence Learner satisfaction and feedback Stakeholder trust Institutional standing	**Board of Directors**	**Executive Management Committee**
6. Technology and delivery risks Reliability and resilience of digital infrastructure Cybersecurity threats and data breaches Staff and learner digital competence Artificial Intelligence use from a technological and policy oversight perspective.	**Board of Directors**	**Executive Management Committee**
7.a. EDI and accessibility risks - organisational EDI in recruitment and staffing practices Accessibility of services Potential discrimination or inequitable practices Monitoring and mitigation of bias in programme promotion.	**Board of Directors**	**Executive Management Committee**
7.b. EDI and accessibility risks - academic EDI in programme development and delivery Accessibility of programmes Inclusive teaching, learning and assessment practices Monitoring and mitigation of bias in learner recruitment and learner engagement	**Academic Board**	**Quality Assurance and Enhancement Committee** **Programme Boards**

4.6.5 Responsibility for Risk

Board of Directors
The Board of Directors has overall responsibility for the management of risk within the organisation lies with the Board of Directors. The Board of Directors:

- Holds ultimate responsibility for risk management
- Approves the Risk Management Policy and risk appetite
- Reviews the Risk Register and high-level risks at least biannually
- Ensures adequate systems of internal control and assurance

Executive Management Committee

- Implements and oversees the Risk Management Policy
- Maintains the Risk Register
- Assigns and monitors risk owners
- Ensures risks are identified, assessed, mitigated, and reported
- Escalates high or emerging risks to the Board
- Ensures risks relating to digital infrastructure, delivery, academic quality, and operations are actively managed.

- Identifies and manages any risks to the college's reputation such as negative publicity or public perception.

Academic Board
The Academic Board oversees risks associated with:
- Programme design, delivery and review
- Teaching, learning and assessment practices
- Academic integrity, including risks arising from the use of Artificial Intelligence (AI)
- Learner outcomes and academic standards

The Academic Board works in conjunction with the QA and Enhancement Committee to ensure that risks relating to academic quality, standards and integrity are effectively identified, monitored and managed.

QA and Enhancement Committee
- Monitors risks related to academic quality and compliance
- Ensures alignment with QQI and internal Quality Assurance procedures
- Oversees risks relating to:
  - Programme development and review
  - Assessment integrity
  - Data governance

Programme Boards
Programme Boards identify and escalate programme-level risks relating to:
- Academic quality and standards
- Effectiveness of face-to-face, blended, and online delivery
- Learner engagement, retention, progression, and satisfaction
- Risks of learner disengagement, particularly in online components
- Assessment integrity and design, including AI-related risks and academic misconduct (e.g. contract cheating)
- Robustness and fairness of assessment strategies

All Staff are responsible for:
- Identifying risks within their roles
- Reporting risks to management
- Adhering to risk management procedures

4.6.5 Risk Management Process

ICPPD adopts a cyclical risk management process in line with ISO 31000.
This Risk Management Process details the steps which when taken in sequence, enable continual improvement in decision making. It is a system of identifying, assessing and rating risk.

4.6.5.1 Risk Identification

Risk Identification produces a list of the potential risks that could impact on the organisation achieving its objectives.

Risk Identification is conducted continuously by management and staff and formally at least annually.

Risks are identified (commonly under defined categories as set out above in ***Section 4.6.4***) and prioritised.

4.6.5.2 Risk Assessment

Risk Assessment has two dimensions:

1. The **impact** on the college should the risk materialise. This is categorised from 1 = Minor, 2 = Moderate, 3 = Severe
2. The **likelihood** of the event occurring. This is categorised from 1 = Rare, 2= Unlikely, 3 = Possible, 4 = Likely.

   Risk Score = Impact x Likelihood.

Impact vs Likelihood Table

Likelihood ↓ / Impact →	Minor (1)	Moderate (2)	Severe (3)
Likely (4)	4	8	12
Possible (3)	3	6	9
Unlikely (2)	2	4	6
Rare (1)	1	2	3

4.6.5.3 Risk Appetite

ICPPD defines its risk appetite as follows:

Low Tolerance: The College adopts a low tolerance for risks that could significantly impact:
- Learner safety and welfare
- Academic integrity, quality, and standards
- Legal and regulatory compliance (e.g., QQI, IACP, GDPR compliance)
- Institutional reputation

Low to Moderate Tolerance: A low to moderate tolerance is applied to:
- Financial risks, where exposure is actively managed and controlled

Moderate Tolerance: A moderate tolerance is accepted for:
- Strategic and innovation-related risks.
- New programme development and delivery methods where academic oversight and controls are in place.
- The adoption of emerging technologies, including Artificial Intelligence (AI), where appropriate controls are in place.

All risks must be assessed and managed within these defined tolerance levels and in line with the College's risk scoring framework.

Risks assessed as high (score 9–12), or otherwise exceeding defined tolerance thresholds, must be escalated to the Board of Directors without delay.

4.6.6.4 Risk Treatment

For each identified risk, an appropriate treatment strategy will be selected based on the college's risk appetite, legal and regulatory obligations, and operational requirements.

Risk treatment options include:

- Avoid
- Mitigate (controls)
- Transfer (e.g. insurance)
- Accept (within tolerance levels)

Risk Control measures must be reported, documented and monitored in the Risk Register ***(Section 4.6.6 below)***

4.6.6.5 Monitoring, Review and Reporting

Risks are reviewed:

- Continuously by EMC
- Monthly by Board of Directors
- Emerging risks are escalated immediately.

Risk updates are included in:

- EMC Minutes
- Board of Directors Minutes

4.6.7 Risk Register

ICPPD maintains a central Risk Register, which provides a comprehensive record of all identified risks across the organisation.

The Risk Register:

- Supports informed decision-making, governance oversight, and resource allocation
- Forms an integral part of the College's Corporate Governance, Quality Assurance and Risk Management reporting processes
- Provides clarity that risks are being appropriately identified, assessed, monitored, mitigated and managed.

The Risk Register includes the outcome(s) of the Risk Management Process ***(Section 4.6.6)*** allocating a grade of risk to any items across the above categories (***Section 4.6.4)***.

The Risk Register documents areas of risk as follows:

- Risk description
- Risk category
- Impact and likelihood rating – risk score
- Risk owner
- Existing controls
- Mitigation actions
- Escalation required
- Review dates

The Risk Register Is maintained and overseen by the College Manager, who is responsible for ensuring its accuracy, completeness, and timely updating. The register is formally reviewed on a monthly basis by the EMC and Board of Directors.

4.6.7.1 Data Protection/GDPR Risk Register

ICPPD maintains a dedicated Data Protection/GDPR Risk Register to systematically identify, assess, monitor, and mitigate risks relating to the processing of personal data. This register is maintained and overseen by the College Manager, in consultation with the Data Protection Officer, and supports compliance with Data Protection legislation, including GDPR.

The Data Protection Risk Register is reviewed regularly and updated as required, and at a minimum on a quarterly basis. It is integrated with the College's overall Risk Management Framework and central Risk Register, where appropriate.

The Data Protection Risk Register records:

- Data-related risks
- Data protection impact assessments
- Control measures and mitigation actions
- Residual risks and review dates

4.6.7.1.1 Data Protection/GDPR Risk in Blended/Online Learning Environment

The Data Protection Risk Register specifically includes risks arising from the use of digital systems and blended/online learning environments, such as:

- Processing of learner data through virtual learning environments (VLEs) and online platforms
- Use of third-party technologies and cloud-based tools
- Risks associated with remote access, data storage, and transmission
- Protection of personal data in online assessment and communication tools

4.6.8 Review/Audit of Risk Management Policy

ICPPD's Risk Management Policy is formally reviewed annually (or more frequently if needed) to ensure it remains effective, current and aligned with best practice and regulatory requirements. The review is led by the College Manager and approved by the Board of Directors. It considers regulatory changes, audit findings, and emerging risks (e.g. AI), and evaluates the effectiveness of risk processes, controls, and organisational risk culture. Outcomes are documented and reported to the Board to ensure oversight and continuous improvement.

SECTION B PROGRAMME RELATED POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

Chapter 1 Design and Approval of Programmes

ICPPD is committed to the development, delivery, evaluation, assessment, and procurement, of highest standards academic programmes and training courses that meet national and international education and training provision requirements.

The validation of programmes of education and training provided by ICPPD, is conducted by the College in accordance with

- Sections 44 and 45 of the Qualifications and Quality Assurance (Education and Training) Act 2012
Core Statutory Quality Assurance (QA) Guidelines: Statutory QA Guidelines developed by QQI for use by all Providers April 2016
- Sector Specific Quality Assurance (QA) Guidelines: Statutory QA Guidelines developed by QQI for Independent/ Private Providers coming to QQI on a Voluntary Basis April 2016
- Statutory Quality Assurance Guidelines For Providers of Blended and Dully Online Programmes October 2023

ICPPD ensures that programmes are developed (designed and re-designed) to meet identified learning needs through a process of regular self-evaluation, and review with potential and current learners, staff and other relevant stakeholders.

Feedback is garnered from learners and ICPPD graduates regarding current and future training needs, in the context of continued professional development (CPD) requirements.

The College utilises up-to-date knowledge of developments in relevant subject/professional areas through recent publications, professional and academic journals, attending conferences, and membership of professional bodies (committees), as well as engaging in research. Ongoing consultation with stakeholders from the relevant professional organisations and agencies is also a central element in this process.

Potential modules, courses and programmes, developments including their most appropriate formats and delivery modes, are initially discussed internally within ICPPD to ensure that the proposed new programme or the development to an existing programme supports market and learner needs.

1.1 Programme Development Aims

In developing its academic and training programmes, ICPPD:

- ensures that each educational/training programme's content reflects international trends within the relevant subject/professional area.
- emphasises the importance of linking theory with practice and supports an appropriate balance between the two.
- respects diversity in ways of learning and encourages active and participatory learning.
- recognises prior learning and evolving learner needs.
- mindfully adopts the language of diversity and encourages reflection on outdated, limiting, and inflexible constructs which undermine respect for the other.
- ensures on-going learner care from academic and support staff.
- facilitates provision of prompt feedback to learners on continuous assessment.
- encourages learners to reflect on their learning (through appropriate scheduling).

- supports learner expectations to meet standards and attain programme outcomes.
- fosters a culture of respect and trust between college staff and learners.
- ensures that all programmes are inclusive in their access and delivery.
- determines appropriate delivery mode of the programme i.e. face-to-face, blended or fully online.

ICPPD further ensures that:

- the selection of delivery modes, including blended and online synchronous learning, is pedagogically justified, aligned with learning outcomes and the college's Teaching and Learning strategy, and is supported by clearly defined college criteria for suitability.
- programme design reflects evidence-based approaches to blended learning, ensuring coherence between face-to-face and online elements.

In developing academic programmes, which attract credit and lead to awards within the National Framework of Qualifications (NFQ), ICPPD considers QQI's requirements as published in the:

- Awards Standards - Counselling and Psychotherapy – QQI, 2014,
- Policies and criteria for the validation of programmes of education and training (Nov 2017)
- QQI Policy for Determining Awards Standards 2014.
- Guidelines for Providers 2014, Operating Principles for PEL Arrangements
- Assessment and Standards (Revised 2013)
- QQI Policy and Criteria for Making Awards (2017)
- Statutory Quality Assurance Guidelines For Providers of Blended and Fully Online Programmes (2023)
- QQI Policy Restatement: Policy and Criteria for Access, Transfer and Progression for FET and HE Providers
- Roles, Responsibilities and Code of Conduct for Reviewers and Evaluators (2018)

1.2 Programme Delivery Modes - Blended Learning and Online Synchronous Delivery

ICPPD recognises the importance of maintaining high academic standards across all delivery modes. In the context of blended learning, the College has established clear policies governing the design, approval, and monitoring of online synchronous delivery. These requirements are mandatory and apply to all programmes incorporating blended learning and online synchronous delivery.

1.2.1 Principles and Criteria for Suitability of Online Synchronous Delivery

ICPPD defines formal college criteria to determine when syllabus content may be considered suitable for synchronous online delivery (**see Section C, Chapter 4 - *4.3.6.1 Criteria for Determining Suitability of Online Synchronous Delivery).***

The following principles establish overarching expectations that guide programme design, approval and review.

Programme development teams must ensure:

- Alignment between learning outcomes and the proposed mode of delivery
- The feasibility of achieving learning outcomes through real-time online engagement

- Availability of appropriate technological infrastructure and digital learning environments
- The capacity to support active learning, participation and interaction in a live online environment
- Provision of appropriate learner supports, including academic, pastoral and technical support
- The presence of mechanisms to monitor learner engagement and participation
- The use of assessment strategies appropriate to synchronous online delivery
- Alignment of proposed synchronous online delivery with institutional design principles for online learning ***(Section C, Chapter 4 - 4.3.6.2***)

These principles must inform:

- programme design and validation
- internal approval and governance processes
- ongoing monitoring and periodic programme review

These principles and criteria constitute the institutional framework for determining the suitability of synchronous online delivery within blended learning provision.

A module or programme component shall not be approved for online synchronous delivery unless these criteria are demonstrably met and evidenced within programme validation or modification documentation.

1.2.2 Limitations and Parameters of Online Synchronous Delivery

ICPPD requires that all programmes explicitly define the extent and boundaries of online synchronous delivery at module level within programme documentation.

ICPPD clearly defines the scope and limitations of online synchronous delivery within blended learning programmes:

- **Practice-based learning components** (e.g., clinical skills, supervised practice) are not delivered online synchronously, except where explicitly justified and approved
- Process-based modules (e.g. Group Process) are not delivered online synchronously, except where explicitly justified and approved
- Programmes must specify whether:
    - entire modules may be delivered online synchronously, or
    - only specific elements are suitable

Where a module is delivered fully online synchronously, the following minimum requirements must be met:

Teaching, Learning and Assessment
- Clearly structured and scheduled live sessions
- Use of diverse teaching strategies to support engagement (e.g., discussion, breakout activities)
- Assessment methods appropriate to synchronous online delivery

Learner Engagement and Interaction
- Mechanisms to ensure active participation
- Monitoring of attendance and engagement

Learner Support
- Access to academic and technical support during and outside scheduled sessions
- Clear communication channels with faculty

- Availability of learning resources in accessible formats

A module may be delivered fully via synchronous online learning only where it is primarily theoretical, academic, or research-based in nature, and where it can be demonstrated that all college criteria for learning modalities are satisfied.

Modules with a primary focus on skills development, personal development, interpersonal process, or relational practice shall not be delivered fully online and must be delivered face-to-face.

All limitations and parameters must be explicitly documented in programme materials and QA documentation.

Decisions regarding the delivery mode of individual modules, including whether a module may be delivered fully via online synchronous learning within a blended programme, are subject to formal internal approval. Such decisions are made with reference to programme learning outcomes, professional body requirements, and module-specific pedagogical, andragogical, paragogical needs.

They must demonstrate how learner engagement and interaction will be facilitated, how appropriate assessment methodologies will ensure academic integrity, and how mechanisms for learner community development will be maintained.

All delivery mode decisions must ensure compliance with relevant professional body requirements, including the Irish Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy (IACP) requirement that a minimum of 70% of programme delivery is conducted face-to-face.

1.2.3 Pedagogical Approach and Design Principles

ICPPD formally defines its pedagogical approach to blended learning though an institutionally approved framework guiding all programme and module design.

In alignment with the colleges Teaching and Learning strategy, ICPPD adopts a clearly defined **pedagogical, andragogical and paragogical approach to blended learning**, underpinned by the following principles:

- Learner-centred design, supporting flexibility while maintaining academic standards
- Constructive alignment between learning outcomes, teaching methods, and assessment
- Integration of synchronous and asynchronous learning to enhance engagement and reflection
- Emphasis on interaction, collaboration, and reflective practice
- Use of evidence-informed digital pedagogy

In relation specifically to online synchronous delivery, design principles include:

- Structuring sessions to promote active learning rather than passive participation
- Ensuring clear sequencing and pacing of content
- Incorporating interactive tools and methods to sustain engagement
- Designing assessments that are authentic and appropriate to the online environment
- Providing inclusive and accessible learning experiences for all learners

These principles guide:

- programme and module design
- internal validation and approval processes
- ongoing monitoring, evaluation, and review

In addition, Programme Development Teams must explicitly demonstrate how the college's design

principles for synchronous online delivery ***(Section C Chapter 4 - 4.3.6.2***) are applied in module design, learning activities, and assessment strategies for any components delivered online.

Integration with Existing Quality Assurance Processes
The requirements outlined in this section are embedded within ICPPD's:

- Programme Design and Development procedures
- Internal and External Validation processes
- Quality Assurance and review mechanisms

Compliance with these requirements is mandatory for all programmes incorporating blended learning.

This pedagogical framework is subject to periodic review as part of ICPPD's quality assurance and enhancement processes.

The detailed institutional design principles for synchronous online delivery are set out in Section 4.3.6.2 and constitute the required standard to be applied across all programmes.

1.2.4 Quality Assurance and Quality Indicators in Blended and Online Synchronous Learning

Quality in blended and online synchronous learning is defined and monitored through institutionally approved indicators as set out in ***Section C Chapter 4 Learner Centred Teaching, Learning and Assessment Section 4.1.9.***

In the context of online synchronous delivery, particular emphasis is placed on:

- learner engagement and participation in live sessions
- attendance and interaction levels
- timely feedback on assessment (formative and summative)
- learner satisfaction with the online learning experience
- retention, progression and completion rates

These indicators are applied within programme design, approval, monitoring and review processes to ensure the effectiveness of blended learning provision.

Tutors teaching in synchronous online delivery environment must demonstrate ongoing fitness to teach in digital environments in accordance with institutional Human Resources and Quality Assurance requirements (***see Section A Chapter 3 Recruitment. Selection, Development, Support and Management of Staff, Section 3.5.7).***

Quality Assurance in blended and online synchronous delivery operates through the college's continuous improvement cycle whereby evidence from learner engagement, assessment outcomes, feedback and programme monitoring is systematically reviewed through Programme Boards and Academic Board. This evidence informs ongoing enhancement actions.

Findings from monitoring and review processes inform programme redesign and revalidation, ensuring continued alignment with the institutional Teaching and Learning framework ***(Section C, Chapter 4 - 4.1.8)*** and Design Principles for Synchronous Online Delivery ***(Section C, 4.3.6.2)***.

1.3 Programme Design & Development – Internal Process

ICPPD defines its programmes into the following categories:

- ***Academic programme***: these programmes are defined as programmes which attract credit and lead to (normally major) awards within the National Framework of Qualifications (NFQ).
- ***Training programme***: these programmes are defined as professionally accredited programmes or short (CPD) programmes which may/may not attract credit and may/may not lead to a minor, special purpose or supplemental award.
- **CPD workshop**: usually of 15-45 hours in length in a field related to counselling and psychotherapy and is designed to support ICPPD learners and/or graduates.

All programme design, development, approval, and review processes outlined in this section are informed by the institutional criteria for blended and online synchronous delivery set out in ***Section 1.2*** above.

Operational implementation of these criteria is detailed in ***Section C, Chapter4, 4.3.6.1.***

Irrespective of category, all programmes are subject to the College's internal programme design/development process.

- Any member of academic staff, or associate staff, within ICPPD may propose a new programme for development within the College, or a change to an existing programme. Requests for specific programme development may also come from individual organisations.
- This proposal is presented to the Academic Director using the **Proposed Programme Development Approval Form**. Requests for specific programme development may also come from individual organisations.
- The Academic Director presents the details of the proposed programme to the Academic Board. ICPPD's Academic Board's identification of strategic academic priorities, supported by institutional/programmatic reviews and quality assurance self-evaluation, is the main process for identifying the requirement for programme development within ICPPD.
- The Academic Board may decide to approve or not approve further programme development.
- If approved, the proposed programme plan is presented to the Board of Directors who will review the viability of the programme in terms of resources required.
- The Board of Directors may decide to approve or not approve further programme development in alignment with the College's Strategic Plans.

On approval to proceed, the Academic Director nominates a **Programme Development Team** to co-ordinate and drive the process within the College, and to complete the appropriate documentation in a time-frame consistent with the academic calendar (and validation bodies' review meeting dates).

1.3.1 Programme Development Team

The Programme Development Team must apply the institutional criteria for blended and online synchronous delivery as set out in ***Chapter 4, Section 4.3.6.1*** when determining the suitability of delivery modes at programme and module level. These criteria form a mandatory decision framework and must be explicitly evidenced in programme validation documentation.

In accordance with the requirements set out in ***Section 1.2 above – Programme Delivery Modes - Blended Learning and Synchronous Delivery***, the Programme Development Team must:

- Explicitly evaluate and document the appropriateness of online synchronous delivery within a blended learning context.
- Ensure that all synchronous online components are designed in accordance with institutional design principles for online delivery (Section 4.3.6.2), including approaches to interaction,

engagement, session structure, and accessibility

- Ensure that decisions regarding delivery modes are informed by defined college criteria, including learner needs, subject matter requirements, and resource availability
- Undertake to collate data in support of the proposal, and to make the market case for new programme proposal. This may include a survey of the potential market, and liaison with relevant stakeholders.
- Develop the programme documentation in accordance with QQI's Validation procedures which require a detailed description of the programme, its context, programme learning outcomes, educational objectives and target learners and their characteristics, the programme assessment strategy and module assessment strategies in accordance with QQI's Assessment and Standards Revised 2022.
- Completion of a comprehensive self-assessment of the programme against applicable QQI validation criteria, as set out in the *Policies and Criteria for the Validation of Programmes of Education and Training* (QQI, 2016), and relevant QQI Statutory Quality Assurance Guidelines, including the *Statutory Quality Assurance Guidelines for Providers of Blended and Fully Online Programmes* (QQI, 2023), where applicable.
- In summary, on completion, the following documents are prepared to support ICPPDs proposed programme validation:

  - Self-Evaluation Report
  - Programme Descriptor, as identified in the Validating QQI Award programmes | Quality and Qualifications Ireland which includes minimum intended programme learning outcomes, profile of the proposed programme's target learners, programme assessment strategy, module assessment strategies
  - Quality Assurance Manual
  - Associated Handbooks and programme material

1.3.2 Academic Governance

The Academic Board's role is to ensure that the document supports the ICPPD's academic strategies and mission and meets the College's/awarding bodies' quality and standards requirements.

The programme documentation is presented to the Academic Board to assess its completeness and accuracy with reference to:

- relevance of the programme to ICPPD's mission and objectives.
- Policies and criteria for the validation of programmes of education and training (Nov 2017)
- QQI and ICPPD associated policies on Access, Transfer and Progression; programme development; academic quality; clinical practice; etc.
- the programme's academic content, and proposed assessment mechanisms.
- available/required academic facilities, human resources and learner supports (As the Executive Management Committee has previously considered the financial implications and feasibility of the proposal, the Programme Board is required to check that this section has been completed and is relevant and accurate).
- compliance with institutional criteria for blended and online synchronous delivery as defined in ***Section C, Chapter 4 - 4.3.6.1***, including suitability of delivery modes, learner engagement requirements, and alignment with professional body standards

- alignment with institutional design principles for synchronous online delivery ***(Section C, 4.3.6.2)***, particularly in relation to learner engagement, session design, and pedagogical coherence.

1.3.3 External Expert Panel

On approval by the Academic Board, and following consultation between the Academic Director and the Registrar, an external academic expert (or group of experts, as appropriate) who is familiar with the particular subject area, the award standard, and the programme evaluation process, will be invited to review the programme before sending it to the accreditation/professional body for evaluation (i.e., a Mock Panel).

External review processes will also consider compliance with the institutional criteria for blended and online synchronous delivery ***(Section C, Chapter 4 - 4.3.6.1)***, particularly in relation to module suitability for online delivery, assessment design, and learner engagement mechanisms.

1.3.4 Incorporation of Feedback

Subsequent to the review, the Academic Director/Programme Development Team will be notified of the outcome of the evaluation, and this output will be considered by the Programme Development team.

Any necessary changes arising from the expert review are incorporated into the programme documentation, and the final document, plus the updated critical self-assessment report, is circulated to Academic Board for final sign-off, in advance of its progression to the external process. The Registrar arranges to submit the appropriate documentation to the relevant validation bodies, in a time-frame consistent with the academic calendar and the external agency's scheduled review dates.

1.4 Programme Design & Development – External Process

The Registrar in consultation with the Academic Director arranges to submit the appropriate documentation (including as relevant the programme descriptor/submission document, the declaration of protection for learners, and the transfer arrangement confirmation) to the relevant validation body, in a time-frame consistent with the academic calendar and the agency's review meeting dates.

A review of the programme is undertaken by the relevant validation body and/or the associated professional bodies, if relevant.

On receipt of the programme documentation, the validating/accrediting body organises a panel visit (in consultation with relevant ICPPD personnel). The relevant body involved determines the nature of the meeting, the date and agenda for the meeting, and organises the relevant panel members (some of which may be nominated by ICPPD).

ICPPD reviews the membership of the panel for any conflicts of interest and reports back to the validating agency.

The validation process typically involves an onsite visit where the panel review the submission, meet with senior management and the programme team (and sometimes Learners), and conduct a review of the resources available to support the operation of the programme. The visit is conducted in accordance with the validating body's procedures for programme validation.

The validating panel formulates initial conclusions and usually conveys them informally to ICPPD management on the conclusion/occasion of the visit. The panel's final conclusions, conditions and recommendations, if appropriate, formally communicated later in a written report. This report may contain conditions, recommendations, or suggestions for the programme.

Where conditions and/or recommendations are attached, a formal response is developed by the programme development team under the leadership of the Academic Director, is reviewed and approved by the Programme Board and Academic Board and is submitted to the validating/accrediting body by the Registrar.

1.4.1 Programme Design & Development – Programme Planning Process

ICPPD endeavours to resolve issues arising from the programme design/development in a timely, efficient and controlled fashion to facilitate the smooth operation of College academic support activities.

To assure the close-out of identified issues, communication with all internal functional areas, relevant academic committees, and external agencies, including accreditation agencies and liaison with professional bodies is vital.

Completion of the programme development activity within the College necessitates the update to the College information management systems, to ensure that programme changes are captured in human resource allocation, programme timetabling, learner handbooks, marketing information, etc.

The approved programme submission is developed into a Programme Plan. This process involves developing a detailed plan covering specific approved curriculum; the recruitment and admission of learners; development of programme documentation; reflection on the assessment modes; and scheduling, monitoring and review procedures. Outline schedules and timetables are prepared, and attention is paid to identifying specific trainer and learner needs and to co-ordinating a mix of training styles and modes to ensure that the programme can be effectively delivered. Programme design, development and delivery is the responsibility of the Programme Development Team under the guidance of the Academic Director.

Specific programme record-keeping forms (including marking schemes and attendance records), learner handbook, and feedback and evaluation forms are also prepared by the Registrar and College Administrator under the guidance of the Academic Director and in accordance with college document drafting procedures.

1.5 Professional Accreditation of Programmes

A number of professional and awarding bodies recognise QQI awards and may grant exemptions from examinations and/or advanced entry to programmes of study. In some instances, such bodies may also recognise ICPPD as an approved provider or centre for the delivery and assessment of specific professional programmes.

From a counselling and psychotherapy perspective, the Irish Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy (IACP) is a key professional body with which ICPPD has engaged in relation to programme recognition and accreditation requirements.

The College also monitors developments in statutory regulation, including the role of CORU as Ireland's multi-profession health regulator, and remains cognisant of any future regulatory developments that may impact counselling and psychotherapy professions.

The College actively seeks to develop and maintain appropriate professional accreditation for its programme portfolio, both at the point of programme development and through ongoing engagement for existing programmes. This approach supports the College's commitments in relation to access, transfer, and progression (ATP), and ensures alignment with professional standards where relevant.

When developing new programmes, ICPPD structures programme design, content, and assessment to align, where appropriate, with the requirements of relevant professional, statutory, and regulatory bodies (PSRBs), in addition to QQI validation requirements.

Engagement with professional bodies to support programme development, review, and enhancement is undertaken on a programme-by-programme basis, considering the discipline, specialisation, and intended progression pathways. Such engagement is reviewed periodically as programmes evolve and as professional or regulatory requirements change.

1.6 Collaborative Provision, Transnational Provision and Joint Awards

According to QQI policy, collaborative provision, transnational provision, and joint awards play an important role in education and training and are subject to the requirements of the Qualifications and Quality Assurance (Education and Training) Act 2012 and associated statutory quality assurance guidelines.

Within this context, QQI validates programmes, makes or recognises awards (including joint awards), and oversees provider quality assurance arrangements in relation to collaborative and transnational provision. While ICPPD has established links with other higher education providers to support aspects of its provision, the College does not currently engage in collaborative programmes, transnational provision, or joint awards.

It is the intention of ICPPD that, prior to entering into any such arrangements, the College will ensure appropriate due diligence is undertaken in line with QQI requirements. This will include formal engagement with QQI, where required, and the development of appropriate governance, quality assurance, and organisational arrangements to support such provision.

The College will ensure that any collaborative or transnational provision is supported by formal agreements (e.g. Memoranda of Understanding or collaborative agreements), and that responsibilities for programme delivery, assessment, quality assurance, and learner support are clearly defined. All such arrangements will ensure that academic standards, assessment practices, and learner outcomes are consistent with the National Framework of Qualifications and aligned with QQI Core Statutory Quality Assurance Guidelines and relevant legislation. All collaborative arrangements will be subject to ongoing monitoring and periodic review to ensure their continued effectiveness, compliance, and alignment with institutional and regulatory requirements.

1.7 Audit/Review of Programme Design and Approval Policies and Procedures

ICPPD is committed to the effective and consistent implementation of its Programme Design and Approval policies and procedures. These processes are subject to annual review to ensure continued alignment with best practice. The review is undertaken by the Academic Director and reported to the Academic Board.

Chapter 2 On-Going Monitoring and Periodic Review of Programmes

QQI's Policy for Cyclical Review of Higher Education Institutions states that *'providers of higher education have primary responsibility for their quality assurance. This principle is laid down in Irish law [reference the* Qualifications and Quality Assurance (Education and Training) Act 2012*] and in the* Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area*.* A core element of contemporary quality assurance practice is external review of the institution as a whole.'

In this context, ICPPD agreed it's quality assurance procedures with QQI in 2012, and has continued to develop these procedures in accordance with

- QQI's Core Statutory Quality Assurance (QA) Guidelines: Statutory QA Guidelines developed by QQI for use by all Providers (April 2016),
- Sector Specific Quality Assurance (QA) Guidelines: Statutory QA Guidelines developed by QQI for Independent/ Private Providers coming to QQI on a Voluntary Basis.

Therefore, ICPPD has implemented processes for quality monitoring, self-assessment system and periodic review of its systems, in accordance with Qualifications and Quality Assurance (Education and Training) Act, 2012, to ensure that it evaluates all programmes at regular intervals and as directed from time to time.

ESG (standard 1.7, Information Management) requires the College to '*collect, analyse, and use relevant information for the effective management of their programmes and other activities*'.

Quality assurance processes are implemented by the College:

- through (routine) monitoring and evaluation of programmes, which is conducted on an on-going basis.
- by obtaining feedback from internal and external sources, for the purpose of further improving and maintaining the quality of education and training which it provides, organises and/or procures.
- more formally, though a cyclical (institutional) review processes.

The purpose of these programme-facing quality assurance procedures is to:

- ensure systematic processes exist for gathering and considering information that may be used to improve the delivery of the programme, learner support services and the overall learner experience
- consider the appropriateness of the current mode of delivery of the Programme i.e. Face-to-face, blended or online
- consider the appropriateness of the current mode of delivery of the Programme (i.e. face-to-face, blended or online), as determined in accordance with the College's formal criteria for learning modalities (see Chapter 1 Design and Approval of Programmes), which are applied during programme design, approval, monitoring and review
- ensure the programme remains current and continues to meet its stated aims
- monitor the extent to which learners are meeting the intended learning outcomes of the programme, and the assessment mechanisms are appropriate
- support the development of a quality culture in which all participants are aware of their respective roles and that observed weaknesses in the programme are addressed
- embed programme monitoring within a framework of systematic periodic reviews.

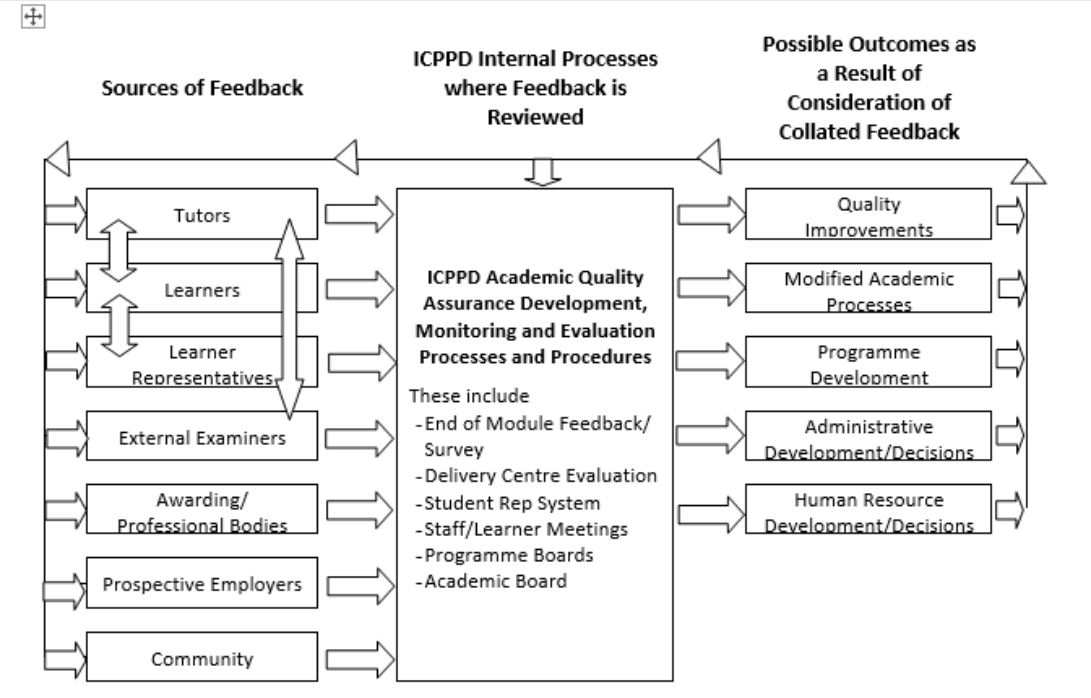
These procedures support the College in promoting and facilitating meaningful learner participation in quality assurance and quality enhancement processes, in accordance with QQI Core Statutory Quality Assurance Guidelines and the Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG 2015).

Quality assurance feedback is garnered within ICPPD through a number of formal and informal processes including:

- cyclical (institutional) review
- employer/professional body consultation
- external examiner's reports
- external observer (ref professional body) reports
- learner survey/feedback
- programmatic review activities
- programme boards
- tutor/staff survey/feedback
-

Feedback obtained and gathered through quality monitoring, feedback and self-assessment activities within the College may ultimately result in changes to existing programmes or the development (or procurement) of new programmes by ICPPD.

A graphical representation of how this information is reviewed, processed and actioned by ICPPD is provided in Figure 2.1 Sources of Quality Assurance Feedback at ICPPD, Internal Processes which Review Information, and Possible Outcomes



2.1 Programmatic Review

Programmatic review within ICPPD takes place within the College's strategic and academic planning framework and is conducted in accordance with QQI's Core Statutory Quality Assurance (QA) Guidelines: Statutory QA Guidelines developed by QQI for use by all Providers (April 2016),Policies and Criteria for the Validation of Programmes of Education and Training (QQI, 2016) and relevant QQI programme review guidance.

Programmatic review is a structured self-evaluation process undertaken at programme level, whereby the College conducts a critical evaluation of its programmes and associated services. This process includes the consideration of programme performance data, learner feedback, teaching and learning practices, and support services and culminates in the production of a self-evaluation report for independent peer review.

QQI has responsibility under Section 46 of the Qualifications and Quality Assurance (Education and Training) Act 2012 to monitor and evaluate the quality of programmes of education and training. In this context, programme review forms part of the College's broader quality assurance and monitoring framework, which supports continuous improvement and ensures the ongoing effectiveness and relevance of programmes.

Where required, the outcome of programmatic review informs applications for revalidation of programmes. Such applications are prepared in accordance with QQI validation policies and supporting documentation, including relevant programme review and revalidation guidance.

Requirements and arrangements for individual programme reviews and monitoring activities are determined by college management, in consultation with the Academic Board and, where appropriate, relevant external or professional accreditation bodies.

Programme reviews are typically conducted on a cyclical basis, normally every five years, in advance of programme revalidation. However, reviews may be undertaken more frequently where required in response to internal monitoring outcomes, learner feedback, changes in regulatory requirements, or external accreditation conditions.

2.1.1 Aims and Objectives

The aim of the programmatic review processes is to conduct a critical evaluation of the ICPPD's operation and delivery of (relevant) programmes, to ultimately generate a plan for the College in respect of the specific programme provision, the associated resources and facilities, and to determine supporting strategic initiatives required for ongoing success.

2.1.2 Process: Programmatic Review

Programmatic review is evidenced through the preparation of a ***Self-Evaluation Report (SER)*** and ***the Independent Evaluation Report (IER)*** arising from external peer review, in line with QQI programme review guidance. These reports are supported by a range of evidence, including learner feedback, programme performance metrics, and quality assurance records, and form part of the College's ongoing monitoring and continuous improvement processes in accordance with QQI Core Statutory Quality Assurance Guidelines and QQI monitoring policy.

The appropriate scope and process for the consideration of data and information relating to the previous five-year cycle of approved programmes under review, together with planned and proposed programme developments for the forthcoming cycle, are informed by relevant QQI guidelines and any applicable requirements of external accreditation or professional bodies.

Consideration is given to the effectiveness of programme design, delivery modes, curriculum relevance, and alignment with award standards and the National Framework of Qualifications.

In this context, the review process takes into account a range of qualitative and quantitative evidence, including, but not limited to:

- learner feedback and engagement outcomes.
- learner performance, progression, retention, and completion rates.
- assessment outcomes and standards.
- external examiner reports.
- teaching, learning and assessment methodologies.
- mode of delivery.
- staff qualifications and continuing professional development.
- adequacy of learning resources and supports.
- programme demand and enrolment trends.
- graduate outcomes and employability data; stakeholder and industry feedback.
- compliance with regulatory, professional, and statutory requirements

Findings from ongoing programme monitoring activities, annual reviews, and quality assurance processes are formally documented and incorporated to ensure an evidence-based evaluation.

These collectively inform recommendations for programme enhancement, modification, or revalidation, and support forward planning to ensure programmes remain current, relevant, and responsive to learner, societal, and industry needs.

2.1.3 Follow-up: Programmatic Review

Following programmatic review process, the College, through the Programme Development Teams led by the Academic Director, addresses any outstanding issues in relation to the programmes under consideration.

In addition. ICPPD may be requested to identify corrective actions for more general issues within the College in relation to specific action items referred to in the final report.

ICPPD programmatic review follow-up reports are reviewed and approved by the College's Academic Board.

Decisions reached including but not limited to those relating to the programme structure, learning outcomes, assessments, delivery modes are formally documented and approved through the College's governance structures.

The defined corrective actions are implemented by individuals nominated by the relevant Programme Board, and progress is monitored through the Academic Board. Resource implications are evaluated by the Executive Management Committee and reported to the Boad of Directors.

ICPPD acknowledges that the outputs and findings arising from programmatic review and associated quality assurance processes may be shared by QQI with relevant stakeholders and authorities, as appropriate, in the context of its statutory monitoring and quality assurance functions. The College recognises that such information sharing may include findings, reports, and supporting documentation generated through programme review, monitoring, and evaluation activities.

2.1.4 Monitoring of Delivery Modalities in Blended Learning

ICPPD monitors delivery mode of programmes to ensure continued alignment with approved programme

design and operational requirements.

These requirements are defined in ***Section 1.2*** (institutional criteria for learning modalities) and are applied throughout programme monitoring and review.

Where modules are delivered fully or partially via online synchronous learning, specific attention is given to:

- mechanisms to ensure active learner engagement and participation
- suitability of assessment methods for the online environment
- measures to uphold academic integrity
- processes to support the development of a learner community

Any proposed changes to delivery mode are subject to review by the Programme Board and require formal approval by the Academic Board.

Modules with a primary focus on skills development, personal development, or relational practice may not be delivered fully via online synchronous learning and must be delivered face-to-face in accordance with professional body requirements, including the Irish Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy (IACP) minimum face-to-face threshold. Proposed changes to approved delivery modes are formally documented and subject to approval by the Academic Board.

2.2 Programme Boards

ICPPD requires that Programme Boards are established for all academic programmes being offered within the College. The terms of reference, composition, etc. of Programme Boards are provided in ***Section A, Chapter 2, 2.2.5.***

Programme Boards are a key component of the College's academic governance structure and are responsible for the ongoing monitoring, review, and enhancement of programme quality, including teaching, learning, assessment, and delivery modes.

Programme Boards consider programme performance data, including learner feedback, tutor feedback, assessment outcomes, progression and retention data, and other relevant quality indicators, as part of the College's continuous quality assurance processes.

Programme Boards review delivery mode decisions in line with the criteria established at programme approval stage.

In relation to delivery mode, Programme Boards:

- review the appropriateness and effectiveness of programme delivery modes (face-to-face, blended, or online synchronous)
- review alignment with approved programme design requirements for delivery mode, including operational requirements for online synchronous delivery (Section 4.3.6.1)
- monitor compliance with professional body requirements, including limits on online synchronous delivery (e.g., IACP 70% face-to-face requirement)
- identify any risks relating to learner engagement, participation, assessment validity, academic integrity, or learner support in relation to delivery mode

Where issues or risks are identified, Programme Boards propose appropriate corrective actions, which may include changes to delivery arrangements, module redesign, or enhanced learner supports. Where proposed changes fall outside approved programme parameters, these are escalated to the Academic Board for formal approval.

Decisions regarding delivery mode, including any changes to approved delivery arrangements, are formally documented in Programme Board minutes and reported through the Annual Academic Programme Report to Academic Board to ensure transparency, traceability, and quality assurance oversight.

Feedback from Programme Boards regarding existing or proposed programmes is reviewed as and processed through the College's Programme Design and Approval procedures (as identified in ***Section B, Chapter 1)***

2.3 External Examiners' Reports

The process for garnering feedback from external examiners is considered a vital element of the ICPPD's Quality Assurance monitoring and programme development processes. External examiners are appointed by ICPPD in accordance with the procedures/guidelines for external examiners which are also set out in ***Section C, Chapter 5, 5.1.***

The external examiners' report is the examiner's professional reflection on the academic standards and achievement of the learning outcomes of the programme, and the internal administration of the external examination system, to defined criteria. The report provides a considered reflection on the relevant programme and the College's assessment process and indicates suggestions that the external examiner feels should improve the standard of the resulting graduate, the programme, or the assessment process.

In addition, the collated feedback from the external examiners' reports is analysed across outreach centres to ensure that there is consistency in the application of standards in delivery and assessment of programmes irrespective of location.

The External Examiner's report is discussed at the relevant Programme Board, and statistics and issues are reported annually to the Academic Board by the Registrar.

On completion of their term of office the External Examiner may additionally submit a general report to the College summarising on their opinion of the standards of the programme and learner performance, and their communication with and overall impression of their experience of engagement with the ICPPD external examination process.

2.4 Learner Evaluation/Feedback

ICPPD, in accordance with the *Qualifications and Quality Assurance (Education and Training) Act 2012* and *QQI Core Statutory Quality Assurance Guidelines*, has established procedures to systematically capture, analyse, and respond to learner feedback on programme quality and learner experience. This feedback informs programme monitoring, review, and continuous quality enhancement.

2.4.1 Aims/Objectives: Learner Evaluation/Feedback

ICPPD's aim in conducting processes which facilitate learner evaluation/feedback in relation to their perception of the quality of their programme, and the services related to that programme, is with the purpose of further improving and maintaining the quality of education and training which the College provides.

The primary objective of this learner evaluation/feedback is both to meet the College's statutory requirements in relation to learner feedback, and to enhance the quality of education and training provision.

Learner feedback is collected to gain meaningful feedback on learners' perception of the current quality and standard of programme delivery and service provision, to support existing and prospective academic and training programme development and support service enhancement.

In addition. Learner Evaluation/Feedback is compared and for programme provision across the cohorts and outreach centres to ensure that there is consistency of standards in delivery and assessment of programmes irrespective of location.

Learner feedback on their experience of online programme delivery is used to inform improvements, identify tutor training needs and assess the suitability of programme content for online delivery.

In alignment with the educational approach of ICPPD and congruent with the nature of the training programmes offered, learners are expected to develop competencies in providing and receiving constructive feedback as part of their professional development. Accordingly, anonymous feedback is not encouraged.

2.4.2 Process: Learner Evaluation/Feedback

Learner feedback is gathered by ICPPD through the following mechanisms

Feedback to Academic and Support Staff

ICPPD encourages and supports an open and frank working relationship between learners and staff within the College. The relationship between the learner and the academic staff is considered critical to the process for collection of learners' feedback in relation to their programme, and the services related to that programme, in a timely and efficient manner.

Formal communication between Learner Representatives and the Academic Director

A minimum of one class representative is elected for each academic programme at each delivery location. Learner representatives are nominated by their peers at the beginning of the academic session/programme/module commencement. Formal plenary meetings between the Learner representatives and the Academic Director are held on a minimum of one-per-term basis. These are considered useful to obtain learner feedback and to hear of any issues which may be arising. Owing to the part-time/outreach nature of academic programmes within ICPPD these meetings are scheduled at a logistically friendly, mutually agreed time for participants, in a venue which supports the College's ethos. If these meetings are conducted remotely (particularly for those attending outreach centres), and facilitated through technology, they must still maintain a conducive meeting atmosphere. These meetings are formally organised, are minuted and outstanding issues are communicated to the rest of the class group/academic staff/Programme Board for resolution, as appropriate.

The Academic Director/Programme Leader/Tutor/Clinical Practice Coordinator is also available at other times to meet with Learner representatives, as required, by appointment.

Meetings with individual Learners and College staff

All ICPPD staff (administration, management and faculty) are available for one-to-one meetings with learners, by appointment. These meetings may be initiated either by:

- the College staff/faculty member - to discuss the individual's academic performance or engagement

with the programme,
or

- the learner - to discuss issues that they feel may not be explored through any of the College's other channels of communication.

The discussions at the meeting are noted by the relevant staff member in a way that maintains the personal confidentiality of the learner. Minutes/brief overview on the discussion of any programme specific quality issues are presented at the next Programme Board meeting, if appropriate, allowing for the sensitivities involved and maintaining confidentiality.

Participation in Programme Boards and Academic Board

Learner feedback is an essential element of the quality assurance process as supported by the Programme Board. Learner representatives, from each programme location, are members of the Programme Board and are invited to attend and participate fully in discussions in relation to academic issues. In addition, learner participation and feedback are used to ensure that there is consistency in the application of standards in delivery and assessment of programmes irrespective of location.

Where learner assessment/progress issues are being discussed, the Programme Board chairman requests that the learner representatives withdraw from the meeting for the duration of these discussions. The Programme Board reports to the Academic Board, and any outstanding issues which cannot be/have not been resolved within the Programme Board are brought to the attention of the Academic Board, when/as necessary.

Surveys (including End-Of-Module Feedback Forms)

Learner survey is considered one of the most efficient and immediate processes for the collection of feedback in relation to programme quality, and learners have an important role in shaping the development of the modules offered. Feedback forms are utilised to assess syllabus quality, the quality of delivery of the content, tutor's ability to impart knowledge, and the learning achieved. The feedback aims to support learners, create an appropriate learning environment, and to model desired behaviour/learning.

- ***Learner End-of-Module Feedback Surveys*** are completed by learners on Moodle at the *conclusion of each module within academic programmes*, or by the facilitator on conclusion of the training programme/workshop. The Feedback Surveys are sent directly to the Registrar who holds the information received until the Feedback and grades have been released for that particular module.

  Collated data is reviewed across cohorts/outreach centres to ensure that there is consistency in the application of standards in delivery of programmes irrespective of location.

- ***Learner End-of-Year Feedback Surveys*** are completed by learners at the *end of each academic year/programme*. This survey is for an overview of how the learners perceived the stage of the Programme and the integration of their learning across modules. In addition, a key part of this survey will include learner's views on the appropriateness on the mode of delivery and their experience of learning online at ICPPD. (where relevant)

The output form completed feedback surveys is reviewed by the Tutor, Academic Director and Registrar and areas are identified for corrective action, as appropriate.

A summary report of feedback is prepared for consideration and discussion at the relevant Programme Board or the Executive Management Committee, as appropriate.

Outstanding issues are reported onwards to Academic Board or Board of Directors, as appropriate and

where necessary.

2.4.3 Follow-up: Learner Evaluation/Feedback

ICPPD is highly cognisant of the value of learner feedback and strives to implement appropriate mechanisms for 'closing the loop' to ensure that the learner feedback is addressed by ICPPD, and that the learner is informed of the actions taken in response to her/his feedback.

Follow-up with Learners is carried out by the Academic Director, following the Learner Representatives feedback to Programme Board, in particular, and on ad-hoc basis when necessary and as any issues arise.

2.5 Consultation with ICPPD Staff

ICPPD, in accordance with the *Qualifications and Quality Assurance (Education and Training) Act 2012* and *QQI Core Statutory Quality Assurance Guidelines* has established procedures to systematically capture, analyse, and respond to tutor/staff feedback on programme quality and the teaching experience. This feedback informs programme monitoring, review, and continuous quality enhancement.

ICPPD Tutors engaged are considered expert in their fields and are additionally experienced facilitators of learner-centred adult education. The faculty team at ICPPD are warm, vibrant, passionate, and respectful and above all are willing to support each other and the community of learners who are applying for and participating on courses at the College.

Tutors are chosen for their stated commitment to supporting and participating in quality assurance measures adopted by the College.

They are invited to participate in

- admission and progression processes
- facilitation and interpretation of stakeholder (including learner) feedback
- membership of relevant Programme Boards
- peer review of programme content/delivery/examination
- programme development and promotion activities.

In addition, feedback from Tutor consultation is collated and reviewed across outreach centres to ensure that there is consistency in the application of standards in delivery and assessment of programmes irrespective of location.

2.5.1 Aims/Objectives: Consultation with ICPPD Tutoring Staff

ICPPD's aim, in conducting processes which facilitate tutoring staff consultation/feedback in relation to their perception of the quality of programme provision, and the services related to that programme, is with the purpose of further improving and maintaining the quality of education and training which the College provides.

The objective of this consultation/feedback is

- to meet the College's statutory and regulatory requirements in relation to stakeholder feedback
- to gain meaningful feedback on staff perception of the current quality and standard of programme delivery and service provision
- to support existing and prospective academic and training programme development
- to support service enhancement.

- to evaluate the effectiveness and appropriateness of the mode of delivery of the programme
- to ascertain future tutor training and development needs. E.g. upskilling on emerging issues, AI and education technology training

2.5.2 Process: Consultation with ICPPD Tutoring Staff

The content and format of each consultation utilised is dependent on the purpose of the engagement and the information output requirement. Where the consultation process is being utilised for programme development/promotion purposes, the required reflection is identified by and minuted as part of the Programme Board process.

The processes utilised for consultation with ICPPD Staff is dependent on the mechanisms employed and the output required. The process for consultation on staff performance is identified in the HR section of this document (reference ***Section A, Chapter 3).***

Tutoring Staff Surveys (including end-of-module feedback forms)

Tutor survey is considered one of the most efficient and immediate processes for the collection of feedback in relation to

- programme quality
- venue, facility and resources quality,
- the development of the modules offered
- the appropriateness and effectiveness of the mode of delivery for particular programmes/modules
- any concerns in relation to the group

Feedback forms/surveys are utilised to assess syllabus quality and support an appropriate teaching and learning environment, with particular reference to the mode of delivery and particular emphasis on blended learning in the context of the field of Counselling and Psychotherapy training.

- ***Tutor End-of-Module Feedback Forms are*** provided to the Tutor and are required to be completed by the tutor on the conclusion of each module within academic programmes or by the facilitator on conclusion of the training programme/workshop.

  Specific focus is given to
  - general comments on learner engagement and participation including any comments on specific trainees regarding their participation, ability, attendance, personal issues, special needs, extra work for learning/time missed, etc.
  - general comments on teaching/facilitating this module
  - any suggestions for improving the content/delivery
    - the suitability of the teaching venue and teaching materials
    - the tutors feedback in relation to the suitability of the mode of delivery (face-face/blended)

- **Tutor End-of-Year Feedback Surveys** are completed by tutors at the end of each academic year/programme. This survey is designed specifically to acquire feedback from tutors on online delivery of module/programmes. Tutors will be asked about the suitability of the content of online teaching, whether further training/upskilling is required and any other issues that presented themselves.

  Completed Feedback Forms/surveys are reviewed by the Academic Director and Registrar. The collated data is compared across delivery centres and cohorts to ensure consistency in the

application of standards in delivery of programmes irrespective of location.

2.5.3 Follow-Up: Consultation with ICPPD Staff

ICPPD is cognisant of the value of tutor feedback and strives to implement appropriate mechanisms for 'closing the loop' to ensure that staff feedback is addressed by ICPPD, and that tutors is informed of the actions taken in response to her/his feedback.

- **Meetings with other College staff**

  Meetings between College staff normally reach a conclusion and agree an appropriate plan of action of which all parties are aware, at the meeting itself. Subsequent communication in relation to matters presented at such meetings issue from the appropriate staff member/office within ICPPD.

- **Participation in Programme/Academic Boards**

  Tutors, who are members of the Programme/Academic Boards, receive a copy of these minutes, which detail identified issues, corrective actions and relevant close-out dates. These minutes serve to inform staff of the relevant actions attached to the identified issues.

A summary report of tutor feedback is prepared for consideration and discussion at the relevant Programme Board. Outstanding issues are brought to Academic Board and the Executive Management Committee/Board of Directors, where necessary.

2.6 Annual Academic Programme Report

ICPPD through the Academic Director compiles an Annual Academic Programme Report for each academic programme offered within the College.

2.6.1 Aims/Objectives: Annual Academic Programme Report

The ***Annual Academic Programme Report*** supports the College's self-assessment of its academic programmes by facilitating analysis of each validated programme.

2.6.2 Process: Annual Academic Programme Report

The **Annual Academic Programme Report** provides a comprehensive overview and analysis of the programme's operations over the academic year. It serves as a key tool for monitoring and enhancing the quality and effectiveness of academic delivery.

Key metrics analysed include learner enrolment trends; retention, progression, and completion rates; assessment outcomes and grade distributions; learner feedback and satisfaction levels; attendance and engagement levels; and the adequacy of teaching, learning, and support resources; the suitability of the mode of delivery in alignment with the stated learning outcomes.

The report may also consider staff development needs, programme demand, and alignment with academic standards and programme objectives.

Included for consideration is the ***Admissions Report*** with details learner numbers, assessment success rates and programme retention rates which is prepared by the Registrar.

The Annual Academic Report includes data from the following sources:

1. **Admissions Report**:

An Admission Report is presented by the Registrar to the Academic Board annually, usually at the first Academic Board meeting of the academic year.
The report includes data on:

- Programme and Cohort Admissions: Total number of admissions per programme and cohort, with breakdowns on gender, nationality/ethnicity, age, and prior education level.
- Transfer and RPL entrants: Number of learners entering through transfer routes or with Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL).
- Learner Progression and Retention: Analysis of progression rates within and across academic years, and retention statistics.
- Completion rates: Percentage of learners who enrolled in Year 1 of a specified intake year and subsequently completed the programme.
- Final Awards data and classifications: Data on the number and classification of final awards conferred

This comprehensive report enables continuous monitoring and quality assurance of academic programmes, supporting evidence-based decision-making and strategic planning.

2. **Overview of Learner and Tutor Feedback** (including facilities reports)
   This section provides a summary of learner and tutor feedback, including responses related to teaching quality, curriculum, learning resources, and facilities. Where available, feedback from facility reports is also included to assess the learning environment's effectiveness.

3. **Appropriateness of the mode of delivery**
   This review considers the effectiveness of programme delivery mode in supporting learner outcomes and programme requirements.

   Any variance from approved delivery arrangements is documented and addressed through Programme Board and Academic Board governance processes.

4. **External Examiner Report**
   Comments and observations from external examiners are included where relevant and available. These insights contribute to the integrity, fairness and academic standards of the programme.

Outcomes and Suggested Actions:

Based on the findings and feedback presented, suggested actions are outlined where appropriate. These may address areas for improvement, enhancements to delivery, or strategic adjustments to ensure continuous development of the programme.

The report will provide commentary on what has worked well and address areas for improvement, enhancements to delivery, or strategic adjustments to ensure continuous development of the programme.

This report supports reflective practice amongst college staff, Programme Committees and Academic Boards by enabling a thorough evaluation of programme quality.

It ensures that programmes remain academically and operationally viable, that delivery modes meet established criteria, that workload expectations are balanced and manageable, and that assessment methods are fair, transparent, and aligned with intended learning outcomes. Furthermore, it helps verify that academic support services and facilities are both appropriate and effective.

These reports also play a key role in fostering Tutor engagement with the programme, promoting

continuous enhancement and alignment with academic standards.

Completed reports are submitted by the Academic Director, following consultation with the Registrar, a at the end of each academic year, for review and consideration by the Academic Board.

2.6.2 Follow-Up: Annual Academic Programme Report

The report is reviewed by Academic Board. Key issues arising from the Academic Board's discussions are documented to ensure appropriate follow-up and resolution. A summary of identified issues and their associated actions is circulated to the Programme Boards or Executive Management Committee, as appropriate, ensuring accountability for overseeing timely closure of any issues.

Where implementation of recommended actions has resource implications, the Academic Board may be required to advise the Board of Directors and seek formal approval and commitment for the necessary funding. This ensures that critical quality improvements are adequately supported and can be effectively implemented.

2.7 Consultation with External Stakeholders (Employers/Professional Bodies)

Consultation with external stakeholders (such as prospective employers, professional bodies, external supervisors) forms a fundamental element of the College's programmes design and development process and supports the College's benchmarking activities.

The input of prospective employers of ICPPD graduates, and the relevant professional bodies, are crucial in the context of the college's obligations under *Qualifications and Quality Assurance (Education and Training) Act 2012* and *QQI Core Statutory Quality Assurance Guidelines*. Therefore, the college has established procedures to systematically capture, analyse, and respond to external feedback on programme quality.

A number of processes are used to engage external stakeholders, including engagement with relevant professional bodies, employer consultations, external supervisor fora, graduate surveys. These are utilised to strengthen the relationships between the College, businesses, and the wider community being served by graduates of ICPPD programmes.

Community/employer relationships are further strengthened by the College's engagement with Clinical Practice host agencies to support the Clinical Practice modules on the BA (Hons) in Holistic Counselling and Psychotherapy.

2.7.1 Aims/Objectives: External Stakeholder Consultation

ICPPD's aim in obtaining employers' and professional bodies' evaluation/feedback of their perception of the quality of ICPPD programmes, and the services related to each programme, is to obtain appropriate information to facilitate the College to further improve and maintain the quality of the education and training provided.

The objective of this employer/professional body evaluation and feedback process is both to meet the College's statutory requirements and to gain meaningful feedback on external perceptions of the currency, quality and standard of programme delivery and service provision. The output of the consultations is used to support existing and prospective academic and training programme development and support programme development.

2.7.2 Process: External Stakeholder Consultation

The content and format of each of the consultations employed is dependent on the purpose of the engagement and the information requirement. Where the consultation process is being utilised for programme development purposes, the required reflection is identified by the Programme Board and/or the Academic Director.

The processes utilised for employer/professional body consultation is dependent on the mechanisms employed and the information output required. For example, ICPPD's engagement with clinical placement organisations to facilitate and support Clinical Practice modules' requirements has resulted in significant feedback regarding the current practices, initiatives and developments within the profession.

Survey is considered one of the most efficient and immediate processes for the collection of feedback in relation to programme quality; however, normally in relation to employers and professional bodies, the College prefers to conduct face-to-face evaluations/meetings/fora.

When the consultation is completed, the output is analysed and a final report is prepared for consideration and discussion at the Programme Board, as relevant. Critical and pertinent issues are reported to Academic Board.

2.7.3 Follow-Up: External Stakeholder Consultation

Reports following consultation meetings are considered by Programme Board, and the major issues arising from the discussions at the meeting are recorded for discussion and follow-up by the Academic Director. The issues and associated actions are copied to the Academic Board which is responsible for ensuring that issues are closed out in a timely fashion.

In particular, the review and update of the Clinical Practice Handbook is conducted annually by the Clinical Practice Co-ordinators, Registrar and the Academic Director to incorporate the requirements identified through consultation with, and feedback from, both clinical practice host organisations, and the relevant professional bodies and to reflect changes to the profession.

Where there are resource implications to facilitate action in relation to particular issues, it may be necessary for Academic Board to advise and secure a commitment to funding from the Board of Directors.

2.8 Benchmarking Activities / Competitor Analysis

ICPPD utilises benchmarking and competitor analysis, which involves comparisons of processes and practices and, more particularly, specific similar programme offerings, in order to identify best practice and initiate further developments and enhancements.

ICPPD also conducts strategic competitor benchmarking across the wider higher education landscape, nationally and internationally. This is done to support the development of innovative practices, particularly in the areas of programme content and development, with a view to enhancing the College's programme portfolio, reputation and geographical location support. Competitor analysis at programme development stage is actioned through the Programme Development team.

2.8.1 Aims/Objectives: Benchmarking Activities/Competitor Analysis

ICPPD's aim in conducting benchmarking is to obtain information which will facilitate the College to maintain and further improve the quality of the education and training which it provides.

The primary objectives of this benchmarking process is both to meet the College's statutory requirements under the *Qualifications and Quality Assurance (Education and Training) Act 2012* and *QQI Core Statutory Quality Assurance Guidelines*, while gaining meaningful feedback on the current quality and standard of programme delivery and service provision to support existing and prospective programme development

and provision.

2.8.2 Process: Benchmarking Activities/Competitor Analysis

In developing programmes, the College benchmarks against a number of criteria including:

- **Programme Content/Structure:** ICPPD monitors developments in the higher education sector, including trends among comparable education and training providers, and incorporates these insights into its strategic, academic, and business planning processes. The College remains committed to maintaining the holistic ethos underpinning its programmes and continuously integrates relevant, current developments in the field to ensure programme relevance and quality.

- **Admissions:** Entry requirements are established and benchmarked at the programme development stage. While aligned nationally with comparable programmes, factors such as prior learning (both experiential and accredited) and available learner supports are also benchmarked against other providers. Alternative (non-standard) entry routes, including recognition of prior experiential learning, are similarly benchmarked, reviewed, and may be formalised within the College's admissions and Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) policies.

- **Accessibility and Flexibility of Provision:** ICPPD recognises that flexible programme delivery is central to widening participation and supporting learner access. Accordingly, the College provides flexible delivery arrangements, including part-time, evening, and weekend provision, enabling learners to balance their studies with work and other commitments and supporting the College's Access, Transfer, and Progression (ATP) objectives.

- **Course Fees:** While not exclusively an academic consideration, ICPPD recognises the significance of economic factors and the impact of fees on learner access, participation, and retention. The College endeavours to maintain competitively priced programmes while ensuring financial viability and the sustainability of programme provision. All tuition fees and associated costs, including personal therapy and supervision requirements, are transparently published on the College website and in programme documentation.

- **Staff Expertise and Professional Engagement:** ICPPD tutors are experienced practitioners in the field of counselling and psychotherapy, many of whom are also accredited supervisors. This enables them to incorporate real-world practice and problem-based learning approaches into teaching and learning.

  Staff Academic Expertise: Additionally, tutors who are engaged with other education and training providers bring valuable insights and experience, enhancing the learning environment for both the College and its learners. Their involvement in ICPPD's academic development processes and programme boards further supports the integration of current professional and sectoral developments into programme design and delivery.

  Individual staff members are encouraged to undertake (professional and personal) development activities which will enhance their current skills and competencies for implementation at the College. Staff (and learners) are actively encouraged to engage with relevant professional bodies, and attend conferences and seminars provided by these organisations to support their own personal and professional development.

When the consultations are completed, the output is analysed and a final report is prepared for consideration at the Programme Board, as relevant. Critical and pertinent issues are reported to Academic

Board.

2.8.3 Follow-Up: Benchmarking Activities/Competitor Analysis

Reports are considered by the programme board and/or the programme development team (as appropriate) and the major issues arising from the discussions at these meeting are recorded for discussion and follow-up. Any issues and associated actions are reported to the Academic Board which is responsible for ensuring that issues are closed out in a timely fashion.

2.9 Audit/Review of On-Going Monitoring and Periodic Review of Programmes Policies and Procedures

ICPPD is committed to ensuring that these On-Going Monitoring and Periodic Review of Programmes Policies and procedures are adhered to and used in a proper and adequate manner. It endeavours to continuously review the process on an annual basis so that the best practice is always applied. This review will be conducted by the Academic Director, reporting to the Academic Board.

Chapter 3 Cyclical External Quality Assurance

The Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG 2015, Section 1.1) identify policies and processes as central to a coherent institutional quality assurance system, supporting continuous improvement, accountability, and the development of a quality culture in which all stakeholders engage. Such policies are required to have formal status and be publicly available.

In addition, the Qualifications and Quality Assurance (Education and Training) Act 2012 establishes the legislative framework for quality assurance within ICPPD.

ICPPD implements and continuously enhances its quality assurance procedures to support the systematic planning, monitoring, evaluation, and improvement of its education and training provision. The effectiveness of these activities is subject to regular review, and appropriate documentary evidence is maintained to demonstrate the implementation, operation, and ongoing development of the College's quality assurance system.

3.1 Statutory Obligations and Provisions

ICPPD is committed to meeting its statutory obligations under the ***Qualifications and Quality Assurance (Education and Training) Act 2012*** and to maintaining a robust and effective quality assurance system. The College has established and continues to enhance its quality assurance procedures in line with the Act and associated QQI guidelines.

The 2012 Act defines the framework for quality assurance and outlines key principles underpinning policy development and practice, enabling providers to design and implement institution-specific policies within a regulated environment. In this context, the legislation supports institutional autonomy, including the development and articulation of the College's ethos and educational approach, while ensuring accountability through a structured quality assurance framework.

The Academic Board holds primary responsibility for quality assurance within the College. This responsibility is discharged in practice through the Registrar, who has designated responsibility for institutional quality assurance. Notwithstanding this, ICPPD affirms that quality assurance is a shared responsibility across the organisation, particularly among members of the Executive Management Committee.

In fulfilling its oversight role, the Academic Board ensures that appropriate decisions and actions are taken to promote best practice and maintain high academic standards across the College.

3.2 External Quality Assurance Mechanisms

ICPPD routinely evaluates the effectiveness of its planning, monitoring, and review activities, using the outcomes to inform continuous improvement and to enhance its operations in line with the College's mission and strategic objectives. The College engages fully with the quality assurance, audit, and review requirements of all relevant statutory, regulatory, and professional bodies.

ICPPD maintains a range of internal and external audit, assessment, and approval processes to meet the requirements of its stakeholders. These include review and oversight by QQI, relevant professional bodies, and other statutory and regulatory authorities.

The College's audit, assessment, and approval practices are outlined in the institutional review and programme monitoring sections of this document. Financial and corporate reporting is carried out in accordance with applicable statutory and regulatory requirements.

ICPPD supports and facilitates external review and quality enhancement activities and encourages staff engagement in these processes, including participation in peer review panels, professional networks, conferences, and sectoral initiatives. The College has established internal systems and procedures to support and evidence its compliance with QQI quality assurance and monitoring requirements.

3.3 Cyclical (Institutional) Review

QQI's *Policy for Cyclical Review of Higher Education Institutions* (2016) states that cyclical review:

- evaluates the effectiveness of institution-wide quality assurance procedures in establishing, maintaining, and enhancing the quality of education, training, research, and related services.
- assesses institutional accountability for compliance with the European Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance (ESG 2015), alignment with QQI quality assurance guidelines, and adherence to relevant QQI policies within the lifecycle of engagement between the institution and QQI.
- examines institutional approaches to quality enhancement, including impacts on teaching, learning, and research, alignment with institutional mission and strategy, and performance against relevant quality indicators and benchmarks.

To maximise the effectiveness of cyclical (institutional) review, ICPPD undertakes structured planning and preparation for these processes, including the periodic review of relevant strategies and objectives to ensure appropriate resourcing, coordination, and alignment with institutional priorities.

3.3.1 Aims/Objectives: QQI Cyclical (Institutional) Review

Institutional review processes focus on the College as a whole and consider ICPPD's mission, strategic objectives, progress since the previous review, governance and management structures, staffing, resources, and operating environment. The review process serves as a key strategic tool to support academic planning and institutional development and evaluates the effectiveness of the College's quality assurance systems in maintaining and enhancing the quality of its programmes and awards.

QQI identifies the following key purposes for cyclical review:

- To promote a quality culture and the enhancement of the learner learning environment and experience within institutions.
- To provide feedback on institutional quality and the effectiveness of mission, strategy, governance, and management in supporting quality assurance.
- To enhance public confidence in the quality of institutions through transparency and accountability.
- To support system-level improvement in the quality of higher education; and
- To facilitate quality enhancement through evidence-based evaluation and recommendations.

3.3.2 Process: QQI Cyclical (Institutional) Review

In accordance with QQI's Policy for Cyclical Review of Higher Education Institutions (2016), the institutional review follows a structured process aligned with internationally recognised quality assurance practices and the Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG 2015).

The cyclical review process comprises the following key stages:

1. Agreement and publication of Terms of Reference, following consultation between QQI and the

College.
2. Preparation of a Self-Evaluation Report (SER) by the College, approved through internal quality assurance processes.
3. External evaluation, including a site visit by an independent review panel appointed by QQI, and the preparation of an evaluation report.
4. Publication of the review report, including findings and recommendations; and
5. A follow-up process to monitor and review the implementation of agreed actions.

The timeframe for completion of these stages is determined in agreement with QQI as part of the review planning process.

The institutional review is informed by the ESG (2015), particularly Part 1, and evaluates the effectiveness of the College's quality assurance procedures in maintaining and enhancing academic standards and the quality of provision.

The ESG standards considered include:
- Policy for Quality Assurance
- Design and Approval of Programmes
- Learner-Centred Learning, Teaching and Assessment
- Learner Admission, Progression, Recognition and Certification
- Teaching Staff
- Learning Resources and Learner Support
- Information Management
- Public Information
- Ongoing Monitoring and Periodic Review of Programmes
- Cyclical External Quality Assurance

These areas are addressed through the Self-Evaluation Report and the external review process.

The Terms of Reference for institutional review are developed in consultation with QQI and are designed to guide the evaluation of key institutional areas, including:
- Alignment of mission, vision, and values
- Effectiveness of access, transfer, and progression arrangements
- Strategic planning and governance
- Teaching, learning, and programme provision
- Research and scholarly activity (where applicable)

Additional areas may be included to reflect institutional priorities or QQI requirements.

The structure and content of the Self-Evaluation Report are informed by the agreed Terms of Reference and reflect the College's policies, systems, and stage of development. The SER incorporates both qualitative and quantitative evidence including key performance indicators aligned with QQI expectations and relevant benchmarks.

The outcomes of institutional review, including the review panel report and the College's formal response, inform strategic planning, quality enhancement and continuous improvement across ICPPD's academic and operational activities.

3.3.3 Follow-Up: QQI Cyclical (Institutional) Review

Following the institutional review process, the College is required to identify and implement appropriate

actions arising from review findings and may be required to submit progress reports to QQI on the implementation of specific recommendations outlined in the final report.

Institutional review follow-up reports are reviewed and approved by the College's Academic Board.

ICPPD acknowledges that outputs and findings arising from institutional review may be considered and, where appropriate, published or shared by QQI in line with its statutory monitoring, evaluation, and quality assurance responsibilities.

3.4 Internal Quality Assurance Mechanisms

This Quality Assurance Manual is a fundamental part of the ICPPD Quality Assurance procedures. Internal quality assurance processes are implemented and monitored within the College

- through on-going (routine) monitoring and evaluation of programmes, which is conducted on a continuous basis
- by obtaining feedback from internal and external sources (including learners and staff) for the purpose of further improving and maintaining the quality of education and training which it provides, organises and/or procures; and
- more formally, though a quinquennial institutional review process which is facilitated through the relevant accreditation body.

College staff are required, and committed, to participate in these quality assurance measures, and to implement the relevant follow-up activities in a timely fashion.

3.5 Audit/Review of Cyclical External Quality Assurance Policies

ICPPD is committed to ensuring that Cyclical External Quality Assurance Policies are adhered to and used in a proper and adequate manner. It endeavours to continuously review the process on an annual basis so that the best practice is always applied. This review will be conducted by the Registrar, reporting to the Academic Board.

SECTION C POLICIES RELATING TO LEARNERS AND ASSESSMENTS

Chapter 1 Learner Admission, Progression, Recognition and Certification

ICPPD understands the terms: access, transfer, and progression, to be as defined in the relevant policies of QQI, and has developed procedures and applies them accordingly, to comply with *section 56* of the Qualifications and Quality Assurance (Education and Training) Act 2012.

Each new academic and training programme developed within the College is required to have relevant access, transfer, and progression requirements considered during the development process, to support the concept of lifelong learning. As they are prepared, each new ICPPD programme document outlines the access, transfer, and progression requirements and options for that programme, as defined by national standards, and determined by the Programme Board. Academic programme documents also detail the ECTS (European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System) credit allocation for each individual module within the programme to facilitate the transfer process.

Through the deliberations at Programme Board and Academic Board, ICPPD monitors and reviews the College's access, transfer, and progression policies to support optimal learner access, transfer, and progression within the College, and to other further/higher education institutions. The College's documentation and programme promotional material informs ICPPD learners of the relevant access, transfer, and progression routes.

1.1 Admissions/Access Policy

1.1.1 Context

The procedures and guidelines outlined below guide all staff, applicants, learners and other stakeholders involved in the practices and principles of admission and enrolment onto ICPPD Programmes.

Applicants are selected via procedures identified for each programme on the ICPPD website.

Programme admission requirements are defined at the time of the development of each academic and training programme, as outlined in **Section B, Chapter B, Chapter 1, 1.1**. The relevant entry requirements are thus approved as part of the programme approval/accreditation process and are aligned with national standards for equivalent programmes. Procedures for processing applications for admission and progression have been prepared within the College to ensure consistency, fairness and transparency.

ICPPD encourages applications from individuals from all backgrounds and evaluates the potential of each applicant individually and on their own merits. ICPPD is proud to be an inclusive learning community; committed to providing a fair admissions system and will provide an equal opportunity for all individuals, regardless of background, to a course subject to their meeting entry requirements and suitability for programmes.

An Admission Panel has responsibility for monitoring, review and development of selection systems and has oversight of admission procedures. Interview Panels for BA Programmes are Academic Staff who are also members of the Admission Panel. The Terms of Reference of the Admission Panel are outlined in the ***QA Manual, Section A, Chapter 2, 2.2.14.***

In addition, ICPPD staff, in particular the Academic Director and Administration Staff, engage in extensive communication with prospective learners regarding admission requirements for ICPPD academic and training programmes.

1.1.2 Accessibility Supports

ICPPD is committed to fulfilling its obligations as an education provider under the ***Equal Status Acts 2000–2018*** and provides reasonable accommodations to support learner participation in its programmes.

As outlined in this QA Manual ***(Section A, Chapter 4, 4.5 – Disability Policy and Supports for Staff and Learners with Disabilities/Additional Learning Needs)***, accommodations are made available from the application stage through to programme participation, supporting inclusive access and engagement.

1.1.3 Admissions Process - Application

Entry onto ICPPD programmes is facilitated through direct entry application. Application Forms are available on the ICPPD website or may requested from the Administration Office.

Applicants for all academic programmes must satisfy the minimum entry requirements as identified for each programme and also any additional requirements specified for their programme of choice to be considered eligible.

Administration Staff are responsible for the administration of all stages of the ICPPD admission processes.

Application forms are available on the relevant ICPPD course pages in digital and printable formats. Receipt of an application form is acknowledged by email and the next steps in the admissions process are explained to the applicant.

Applications are screened by the Administration Staff to determine whether the specified entry requirements have been met for the programme. Documentation required to provide evidence of meeting minimum entry requirements is authenticated and recorded.

All applicants must produce the original copies of all supporting documentation, such as transcripts and academic parchment/certificates at the Admissions stage. Copies are retained on file and verified by a member of the Administration Staff.

1.1.3.1 English Language requirements

Applicants are required to have appropriate English language skills to facilitate their engagement with programmes. If English is not the learner's first language, and they have not completed a programme in English within the previous two years of application, they will need to provide evidence of English language proficiency as detailed below.

Applicants for BA programmes or ICPPD's professional programmes, must provide acceptable proof of English proficiency before any offer of a place may be made, therefore ICPPD requires the learner to provide English proficiency certificate and scores, along with their other documents on application, if/as appropriate. The English language proficiency tests and scores which are considered acceptable for ICPPD programmes is 6.5 IELTS, or equivalent.

1.1.4 Admissions Process – Orientation and Interview

Depending on the programme being applied for, a virtual or face-to-face interview is scheduled.

In the case of the BA (Hons) in Holistic Counselling and Psychotherapy programme all applicants are required to attend an interview. An Interview Panel, derived from the Admissions Panel, is appointed and interview dates are scheduled. Details of the applicant's interview date and time are communicated to them by email.

All applicants are required to attend a group virtual orientation session with the Academic Director, scheduled on the same day as interviews and held prior to the individual interviews. The orientation session aims to identify the expectations and requirements of the learner to facilitate successful engagement with the programme.

Applicants must attend a selection interview to

- ensure that the learner meets the personal and professional admission requirements identified by the ICPPD
- determine whether they are cognisant of the academic workload and specific professional requirements of the programme
- explore the progression and fitness-to-practice considerations with the prospective learner

1.1.5 Exemptions and Award Stage Result

Exemptions are granted at Admissions Stage to a programme. Where exemptions are granted, the exempted module is excluded when calculating the overall average mark (grade) for the programme. Therefore, exemptions are not granted against modules within the award stage of a course.

1.1.6 Admissions Process – Interview

On submission of application and all supporting documentation, candidates are scheduled for interview with a panel of two interviewers.

The Interview Panel make a recommendation whether or not an applicant is a suitable candidate to be offered a place on the programme. The ultimate decision to offer or not offer a place on a programme is made by the chair of the Admissions Panel. A second interview may be scheduled if necessary.

The output of the interview is recorded on the **BA Admissions Interview Form** or **BA Admissions RPL Interview Form** as appropriate.

The outcome is communicated to the applicant by the designated Administration Staff member.

1.1.7 Admissions Process – Appeal of the Interview Decision

Unsuccessful applicants may appeal the decision to the Chair of the Admissions Panel, if he/she was not involved in the admissions decision, otherwise an external academic, independent member of the Academic Board will make the determination.

1.1.8 Admissions Process – Registration

A letter of acceptance, together with Registration form and information on Fees and Payment Plans, is forwarded to successful applicants.

On receipt of completed Registration Form and the next required fee payment, learners are enrolled on the relevant programme and forwarded information relating to Timetables, Induction and Moodle Enrolment.

1.1.9 Admissions Process – Deferral of a place on a programme

Learners may choose the option to defer their place on a programme in accordance with the process outlined in ***QA Manual, Section C, Chapter 2, 2.4 – Deferral of a Programme/Module.***

1.2 Transfer

ICPPD facilitates, where possible, the transfer of learners across programmes within ICPPD, or from other Colleges whose programmes are sufficiently similar to those offered by ICPPD.

1.2.1 Application to Transfer

Applications in relation to possible learner transfer are required to be submitted to ICPPD by the current/potential learner. Applications are reviewed on an individual basis.

Where the programme is linked to professional registration, the impact on the learner's prospective registrations is also considered when considering the transfer request.

1.2.2 Application to Transfer – Mapping of Programmes

This activity involves mapping details of the learner's current programme to the relevant ICPPD programme by the Academic Director, a Programme Leader, and/or a senior academic in the appropriate subject area.

1.2.3 Monitoring of transferred learners progress / required supports

In the case of a learner who has transferred onto an ICPPD programme, the learner's progress is monitored during the programme to ensure that the admission decision was appropriate, and to determine if additional support is required for learner to successfully engage with and complete the programme/stage.

1.3 Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL)

Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) supports widening participation and lifelong learning and is underpinned by the Qualifications and Quality Assurance (Education and Training) Act, 2012. ICPPD's approach to RPL and work-based learning is informed by QQI's Policy Restatement - Policy and Criteria for Access, Transfer and Progression in Relation to Learners for Providers of Further and Higher Education and Training [NQAI 2003, Restated 2015]

The application of RPL within ICPPD allows potential learners to gain admission to a module/programme or to gain exemptions/credit from some parts of a programme (complete modules only), based on demonstrated learning achieved prior to their entry.

1.3.1 Application to Gain Admission/Exemption with RPL

Applications in relation to possible learner admission/exemptions with RPL are required to be submitted to ICPPD by the applicant using the existing programme application form, supported by the required provide evidence of meeting minimum entry requirements. Applicants must produce the original copies of all supporting documentation, such as transcripts and academic parchment/certificates.

To apply for an exemption at ICPPD an applicant must provide the College administration office with supporting documentation including evidence of:

- the level of previous study (with a copy of their marks/transcript)
- learning outcomes of the modules/programme(s) previously completed
- the specific content covered including samples of work
- details of the type and scale of the assessment involved in the completed programmes for consideration.

Applications are reviewed on an individual basis.

1.3.2 Evaluation of RPL

ICPPD utilises RPL processes to evaluate application information provided by a prospective learner in

relation to both their prior certified learning and their prior experiential learning.

The application and supporting documentation are referred to the Academic Director, relevant Programme Leader and/or nominated senior academic staff for review, and to obtain a recommendation regarding the learner's possible exemptions (for complete modules) prior to their entry onto the programme.

RPL admissions/evaluation is conducted by of no less than two of the Admissions Panel on a case-by-case basis, on request by an applicant for consideration under the College's RPL processes.

- ICPPD uses the verified applicant-provided information [programme certification, proof of study of comparable accredited material, etc.] to review the applicants request for access to an ICPPD programme at an advanced level, or to avail of exemptions in relation to particular programme material, while maintaining the standard of entry requirement for the programme as approved by the relevant accreditation and/or professional bodies.
- ICPPD offers exemptions on a per-module basis (only), as relevant, and consideration takes place in advance of the candidate's admission to the College programme.
- In addition, it may be necessary for the Academic Director to meet with the applicant (in addition to admission interview) to explore particular nuances for the previously completed learning to determine if it appropriately matches the module for which the exemption is being considered.
- Only when the College is completely satisfied that the applicant has met the appropriate learning outcomes, and meets the module-relevant criteria, is an exemption granted.

1.3.3 Communicating outcome of the RPL consideration

The learner is communicated with in writing indicating the decision taken in relation to

- their application for RPL consideration
- the stage of the programme into which they are granted admission
- the modules which they will have to complete and those for which an exemption has been granted (no partial exemptions are awarded – full modules only are permitted).

Auditing a module: In many instances, while a learner is exempted from undertaking the module, they may be required to attend the delivery of the module (for andragogical, group dynamics and learning-support purposes) but do not have to complete the assessment requirements.

1.3.4 Monitoring of RPL learners progress / required supports

The learner's progress is monitored during the programme stage to ensure that the RPL decision was appropriate, and to determine if additional support is required for the learner to successfully engage with and complete the programme/stage.

1.3.5 Admission Report - Admission, Transfer and RPL data reporting

Admissions, Transfer and RPL entry numbers, and relevant data, are identified to Academic Board by the Registrar in the **Admissions Report** (part of the end of year **Annual Academic Programme Report**) to facilitate the monitoring of the standard and effectiveness of the process.

1.4 Admission – Garda National Vetting Procedure

ICPPD requires applicants on the academic programmes requiring clinical practice (client work), which may bring them into contact with vulnerable individuals or groups in society, to undertake Garda vetting documentation before Fitness to Practice meetings.

- All learners are responsible for providing accurate and complete information required to facilitate

Garda Vetting and to enable assessment of their suitability to undertake clinical practice.

- ICPPD engages the **Employment and Recruitment Federation (ERF)** to liaise with the **National Vetting Bureau (NVB)** on its behalf, in accordance with national vetting procedures.

- A designated member of Administration Staff (who is part of the Garda Vetting process) is responsible for:
  - Verifying learner identity (as required by law)
  - Initiating the vetting process via the NVB
  - Receiving and securely handling vetting disclosures

- Vetting disclosures issued by the NVB will indicate either:
  - No criminal record
    or
  - Details of recorded convictions (if applicable)

- The existence of a criminal record does not automatically preclude participation in clinical practice. Each case will be **considered individually**, taking into account:
  - The nature, seriousness, and relevance of the offence
  - The requirements of the programme and placement setting
  - The safety and wellbeing of clients and service users

- Failure to disclose relevant information during the vetting process may result in **disciplinary action**, up to and including removal from the programme.

- Final decisions regarding a learner's suitability for placement rest with the **clinical practice host organisation**.

- Garda Vetting is **non-transferable**, and individual placement providers may require additional vetting.

- Learners on programmes such as the BA (Hons) in Holistic Counselling and Psychotherapy are informed that successful completion of clinical practice is a mandatory requirement for programme completion.

- Garda Vetting requirements are clearly communicated in:
  - Programme documentation
  - Promotional materials
  - The College website

1.4.1 Data Protection and Confidentiality

All vetting information is processed in accordance with **GDPR and data protection legislation**, and is treated as **strictly confidential**. Access to vetting disclosures is restricted to authorised personnel only.

1.5 Intra-Programme Progression

ICPPD is cognisant of the ethical obligations of the college regarding progression of learners through training programmes in the field of counselling and psychotherapy. ICPPD College is cognisant of the requirements of QQI and IACP as the validating and accrediting bodies respectively, and our place as

gatekeepers through our training programmes in the field of counselling and psychotherapy.

ICPPD reserves all rights in relation to a learner's participation on a programme.

Scope
This policy applies to all learners at ICPPD College over the duration of their attending the BA (Hons) in Holistic Counselling and Psychotherapy, Level 8 programmes.

1.5.1 Learner Support and Progression Meetings

Purpose
Learner Support Meetings and Progression Meetings are academic, professional and welfare supports held with learners on the BA (Hons) in Holistic Counselling and Psychotherapy programme.
Learner Support Meetings and Progression Meetings are in place for faculty and learners to review and discuss with faculty how the learners are progressing in the programme. These discussions include a review of the integration of personal, professional and academic development.

Learner attendance at these meetings is mandatory.

Note: As Learners are given advance notice of the dates, there is a fee if this meeting needs to be rescheduled to cover costs involved in rescheduling.

Process
Learner Support Meetings are scheduled at the end of Semester 1; Progression Meeting take place at the end of the Semester 2.

Fitness to Practice Meetings take the place of the Progression Meetings at the end of Year 2. The dates are advised on the timetables at the commencement of the academic year.

The panels are comprised of the Programme Leader and Core tutor and/or Clinical Practice Co-Ordinator.

Areas for discussion and recommendations of the panel are defined and recorded including:

- Learner's meeting of Academic Requirements, including attendance; continuous assessment/essays/assignments completed to date (and grades achieved); missed time learning tasks completed, if appropriate.
- Learner's Personal and Professional Development, including review of learner's Personal Therapy Log – the minimum required sessions completed and sign-off/letter of confirmation by accredited therapist on file.
- Discussion/Feedback on Clinical Practice (if/as appropriate): Issues covered include attendance requirements; In-house supervision; clinical practice meetings; learner update of client work; contract with clinical practice organisation; maintenance of case notes for client work completed; external supervisors log and report; completion and return of appropriate clinical practice forms.
- Other Administration/Academic Issue(s)

The written record is forwarded to the learner after each meeting with an opportunity for the learner for the learner request further discussion.

Outcomes of Progression Meetings:

The Overall Progression outcome focuses on learner's personal/professional development and integration. The recommendations may include:

- Progression to the next stage
- Progression with suggestions for further development
- Progression with requirements to attend to particular areas of development
- Non-progression with recommendations e.g., pause training for a period of time to focus on personal development or life circumstances i.e., Deferral of programme (see Section 2.2.4 re Deferrals Policy)
- Non-progression - Unsuitability for programme or profession leading to withdrawal from the programme.

Any ICPPD learner who is not in agreement with the outcome of their Progression meeting can avail of the Assessment Review Procedure as outlined in the ICPPD Learner Handbook and Quality Assurance Manual, ***Section C, Chapter 6, 6.2***. Both are available on Moodle.

1.5.2 Fitness to Practice (Access/Progression)

A learner is required to attend a Fitness to Practice meeting at the end of year two, the purpose of which is to determine collaboratively whether a learner is ready to move on to the next stage in their training, i.e., to move into clinical practice.

During the first two years of training, the learner has experienced and received training that provides a knowledge base for a range of skills, responsibilities, functions and activities; and will have attended Learner Support Meetings and Progression Meetings to review and discuss collaboratively how they are progressing ***personally, professionally and academically and the integration of these.***

Fitness to Practice at ICPPD College over the years has demonstrated that preparedness is on a continuum, with learners reaching readiness perhaps at different points of time. This policy exists to support and assist learners as part of a decision-making process in determining when they are ready to move into clinical practice, and ready to take on responsibility in their role as trainee therapist with clients.

Where a learner is considered not yet ready to move into clinical practice, the usual conclusion is that they will work towards readiness, within the limits and confines of this procedure.

1.5.2.1 Purpose

The Purpose of this policy is to:

- Provide a framework for the evaluation of a learner's preparedness for progression to clinical practice.
- Ensure that as a trainee therapist, they are informed, competent, and confident and have considered to have sufficient ethical awareness to work with clients.
- Ensure the well-being of clients and any members of the public who may engage the services provided by ICPPD College learners over the course of their clinical placement(s).
- Ensure learners on all ICPPD BA Programmes have a clear understanding of the standards of professional behaviour required of them throughout their training, and that learners are supported in their continuous achievement and completion of these standards.

1.5.2.2 Considerations under this Policy:

Progression to clinical placement is not automatic. A Fitness to Practice assessment takes place before progression to engagement with clients can ensue.

Learners are required to undertake a "Readiness to Practice" procedure prior to seeing clients. Learners

are involved in their own assessment in this regard, and their self-assessment feeds into the evaluative process.

Learners need to be aware that a placement is an agreement between ICPPD College, the learner and the agency. This agreement cannot be arranged until ICPPD College has approved the placement provider. Therefore, learners are required to inform the Clinical Practice Coordinator (CPCO) of any placement they are considering.

The Standards used in this procedure are stated in IACP Code of Ethics and Practice (IACP, 2018) There is a *Clinical Competencies form (CP02)* which is discussed with a learner at their Fitness to Practice meeting.

ICPPD College learners are bound to the IACP Code of Ethics over the duration of their training. A learner may be governed by other policies, procedure or Codes of Ethics arising from another aspect of their life. Observance to these is not the responsibility of ICPPD.

1.5.2.3 Responsibilities of a Learner under Code of Conduct

It follows that anything that impairs the capacity or health of a learner or arises from conduct and behaviour that might cause harm to others or the reputation of the profession, may have implications regarding Fitness to Practice. A learner is obliged to inform the College of anything which might impact on their ability to work with clients.

Learners are required to disclose at the time of their Fitness to Practice Meetings any criminal convictions incurred prior to or during their programme of study. In addition, they are required to disclose any situation where they have been the subject of disciplinary hearings or have ever been suspended in the course of their work-based activities (including voluntary work and work experience). This requirement to disclose remains in place for the duration of the training programme.

Should a learner's health status change or a disability emerge during the programme that causes concern as to the capacity for safe and effective practice, then the learner is required to inform the College through their Programme Leader or Academic Director. ICPPD College policies and procedures ensure that reasonable accommodations needed to support learners with an illness and/or a disability are considered and provided, where it is reasonable to do so.

A learner who has been subject to a judgment of a competent authority that might reflect on their ability to move into clinical practice, either out of consideration to illness, disability or specific learning difficulty will be supported appropriately. It is likely that in such instances, there will have been previous discussions with relevant tutors in year one and year two prior to the Fitness to Practice meeting. Any decisions, requirements or recommendations under review and any follow-up dates are noted on the learners file, the documentation having been signed by all parties present.

1.5.2.4 Requirements to commence Clinical Practice (all relevant programmes):

Prior to commencing Clinical Practice, a learner must:

- Achieve the required academic standard in examinations and assessments.
- Agree to abide by the IACP Code of Ethics and Practice for Counsellors and Psychotherapists.
- Have the capacity to perform within their role as trainee therapist.

Capacity relates to the knowledge, skills and competence to carry out the role as a trainee therapist. ICPPD College's programme-specific *Clinical Competencies form (CP02)* sets out the standards required from a learner before they begin to see clients.

Capacity also relates to the ethical, psychological, physical and behavioural readiness to undertake the responsibilities of the role as a trainee therapist, as set out in the IACP Code of Ethics.

It is a requirement of ICPPD College that a clinical practice placement cannot be finalised prior to a decision that a learner is ready to move into client work.

Evidence required to be submitted to the College prior to progression to clinical practice is as follows:

- Clinical Competencies form (CP02)
- Garda Vetting
- Engagement with an accredited supervisor is required to be in place in advance of commencing placement
- Personal Therapy Log, a minimum of 40 sessions of personal therapy signed off by the therapist and the learners
- Agreement with CPCO for preferred placement
- TUSLA e-Learning Programme Certificate

1.5.2.5 Fitness to Practice Procedure

Prior to the scheduled Fitness to Practice meetings the Programme Leader will have engaged with all relevant tutors and staff around each learner. This is allowing the experience of all those involved in a learner's development to speak to their recommendation for each learner. Confidentiality is held at organizational level in alignment with the ***College's Statement of Confidentiality, Section C, Chapter 2 – 2.1.***

The Fitness to Practice meetings are held individually with learners and the rationale for decisions, and requirements for next step, are amongst the topics that may be discussed with learners.

Stage 1: The learner completes the **Learners Clinical Competencies - Self-Evaluation form (CP02b)** and submits for consideration at the Fitness-to-Practice meeting.

Stage 2: A learner presents at the scheduled Fitness to Practice meeting and brings relevant required documents and evidence of therapy undertaken.

Stage 3: A learner reflects on their readiness to move into clinical practice and completes the **Clinical Competency form (CP02**) in collaboration with their Programme Leader and Core Tutor.

Stage 4: Both learner and Programme Leader discuss and sign the record of the Fitness to Practice meeting.

Stage 5: The Fitness to Practice panel considers evidence (including Clinical Competency form, requirements for progression to practice, assessment results and learner file). The Fitness to Practice panel decides whether the learner is ready to practice or not yet ready to practice. The feedback from tutors and staff, where relevant, is included.

Stage 6: The learner is notified of the decision and assisted with the next step.

Once a decision to proceed has been made, learners must prepare and submit the relevant supporting documentation required to the CPCO.

It should be noted that this is not an academic assessment process. Assessment results and achievement of Learning Outcomes are taken into consideration only in terms of a learner's competency to move into clinical practice.

Where a decision is not made at the time of the Fitness to Practice meeting, the panel will inform the learner of the reason and of any alternative arrangements that will have to be made. This information will be recorded on the learner's file.

1.5.2.6 Possible Outcomes of Fitness to Practice Meeting

- **A decision to progress to Client Work**

In this case the learner has been deemed ready to progress to client work and undertakes preparation for clinical practice placement, and the next steps, supported by the CPCO.

- **A decision of "not yet ready" to progress to client work**

The options here are discussed and agreed at the meeting, if possible. These may include:

- Any competency that needs to be addressed
- A realistic timeframe, where possible
- Any additional supports, if required

The learner cannot progress to client work until deemed ready to practice. In this case learners may defer the Clinical Practice module until a later time; and a review meeting date is agreed with panel. In this case learners are supported by panel/faculty and given clear direction as to what may be the skills, learning and competencies that need further development as set out in the panel's recommendations.

- **A decision not allowing progression**

In this case further requirements are discussed e.g., taking a year out to resolve some personal challenge etc. Learners can exit with a QQI Level 6 Certificate award. The decision for not progressing a learner through to client work occurs when there are safety and/or welfare concerns. The Learner can decide to exit the programme with Level 6 Exit Award.

An ICPPD learner who is not in agreement with the outcome of their Fitness to Practice meeting can avail of the Assessment Review Procedure as outlined in the ICPPD Learner Handbook and Quality Assurance Manual, ***Section C, Chapter 6, 6.2***.

ICPPD has a designated Clinical Practice Coordinator (CPCO), who is in regular contact with the Programme Leader, Core Tutor and Academic Director. When the Fitness to Practice meetings are complete, the Programme Leader notifies the administration office as to which learners have been approved to commence clinical practice and which learners have been postponed with dates for review sessions indicated.

Administration staff notify the CPCO and Academic Director; and also notify/remind all learners as per timetable of the Clinical Practice induction session that is scheduled to introduce the CPCO and the required 'paperwork' associated with the Clinical Practice module.

There are several documents associated with the Clinical Practice module, implemented by the CPCO. All relevant documents and forms are available on Moodle.

1.5.2.7 Starting Clinical Practice

Next Steps following approval from Fitness to Practice panel:

- When the learner has been cleared by Fitness to Practice Panel to start client work, the learner needs to identify an accredited supervisor - the required accreditation is outlined in the Clinical Practice Handbook.
- The learner then needs to have an initial session with an accredited supervisor (this is not included in the minimum of twenty-four supervision sessions - so it is a minimum of 24+1). The supervisor should complete the **External Supervisor's Verification (CP07**) which the learner then pots/emails

CPCO.

- This allows the learner to complete the **Trainee Counsellor's/Psychotherapist's Preparation for Clinical Work Contract (CP1**) which also needs to be forwarded to CPCO once it has been fully completed together with the CP02. The CPCO cannot progress the leaner's placement until this form has been received. The learner also needs to attach a copy of the certificate for completing the Children First e-learning programme as identified on the CP01.
- If the learner has been offered a placement, the details of this and contact details of the co-ordinator at the placement needs to be emailed to CPCO: email/phone-mobile/address.
- CPCO will then contact the co-ordinator/manager of the Host Placement and ask ICPPD Administration staff to send out the Information Pack and email the learner confirming that they can start working with clients. Once the placement organisation has received this the learner is good to go.
- To summarise, the three documents the learner needs to give to CPCO to enable the placement to be processed are **CP01 (plus Children First certificate), CP02 and CP07**.

1.5.2.8 Learner Supports during Clinical Placement

During the Clinical Practice module, ICPPD College provides the following supports for Learners

Designated Clinical Practice Coordinator (CPCO)

Induction Session – a 1.5-hour induction session is provided in both locations, Athlone and Galway and is delivered by the CPCO. This induction session is timetabled at the beginning of the academic year and is provided following Fitness to Practice Meetings for learners to ease anxiety and to inform learners of the process required. Learners will be provided with hard copies of all the forms required and introduced to the 'paperwork' and documents required for their clinical practice and the Clinical Practice module.

Letter of Approval – letter from ICPPD College for a learner to use when approaching a Clinical Placement(s). It introduces the College and programme and stipulates to the fact that the learner has been approved to commence client work; identifies the CPC0; validates insurance cover, in-house supervision and external supervision; that personal therapy is in place and that Garda Vetting is complete.

In-house Supervision – these are usually 2-hour sessions provided monthly, in groups of 3-6 learners (in accordance with IACP requirements). The initial sessions are scheduled over the summer months to support learners in preparation for their clinical practice placement.

External Supervision – as required by programme criteria and in line with IACP requirements as outlined in both the Clinical Practice Handbook and the Learner Handbook.

Personal Therapy – as required by programme criteria – as outlined in the Clinical Practice Handbook and the Learner Handbook.

Professional Indemnity Insurance - ICPPD covers this for the duration of clinical practice as a trainee therapist.

Garda Vetting – processed by ICPPD College administration staff, at no cost to learner.
Clinical Practice Peer Support Session – 2-hour session timetabled at beginning of academic year and delivered in ICPPD Athlone. This session is scheduled to take place in the second half of the academic year as the purpose of this support session is to provide learners with the experience of meeting learners from year 3 and graduates of the programme from previous years to ease anxiety and hear their experience of the Clinical Practice module and Clinical Placements.

Information Pack – for Clinical Placement Manager, authorised by CPCO and administered by ICPPD

College administration staff. This pack contains a cover letter of introduction and appreciation, ICPPD's Clinical Practice Handbook and copy of professional indemnity insurance.

Site Evaluation – the CPCO will contact placements and complete placement evaluation form to ensure they meet QA guidelines and IACP requirements

Clinical Practice Module on Moodle – documentation, guidelines, videos and articles to support the Learner on the Clinical Practice module. Learner engagement via Moodle is also available for review.

External Supervisor's Forum – an annual gathering of external supervisors and an opportunity to network, introduce ICPPD College and an invitation to share information and expectations.

Clinical Placement Manager's Forum - an annual gathering of Managers of Clinical Practice Placements who consider taking on trainee therapists and provide client hours for learners. This meeting is an opportunity for us in ICPPD to hear feedback on our trainees and to support each other as organisations in supporting trainees in the field of counselling and psychotherapy.

All **feedback** is valued, as it provides essential insights into areas where the College is performing well and highlights opportunities for improvement. Feedback is systematically shared with the relevant Boards within ICPPD College to inform ongoing quality enhancement and strategic decision-making.

1.6 Post-Programme Progression

It is ICPPD policy to encourage and facilitate the progression of eligible learners, who wish to continue with further studies in a similar or related field, to a higher award level within the National Qualifications Framework.

The requirements for learners to progress from one stage to another within an ICPPD programme (if applicable), and to successfully complete that programme, are specified in the Approved Programme Schedule for each programme at the time of the development of the programme, as outlined in ***Section B,* 1.2: *Programme Design/Development: Internal Process***. Progression requirements are advised to learners in their Learner Handbook distributed at the start of each academic year and are also published on the ICPPD website.

Post-programme progression options and pathways are considered at the time of the development of each academic and training programme, as outlined ***Section B, 1.2*: *Programme Design/Development: Internal Process*** The relevant entry requirements of other programmes are considered as part of the programme approval/accreditation process.

Potential progression options are identified for prospective learners on the ICPPD website and in the relevant programme promotional material. In addition, ICPPD staff, in particular the Academic Director/Programme Leader, also engage in extensive communications with prospective learners regarding possible progression opportunities post-ICPPD academic and training programmes.

With the alignment of ICPPD Programmes to the National Qualifications Framework (NFQ) specific progression opportunities currently provided with ICPPD are:

Successful completion of ICPPD's Personal Development programme allows a candidate to apply for entry (with exemptions) to/progress within to the ICPPD Certificate *in Introduction to Holistic Counselling and Psychotherapy* programme, or equivalent programmes at other third-level providers.

Successful completion of ICPPD's Introduction to Holistic Counselling and Psychotherapy allows a candidate to apply for entry to the BA (Hons) in Holistic Counselling and Psychotherapy – Level 8 programme at ICPPD, or equivalent programmes at other third-level providers.

The BA (Hons) in Holistic Counselling and Psychotherapy programme, Level 8, meet the academic requirements for trainee counsellors'/psychotherapists' registration with (as a minimum) the IACP professional bodies, to support Learner's progression within the Counselling and Psychotherapy profession.

Successful graduates of ICPPD's BA programme may also enhance their professional qualifications by applying for on ICPPD certified programmes – Diploma in Advanced Supervision (IACP accredited) (participants must have attained IACP accreditation) or Diploma in Expressive Arts.

The Administration Staff are responsible for the administration of all stages of the ICPPD admission processes which facilitates Learner progression. The alignment of ICPPD programmes within the NFQ should facilitate progression of ICPPD Learners, while also supporting progression of non-ICPPD graduates accessing progression options within ICPPD.

1.7 Audit/Review of Access, Transfer and Progression Policies and Procedures

ICPPD is committed to ensuring that these Access, Transfer and Progression Policies and procedures are adhered to and used in a proper and adequate manner. It endeavours to continuously review the process on an annual basis so that the best practice is always applied. This review will be conducted by the Registrar, reporting to the Academic Board.

Chapter 2 Learning Environment, Resources and Supports Policy

2.1 Statement of Confidentiality at ICPPD

2.1.1 Introduction

Confidentiality and trust are fundamental to creating and maintaining an effective learning environment on ICPPD programmes. Confidentiality is essential to the trust required for groups to form and work well together. Groups that achieve a high level of trust will usually demonstrate enhanced learning outcomes.

2.1.2 Scope

This statement applies to information shared by or about learners with ICPPD staff or tutors. It applies to learners across all programmes. All staff, tutors, and learners are expected to respect confidentiality within the College.

2.1.3 Confidentiality at Organisational Level

Confidentiality is understood to be between the learner and ICPPD and not with any individual employee/tutor.

This means that employees/tutors have both the right and the duty, as necessary, to convey relevant information regarding learner issues to relevant ICPPD College personnel.

2.1.4 Confidentiality within the classroom

All tutors and learners agree to a learning contract within the classroom setting including virtual classrooms. Each learning contract will stipulate limitations to the confidentiality of their contract.

2.2 Administration

ICPPD objectives in relation to the provision of administration services are to:

- support the effective and efficient operation of all College activities
- support ICPPD in its ethos, values and principles in relation to all stakeholders particularly the learners
- provide administrative back-up to staff to facilitate the provision of a quality service to Learners
- maintain secure filing and database systems, which provide up to date, accurate and easily retrievable information on learners and College activities
- ensure the effective operation of college systems
- ensure that lectures, workshops and class events are properly organised, run and administered, including the booking of venues and presenters, communication with learners, and the provision of required materials
- provide a speedy response to learners in relation to queries and requests
- implement and manage effective systems in relation to assessment broadsheets
- take an active role in the management of customer care standards in the College
- assist the planning and implementation of the course calendar for each course within the College
- support College marketing and recruitment processes
- partake in quality evaluations and review procedures as requested
- partake in professional development activities as requested.

2.3 Registration

Registration at ICPPD is necessary before potential learners are admitted to lectures, and it is valid up to a maximum of one year at a time. To be registered, a potential learner must complete the appropriate **Application Form** (for year of entry) and **Registration Form** (for year of entry/progression) and must be in good financial standing with the College (refer to ***Section C, Chapter 3, Fees Policy***).

At the time of Registration, learners are advised to familiarise themselves with the Learner Handbook and the Quality Assurance Manual. The Learner Handbook presents a guide to the various facilities and services, both academic and non-academic, at ICPPD, and also includes the ICPPD's policies, rules and regulations. A learner's completion of the ICPPD registration form indicates their acceptance of and commitment to abiding by these regulations.

An ICPPD learner ID card is issued to all registered learners on programmes by the Administration Staff and may be used by learners to access ICPPD facilities and, more particularly, for identification and for access to classes at outreach-site locations.

2.4 Deferral of a Programme Stage/Module

ICPPD is conscious that there may be occurrences during a learner's academic engagement which necessitate them to take some time out of their academic programme. All learners undertaking an academic programme at ICPPD have the right to request a deferral of a stage of the programme or a module.

In considering a learner's ability to progress from one stage of a programme to another, learners may be advised or required by the relevant Progression panels to defer a stage of their programme to focus on their personal development and the integration of personal and professional development.

Deferral Request Process
Before seeking a deferral of programme or individual modules at ICPPD, Learners are required to discuss the decision with the Programme Leader and/or Academic Director in advance of assessment submission dates to discuss all options available and to consider the financial implications for the learner.

- Learner's request for a deferral, via the **Deferral Request Form**, should be submitted to the Registrar and must be supported by authenticated, independent, documentary evidence, if/as appropriate. All communication must be in writing but may include email correspondence. A confidential written record of the request is maintained on the learner's file within ICPPD.
- In the instance where assessment submission dates fall between the submission of the **Deferral Request Form** and a decision being made in relation to that request, the learner is expected to submit the assessment. Failure to do this may constitute the learner forfeiting their first assessment attempt and may be subjected to the implications this carries, subject to extenuating circumstances.
- The relevant **Programme Leader** considers each application for deferral, on a case-by-case basis, and assesses it, in consultation with Academic Director/other relevant staff member, on the grounds of the learner's reasonable ability to continue with the programme, the evidence presented in relation to the timing and impact of the circumstances, and the stage of the learner's progression within the programme.
- Deferrals are not automatic and will only be granted where there is evidence of mitigating circumstances.
- Where a deferral application is rejected, the learner has the option to withdraw or continue with the programme and may also appeal a deferral decision to the Academic Board, subject to its Chair's confirmation of there being valid grounds for the appeal.
- In the case of a learner who, for personal or family reasons, needs to defer their course of study for a

period of time they may request deferral of assessments only. This is assessed on an individual basis and may depend on the nature of the module or mode of assessment.

- **Fees:** The implications in relation to a learner's fee payment are outlined in ***Section C, Chapter 3, Fees Policy.***

Returning to studies

- Learners should be aware that availing of a place on the programme in the subsequent academic year is not automatic and may be dependent on a place being available either in the preferred cohort and academic year and/or venue of choice.
- Learners should be aware that during their deferral period, changes may have been made to the programme as a result of standard internal and external cyclical reviews.
- Prior to returning to the programme, learners are required to attend a **Re-Engagement Interview** with the Academic Director to discuss and assess and ascertain the learner's readiness and ability to resume the programme.
- On their return to a new class cohort, for their integration with the group and for personal and professional development, learners must attend all modules with the new cohort, regardless of whether exemptions have been awarded. Where exemptions have been awarded in modules, assessments do not need to be repeated.
- Where a learner chooses to defer the Clinical Practice Module(s), there are additional professional requirements to be undertaken when commencing and completing the module which may include additional Personal Therapy hours, appropriate CPD course and there may be additional fee implications. These should be discussed with the Academic Director in advance.

Professional Body Requirements: Learners are also cautioned that relevant professional bodies may have other requirements which may be impacted by decisions to defer, seek exemptions, etc., for example, a minimum of 2 consecutive years of study. It is the learner's responsibility to determine and consider the implications of any such regulations on their progression through the programme, and subsequent professional accreditation,

2.5 Learner Withdrawal

ICPPD is conscious that there may be learners who decide not to complete their programme for a number of reasons.

A learner who is contemplating leaving their ICPPD programme is requested to discuss the decision with College Personnel e.g., the Academic Director, Programme Leader or Tutor, to make sure they have explored all of their options, including that they may also consider seeking a deferral.

If the learner's decision to withdraw is definitive, they are required to complete a **Learner Withdrawal Form** to facilitate the update of the learner information system. The learner is not considered to have withdrawn until a signed **Learner Withdrawal Form** has been received by the Registrar. Copies of the Learner Withdrawal Forms form are available from the administration office, and on Moodle.

The implications in relation to a learner's fee payment are outlined in ***Section C, Chapter 3, Fees Policy***.

2.5 Library and I.T. Supports

ICPPD is committed to providing high-quality, accessible, and up-to-date library and IT services to support teaching, learning, and research, in line with QQI Core Statutory Quality Assurance Guidelines. The College ensures that learning resources are relevant, sufficient, and responsive to programme requirements and learner needs.

Library services are designed to support both on-site and remote learners. Physical resources are available for loan where appropriate, and core materials are made accessible to all learner cohorts, including those studying at a distance.

ICPPD objectives in relation to the provision of Library and IT services are to

- provide a comprehensive and current range of reference materials to support programme delivery and learner achievement.
- continuously develop and enhance the range and quality of library resources.
- facilitate learner access to College library services and resources.
- provide access to high-quality web-based information and digital resources.
- ensure availability of relevant academic journals and research materials.
- promote awareness of, and facilitate access to, external library resources, including those available locally to learners; and
- support the use and integration of Open Educational Resources (OER) to enhance accessibility, flexibility, and inclusivity in learning.

Library resources are available in a range of formats, including print books, journals, electronic databases, and online/web-based resources. The College also promotes the use of curated OER to supplement core learning materials and support diverse learning needs.

Registered learners have access to the College library (based in Athlone) and are entitled to:

- use materials to support their learning
- borrow resources for a defined loan period, subject to availability and access restrictions
- renew or request items in accordance with library procedures
- seek guidance and support in accessing relevant materials
- access library services remotely via telephone or email
- expect a professional, respectful, and supportive service.
- remote access: A stock of library books (essential reading) is made available to all cohorts in each venue.

Access to materials is governed by applicable copyright legislation, including the Copyright and Related Rights Act 2000.

Digital access to resources is a key component of the College's provision. Learners have access to:

- an online library catalogue via the Virtual Learning Environment (VLE), Moodle.
- an eLibrary and eJournal resources (e.g. EBSCO – Psychology and Behavioural Sciences Collection).
- curated digital and Open Educational Resources to support programme delivery.

Learners are introduced to library and digital resources during induction and through ongoing support workshops.

2.5.1 Monitoring of Library and Digital Resources

ICPPD monitors the use of library and digital resources, including usage data from electronic databases, to ensure that resources remain relevant and responsive to learner demand. Insights from usage data are used to inform resource planning and the ongoing development of learning supports.

2.6 Virtual Learning Environment (VLE) – Moodle

Moodle is the College's Virtual Learning Environment (VLE) and is accessed via the ICPPD website (www.icppd.com). All learners are enrolled on Moodle prior to programme commencement, and login details, guidance, and access instructions are provided in advance.

Moodle functions as the central platform supporting teaching, learning, assessment, and communication in both face-to-face and blended learning contexts, in line with QQI Statutory Quality Assurance Guidelines for Blended and Fully Online Programmes.

2.6.1 Use of Moodle for Teaching, Learning, and Assessment

Moodle is used at ICPPD to:

- disseminate teaching and learning materials (e.g. presentations, readings, multimedia resources).
- provide access to programme-specific and supplementary learning resources.
- facilitate communication through announcements, messaging, and discussion forums.
- publish assessment details, submission deadlines, and feedback timelines.
- enable secure submission of assignments and the provision of feedback and grading by tutors; and
- support learner engagement and interaction in blended and online learning activities.

All Moodle-based processes, including submission and feedback procedures, are clearly outlined for learners in the Learner Handbook.

2.6.2 Learner Access and Supports via Moodle

The VLE provides learners with access to key academic and support resources, including:

- Quality Assurance documentation
- Learner Handbook and programme-specific handbooks (e.g. Clinical Practice, Research)
- Timetables, including assessment submission dates and feedback timelines
- Module descriptors and learning outcomes
- Reading lists and academic support materials
- Forms and guidance related to academic processes
- Academic resources, including access to eBooks and eJournals via EBSCO databases and links to relevant professional resources
- Professional body codes of ethics and guidance documents.

2.6.3 Tutor Access and Supports via Moodle

Tutors are provided with access to the resources available to learners, in addition to dedicated supports to facilitate effective blended and online delivery.

These include:

- guidance on the use of Moodle and associated digital tools.
- access to the QA Manual, Tutor Handbook, and teaching resources.
- tutor training materials and presentations.
- resources to support supervision of research projects; and
- a shared platform for collaboration and the exchange of good practice.

Tutors are encouraged to contribute to the development of shared resources and to identify materials and

practices that may benefit colleagues.

2.6.4 Training and Support

ICPPD provides structured support to both learners and tutors in the use of Moodle and digital learning tools.

This includes:

- learner induction sessions at programme commencement.
- tutor induction and ongoing professional development; and
- access to additional support and guidance from administrative staff, as required.

2.6.5 Blended Learning and Continuous Enhancement

In line with QQI expectations, Moodle supports:

- equitable access to learning resources regardless of location.
- engagement in both synchronous and asynchronous learning activities.
- the integration of digital resources, including Open Educational Resources (OER); and
- ongoing monitoring of learner engagement and resource usage.

Feedback from learners and tutors, along with usage data, is used to inform the continuous improvement of the VLE and associated supports.

2.7 Computer Software Licence Policy

ICPPD is compliant with all applicable legislation regarding the installation and use of computer software. College policy and procedures ensure that all IT facility users are aware that all proprietary computer software is protected by copyright laws.

The proper licencing of software is both a legal requirement and an ethical imperative, therefore, all software installed or run on ICPPD IT facilities is licenced with a proof of purchase available for audit verification. The College Manager is responsible for assuring that the software running on all ICPPD computers operated by college employees/Learners is appropriately licenced. ICPPD aims to prevent the installation of illegal or unlicensed copies of software on any ICPPD owned or operated computer system.

ICPPD employees/Learners must not install, upload, download, or use any unlicensed software on ICPPD IT facilities. Properly obtained and licenced demo and personal software may be installed by an employee/Learner at the discretion of the College Manager with the understanding that ICPPD will only support standard College academic and administrative software. Any ICPPD employee/Learner, who makes, acquires, or uses unlicensed copies of computer software, may be subject to disciplinary action up to and including suspension or dismissal.

2.8 Premises and Facilities

ICPPD has a dedicated campus/facility – its headquarters in Athlone - and in addition, the College utilises external training venues in the delivery of its programmes on an outreach basis. ICPPD believes that a module/programme can only be properly implemented if adequate outreach facilities are secured. It is the responsibility of the Academic Director to ensure that due diligence is performed and that the physical resources procured are sufficient for the successful delivery of the module/programme to Learners. ICPPD

has strict quality criteria which any potential venue must meet, and the objectives are to

- use training facilities and examination venues appropriate to the ethos and values of the education of mature learners and ICPPD
- facilitate learners through provision of an accessible location and facility
- meet health and safety requirements
- provide venues that are comfortable, clean, safe, well-serviced, and conducive to education and training provision, and personal development
- ensure learners have reasonable access to food and beverages
- listen to, and act on, feedback provided by learners and tutoring staff on education and training venues previously used. This feedback is communicated via weekly correspondence between Administration Staff and tutors, *Post-Delivery Evaluation of ICPPD Centre* form and via Learner Representatives.

2.8.1 Outreach Training Venues

ICPPD utilises external training venues for the delivery of programmes. These venues may be either other educational or training institutions; counselling centres' meeting rooms; or hotel conference facilities. In choosing such an outreach venue the College applies strict quality criteria which the venue must meet. A quality assurance checklist for external venues is used within ICPPD to evaluate potential new premises for outreach purposes via the ***Evaluation of External Facility Form***.

In the procurement of outreach training venues, ICPPD's objectives are to:

- use training facilities and venues suitable to the ethos and values of adult education
- facilitate learners with a location that is accessible to them
- ensure access to quality reasonably priced refreshments
- procure venues that are comfortable, quiet, clean, safe, secure and well serviced, and which maintain the confidentiality of the class interactive process
- listen to and act on feedback provided by learners and tutors on the training venues used
- use venues which can provide training equipment if needed such as Whiteboard, audio-visual equipment.

Ongoing review of all delivery sites is conducted throughout the academic year through the use of the End of Module Learner and Tutor Surveys. Remedial action will be taken to offset any difficulties experienced in using the venue.

The Learner Handbook provides details of all outreach centres, including their delivery location, with link to a map of the location, access instructions and car parking arrangements, and availability of catering/canteen facilities.

The Academic Director delivers an annual report to the Board of Directors regarding the facilities utilised during the year, any feedback received from learners in relation to these venues, and any plans for the forthcoming academic year.

2.9 Virtual Classroom Technology

ICPPD is committed to providing accessible, high-quality library and IT services that support teaching, learning, and assessment in both face-to-face and blended learning environments, in line with QQI Statutory Quality Assurance Guidelines for Blended and Fully Online Programmes.

The College ensures that learners have timely and equitable access to a comprehensive range of learning resources in both physical and digital formats. These include print materials, electronic databases,

academic journals, and curated online resources, including Open Educational Resources (OER), to support flexible and inclusive learning.

ICPPD provides learners with:

- access to up-to-date library resources relevant to their programme of study.
- remote access to digital resources, including eLibrary and eJournal collections (e.g. EBSCO), via the Virtual Learning Environment (VLE).
- an online searchable library catalogue accessible through Moodle.
- guidance and training in accessing and using digital and library resources, including induction and ongoing support workshops; and
- information on accessing external library services where appropriate.

ICPPD provides tutors with:

- access to digital teaching and learning resources, including library databases, e-resources, and OER, to support programme delivery
- access to, and training in, the use of the Virtual Learning Environment (VLE) and associated digital tools
- guidance on the selection and use of appropriate learning resources for blended and online delivery
- ongoing support and professional development to ensure effective integration of digital resources into teaching, learning, and assessment.

Feedback from learners and staff is also used to inform the ongoing development and enhancement of virtual classroom experience, library and digital supports.

In line with QQI expectations for blended learning provision, the College ensures that learning resources are:

- appropriate to the mode of delivery.
- accessible to all learners, regardless of location.
- sufficient to support independent and guided learning; and
- regularly reviewed and updated as part of programme monitoring and quality assurance processes.

2.10 Learner Complaints Policy and Procedure

2.10.1 Purpose

ICPPD is committed to excellence in education and seeks to ensure that learners receive appropriate, high-quality services, facilities, administrative and learner support services. It is recognised, however, that there may be occasions when learners may feel that they have cause for complaint. This policy outlines a series of steps required to investigate complaints or issues raised by a Learner.

ICPPD aims to provide a fair, consistent and expeditious mechanism to process complaints made by any learner in a manner which affords all concerned parties their rights in accordance with the principles of Natural Justice. This policy is designed with regard to **QQI's Core Statutory QA Guidelines 2016** and the **ESG.**

ICPPD ensures that each registered learner is aware of the Learner Complaints Process. It is spoken to during learner induction and a copy of the policy and procedure is available in the Learner Handbook.

A summary of the Learner Complaints Process is outlined in Table **2.10** below.

2.10.2 Scope

The Learner Complaints Procedure outlined in this section applies to all learners registered on programmes at ICPPD College.

Academic Appeals are not included in the scope of this policy. The procedures and processes for academic appeals are outlined in ***Assessment Review and Appeals' Policy and Procedure, Quality Assurance Manual Section C, Chapter 6.***

Complaints about bullying/harassment follow the ***Equality, Dignity and Inclusion Policy (Quality Assurance Manual, Section A, Chapter 4, 4.1.***

A learner who is aggrieved about the behaviour of a fellow learner may refer the matter to ***Learner Disciplinary Policy and Procedures – Quality Assurance Manual, Section C, Chapter 7, 7.4.***

Complaints about learners from a third party may be managed through the ***Learner Disciplinary Policy and Procedures – Quality Assurance Manual, Section C, Chapter 7, 7.4.***

2.10.3 General Principles

a) ICPPD will ensure that no learner suffers penalisation, discrimination or disadvantage as a result of making a complaint in good faith. Learners should be aware that, should they need it, a mechanism is available to request a review of grades through the ***Assessment Review and Appeals' Policy and Procedure, Quality Assurance Manual Section C, Chapter 6.***

b) The College expects that in raising possible issues of complaint, learners themselves will have observed their own obligations as outlined in the ***Learners' Code of Conduct QA Manual, Section C, Chapter 7, 7.1.***

c) Due to the seriousness with which the College handles complaints and impact on available resources to manage complaints, we expect that learners will not engage in vexatious or malicious complaints. Vexatious or malicious complaints may result in the complainant being referred to the Learner Disciplinary process.

d) The intention is that most problems will be dealt with informally, in a spirit of conciliation. Therefore, the formal complaints procedure should be a last resort in the search for a solution. However, a learner has a right to refer the complaint to *Stage 2 - Formal Complaints Process* in writing, explaining the rationale for escalation to the Formal Stage. Learners may be referred back to an earlier step if this is deemed appropriate.

e) The procedure is intended to produce a speedy and efficient resolution. The aim is to prevent unnecessary delay, whilst ensuring a full and fair assessment of the circumstances of any individual complaint.

f) To enable prompt resolution complaints should be raised as soon as possible after issues arise. Complaints should normally be made within 10 working days of the alleged incident, matter or concern occurring.

g) Anonymous complaints may be considered where the information provided indicates serious concerns, although investigation may be limited where the complainant cannot be contacted.

h) Complaints will be dealt with in a confidential manner. Complaints will remain confidential to those directly involved in the investigation of and response to the complaint.

i) Any person named in a complaint (respondent) will be informed of the substance of the complaint and the identity of the complainant. The respondent will have a right of reply as part of the investigation. Only in very exceptional circumstances will the identity of the person making the complaint be concealed from the person against whom the complaint is made.

j) The College will provide reasonable accommodations to ensure that learners with disabilities or additional needs can access the complaints process.

k) All complaints will be handled in accordance with the College's Data Protection Policy and applicable data protection legislation. Information will only be shared with individuals involved in the investigation.

l) Minutes will be taken of all formal meetings and records are maintained in accordance with the College's ***Records Management and Retention, Quality Assurance Manual, Section C, Chapter 10.***

m) There may be particular circumstances, including a conflict of interest, requiring another post-holder to undertake the functions assigned to the post-holder referred to in this process.

n) Complaints provide an important source of feedback on the performance of the College's services. As such, the College will monitor the registration of complaints and the progress made towards resolution, in order to further improve the process.

o) "Working days" as used in this policy excludes weekends and College closure days.

2.10.4 Learner Complaint Informal Process -Stage 1- Informal Process

Complaints and concerns should, where possible, be resolved at any early stage through dialogue and by those who are directly involved in the situation.

Learners are encouraged to raise concerns respectfully with:

- the person concerned
  and/or
- their Programme Leader

Normally, a complaint or concern should be raised within 10 working days of the alleged incident. An Informal Complaint may be raised in writing but will not be considered a formal written complaint at this stage.

The Informal Stage is generally a process conducted collaboratively through dialogue.

Notes may be taken for internal purposes, however, a formal report will not be issued at this stage.

If the matter cannot be resolved informally, the learner has the right to refer the complaint to *Stage 2 – Formal Process.*

The Programme Leader will explain to the learner how to refer their complaint to the next stage of the Learner Complaints Procedure.

2.10.5 Learner Complaint Formal Process -Stage 2- Formal Stage

ICPPD appreciates that there may be occasions where the Informal Process is inappropriate or the outcome may be unsatisfactory to the parties involved and/or that a more formal approach is necessary.

- At this point, the learner should make their complaint by submitting the **Formal Learner Complaints Form** within 10 working days of the completion of the Informal Process.

- Where the learner chooses not to follow the Informal Process the learner must submit their complaint within 10 days of the date of the alleged incident, matter or concern. Learner Complaints are normally only accepted at Formal Stage when all other avenues have been exhausted and may be referred back to an earlier step. If you are unable to attempt to resolve your complaint at the previous levels, you must explain why.

- The **Formal Learner Complaints Form** plus any supporting documentation must be submitted to the College Manager.

- The College Manager acknowledges receipt of the complaint within 5 working days if possible.

- An Investigating Officer (the College Manager, or a designate) will review the Formal Learner Complaint Form to ensure that it complies with the complaints procedure and whether it ought to be dealt with under different policies and procedures (e.g., Academic Appeals).

- All communication in relation to the formal complaint should be sent to the Investigating Officer only. There should be no communication with any other member of staff in relation to the complaint.

2.10.5.1 Investigation of the complaint:

- The Investigating Officer reviews the complaint and relevant supporting documentation.

- The Investigating Officer contacts the person who is the subject of the complaint (respondent) and provides them with details of the complaint. The respondent is afforded a right of reply.

- If necessary, the investigation will include discussions with the complainant and the person who is the subject of the complaint.

- If a meeting is required with either party, they may be accompanied by a support person who is not of legal standing to any meeting regarding the complaint – refer to ***Section 2.10.5.2*** of this policy.

- The findings of the investigation are considered by an Internal Complaints Committee comprising of the Investigating Officer and one other member of the Executive Management Committee.

- The outcome of the investigation should normally take be communicated by the Investigating Officer within 15 working days of receipt of the Formal Complaint. Any anticipated delays will be communicated in writing to both parties.

2.10.5.2 Support Person

At any formal meeting under this procedure, both the complainant and the subject of the complaint may be accompanied by a support person.

The role of a support person is to:

- Provide emotional support.
- Assist with understanding information.
- Take notes for the learner where appropriate.

A support person:

- May not be a member of the complainant's class.
- May not act as a legal representative.
- May not speak on behalf of the learner.
- May not answer questions for the learner.
- Must not disrupt proceedings.

The name of the support person must be notified in advance of any meeting.

All support persons must respect the confidentiality of the process.

2.10.5.3 Possible outcomes:

- The complaint is upheld.
- The complaint is not upheld.

2.10.5.4 Written Response

When the Internal Complaints Committee has deliberated and reached an outcome, both parties will receive a written response within 15 working days, if possible, outlining the decision and what actions need to be taken, if any.

If the learner considers their complaint unresolved, the learner can refer the complaint to ***Stage 3 - Appeals Stage*** of the procedure, outlined below.

2.10.6 Learner Complaint Formal Process -Stage 3- Appeals Stage

An Appeal is not a subsequent hearing or a new investigation. It is a formal request that another body re-examines the procedure or decision of Stage 2. Disagreement with the outcome of stage 2 does not constitute grounds for appeal.

A complainant who wishes to lodge an Appeal may do so on grounds specified in *Section 2.10.6.1.*

The complainant must clearly specify the grounds on which the Appeal is sought and must provide all evidence that they require to have considered in the appeal.

2.10.6.1 Grounds for Appeal

- Procedural irregularity in the previous stage
- Inconsistent implementation of procedures
- Exceptional personal circumstances not previously reported for good reason; the appeal should explain the reason(s) for previous non-disclosure.

2.10.6.2 Submitting an Appeal

- If, in the opinion of the learner (complainant), the complaint remains unresolved at Learners Complaint Formal Process - Stage 2, the learner may submit a request for an appeal in writing to the College Manager which should comprise a written statement explaining the **grounds for the appeal** and provide evidence to support it.

- The learner must make the appeal within 10 working days of the completion of Stage 2.

- The College Manager will normally acknowledge the appeal within 5 working days.

- The College Manager sends the request to appeal to the Chair of the Board of Directors within 5 working days of receipt of the appeal from the learner.

- All communication in relation to the procedural handling of the Formal Complaint Stage 3 should be made via the College Manager only. There should be no communication with any other member of staff in relation to the complaint. Any such communication with any other person will not be acknowledged.

- The Chair of the Board of Directors convenes a Complaints Appeals Board under the Terms of Reference set out in the ***QA Manual, Section A, Chapter 2, 2.2.9.***

- Members of Complaints Appeals Board shall ensure to act in good faith regarding potential conflicts of interest and ensure that any potential conflicts of interests which may arise, whether actual or perceived, are noted to the Chairperson at the earliest opportunity, so they can be dealt with appropriately if necessary. If the Chairperson of the Complaints Appeal Board is associated in any aspect of the case under review which may give rise to a potential conflict of interest, a replacement Chairperson shall be nominated ad hoc by the Chair of the Board of Directors, if necessary.

- The Complaints Appeals Board reviews the grounds for the appeal and considers whether it meets the threshold for an appeal as set out above. The outcome of this consideration is communication to the Learner/Appellant by the College Manager.

2.10.6.3 Complaints Appeals Board

- Where it established that there are Grounds for Appeal, the Complaints Appeals Board considers all the evidence gathered under Stage 2, and a written account from the Investigating Officer.

- The Complaints Appeals Board considers how the complaint has been handled at previous stages of the procedure and the appropriateness of the outcome of the previous stage of the procedure.

- Having examined the material, the Complaints Appeals Board may seek further information from the complainant or other relevant parties.

- The Complaints Appeals Committee may interview separately, the complainant and the subject of their complaint and any appropriate witnesses, if deemed necessary.

- The complainant and the subject of the complaint may be accompanied by a support person who is not of legal standing. ***Refer to above - 2.10.5.2 Support Person***

- The Complaints Appeals Board aims to complete this stage (Stage 3) of the Learner Complaint's procedure within 20 working days of convening of the Complaints Appeals Board.

- The parties involved in the appeal will be informed if delays are expected.

2.10.6.4 Outcome of the Complaints Appeal Board

The Chair of the Complaints Appeal Board completes a written response which will clearly outline the outcome of the appeal process and the reasons for it.

Possible Outcomes:

- The appeal is not successful.
- The appeal is successful. Where the appeal is successful, details of what action is required, if any, to resolve the complaint will be included.

The report from the Complaints Appeals Board is forwarded to the learner via the College Manager.

The report from the Complaints Appeal Board should advise the learner that the Learner Complaints process from an internal point of view has now been completed and that the next stage available to the learner is Stage 4.

If the complainant decides to take the matter further to an external body (Stage 4) the college will not enter into any further communication with the complainant about the complaint.

The decision will be final as far as the College's Learner Complaints Procedures are concerned.

2.10.7 Learner Complaint Formal Process - Stage 4 – Formal Complaint to the Relevant Awarding or Professional Body

Learners may contact the relevant **Awarding Body (QQI)** or **Professional Body (IACP)** if they are dissatisfied after exhausting internal procedures.

2.10.8 Audit/Review of Learner Complaints Policies and Procedures

The Chair of the Complaints Appeals Board may make recommendations on any policy or procedural changes recommended or required arising from the complaint process.

Additionally, the Chair of the Complaints Appeals Board will forward any reports or recommendations to the college's governance committees, i.e. Academic Board and/or Executive Management Committee.

ICPPD is committed to ensuring that Learner Complaints Policies and procedures are adhered to and used in a proper and adequate manner. The policy will be reviewed on an annual basis to ensure that

best practice is always applied. This review will be conducted by the Quality Assurance and Enhancement Committee, reporting to the Board of Directors.

Figure 2.10 – ICPPD Learner Complaints Process and Procedure Summary Table

Stage	Title	Responsible	Timeline (Working Days)	Outcome
1	Informal	Programme Leader	Within 10 working days of issue/incident arising	Resolution through dialogue
2	Formal	College Manager	Learner submits Complaints Form within 10 working days of the completion of Informal Stage/Incident. College Manager acknowledges within 5 working days.	
3	Formal - Investigation	Investigating Officer	15 working days to conduct investigation and communicate outcome to Learner.	Complaint is: - Upheld - Not upheld
4	Formal Appeals	Chair, Board of Directors	20 working days from convening of Complaints Appeals Board	Appeal is - Not Successful - Successful with proposed action documented.
5	External Complaint	Relevant Awarding / Professional Body	As per procedures of the external body	As per procedures of the external body

Chapter 3 Fees Policy and the Learner's Contract with ICPPD

ICPPD is committed to providing clear, transparent, and accurate information regarding all programme-related fees. Fee information is made available to prospective learners in advance of application through programme documentation, promotional materials, and the College website, enabling informed decision-making and appropriate financial planning.

ICPPD ensures that all fee-related practices are conducted fairly, transparently, and in compliance with applicable consumer protection principles, data protection legislation, and QQI quality assurance requirements.

ICPPD provides learners with accurate information on the fees attached to programmes and workshops running at the College, prior to their application, to facilitate learners to make advance payment of fees (in compliance with College regulations), and to budget with reasonable accuracy for the total cost of their tuition, workshop, personal therapy, supervision and other programme related costs over the period of the programme for which they are applying.

3.1 Registration and Payment of Fees

- An applicant wishing to secure a place on a programme at ICPPD is required to submit an application form to the College, accompanied by a (non-refundable) application deposit or interview fee indicated on the relevant application form, within the relevant programme promotional material, and in the programme details on the College website.

  An applicant is entitled to a full refund of this fee if they decide to cancel within seven days of receipt of application. Should an application be unsuccessful or cancelled by the applicant following the seven-day period, the fee is non-refundable.

- Learner fee payments (deposits/full fees) are accepted by ICPPD in cash, by cheque, money order, direct debit or EFT. Fees may be paid by an employer, sponsor or other third-party, and ICPPD provides a facility whereby this party may be invoiced for the course fee (all or a proportion) on the request of the learner.

- Successful applicants are required to formally accept their place by signing a **Learner Registration Form (Contract)** prior to commencement. This agreement outlines:
  - programme details
  - fee obligations
  - College regulations and code of conduct
  - academic and financial responsibilities

- Learners are strongly advised to read the Learner Registration Form carefully prior to signing, as it constitutes a formal agreement between the learner and the College. This form/contract specifies the learner's personal details, the modules and/or programme to be studied, and the appropriate fees payable. The College strongly advises that the learner reads the contract (and associated regulations) carefully prior to their signing, to ensure that they fully understand the attached conditions.

- Once an applicant has accepted a place on an ICPPD programme, the registration fee is fully non-refundable.

- By signing this contract, which is a legal and binding document, the learner commits to their academic

engagement with the programme, to abide by the College's rules, regulations and code of conduct, and to meet all financial obligations of the programme.

- A photograph for generation of the learner identity card must also be submitted by the learner.

- On receipt of payment, the Finance Officer issues a receipt and records the transaction in the College financial and learner management systems.

- Learners must remain in good financial standing to access classes, assessments, and awards. Where financial difficulty arises, learners are encouraged to engage with the Finance Officer to explore reasonable payment arrangements.

- A learner is not eligible or permitted to attend classes, receive course material, submit assessments, and/or receive marks or awards if their fee payments are not current i.e., if they are not in good financial standing with the College (unless at the discretion of the College Manager).

- Prospective learners may be eligible for financial assistance, granted extensions of time to pay tuition fees, or facilitated through the agreement of a payment plan/schedule. A learner wishing to avail of alternative payment arrangements are required to contact the Finance Officer at ICPPD to discuss this matter, in advance of the commencement of their programme. Payment plans may be approved at the discretion of the Finance Officer in consultation with the College Manager. All agreed arrangements will be confirmed in writing.

3.2 Learner Deferral and Payment of Fees

Prior to requesting a deferral of programme or individual modules at ICPPD, Learners are required to discuss the decision with the Programme Leader and/or Academic Director ***(Section 2, Chapter 2, Section 2.4 Deferral of a Programme Stage/Module/Assessment)***

Full programme fees must be paid or a payment plan put in place prior to the learner's engagement with their programme. In this context, where a learner applies to defer a module of stage of their academic programme mid-stage/academic year, there are fee implications to be considered.

Deferral of a Stage/Academic Year – prior to commencement of Academic Year:
When a learner requests a deferral of a programme stage (and is approved) prior to the commencement of the academic year, course fees are frozen. Any fees paid at that point in time, will be credited to their course fees on resumption of the programme. This will also apply where the deferral is requested and approved within 2 weeks after the start of the academic year.

Deferral of a Stage/Academic Year – during the Academic Year:
When a learner requests a deferral of a programme stage (and is approved) during the academic year (more than 2 weeks after commencement), the learner is liable for full course fees for that academic year. On resumption of the programme, in order to integrate with the new group and for personal development, all modules are to be attended (with exemptions from assessment on previously successfully completed modules). A re-Registration fee will be due for the new academic year – this should be discussed with the Finance Officer in advance of making a final deferral decision.

Deferral of a Module / Assessment: Information about any fees for module/assessment deferral should be sought from the Finance Officer in advance of making a deferral decision.

3.3 Learner Withdrawal and Payment of Fees

Full learner fees must be paid or a payment plan put in place prior to the learner's engagement with their programme. In this context, where a learner wishes to withdraw from their academic programme prior to the programme's completion, ICPPD does not refund any element of these fees to the withdrawing learner.

A notice of withdrawal (due to exceptional circumstances) may be accepted as grounds for a full/partial refund of fees, subject to the provision of acceptable documentary evidence in support of the refund application. Examples of exceptional circumstances include

- recent certified serious illness or disability
- death of the learner or a close family member (parent, sibling, spouse or child; this does not normally include a grandparent)
- collapse of promised financial support or sponsorship of the learner notified before commencement of the course.

However, where a learner's withdrawal is as a result of less exceptional circumstances, there may be a facility for the learner to have a proportion of their fee held in credit within the College for their future purposes. The option to facilitate financial credit allocation is determined by the College Manager, in consultation with appropriate College personnel. The financial credit amount is not refunded to the learner, but rather held on account, and may be used towards another academic or training programme or workshop at ICPPD before the end of the subsequent academic year.

The following criterion have been defined by ICPPD as conditions which would determine a zero refund i.e., ICPPD reserve the right to retain the full fee

- a learner, who withdraws from a course for whatever reason after six teaching weeks (i.e., having attend the first module) will not be eligible for a refund
- where an offer of a course place was made on the basis of documents which subsequently prove to be fraudulent or misleading
- a learner whose entitlement to attend a programme is terminated due to academic misconduct or antisocial behaviour within ICPPD, will not be eligible for a refund
- a learner, who is unable to continue or complete their studies because of having been convicted of a criminal offence in the jurisdiction of the Republic of Ireland, will not be eligible for a refund.

If a learner on a payment schedule decides to withdraw without having fully discharged their fee liability for the academic year, this may impact on their opportunity to gain credits for work already undertaken, or to be offered a place within an ICPPD programme, or a payment schedule in future.

3.4 College Termination of a Learner's Contract

Ideally full fees must be paid by the learner prior to their engagement with the programme. In this context, in the event that ICPPD decides to discontinue a learner's participation in an academic programme, part-way through any module/academic programme, as a result of a proven case of academic impropriety or infringement of the Code of Conduct, the learner will lose all fees paid to date.

3.5 Protection for Enrolled Learners and Cessation of an Academic Programme

ICPPD complies with ***Section 65 of the Qualifications and Quality Assurance (Education and Training) Act 2012*** and maintains appropriate arrangements for the protection of enrolled learners.

In the unlikely event that a programme ceases to be offered, ICPPD has arrangements in place through an external protection scheme to support enrolled learner protection obligations, including insurance-based cover where applicable.

Learners should note that their personal data may be shared with relevant third parties, including Quality and Qualifications Ireland (QQI) and approved protection of enrolled learner service providers, strictly for the purpose of compliance with statutory requirements.

3.6 Audit/Review of Fees Policies and Procedures

ICPPD is committed to ensuring that all fee policies and procedures are transparent, fair, and consistently applied.

This policy is reviewed annually by the College Manager, and is subject to final approval by the Board of Directors.

The review process considers:

- learner feedback
- regulatory requirements
- QQI quality assurance expectations
- financial sustainability
- fairness and accessibility

Chapter 4 Learner-centred Learning, Teaching and Assessment

4.1 Teaching and Learning Strategy at ICPPD

4.1.1 Introduction

At the International College for Personal and Professional Development (ICPPD), the philosophy of education is not confined to policy documents or mission statements—it lives and breathes within the experience of every learner and tutor. The college's commitment to person-centred, holistic education is unmistakably evident in how it designs, delivers, and supports face-to-face, blended and fully online synchronous teaching and learning. In a climate of rapid change, where education increasingly straddles physical and digital spaces, ICPPD is steadfastly resolved to remain true to its values while embracing innovation.

This is most clearly seen in ICPPD's mission and ethos, as outlined in this Quality Assurance Manual ***(Section A, Chapter 1, Section 1.1),*** where the learner is positioned as an active participant in a relationship of mutual respect and engagement. The mission explicitly articulates a commitment to enabling each individual to reach their full potential, guided by respect, integrity, inclusivity, and ethical behaviour. These are not abstract aspirations but operational principles that inform every aspect of the learner journey—from programme design to the virtual classroom.

The Teaching and Learning strategy reinforces this integrated approach. Tutors are facilitators of experience drawing on their own professional and clinical expertise to hold safe, reflective learning environments. Assessment, too, reflects this ethos—employing both formative and summative tools, and often inviting learners to engage in reflexivity and personal insight as part of their academic journey.

4.1.2 Context

This Teaching, Learning and Assessment Strategy sets out the college's institutional approach to developing and delivering programmes at ICPPD and is aligned with the college's Strategic Plan. ICPPD's holistic ethos and the understanding of the development of the whole person, and the inter-relatedness of body, mind, and spirit along with humanistic principles, underpins, guides and helps to formulate the approach taken to the development and provision of programmes at ICPPD.

The Teaching Learning and Assessment strategy at ICPPD is informed by Kolb's Learning Cycle (amongst others). "Kolb's Learning Cycle is based upon experiential learning theory which views learning as a process involving continuous modification of ideas and habits a s a result of experience" *Kolb, D.A. (1984) Experiential learning: Experience as the source of learning and development. Englewood Cliffs, N J:Prentice-Hall.*

Robertson (2002:112) advocates that when teaching is construed as "facilitating learning" rather than "imparting knowledge" it becomes an "educational helping relationship".

In alignment with these perspectives, ICPPD's person-centred, experiential and collaborative approach to education espouses a fine attunement to the needs of individual Learners and groups. According to Lev Vygotsy's concept of the Zone of Proximal Development, Learners flourish when tutors are cognisant of what the Learner is capable of learning with support, as appropriate to their stage of development. The learning deepens with the appropriate level of scaffolding and tapering off of scaffolding as appropriate to needs and capacity. *Vygotsky, L. S. (1978). Mind in society. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press*

The terms 'tutor' and 'adult learner' have been continually discussed for appropriateness and are deemed by Programme Boards to be more in alignment with ICPPD's holistic and humanistic approach to learning

than the alternatives discussed i.e., 'lecturer' and 'student'.

The Teaching and Learning Strategy at ICPPD is designed to support learners to make practical connections for the knowledge and skills they are acquiring and applying to their development as reflective trainee practitioners. Teaching styles and contexts are flexible and aim to motivate and engage learners.

4.1.3 Scope

This Teaching, Learning and Assessment strategy applies to all programmes provided by ICPPD.

4.1.4 Guiding Principles

Teaching and Learning at ICPPD ensures as far as it is practicable that

- teaching strategies are aligned with a defined humanistic and holistic ethos and that teaching strategies invite learner engagement and empowerment.
- deep understanding and comprehension including a critical, inquiring orientation is evident
- independence and autonomous modes of learning including opportunity for self-evaluation are incorporated in teaching and learning
- experiential insights with emphasis on the translation of theory to practice supported by internal (for example workshops) and external (for example clinical placements) practice-based learning will be an essential component of the learning experience
- inclusivity with emphasis on tolerance, cultural diversity, learning diversity, and appropriate accommodation will feature within the ethos of programmes
- appropriate reflexive strategies are provided
- a commitment to continuous personal, educational, and professional development where learning is viewed as a lifelong activity
- skill sets that support employment transferability including critical thinking, personal planning, organizing, analysing, solving problems, teamwork, interpersonal skills, oral and written communication, initiative and creativity, information and communication technology are addressed within the curricula
- program learning outcomes are aligned with the competency-based model teaching and learning practices are anchored in an evidence base
- all modules will have an associated set of learning outcomes, which will describe by accessible means what the learner will have learned on completion of module and extensionally of programmatic content
- teaching is dynamic flexible and innovative with a broad range of strategies such as workshop, tutorial, mentorship, seminars, podcast, practice placement, field trips, or retreat, and other instructional practices including inquiry based learning, personal development, case-based learning, project-based learning, observational learning, simulating learning, collaborative and cooperative learning through group work and assessment, independent and discovery learning and problem based and problem-solving learning.
- the provision of an academic, pastoral, and technological support infrastructure and environment are included in experiences
- academic staff are constructively afforded the opportunity to enhance and develop their expertise in teaching and learning through continuous academic professional development and accredited programs in teaching and learning
- innovative use of technology to further enhance the teaching and learning environment whether in face-to-face, blended or online setting

4.1.5 Teaching and Learning at ICPPD – an Integrated Pedagogical, Adrgragogical and Paragogical Approach

Teaching and Learning approaches at ICPPD are underpinned by four core pillars of learning:

(1) Personal and professional awareness and development
(2) Schools of theory in counselling and psychotherapy
(3) Research skills and methodologies
(4) Clinical practice and skills development.

Together, these elements support a coherent, integrated, and humanistic learning experience that develops the learner across cognitive, reflective, relational, and practice-based domains.

ICPPD integrates pedagogical, andragogical and paragogical approaches to adult learning each contributing a distinct but complementary dimension to the college's holistic and humanistic ethos. Together, these approaches ensure that learning is structured, meaningful, experiential, and socially constructed, while remaining responsive to the needs, experiences, and autonomy of adult learners.

Pedagogical approach
The pedagogical approach provides the structural and instructional foundation for learning. It focuses on clear sequencing of content, guided instruction, and the progressive development of knowledge, skills, and competence. Within this approach, the tutor plays a central facilitative role in designing learning experiences, scaffolding understanding, and ensuring that learners are supported in achieving defined learning outcomes.

Andragogical approach
The andragogical approach recognises learners as self-directed adults who bring prior experience, motivation, and contextual knowledge to the learning process. This approach emphasises relevance, application, and problem-centred learning rather than content transmission. Learners are encouraged to actively integrate new knowledge with their professional and personal experiences, take responsibility for their learning progress, and engage in reflective practice. The tutor's role shifts towards facilitation, support, and guidance, enabling learners to make meaningful connections between theory and real-world practice. This aligns closely with Malcolm Knowles' principles of adult learning.

Paragogical approach
The paragogical approach extends learning into a collaborative, peer-driven process, where knowledge is co-created through interaction, dialogue, and shared inquiry. Learning is understood as a distributed process in which peers actively contribute to each other's understanding through discussion, feedback, and collaborative tasks. This includes structured peer learning, peer assessment (formative), and the development of communities of practice where learners collectively construct meaning and challenge perspectives. This approach is informed by networked and collaborative learning theories and aligns with the work of Corneli and Danoff (2011), which positions learning as a shared and emergent process.

Holistic and Humanistic Theoretical Framework
Together, these three approaches create a balanced and integrated learning model. In combination, they support a holistic and humanistic educational ethos that values the cognitive, professional, relational, and reflective dimensions of learning, while fostering an environment in which learners are supported to develop both individually and collectively. The pedagogical ensures structure and clarity; the andragogical ensures relevance, autonomy, and experiential depth; and the paragogical ensures collaboration, social learning, and shared meaning-making.

A holistic synthesis permeates pillars and aspects of ICPPD programmes including the experiential learning and training, academic teaching and research, clinical practice, supervision. Boud et al (1985) adopting a holistic approach, considered the emotional impact of events as well as the cognitive processes. The core epistemological and philosophical issues underlying humanistic, transpersonal, and psychodynamic approaches to human psychology are explored.

Importance is placed on lifelong learning, and self-development is at the heart of the professional training at ICPPD. Tutors are encouraged to deliver in their own style and creativity is supported. Schon (1987: 343) confirms the importance of engaging tutors as agents of change and agrees that it is possible for faculty members to become committed to collective enquiry into teaching and learning and that "Faculty members can find it exciting, even liberating, to make their own teaching into a subject for mutual exploration. And when they do so, their substantiative research interests are engaged".

Integration between theory and practice by a variety of means relevant to the qualification and mode of delivery is implemented. This provides opportunities for learners to reflect on knowledge, experience, and practice, particularly through a process of peer interaction, formative activities, and practice sessions. Reflective opportunities support learners being able to modify and develop their practice. Opportunities are provided for learners to give and receive feedback which is integral to their personal and professional development.

Modelling ethical behaviour, authentic conversation, and congruency in interaction with learners is seen as central to the development of trainees on courses at ICPPD. Brookfield advocates the need for tutors to be enquiring learners themselves when engaging in critical analysis of adult educational literature, and he says that "… critical teaching (Shor, 1987), critical thinking (Brookfield, 1987, 1991), critical pedagogy (Smith, 1988) and critical reflection (Mezirow et al) emphasize the overwhelming importance to learners of their seeing the process of critical analysis modelled by educators…" (Brookfield, 1993, vol. 25.2).

Palmer (2017:212) says modelling demands that we create academic programmes that are open to learner critique, challenge, and change, and that an educational programme that emerges from a "continuing collaboration of administrators, faculty, and students is much more likely to produce new professionals than one that leaves students disempowered."

Learners are encouraged to develop a reflective awareness of their own life experience and formulate their own congruent approach to working with clients. To support this activity, learners utilise several models of reflective practice including that of action research (McNiff and Whitehead, 2006), personal experience methods of research (McLeod, 2011) and reflective learning (Moon, 2004).

4.1.6 Teaching and Learning Methodologies

ICPPD's Teaching and Learning Strategy facilitates the achievement of the intended programme/module learning outcomes, through the following list of methods which support the quote - "Learning is a process as well as an outcome" (Zuber-Skerritt 1992:103).

A variety of teaching and learning strategies are employed to support the delivery of programmes and attainment of learning outcomes.

- Tutorial/workshop/lecture
- Demonstration of theoretical approaches through experiential and experimental exercises which enhance learning and the integration of theory into practice and further reflexivity.
- Qualitative Research Methods including Personal Experience Methods e.g., Heuristic Inquiry
- Personal development including reflective practice and engagement with personal therapy
- Tutor-Learner collaborative dialogue and assimilation of feedback

- Self-directed learning including further reading, research and independent study (including use of the programme material and online resources section on Moodle)
- Self-evaluation including preparation for Fitness to Practice meetings, Group Process assessments, Clinical Practice Reflections.
- Peer-to-peer learning (paragogy) including group sharing, discussion groups, group-work.
- Modelling by the tutor is a source of valuable learning.
- Role play
- Class Presentations – individual and peer group
- Journaling
- Holistic practices including Meditation, Mindfulness, Visualization and Creative processes as appropriate to individual and group development
- Skills practices and exercises in pairs, small and large groups (dyads, triads)
- Applied Learning – application of theory and reflexive learning to counselling and psychotherapy skills and competencies.
- Flipped Classroom
- Professional development and understanding of ethical practice including understanding of and engagement with relevant professional bodies' Codes of Ethics
- Engaging with clinical placement venues
- In-house supervision in small groups
- Literature reviews
- Research, Report and Thesis Writing
- Collaborative research supervision

4.1.7 Responsibility for Teaching and Learning

While teaching and learning relies on a wide spectrum of resources ICPPD acknowledges that the primary resource relies on effective interpersonal relationships defined by professionalism, supportiveness, fairness, and consistency bound by good practice, respect, and ethical awareness.

Academic Director: The Academic Director implements, monitors, reviews, oversees and co-ordinates the teaching and learning strategies across the programme and the college.

Tutor: The tutor is responsible for delivery of modular content and teaching excellence.

Learner: Learners will take responsibility for and participate in their own learning and engage in a broad range of learning opportunities.

Registrar: The Registrar advises on academic procedures, monitoring of QAE activities associated with teaching and learning

College Administrator: The college administrator ensures that learner and tutor queries are responded to, manages learner attendance records, administration of extension requests, deferral of assessment requests.

The **Programme Team** discusses and reviews teaching, learning and assessment strategies through the structures of Programme Boards and reporting onwards to Academic Board.

4.1.8 Integrated Pedagogical, Andragogical and Paragogical Framework for Blended

and Online Learning

ICPPD's approach to blended and fully online synchronous learning is grounded in the same holistic, humanistic, and experiential philosophy that underpins all college programmes. In this context, teaching and learning are understood as relational, reflective, and transformative processes that honour the whole person—body, mind, heart and spirit.

This approach integrates pedagogical, andragogical, and paragogical principles for all modes of programme delivery. This framework recognises learning as a structured, experiential, and socially constructed process in which learners develop competence through guided instruction, self-directed engagement, and active participation in peer-to-peer knowledge creation. It supports learners as autonomous individuals who bring prior experience, professional context and the capacity to contribute meaningfully to collaborative learning environments.

The framework draws on:

- **Pedagogical principles** that provide structured sequencing, instructional clarity, and progressive development of knowledge, skills, and competence. This structure is particularly important in blended and online environments, where clarity of expectations, explicit guidance, and carefully designed learning activities ensure consistency, accessibility, and academic rigour.
- **Andragogical principles** (Malcolm Knowles), emphasising self-direction, relevance to practice, and the application of learning to real-world contexts.
- **Paragogical approaches** which draw on the concept of peer-driven and co-constructed learning (Corneli and Danoff, 2011) and are further supported by communities of practice theory (Lave & Wenger, 1991; Wenger, 1998), emphasising collaborative knowledge creation, peer feedback, and shared responsibility for learning.

This integrated approach to teaching and learning draws explicitly on:

Experiential learning (Kolb, 1984) whereby learners move through cycles of concrete experience, reflection, conceptualisation, and active experimentation.

Sociocultural and scaffolded learning (Vygotsky, 1978), which emphasises the importance of attuned tutor support, peer interaction, and gradual release of responsibility within the learner's Zone of Proximal Development.

Humanistic, Person Centred Approaches (Carl Rogers), in which the tutor–learner relationship, authenticity, and congruence are central to the creation of safe and empowering learning environments. **Principles of Universal Design for Learning (UDL)**, which promote multiple means of engagement, representation, and expression to support diverse learner needs and promote equity of access.

Within this framework, blended and online synchronous delivery is designed to:

- foster **presence, connection, and dialogue** between tutors and learners, even when not co-located physically
- support **active, experiential, and reflective learning** using the affordances of digital tools (e.g. breakout rooms, polls, collaborative documents)
- ensure **accessibility and inclusion** through intentional design of learning activities and materials, including reasonable accommodations

- maintain the **integrity and depth** of process-oriented and practice-based learning within the constraints of the online environment.
- balance structured instructional guidance with increasing learner autonomy and peer-supported learning
- facilitate active, experiential, and reflective learning aligned with programme learning outcomes
- embed structured peer-to-peer learning through collaborative tasks, group inquiry, and facilitated discussion
- incorporate peer assessment and feedback mechanisms, where appropriate, supported by and tutor oversight
- support the development of communities of practice in which learners share knowledge, challenge perspectives, and co-construct understanding
- ensure regular, meaningful interaction between tutors and learners and among peers through synchronous and asynchronous engagement
- utilise appropriate digital tools to support collaboration, formative feedback, and reflective dialogue
- maintain equivalence of academic standards, assessment integrity, and learner experience across all modes of delivery

This pedagogical, andragogical and paragogical framework informs the design of programmes, programme and module learning outcomes, learning activities and assessment strategies across all modes of delivery.

The framework is reviewed periodically by Programme Boards and Academic Board, taking account of learner feedback, tutor feedback, developments in the field of digital pedagogy, and regulatory and professional body requirements.

These principles are implemented through explicit design standards for synchronous online delivery (see ***Section 4.3.6.2*** below) and defined quality and accessibility requirements for digital learning materials (see ***Section 4.3.7.1***).

4.1.9 Quality *Assurance* in Face-to-Face, Blended and Online Synchronous Learning

4.1.9.1 Introduction

In alignment with ICPPD's commitment to excellence in learner-centred, holistic education, the College defines quality in face-to-face, blended and online synchronous learning in a manner that reflects its holistic ethos. This definition provides a structured framework to guide programme design, delivery, monitoring, review, and continuous enhancement across all modes of provision.

This section ensures that quality in face-to-face blended and online synchronous learning is not only philosophically grounded but also explicitly defined, measurable, and embedded across ICPPD's Quality Assurance policies, procedures, and administrative processes.

4.1.9.2 Definition of Quality in Education and Training Provision at ICPPD

ICPPD defines quality in education and training as the extent to which the College's education and training provision enables learners to achieve clearly articulated learning outcomes, within a coherent, ethical, inclusive, transparent and well-supported learning environment.

Quality is continuously monitored, evaluated, and enhanced through the college's documented quality assurance processes and encompasses the

- development, design, delivery, assessment and review of programmes

- the effectiveness of learner supports and learning resources
- tutor competencies and capability
- fir-for-purpose governance structures

Quality reflects the College's responsibility as a provider to ensure that all provision is fit for purpose, transparent, accountable, and aligned with the college's mission and ethos and meeting requirements of statutory and regulatory bodies.

ICPPD promotes a quality culture where continuous enhancement is a shared responsibility of staff, learners and governance structures, and where Quality Assurance processes are methods for development and improvement.

4.1.9.3 Definition of Quality in Blended and Online Synchronous Learning

ICPPD defines quality in blended and online synchronous learning at ICPPD as the extent to which a blended approach, combining face-to-face and synchronous online teaching, learning, assessment, and learner supports, enables learners to achieve programme and module learning outcomes.

The college also considers how this approach maintains the integrity of experiential, relational and practice-based education and training while ensuring the learning experience is engaging, inclusive, safe and ethically grounded.

This definition applies across all programmes and informs decisions relating to programme approval, design, delivery modes, assessment strategies and ongoing monitoring and review.

4.1.9.3 Core Principles Underpinning Quality

Quality in face-to-face, blended and online synchronous learning at ICPPD is underpinned by the following principles:

- **Pedagogical, Andragogical and Paragogical Integrity:** All delivery modes must uphold the experiential, reflective, and relational nature of counselling and psychotherapy education, ensuring a coherent integration of pedagogical (tutor-guided), andragogical (adult learner-centred), and paragogical (collaborative, peer-led) approaches that collectively support structured learning, self-directed development, and shared inquiry within a professional learning community
- **Learner-Centredness:** Learning environments, physical and virtual, are designed in accordance with andragogical principles that recognise learners as autonomous adults who bring prior experience, professional context, and intrinsic motivation to the learning process. Learners are supported to engage actively, reflect critically on their experiences, values, and interpersonal styles, and apply learning to real-world practice, thereby fostering self-awareness and professional identity development.
- **Collaborative and Peer-Supported Learning:** Learning is understood as a socially constructed and co-created process. Paragogical approaches support peer-driven learning, shared inquiry, and collaborative knowledge creation within intentional learning communities. Through structured peer dialogue, feedback, and reflective engagement, learners contribute meaningfully to both individual and collective learning, reinforcing shared responsibility for learning outcomes.
- **Equivalence of Experience:** Learners engaging online must receive a learning experience and level of support equivalent in quality, depth and integrity to face-to-face provision.
- **Ethical and Safe Practice:** Ethical awareness and psychological safety are foundational across all modes of delivery. Confidentiality, professional boundaries, and respectful engagement are actively maintained in face-to-face, online and blended environments, supporting a secure learning space conducive to personal and professional growth.
- **Accessibility and Inclusion:** Learning design must accommodate diverse learner needs in line

with Universal Design for Learning (UDL) principles. This ensures that all learners can engage fully and meaningfully with course content, learning activities, and assessment processes.

- **Continuous Enhancement:** Quality is continuously monitored, evaluated, and enhanced through structured feedback, reflective practice, and systematic review processes involving learners, faculty, and programme teams. Insights gained are used to inform ongoing curriculum development and pedagogical innovation across blended and online learning contexts.

4.1.9.4 Indicators of Quality

These quality indicators are grounded in ICPPD's integrated pedagogical, andragogical, and paragogical framework, ensuring that blended and online synchronous learning supports adult learner autonomy, professional relevance, and collaborative peer engagement within a structured and academically rigorous environment.

These indicators are supported, where appropriate, by measurable benchmarks (e.g. learner feedback outcomes, attendance and engagement data, completion rates, and tutor-learner ratios) which are monitored through Quality Assurance processes.

The following indicators are used to determine, monitor, and evaluate quality in face-to face, blended and online synchronous learning. These indicators are applied during programme design, approval, delivery, and review.

1. Curriculum Design and Pedagogical Alignment

- Learning outcomes are clearly defined and achievable within the selected delivery mode.
- The balance between face-to-face and online synchronous delivery is appropriate to the nature of the subject matter, particularly in relation to practice-based and experiential components.
- Online elements are intentionally designed rather than adapted from face-to-face delivery.
- Module and programme design reflect the college's Integrated Pedagogical, Andaragogical and Paragogical Teaching and Learning framework ***(Section 4.1.8 above)*** and design principles for online learning ***(Section 4.3.6.2 below)***.
- Programme design decisions reflect the institutional requirements set out in ***Section B, Chapter 1, Design and Approval of Programmes.***

2. Teaching, Learning, and Facilitation Quality

- Tutors demonstrate competence in face-to-face and/or online facilitation as appropriate to the mode of delivery for the module or programme.
- Teaching strategies promote active, experiential, and collaborative learning consistent with andragogical principles of adult learning.
- Sessions are structured, with defined learning outcomes, pacing, and opportunities for reflection.
- Tutor-learner and peer interaction are meaningfully facilitated in both face-to-face and online environments.
- Delivery of synchronous online sessions is aligned with the institutional design principles set out in ***Section 4.3.6.2 below***.

3. Learner Engagement and Interaction

- Learners actively participate in face-to-face and synchronous online sessions (e.g. discussions, breakout activities, reflective exercises).
- Opportunities for peer learning, dialogue, and reflective process are embedded in lesson design, supporting paragogical and community-based learning.
- Attendance and participation rates are monitored and reviewed.

- Learners report feeling connected, included, and actively engaged with the feedback processes, indicating the effectiveness and quality of the learning environment, whether face-to-face or online.

4. Learner Experience and Support

- Learners have consistent access to appropriate academic, pastoral, and technical supports across all modes of delivery.
- Expectations regarding in-person and online participation, etiquette, and confidentiality are clearly communicated and upheld.
- Learners can access learning materials, platforms, and supports reliably and without undue barriers.
- Learner feedback indicates satisfaction with the quality of teaching, support, and overall learning experience.

5. Assessment Quality and Integrity

- Assessment strategies are aligned with learning outcomes and appropriate to the delivery mode.
- Practice-based and clinically sensitive assessments are conducted in appropriate settings (typically face-to-face where required).
- Mechanisms are in place to ensure academic integrity, authenticity of learner work, and ethical use of technology.
- Feedback is timely, constructive, and supports learner development.

6. Staff Capacity, Workload, and Development

- Tutor-learner ratios are appropriate to support interaction, feedback, and monitoring of learner wellbeing, with particular emphasis to this in online environments.
- Workload models take account of the additional demands of online teaching, including preparation, facilitation, and learner support.
- Tutors receive ongoing training in online pedagogy, digital tools, accessibility, and ethical practice.
- Responsibilities for teaching, technical support, and learner support are clearly defined.
- Indicative class-size norms and tutor-learner ratios for synchronous online delivery are defined at programme level and approved through QA processes.

7. Technology, Infrastructure, and Digital Environment

- Platforms (e.g. Moodle, Zoom) are reliable, secure, and fit for purpose.
- Digital learning materials meet defined quality and accessibility standards (Section 4.3.7.1).
- Technical support is available to learners and staff, with clear escalation procedures.
- Data protection, privacy, and cybersecurity requirements are met and regularly reviewed.

8. Monitoring, Review, and Continuous Enhancement

- Quality Indicators are systematically reviewed through:
    - Programme Boards
    - Annual programme monitoring
    - Learner and tutor feedback mechanisms
    - External examiner reports

Data (including engagement, feedback, retention, and outcomes) is used to inform decision-making and enhancement. Learner engagement data and analytics from digital platforms (e.g. Moodle participation, attendance patterns) are used, where available, to support monitoring and enhancement.

Actions arising from quality review processes are documented, implemented, and monitored by Programme Boards reporting to Academic Board.

4.1.9.5 Application of Quality Indicators across Quality Assurance Processes

The above indicators are embedded across ICPPD's Quality Assurance system as follows:

- **Programme Design and Approval:**
  Programme Development Teams must explicitly demonstrate alignment with these quality indicators, including documented justification for delivery mode and evidence that online synchronous components meet the criteria set out in section 4.3.6.1

- **Programme Monitoring and Review:**
  Programme Boards and the Quality Assurance and Enhancement Committee review programmes against these indicators on an ongoing basis through annual monitoring and periodic review processes.

- **Teaching and Learning Practice:**
  Tutors are required to align their teaching practices with these indicators, supported by institutional guidelines, peer support and staff development.

- **Learner and Tutor Feedback:**
  Feedback instruments are designed to capture qualitative and quantitative data aligned to these indicators, particularly in relation to engagement, interaction, and overall learner experience.

- **Institutional Oversight:**
  The Academic Board maintains oversight of quality in blended and online learning through periodic review of programme performance and Quality Assurance reports.

- **Blended and Online Application:**
  These indicators are actioned within the Blended and Online Teaching and Learning Policy ***(Section 4.3)***, which specifies the criteria, requirements, and standards for their application in synchronous online and blended delivery contexts.

4.2 Programme Delivery Modes

To uphold ICPPD's holistic ethos, the college places high value on experiential learning in counselling, psychotherapy and related programmes. Face-to-face delivery remains the preferred and predominant mode where programmes are highly process-oriented and practice-based. At the same time, ICPPD recognises the opportunities afforded by well-designed online synchronous learning to enhance flexibility, accessibility, and equity of participation for adult learners.

All modes of delivery are designed and implemented within the QQI-approved scope of delivery, relevant professional body requirements (e.g. IACP), and this Quality Assurance Manual.

4.2.1 Face-to-Face delivery:

Face-to-face learning involves direct, physical interaction between learners and tutors, typically occurring in a traditional classroom or on-site setting. ICPPD is committed to delivering programmes in a face-to-face

classroom environment believing that this is the optimum mode of delivery of experiential learner-centred programmes.

4.2.2 Synchronous Blended Delivery:

At ICPPD, synchronous blended learning, is where teaching learning and assessment occur using a mix of onsite, face-to-face and online learning, with the online components taking place synchronously i.e. tutors and learners gather at the same time and virtual place and interact in real-time.

With technological advances, online delivery of elements of programmes can be a support to learners and that some programmes/modules are well suited to virtual synchronous delivery. Any online delivery of programmes will be conducted with reference to accrediting (i.e. IACP) or validating body (i.e. QQI) requirements.

The approach of ICPPD to blended teaching and learning is based on the integration of classroom face to face learning experiences with online learning experiences referenced in the Statutory Quality Assurance Guidelines For Providers of Blended and Dully Online Programmes October 2023

4.2.3 Fully Online (Synchronous) Delivery:

ICPPD's fully online programmes (see table below Section 4.3.4) are defined as a type of education where teaching, learning and assessment occur online, synchronously - Tutors and learners gather at the same time and virtual place and interact in real-time

For a limited number of programmes/workshops delivery is 100% online using Zoom platform technology for synchronous, real-time teaching and learning. These programmes are not on the National Framework of Qualifications.

4.2.4 Over-arching Expectations for Synchronous Online Delivery

To support learner readiness and informed choice, the following principles apply across all programmes with online synchronous elements:

- Module descriptors and timetable will specify the approximate proportion of teaching hours that are face-to-face and that are synchronous online.
- Attendance expectations for synchronous online sessions are equivalent to those for face-to-face sessions and are clearly communicated to learners.
- Recording of classes is not permitted due to the nature of the personal sharing on Counselling and Psychotherapy and related programmes.
- Online learning etiquette (e.g. camera use, muting, confidentiality, use of chat, appropriate learning environment) is agreed through group learning contracts and reinforced by tutors in line with Section 4.3.9.
- Programme documentation will indicate that cohorts are not permitted to be merged for the synchronous delivery of programmes where discrete cohorts are hosted in different locations.
- Synchronous online classes are structured in line with ICPPD's design principles for online delivery (Section 4.3.6.2), including clear openings, interactive learning phases, and reflective closure.
- Sessions incorporate planned opportunities for learner interaction at appropriate intervals (e.g. discussion, breakout activities or reflective exercises) to support engagement and active learning.
- Tutors are expected to design and facilitate online sessions in a manner that supports experiential, reflective and collaborative learning, rather than passive content delivery.

The approach of ICPPD to blended teaching and learning is based on the intentional integration of classroom face-to-face learning experiences with synchronous online experiences, in line with QQI's Blended Learning Guidelines (2018) and Statutory Quality Assurance Guidelines for Blended and Fully Online Programmes (2023).

4.3 Blended and Online Teaching and Learning Policy

4.3.1 Introduction

This Blended and Online Teaching Learning and Assessment policy is devised in the context of ICPPD's Blended Learning Strategy and is supported by the full range of ICPPD's Quality Assurance policies and procedures, our mission statement and ICPPD's strategic plan.

It is produced with reference to QQI's (Oct 2023) Statutory Quality Assurance Guidelines For Providers of Blended and Fully Online Learning Programmes and QQI's Core Statutory Quality Assurance Guidelines .

The requirements of professional, accrediting bodies i.e., IACP are also considered when devising ICPPD's Blended and Online Teaching and Learning policy.

Blended learning seeks to draw on the strengths and opportunities of both the online and the face-to-face environments to deliver programmes that are academically robust, foster engagement and are accessible.

For the purposes of this policy, 'blended learning' includes both face-to-face and synchronous online delivery components, while 'online synchronous learning' refers to live, real-time virtual teaching.

4.3.2 Context

Blended learning at ICPPD is shaped by an educational philosophy that holds the whole person at its centre. Rooted in the humanistic tradition and integrative psychotherapy principles, the college understands learning not simply as cognitive acquisition but as a transformative process—intellectual, emotional, spiritual, and behavioural. It is from this foundation that all modes of teaching, whether face-to-face or online, draw meaning.

Blended learning at the college is not a compromise between digital and in-person instruction; rather, it is an intentional integration that reflects the college's belief in flexibility, accessibility, and responsiveness to individual needs. Platforms such as Moodle and Zoom are used not merely for content delivery but as tools to foster presence, connection, and reflection. Tutors engage with learners as whole persons, maintaining dialogue, providing feedback, and creating spaces where learners feel seen, heard, and supported. Learner-centredness in this context is not a methodological choice—it is a core value, shaping everything from assessment design to pastoral support structures.

What distinguishes ICPPD's approach further is its unwavering commitment to holistic teaching and learning. Whether in a digital module or an in-person tutorial, the content and process are crafted to touch all dimensions of human experience. Learners are invited to reflect deeply, engage creatively, and explore personal meaning—elements that are not only compatible with online learning but, when designed mindfully, are often enhanced by the space and flexibility digital platforms provide. In this sense, blended learning becomes a vehicle for transformation, not merely a mode of delivery.

Throughout all of this, ICPPD maintains rigorous quality assurance structures that uphold the integrity of

its blended learning delivery. These systems ensure that learner feedback is consistently gathered, staff development is prioritised, and programme content evolves in response to both professional standards and learner voice. Such structures are not bureaucratic impositions but are expressions of the college's value of shared responsibility and continuous improvement. Feedback from tutors, learners, clinical placement organisations and external supervisors informs this policy in terms of the appropriateness and effectiveness of the chosen mode of delivery.

The principles, philosophy, and practices of ICPPD are not only visible but fully embodied in its approach to blended learning. Through intentional design, responsive delivery, and reflective pedagogy, the college sustains its commitment to the individual learner, to person-centred education, and to a holistic model of teaching and learning.

4.3.3 Purpose

This policy sets out to document ICPPD's policy and procedures in respect of blended and online learning and to demonstrate ICPPD's compliance with requirements of validating and professional accrediting bodies.

Existing Quality Assurance policies and procedures remain applicable and are supplemented by additional requirements as specified in this policy.

This policy addresses matters specific to Blended and Online Programmes. It is designed to safeguard academic standards and guide and support staff and learners involved in any aspect of such programmes which include an online component. It guides ICPPD in managing potential risks and vulnerabilities and developing blended and online learning opportunities.

4.3.4 Scope

This policy covers all ICPPD's programmes with an online delivery component if the programme allows. This includes a QQI validated programme, IACP accredited and ICPPD Certified Programmes and provides for best practice regarding ICPPD's academic and training programmes.

ICPPD Programmes	Mode of delivery	Rationale and considerations for delivery mode
BA (Hons) in Holistic Counselling and Psychotherapy (Level 8)	Synchronous Blended	The experiential and learner-centred approach to this programme means that face-to-face Teaching & Learning is prioritised. However, the college recognises that there are opportunities and benefits to some elements being taught Synchronous online. The professional accrediting body IACP also requires that a minimum of 70 % is face-to-face. Feedback from learners' surveys supports their preference for Face-to-face on-site interaction with each other and tutors.
Diploma in Supervision across Professions - A Holistic Approach	Synchronous Blended	In alignment with ICPPDs learner-centred ethos the college places high value on face-to-face experiential learning on this programme. The feedback from faculty and learners is that a blend of online and face-to-face is desirable but on-site is preferable. Hence 80% is delivered face-to-face on-site.
Diploma in Expressive Arts for Professionals	Face to Face	Due to the creative experiential content of this programme, it is delivered 100% face-to-face on-site.

Certificate in Psychosynthesis for Professionals	Face to Face	The content of this programme is most suited to face-to-face on-site delivery.
Introduction to Holistic Counselling and Psychotherapy	Online	This programme is delivered midweek in three-hour sessions. ICPPD believes this supports the participants on the programme who may be undertaking it for a variety of reasons.
Certificate in Personal Development	Face to Face	The provision of this programme supports the ethos and mission of ICPPD, and the college believes that personal development is best facilitated in a face-to-face setting.

4.3.5 Roles and Responsibilities

This policy is implemented through existing governance structures. A variety of personnel and committees are responsible for ensuring that the college provides the necessary operational support, guidance, and technical infrastructure for technology enhanced learning and assessment.
In accordance with ICPPD's Quality Assurance policies and procedures:

The **Board of Directors** is responsible for the provision of resources (software, hardware etc) and allocation of training budgets for upskilling and reskilling of staff. The Board of Directors makes decisions on new programme approvals which have been recommended by the Academic Board. The input into that decision would relate to the viability of a programme and resources necessary to develop and deliver including technological requirements.

The Executive Management Committee (EMC) holds overall responsibility for the operational oversight of blended and online delivery.
The **Academic Director**, in collaboration with the Programme Development Teams and Administration Team, is responsible for ensuring the effectiveness of blended and online synchronous delivery, including:

- live online session delivery standards
- learner engagement monitoring in synchronous environments
- technical readiness for live delivery
- implementation of online pedagogy requirements

The **College Manager** implements the Board of Directors instructions in relation to sourcing and provision of resources.

The **Academic Board** is responsible for the College's strategic academic direction, policy and standards, including the management, coordination, development and academic progress and direction of ICPPD's training programmes. Within this remit the Academic Board approves the Blended and Online Teaching Learning and Assessment Policy.
The Academic Board currently has a member with experience in digital education and the Board of Directors will ensure this continues in the future.

The **Quality Assurance and Enhancement Committee** evaluates, reviews and revises Quality Assurance procedures within the college. The Committee is responsible for monitoring and reviewing all processes designed to improve academic standards and ensuring ongoing quality processes are incorporated into the academic programmes including Blended and Online learning components of programmes.

Programme Development Teams are responsible for developing a programme proposal for submission to the Academic Director who in turn presents the details to the Academic Board for approval and subsequently to the Board of Directors. The Programme Proposal should specify mode of delivery and the rational for the chosen mode.

The Academic Director holds overall responsibility for all academic matters and is responsible for overseeing and management of design, development and delivery of programmes including whether programmes should be delivered face to face, blended or online.
The Academic Director in collaboration with the College Manager has responsibility for ongoing staff and tutor training and development.

Tutors are responsible for facilitation of the learning process on the programmes in accordance with the mode of delivery prescribed for the programme/module. Tutors are responsible for providing ongoing feedback to the Academic Director on the effectiveness of the mode of delivery and whether online delivery is appropriate to the content of the programme/ module.

The Registrar is responsible for monitoring and reporting on the implementation and effectiveness of all ICPPD's Quality Assurance Policies and Procedures and identifying areas for enhancement. This includes all forms and modes of teaching, learning and assessment.

Programme Boards are responsible for the ongoing delivery and review of programmes. Through the biannual Programme Board meetings, recommendations can be made to Academic Board on programmes teaching learning and assessment.

The Administration Team provides technological support to learners and faculty through annual support sessions for Moodle and Zoom and ongoing ad hoc support as required. Service expectations, including defined support hours, communication channels, response times, and escalation procedures, are formally documented and communicated to staff and learners annually, and all applied consistently across all programmes.

The External Examiner will review for appropriateness the programme assessment strategies including online assessments.

A contracted **Education Technologist**, in collaboration with the Academic Director, provides external expertise, including an audit of online learning materials, recommendations for improvements and delivery of online digital skills workshops.

4.3.6 Blended and Online Teaching and Learning: Key Principles

ICPPD recognises that teaching online is not simply a transference of material and methods originally designed for face-to-face delivery. Suitable adaptations need to be identified to deliver online elements appropriately and effectively to meet programme and module outcomes.

- Programme content, teaching methodologies including assessment strategies are designed to support learning, achievement of learning outcomes, and full engagement with the programme of study regardless of whether any specific component is being delivered face to face or online environment.

- Tutor attunement and sensitivity to the topic is crucial in determining whether particular course material is suitable to being taught online or face-to-face.

- Learners on ICPPD programmes are treated equally and given appropriate access to physical and remote resources and supports.

- Regardless of the modes of delivery, ICPPD ensures that the programme includes opportunities for formative and summative assessment and enables learners to meet the intended learning outcomes.

- Quality Assurance processes and procedures are in place to support the integrity of learning and assessment processes for all modes of delivery.

- ICPPD recognises that it may be necessary for the approach to online teaching and learning to evolve, and innovative approaches to learning and teaching will be examined on an ongoing basis. Teaching staff will also be supported to develop their digital literacy skills capacities.

- Robust quality assurance checks are in place to monitor the integrity and consistency of the teaching and learning experience through surveys, feedback forms and annual meetings.

- Due to the content and experiential nature of the programmes delivered at ICPPD, recording of classes is not permitted.

- ICPPD ensures that academic integrity, privacy, cybersecurity, and responsible use of technology, including generative AI, are monitored and enforced through Quality Assurance processes and reflected in programme review and tutor feedback mechanisms.

4.3.6.1 Criteria for Determining Suitability of Online Synchronous Delivery

To ensure pedagogical coherence, regulatory compliance and programme integrity, ICPPD applies the institutional principles outlined in the ***Section B, Chapter 1 Design and Approval of Programmes, 1.2.1*** through a set of operational criteria used in programme approval and review processes.

A module or programme component shall only be approved for synchronous online delivery where ALL criteria below are demonstrably met and evidenced at programme approval or formal modification stage.

Learning Outcomes

- The learning outcomes can be achieved without compromising experiential, interpersonal, or skills-based components that require physical presence.
- Online delivery supports, rather than dilutes, reflective or process-oriented learning central to ICPPD's ethos.

Pedagogical, Andaragogical, Paragogical Suitability

- Content is appropriate for online facilitation and does not rely heavily on embodied, somatic, or sensory experiential work that requires in-person attunement.
- Tutor-learner interactions and group learning processes can be effectively facilitated through synchronous online methodologies
- Emotional, interpersonal and ethical risks are identified and demonstrably manageable in a virtual environment.

Learner Readiness and Support

- Learners have access to required technology, internet reliability, confidentiality/private learning

environment
- Equivalent academic, pastoral, and technical supports are available for online delivery.
- Online learning contracts address confidentiality, participation and professional conduct.

Tutor Capacity and Digital Competence
- Tutors have demonstrated competence in online pedagogy (see Section 4.3.10.2).
- Tutors can evidence capacity to facilitate engagement, manage group process, and monitor learner wellbeing in real time online environments.

Quality Assurance and Resourcing
- Online delivery must not exceed the QQI-approved proportion of blended learning for the programme.
- Professional body requirements (e.g., IACP's minimum face-to-face percentages) are respected.
- The required digital resources, support systems, and technical infrastructure are in place and quality assured.

Approval Decision Rule
A module or component shall not be approved for synchronous online delivery unless:
- all criteria above are met
  and
- evidence is provided within programme validation documentation demonstrating alignment with learning outcomes, assessment strategy, and professional body requirements
  and
- approval is granted through formal programme governance processes (Validation Panel / Programme Board as applicable).

All decisions are recorded in validation documentation, annual monitoring reports, and Programme Board minutes.

A whole module may be delivered synchronously online only in clearly justified and exceptional circumstances, where all criteria above are met and where the following additional conditions apply:

- Such modules are limited to those with a primary focus on theoretical, academic, or research-based learning; modules involving personal development, interpersonal process, or skills-based practice must be delivered face-to-face.
- Programme design must ensure compliance with all relevant professional body requirements, including the minimum requirement of programme delivery is conducted face-to-face.
- The module must be explicitly designed or adapted for online delivery, demonstrating how learning outcomes will be achieved through online pedagogical approaches rather than direct replication of in-person teaching.
- Structured approaches to learner engagement and interaction, appropriate online assessment, academic integrity, and the development of learner community must be clearly defined and implemented.

All such decisions must be fully justified and documented within programme validation, approval, and monitoring processes.

4.3.6.2 Design Principles for Synchronous Online Delivery

In addition to the institutional principles outlined in ***Chapter 1 Design and Approval of Programmes, Section 1.2***, the following design principles apply to all synchronous online delivery and represent the

minimum required standard for the design and facilitation of online synchronous classes. These must be evidenced in module design documentation.

These principles provide a shared standard of practice across programmes and support the consistent delivery of high-quality online learning experiences aligned with ICPPD's ethos.

a) Presence and Connection

- Tutors establish and maintain active relational presence throughout delivery (e.g. check-ins, check-outs, learner reflections and explicit attention to learner process)
- Learners are actively engaged through facilitated dialogue and are supported to contribute meaningfully to collective learning.

b) Interaction and Engagement

- Online sessions incorporate regular opportunities for interaction (e.g. open discussion, chat, breakout rooms, pair/triad work) at appropriate intervals.
- Learning activities are designed to promote experiential, reflective, and applied learning, rather than passive content delivery.

c) Structure, Clarity, and Pacing

- Learning outcomes, learning plan and expectations are communicated at the start of each class where appropriate to the module content.
- Where appropriate to the module classes have a clear beginning, middle, and end, including time for reflection and questions.
- Learning activities are appropriately scaffolded to support learner readiness, engagement and emotional and psychological safety.

d) Accessibility and Inclusion

- Online sessions are designed with Universal Design for Learning (UDL) principles in mind, offering multiple means of engagement and allowing for diverse ways of participating.
- Reasonable accommodations (e.g. screen breaks, alternative participation modes) are built into session planning where required.

e) Safe and Ethical Practice

- Tutors attend to psychological safety, confidentiality, and professional boundaries in the online environment, including explicit contracting regarding camera use, confidentiality of space, and appropriate self-disclosure.
- Online activities involving practice work are carefully framed and debriefed, particularly where material has the potential to be triggering.

f) Effective and Ethical Use of Technology

- Digital tools (e.g. Zoom, Moodle, whiteboard) are used to support learning outcomes
- Tutors use technology in line with ICPPD's policies on data protection, privacy, cybersecurity, and responsible use of generative AI.

These principles are implemented through Tutor Guidelines (Section 4.3.8), Learner Guidelines

(Section 4.3.9), and ongoing Staff Development (Section 4.3.10).
Compliance with these principles is required at programme design, approval, and delivery stages.

4.3.7 Blended and Online Teaching and Learning: Considerations

It is recognised that online teaching, learning, and assessment differ significantly from face-to-face teaching, learning, and assessment and requires an additional teaching skill set which will be provided through staff training and development. Ongoing Quality Assurance checks include monitoring academic integrity, ethical use of technology, and compliance with Data Protection, GDPR and privacy requirements during online delivery.

This section articulates the quality principles and indicators for blended and online synchronous learning as defined in ***Section 4.1.9*** of the ***Programme Design and Development Policy.***

When teaching online technical expertise is required in the use of IT platforms and communication channels, training and supports will be provided annually and on an ad hoc as required.

Ongoing feedback from tutors on the online and blended learning will be gathered through the college's feedback mechanisms e.g. Tutor End of Module surveys, programme boards meetings and ongoing dialogue with the Academic Director.

ICPPD's technical software is chosen to support online learning. Operational supports and guidance are in place for learners to allow for full engagement with each programme. Support is available through our administration staff during office hours to learners throughout the programme. Support sessions are scheduled at the start of each academic year to guide learners in the use of Moodle and ESCO online library.

ICPPD uses various platforms including Moodle, a Virtual Learning Environment system, and Zoom Video Conferencing platform to support learners in providing an effective and positive learning experience. These platforms are chosen for the considerations of reliability, accessibility, security against data breaches, hacking and being GDPR compliant. External contractors provide expertise and contracted services to support ICPPD's technological infrastructure. Service Level Agreements (SLAs) are established between ICPPD and external contractors to ensure consistency and the effective provision of services.

4.3.7.1 Standards for Digital Learning Materials in Blended and Online Learning

To support consistency, accessibility, and academic integrity, ICPPD maintains clear standards for the development, use and review of digital learning materials including but not limited to slides, videos, recorded demonstrations, interactive online activities, and resources within Moodle.

a) Design and Quality Standards
Digital learning materials must:

- align with approved programme and module learning outcomes and reflect ICPPD's humanistic and holistic ethos
- be accurate, current and appropriately referenced
- be written in clear, respectful, and learner-centred language
- be designed to support engagement, reflection in blended and online contexts

Accessibility is a core requirement. Materials should, where practicable, be designed in accordance with Universal Design for Learning (UDL) principles, including:

- readable and accessible formatting
- appropriate colour contrast
- use of alternative text for images where relevant
- provision of materials in multiple or adaptable formats where feasible

b) Roles and Responsibilities

Responsibility for digital learning materials is owned as follows:

- Tutors are responsible for the development, adaptation, and routine updating of materials used in their modules, in line with approved module descriptors.
- The Academic Director provides oversight of coherence, quality, and alignment with programme standards.
- The Academic Director, in collaboration with a contracted Education Technologist, conducts audits of online learning materials. The output of this audit is used to design support and CPD training plans.
- Programme Boards review digital learning materials as part of annual monitoring, with particular attention to quality, accessibility, and suitability for blended and online delivery.
- The Executive Management Team is responsible for resourcing including digital technology platforms.

c) Copyright, Open Educational Resources (OER), and Generative AI

ICPPD requires compliance with all relevant copyright and intellectual property legislation in the sourcing and use of digital content.

- The use of Open Educational Resources (OER) is encouraged, where resources are reputable, appropriately attributed, and aligned with programme learning outcomes.

When generative AI tools are used by staff to support the development of teaching materials:

- all outputs must be critically reviewed for accuracy, relevance, and alignment with ICPPD ethos and programme standards
- no confidential, sensitive, or identifiable learner information may be input into AI systems
- AI-generated content must be adapted, contextualised, and integrated by the tutor, who retains full responsibility for the final material

d) Approval, Review and Version Control

ICPPD ensures that digital learning materials are subject to ongoing review and quality assurance.

- New or substantially revised core teaching materials are recorded through Programme Board minutes and reflected in annual monitoring reports where relevant
- Tutors review and update digital materials at least annually as part of end-of-module reflection
- Where changes materially affect learning outcomes, assessment, or delivery, they must be approved through the relevant QA governance process and communicated to learners in a timely manner
- Version control practices are maintained to ensure clarity, traceability, and consistency of materials used across cohorts

4.3.8 Guidelines for Tutors for Online Delivery of ICPPD Programmes

4.3.8.1 Learner-Centred Approach:

- Tutors must prioritise the achievement of module learning outcomes and syllabus as outlined in the programme/module descriptors when designing activities and teaching methodologies used in the virtual classroom.
- Tutors need to encourage students to take ownership of their learning while online.
- Tutors should strive to accommodate individual learning styles where possible by providing diverse learning materials and activities. in alignment with the principles of Universal Design for Learning (UDL), which advocate for multiple means of representation, engagement, and expression to support the diverse needs of all learners.
- Tutors should consider the needs of learners with additional requirements, such as the provision of screen breaks, and make reasonable adjustments to support their participation and well-being.
- Group Learning contracts will need to consider the online classroom environment for example, online etiquette, camera on.
- The use of virtual break-out rooms should be used for the promotion and nurturing of dialogue and interpersonal learning through working in triads and small groups.
- To encourage engagement with their peers, tutors should open the virtual classrooms before the start of class and during breaks to allow learners to communicate with each other informally.
- Waiting rooms are not encouraged in order to not interfere with the delivery.

4.3.8.2 Tutors Teaching Space/Environment:

- Tutors should ensure that the environment that they are teaching in is a confidential space with no distractions or interruptions.
- Please ensure that your internet access is adequate to host an online Zoom class.
- Use appropriate technological aids such as headphones, earbuds for better quality sound, webcam, microphone, as necessary.
- Adjust your camera and lighting so you can be seen well by learners. If possible, have your computer at eye-level.

4.3.8.3 Effective Use of Technology:

- Technology: The Tutors will be provided with an ICPPD Zoom account and should be familiar with Zoom and its features e.g. Breakout Rooms, Whiteboard, Document/Screen sharing and Chat features. Tutors will be provided with training to support them in the delivery of online classes.
- Ensure Accessibility: Make sure that all online resources are accessible to all learners, including those with disabilities. Use the chat feature on Zoom to give clear instructions if a learner is in your class with a disability.
- Zoom links should be posted on Moodle (through announcements) ahead of class-time. For new cohorts who may be unfamiliar with ICPPD procedures, Zoom links may also be shared with the group through email from the administration staff.
- Tutors' competence in online teaching and facilitation is reviewed annually to ensure alignment with ICPPD's blended learning strategy and Quality Assurance expectations.

4.3.8.4 Use of Breakout Rooms at ICPPD

Purpose:

- At ICPPD Breakout Rooms are used during online classes to help to mirror the face-to-face experience of working in small groups.
- Small groups can be used to facilitate discussion on a particular topic, practising skills etc.

Guidelines:

- Clearly communicate the purpose and expectations for breakout room activities.
- Strive to ensure the activities and materials are accessible to all participants, including those with disabilities or diverse learning styles. e.g. use the chat features to communicate to everyone in the breakout rooms.
- Regularly check in on breakout rooms to ensure emotional safety, bearing in mind the nature and the content of the programmes.
- Address any issues promptly.
- Ideally there should be no less than 3 people in a breakout room unless in certain circumstances e.g. skills practice
- For longer discussions it may be useful to check in at the start of each discussion and also at a point midway, to explore their progress.
- Be mindful of the time and ensure breakout rooms conclude on time.
- Remind participants that they can leave the breakout room at any time if they feel uncomfortable or emotionally unsafe.
- Facilitate a debriefing session to discuss the key takeaways from the breakout room activities.
- If necessary, follow up with participants to address any outstanding questions or concerns.
- To support different learning styles, it may be useful to include on the chat the purpose of the breakout room.

4.3.8.5 Formative Assessment and Feedback:

- Tutors are advised to use a variety of formative assessment methods to enhance learning in the online environment (Refer to Section 4.5.7 Formative Assessment of/as Learning)
- Tutors are expected to provide constructive, timely and effective feedback to learners on their learning, engagement and participation, in line with the feedback principles and turnaround times outlined in ***Section 4.3.11.4 and Section 4.5.6.2***.

4.3.8.6 Digital Learning Materials and Online Resources:

- Tutors are expected to design and use digital learning materials in accordance with the standards set out in ***Section 4.3.7*** above.
- When using third-party digital resources (e.g. videos, articles, online tools), tutors must ensure that these are reputable, pedagogically appropriate, and used in compliance with copyright and licensing requirements.
- Tutors must not upload or share any digital content that breaches confidentiality, professional ethical codes, or data protection requirements.
- Where generative AI is used to support preparation of materials, tutors remain fully responsible for the accuracy, appropriateness, and ethical integrity of all content shared with learners.

4.3.8.7 Other Important Considerations:

- As you do for the face-to-face environment, create a welcoming and inclusive environment, ensuring that all learners feel comfortable and welcome in the classroom.
- Stay Updated: Keep abreast of new technologies and best practices in blended learning. Collaboration and resource sharing with faculty is encouraged. Resources are provided on Moodle for tutors to refer to.
- Tutors are encouraged to seek support from colleagues or college staff as required.
- Regularly reflect on your blended learning practices and adjust as needed. Tutors are required to

use end of module feedback forms to provide the college with information and suggestions on the online teaching experience.

4.3.9 Guidelines for Learners in an online learning environment

4.3.9.1 Your learning space / environment

- Negotiate with your household the use of your learning space. Carve out a space where you can listen and participate in online classes with as few distractions as possible. Take measures to protect your space as much as possible when scheduled to attend class. Be mindful of background noise and distractions around you, as much as possible
- Ensure that your space is confidential and no other person is in the room or can hear the class discussions. If necessary, use headphones.
- As you do for face-to-face learning, aim to block out your day, prioritising your learning and attendance as you would have done ordinarily. Please keep in contact with your tutor if you have any concerns about your ability to attend class effectively
- Try to orient yourself into learner-mode before class time begins by dedicating your class-time to your learning, engagement and growth. Remind yourself of your learning goals and objectives for the module/programme.
- If your circumstances change or there are other demands on your time which may impact your learning, please work with your tutor and we can provide guidance on how to progress your learning in an optimal way as is possible.
- Your group learning contract will refer to online etiquette. Learners are reminded to abide by the Group Learning contract online as they would in a face-to-face class
- There will be a facility to use "breakout rooms" for discussions with instructions provided by your tutor

4.3.9.2 Course Access and Technology Requirements

- Make sure you have good quality internet access. If your audio/video quality is poor, try to reduce other bandwidth demands in your home environment. If this does not help, switch off your video transmission or mute and unmute your microphone.
- Use headphones, earbuds for better quality sound, and to minimise sound interference for everyone. Use a headset equipped with a microphone if possible.
- Adjust your camera and lighting so your peers and tutor can see you. Have your computer at the same height as your face as this will both reduce discomfort for you and help us to see each other clearly.
- The online communication platform used at ICPPD is Zoom, please familiarise yourself with the tools available. Click on link here. https://www.zoom.com/home. Create a free account although not necessary for joining a meeting. Check your settings in advance of the session.
- You can join a meeting on your desktop, laptop or tablet (smartphones are not recommended) as it is much clearer to see screen sharing, PowerPoint slides etc from a larger screen.
- The zoom link will be shared by tutors before class on Moodle announcements.
- To Join the session, click on the link ahead of start-time with headphones to reduce distractions and make sure to test your headphones audio and video before class time begins. You will be directed into the virtual class. Here you should see other learners on the screen.
- Familiarise yourself with the toolbar, you can screenshare if invited to do so, speak and ask questions.
- Mute your microphone when you aren't speaking by clicking the microphone button. When you are ready to ask a question or speak, unmute your line and then speak up as above.

- You may use the chat feature if you want to ask a question and are having difficulty with the sound/video quality.

4.3.9.3 Ethical Considerations and Professional Standards

- Recording of class is not allowed.
- Please consider your name as it appears on the screen on Zoom. The name shown should obviously be your own and not someone else (e.g. if using someone else's device their name will appear on screen)
- If you have not met your tutor before, make sure you state your name when you want to contribute to the conversation/lesson. E.g. 'Mary, it's James here, I was just wondering about …….'
- Be careful not to compromise others anonymity by family members etc being able to see your screen, listen in etc.
- Try not to speak over each other as it may not always be possible to pick up on social cues where someone is signalling a contribution. Hang back, negotiate a speaking order or wait to see if your peer has asked the question you were going to ask before continuing. Your tutor will make your classes as interactive as possible.
- Once class has ended, give yourself a moment to self-reflect and note your key learnings and take-aways from the class/session that day.
- Learners are required to engage with supports available to them when there is potentially triggering material i.e., personal therapy, journalling, contract, check-in/check-out.
- It is a Learner's responsibility to let the college know of any particular personal requirements they may have in the online environment.
- Set yourself some realistic self-directed-learning goals for the time leading up to the next session. Remain curious as to how you can maximise your learning within the current limits.

4.3.10 Resource, Staffing, and Staff Development Requirements for Blended and Online Learning

In accordance with QQI Statutory ***Quality Assurance Guidelines for Blended and Online Learning (2023)***, ICPPD ensures that robust resource planning, staffing, and staff-development structures support the quality, integrity, and effectiveness of all blended and online synchronous delivery.

This section outlines the implementation of the ***Staff Development Plan (Section 3.5***) within blended and online learning contexts.

4.3.10.1 Allocation and Definition of Responsibilities

ICPPD maintains clear, documented responsibilities for the design, development, delivery, operation, and support of blended and online components, including:

Design, Development, Delivery, and Management

- Programme Development Teams are responsible for designing and developing modules and programmes, including identifying whether blended or online synchronous delivery is appropriate.
- The Academic Director is responsible for overseeing delivery, pedagogical integrity, and ensuring staff are appropriately trained.
- Programme Leaders and Tutors are responsible for effective operation and facilitation of blended and online elements, including learner engagement and monitoring of learner progress.
- The Academic Director monitors the implementation of synchronous online teaching

standards and design principles through mechanisms such as tutor reflection, feedback review, and, where appropriate, observation or review of online teaching practice.

Technical Support

- Service expectations, including support availability, response times, and escalation timelines, are formally defined and communicated to staff and learners annually**.**
- The Administration Team provides technical support to tutors and learners.
- External contractors, under Service Level Agreements, provide additional system-level technical support, security, and maintenance.
- Clear escalation routes for urgent issues (Tutor → Administration → College Manager → IT contractor) are published annually.

Digital Resource Design, Review, and Approval

- Tutors develop digital learning resources in line with programme/module descriptors.
- All digital materials are reviewed annually by Programme Boards for pedagogical suitability, accessibility, and alignment with learning outcomes.
- The Academic Director approves digital learning resources for continued use or revision.
- A contracted Education Technologist, in collaboration with the Academic Director, will audit and make recommendations on digital learning materials.

4.3.10.2 Learner Support Structures

ICPPD ensures equivalent learner support across face-to-face, blended and online delivery modes.

Support includes:

- **Academic Support:** published office hours, Moodle access guidance, assignment briefings, and tutor consultations.
- **Technical Support:** scheduled start-of-year Moodle/Zoom training, administrative technical support during office hours, and emergency escalation procedures.
- **Pastoral Support:** access to Programme Leaders and tutors for support, including referral to appropriate external or internal supports where personal or wellbeing issues impact learning.

This ensures that learners studying online have access to supports equivalent in quality and availability to those provided in face-to-face delivery.

To ensure consistency, transparency and equitable access across all programmes, cohorts and delivery locations, ICPPD publishes standardised learner support information annually.

This includes:

- **Support hours** for academic, technical and pastoral supports
- **Communication channels** (e.g. email, Moodle, scheduled sessions)
- **Expected response times** (normally within 2 working days for academic queries and 1 working day for technical issues during teaching periods)
- **Escalation procedures and timelines** where issues are not resolved at first point of contact

These service expectations are communicated to learners during induction, published on Moodle, and reviewed annually by the Quality Assurance and Enhancement Committee to ensure consistency across all centres and programmes.

All support structures will be reviewed by the Executive Management Committee through monthly management meetings. Any additional supports identified will be proposed at the monthly Board of

Directors meeting.

4.3.10.3 Minimum Competency Requirements for Tutors in Online Pedagogy

To ensure high-quality online learning, all staff involved in blended or online delivery must demonstrate competence in:

- Online and blended pedagogy principles – understanding and application of pedagogical structures in an online learning environment.
- Andragogical approaches – understanding and applying principles of adult learning (including learner autonomy, relevance, and professional application) in an online setting.
- Paragogical approaches – understanding and applying approaches that support peer learning, collaboration, and co-constructed knowledge.
- Synchronous Online Facilitation Skills – the ability to facilitate engaging, relational, and psychologically safe synchronous online classes which balance structure with responsiveness, support reflective dialogue, and enable effective peer interaction.
- Digital Platforms and Learning Technologies: Effective use of Moodle, Zoom and digital learning tools to support learning design, communication, collaboration, assessment, and feedback in online and blended contexts.
- Online Learner Engagement Strategies - competence in fostering active participation, reflective engagement, and collaborative learning communities, including group interaction, peer dialogue, and inclusive participation in online environments.
- Ethical and Professional Practice Online: Understanding and maintenance of ethical standards, professional boundaries, confidentiality, and data protection in synchronous online learning environments.
- Accessibility, Inclusion and Learner Support in digital environments - Knowledge and application of accessibility and inclusive practice in digital environments, aligned with Universal Design for Learning (UDL) principles and appropriate learner support and referral processes.
- Completion of mandatory training in online pedagogy, andragogy, paragogical facilitation, and digital teaching is required prior to and during engagement in blended or online delivery.

New members of faculty must complete induction and demonstrate competence prior to online teaching. Competency is reviewed annually as part of staff development and appraisal processes.

4.3.10.4 Staff Development and CPD for Blended Learning

This section implements the institutional ***Staff Development Plan*** outlined in ***Section A, Chapter 3, Section 3.5,*** with specific reference to blended and online delivery requirements.

ICPPD maintains a comprehensive Staff Development Plan which aligns with the Blended and Online Teaching and Learning Strategy. This plan includes:

- Annual training workshops in digital pedagogy, andaragogy and paragogy
- Optional accredited training in online or blended learning
- Peer-sharing sessions on teaching innovations
- Access to resources on Moodle for best practices in digital teaching
- Opportunities for reflective practice and tutor end-of-module feedback
- Training in data security, GDPR, and the ethical issues of online learning

Engagement in CPD activities relating to blended and online delivery is mandatory for relevant staff.

The Academic Director and College Manager jointly oversee implementation of this plan and ensure

sufficient budget is allocated.

4.3.11 Assessment in Blended and Online Learning Contexts

Assessment in blended and online contexts is governed by the **Assessment of Learners Policy (Section 4.5)**, which establishes institutional principles of fairness, consistency, validity, reliability, and academic integrity across all delivery modes.

Assessment within blended and online provision is designed to ensure validity, reliability, and authenticity, particularly where peer-to-peer and collaborative learning approaches are used. Tasks are explicitly aligned with module learning outcomes and are designed to evidence individual achievement, even where collaborative processes are used in learning activities. Authenticity is supported through the use of applied, reflective, and practice-based assessment tasks that require learners to draw on their own experience, context, and professional practice.

Academic integrity, authentication, digital ethics, and misconduct procedures specific to online and digital environments are set out in ***Section 4.10.6 Academic Integrity in Digital, Online and Blended Contexts.*** This section outlines additional QA requirements specific to blended and synchronous online delivery.

4.3.11.1 Assessment Design and Equivalence

In blended and online delivery, assessment design must ensure:

- equivalence of academic standards across all modes of delivery
- alignment between learning outcomes, teaching approach, and assessment method
- appropriate adaptation of experiential or reflective assessments where online delivery is used
- accessibility and reasonable accommodation for all learners
- validity, reliability, and authenticity regardless of delivery mode
-

Where components are delivered online, the rationale for mode of delivery must be evidenced at programme level.

4.3.11.2 Formative Assessment in Synchronous Online Contexts

Formative assessment is a key feature of synchronous online delivery and is used to support learning, engagement, and real-time pedagogical adjustment.

In synchronous online contexts, formative assessment may include structured questioning, reflective dialogue, breakout activities, live discussion, or brief learner responses.

Tutors are required to:

- embed formative assessment into synchronous online sessions where appropriate
- use learner responses to adapt teaching and clarify understanding
- provide timely developmental feedback during or immediately following activities
- support active learner engagement and participation

Formative assessment is normally ungraded unless explicitly stated in module documentation.

4.3.11.3 Summative Assessment in Blended and Online Contexts

The Summative Assessment policy is described in ***Section 4.5*** below and programme-specific assessment strategies.

ICPPD ensures:

- equivalence of assessment standards across all modes of delivery

- appropriate use of online assessment where pedagogically and ethically suitable
- preservation of experiential and practice-based assessment in face-to-face contexts where required

Typical online summative assessments may include written assignments, portfolios, reflective journals, presentations, or oral examinations.

All assessment mode decisions must be approved through programme governance structures and comply with QQI validation requirements and relevant professional body standards.

4.3.11.4 Feedback and Evaluation of Online Delivery

Feedback practices follow ***Section 4.5*** requirements below.

ICPPD defines standard feedback turnaround times in blended and online contexts as follows:
– **Formative assessment:** feedback is provided during synchronous sessions or, where follow-up is required, within **5 working days** of the activity.
– **Summative assessment:** written feedback is provided within 6 weeks of the due date

In blended and online contexts:

- immediate verbal feedback may be provided during synchronous formative activities where appropriate
- written feedback on summative assessments is provided within published turnaround times

ICPPD evaluates the effectiveness of blended and online delivery through:

- learner and tutor feedback specific to online learning experience
- Programme Board review of delivery effectiveness
- analysis of Moodle engagement data and online participation indicators (where applicable)

Findings are reported to Academic Board and used to inform continuous improvement in teaching, learning, and assessment design.

4.3.11.5 Academic Integrity and Authenticity

ICPPD applies consistent academic integrity standards across all modes of delivery, including blended and synchronous online assessment. Academic misconduct definitions, procedures, and related processes are set out in ***Section 4.10 below.***

The use of generative AI and other digital tools in assessment is articulated in ***Section 4.3.7*** and programme/module-specific requirements. Any permitted use must be approved by the tutor, be clearly disclosed and comply with assessment criteria.

Assessment design in blended and online contexts incorporates appropriate measures to support authenticity of learner work and to mitigate the risk of academic misconduct, in line with institutional QA requirements.

In addition to preventative approaches, ICPPD employs mechanisms to detect academic misconduct. These include the use of text-matching software (Turnitin), authorship verification methods such as presentations or structured oral questioning where appropriate, and the review of learner engagement and submission patterns in digital platforms. Any identified concerns are addressed in accordance with institutional academic misconduct procedures.

4.4 Learner Attendance

Learners are required to maintain **a minimum of 85% attendance** for each programme / module to ensure they have adequate time to assimilate and demonstrate the required course skills, knowledge and competencies, and participate effectively in interactive and group learning. Tutors maintain attendance sheets for all modules, which are considered during learner progression meetings.

In practice, this means that a learner cannot miss more than 4.5 hours of a 30-hour (class contact time) module or 2.25 hours in a 15-hour (class contact time) module.

During induction, and throughout the academic year, learners are made fully aware that attendance and punctuality form an integral part of programme assessments. Trainee Counsellors/ Psychotherapists are required/expected to attend all programme elements, subject only to **exceptional circumstances**. Learners are asked not to book holidays or any other avoidable appointments that will conflict with class times/days. Learners unable to attend a particular class session should advise Administration Staff in advance, in so far as is possible, of their absence and the pertinent reason. All relevant communication in relation to learner attendance is recorded and maintained on the learners' files for possible discussion during Learner Support and Progression meetings.

A learner who has missed class time during a module/the academic year (and, in particular, where they fear that they will not meet the minimum attendance requirement of 85%) is required to discuss the issue with their Tutor and Programme Leader. Where possible, the Tutor/Programme Leader will agree a course of corrective action with the Learner to appropriately supplement their learning (this may include completion of a piece of research, written work or workshop attendance). The 'make-up' activity will be undertaken at the Learner's own expense, if available/relevant.

Where it is not possible for the learner to make up their missed time the Academic Director will discuss the progression implications with the learner and advise them of their possible options including module deferral, re-attendance, and progression (with credit deficit).

Attendance at the first class for each module (which includes an induction and information session) is mandatory. If the learner is absent from this first class, they must provide appropriate justification and must attend a separate induction briefing (arrangements to be made with the Tutor/Programme Leader) to ensure they are aware of their obligations and rights as a learner at ICPPD.

4.5 Assessment of Learners Policy

4.5.1 Context for the Assessment of Learners within ICPPD

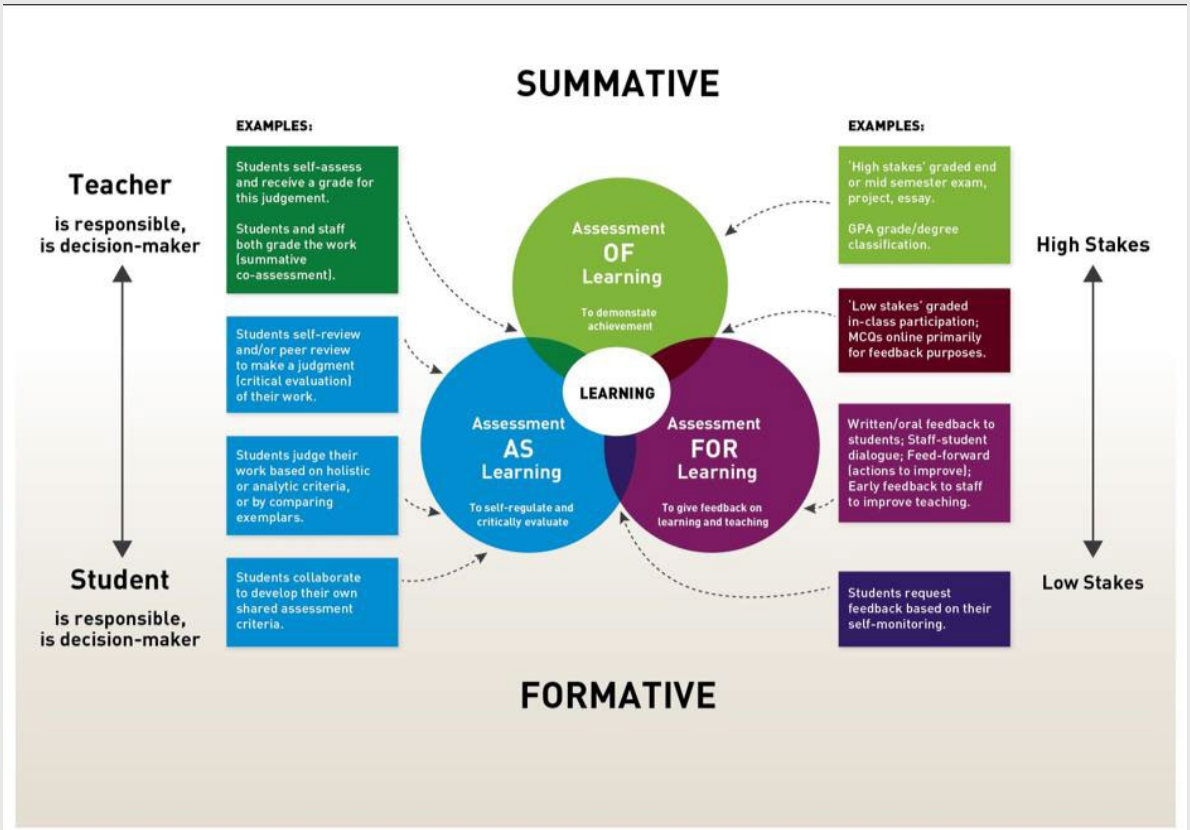
ICPPD's assessment policies and procedures are developed in accordance with ***QQI Core Statutory Quality Assurance Guidelines (2016)***, in particular ***Section 2.6.1 (Assessment of Learners)***, and are aligned with the ***Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG 2015)***, specifically ***Standard 1.3:***

"Student-centred Learning, Teaching and Assessment Standard: Institutions should ensure that the programmes are delivered in a way that encourages students to take an active role in creating the learning process, and that the assessment of students reflects this approach."

This standard requires that programmes are delivered in a manner that encourages learners to take an active role in the learning process and that assessment approaches reflect this learner-centred philosophy.

ICPPD ensures that assessment methods are valid, reliable, fair, and consistent, and are designed to support the achievement of programme learning outcomes and continuous learner development.

Assessment practices at ICPPD are further informed by the National Forum for the Enhancement of Teaching and Learning in Higher Education, particularly the framework of ***assessment of, for, and as learning,*** which supports a balanced approach to summative and formative assessment and promotes learner engagement, reflection, and development.



Assessments are recognised as learning opportunities, and are designed to match the level of study, validate achievement of the Programme Learning Outcomes (MIPLOs) and Module Learning Outcomes (MIMLOs), and to prepare learners for progression in a career and / or further study. Assessment is not viewed narrowly as outcome but rather as a means of supporting and promoting effective teaching and learning.

4.5.2 Scope of Assessment of Learners Policy

ICPPD's Assessment Policy applies to all assessment conducted within, and on behalf of, ICPPD including continual assessment, recognition of prior learning, and assessment of work-based learning elements of programmes. This section of the Quality Assurance Manual is designed to cover the administration and regulation of the assessment and examination of learners on all ICPPD academic and training programmes.

4.5.3 General Principles

ICPPD assessments are carried out following theses general principles:

1. Assessments are designed to be fair and consistently applied
2. Assessments are carried out in accordance with the stated procedures
3. Assessments are transparent, valid, reliable and free from bias.
4. Assessments are subject to regular review, both within the College and externally

5. Assessments are constructively aligned with the minimum intended learning outcomes of each programme/module.
6. Clear and consistent assessment criteria are shared with the learner in good time and in a user-friendly manner. The criteria are published in module descriptors (available on the VLE - Moodle). Assessment deadlines/dates are provided on the relevant timetables which are supplied in advance of the commencement of the academic year.
7. The assessment framework facilitates learning and informs and supports learner progression, particularly in the early stages of programmes
8. Learners are provided with timely feedback on assessment which promotes learning and facilitates reflection and improvement
9. The quality of feedback to learners on assessment is consistent across programmes, cohorts and delivery centres
10. Learners participate in assessment as learning which helps them to self-regulate i.e. empowers them to critically evaluate their own work and be able to monitor themselves.
11. The management of assessments is efficient, especially regarding the amount and timing of assessments, staff and learner workloads; and allows time for learner reflection
12. A culture of upholding academic integrity is promoted

4.5.4 Assessment of/for/as Learning

Assessment *of* Learning assists tutors in using evidence of learning to assess their achievement of learning outcomes - also understood at ICPPD as 'Summative Assessment'. Assessment of Learning (Summative Assessment) usually occurs at defined key points during a programme or module – typically at the end of a module/programme but certain modules/programmes may have staggered assessments during delivery. Assessment of Learning typically is used to assign grades to learners' assessments. The effectiveness of assessment of learning for grading purposes depends on the validity, reliability, and weighting placed on any one assessment instrument.

Assessment of Learning is an opportunity for learning which depends on the nature and quality of the feedback provided by the tutor. ICPPD's Summative Assessment Strategy is described below in greater detail in ***Section 4.5.6 – Summative Assessment of Learning.***

Assessment *for* Learning involves tutors using evidence about students' knowledge, understanding, and skills to inform their teaching and benefits teaching staff by helping them to focus on learning. Assessment for Learning is understood at ICPPD as 'formative assessment'. Assessment for Learning/Formative Assessment usually occurs throughout the teaching and learning process to clarify learner learning and understanding. ICPPD's Formative Assessment strategy is described in greater detail below in ***Section 4.5.7 – Formative Assessment of Learning.***

Assessment *as* Learning occurs when learners are their own assessors. Learners monitor their own learning, ask questions and use a range of strategies to critically evaluate their own work. This allows learners to make changes and consider their approach to their study and ultimately empowers learners to self-regulate and be able to monitor themselves.

ICPPD values and fosters a culture of Assessment as Learning. The college encourages adult learners to develop their own ability to review and critically self-evaluate their own learning. Assessment as Learning encourages an attitude of independent learning by the learning body. Assessment as Learning encourages an attitude of independent learning by learners. Taking agency and responsibility regarding their own learning sees learners adopt an attitude of curiosity towards their original learning style and prompts learners to consider how they might in the future learn differently.

Other strategies of learning reflection include peer assessment in the class setting and the practical

feedback that follows each assignment. ICPPD encourages learners to reflect not on marks awarded but on the feedback which accompanies the marks. Such feedback offers constructive signposts for future learning and supports both academic and reflective processes.

This dynamic attitude is practically encouraged by the tutoring staff through various exercises and mechanisms:

- allowing opportunities in class for self- and peer-review through dyads/triads
- facilitating in-class or online activities, such as quizzes and discussions, where learners can judge how well they are doing
- providing opportunities for learners to compare their work with other exemplars, to be able to critically evaluate their work
- supporting multiple opportunities to peer review other learners' work, giving them the opportunity to build skills in judging standard.
- developing open dialogue between tutors, learners and their peers based on their actionable and timely feedback

The following assessment OF/FOR/AS learning table is a compilation of from a wide variety of re- sources that goes a bit further than simple definitions (Chappuis et al., 2012; Fenwick & Parsons, 2009; McNamee & Chen, 2005; Rowe, 2012; Schraw, 2001; Sparks, 1999):

Assessment	**Of Learning**	**For Learning**	**As Learning**
Type	Summative	Formative	Formative
What	Tutors determine the progress or application of knowledge or skills against a standard.	Tutors and peers check progress and learning to help learners to determine how to improve.	Learner takes responsibility for their own learning and asks questions about their learning and the learning process and explores how to improve.
Who	Tutor	Tutor & Peers	Learner & Peers
How	Formal summative assessments used to collect evidence of learner progress and may be used for achievement grading on grades.	Involves formal and in- formal assessment activities as part of learning and to inform the planning of future learning.	Learners use formal and informal feedback and self-assessment to help understand the next steps in learning.
When	Periodic report	Ongoing feedback	Continual reflection
Why	Ranking and reporting	Improve learning	Deeper learning and learning how to learn
Emphasis	Scoring, grades, and com-petition	Feedback, support, and collaboration	Collaboration, reflection, and self-evaluation

4.5.5 Assessment Strategies

ICPPD utilises Assessment Strategies that are both formative and summative and are constructively aligned with and appropriate to the relevant programme/module learning outcomes. Programme/Module Descriptors identify valid and reliable formative and summative assessment strategies which are utilised in programmes/modules for the assessment of/as/for learning.

When a programme or module is designed and/or reviewed, the programme development team proposes assessment mechanisms which are most appropriate to support the measurement of learning outcome achievement.

4.5.6 Summative Assessment of Learning

Summative assessment (also referred to 'Assessment of Learning') is usually provided at the end of the learning process i.e., at the end of a module/programme and serves to provide learners with an overall assessment of their learning and achievement of learning outcomes. Summative assessments are required to provide a measurable and comparable indicator of a learner's knowledge and skills. With a summative assessment, learner's performance is evaluated with respect to prescribed learning outcomes and results in allocation of a grade for the module or programme.

The Summative Assessment strategies on ICPPD programmes are described as continuous assessment. Over the duration of a programme, learners are assessed via multiple and varied assessment instruments to demonstrate their knowledge, skills, competency and attainment of Programme/Module Learning Outcomes. ICPPD is diligent in ensuring that assignments are relevant and useful to the learners. Detailed marking criteria and assignment guidelines are prepared by tutors.

In keeping with the focus on therapeutic work, and the nature of the professional field, ICPPD requires learners to maintain personal journals and to submit reflections to demonstrate their growth, personal development, and ability to engage in reflective practice, as appropriate to the assessment criteria of individual modules.

As summative assessment is directly linked to Module/Programme learning Outcomes, it can be used as programme feedback, providing faculty with feedback about the effectiveness of the programme/module design. The defined learning outcomes and marking schemes which accompany each module or programme (described in individual module/programme descriptors) give learners a clear indication of benchmarking standards and are obvious signposts.

Assessments for awards (QQI awards and ICPPD certified awards) are criterion-referenced i.e., learners are assessed and the assessment judgment is made based on whether the learner has attained the relevant Programme and/or Module Learning Outcomes

4.5.6.1 Summative Assessment Methodologies

ICPPD summative assessment methodologies include a combination of applied, practical, and end-of-module assessments. Various approaches are employed within the College including:

- academic essays
- reflective assignments
- live skills assessments
- research papers
- presentations
- portfolio development (clinical practice modules)
- case studies
- journaling

- creative portfolios
- group presentations

All assessment material is checked for correct citation and non-plagiarism. ICPPD uses text matching software (Turnitin). All work submitted by learners for assessment purposes is accepted on the understanding that it is their own work and written in their own words except, where explicitly referenced using the accepted norms and formats - ICPPD requires the use of Harvard-style referencing in assessment submissions.

4.5.6.2 Formative Feedback on Summative Assessment

ICPPD encourages learners to reflect not only on marks awarded but on the feedback which accompanies the marks. Such feedback offers constructive signposts for future learning and supports both academic and reflective processes.

Tutors (and second markers where relevant) are required to provide learners with evaluative comments and constructive, developmental feedback that corresponds constructively to learning outcomes, the Grade Descriptor and that reflects the grade given.

Since assessment criteria constitute what learners are required to achieve, formative feedback on summative assessments should explain the extent to which learners achieve their grade, identify knowledge gaps and address specific errors and preconceptions.

Quality formative feedback should be effectively communicated to learners to aid motivation and ensure that students engage with the content of the feedback.

Summative Feedback should be:

- directly related to assessment criteria/learning outcomes.
- actionable and constructive for further development of the learner's academic performance
- empowering in order to aid student motivation and encouragement.
- enable a learner to build on success.
- individual/personal to address each learner's unique strengths and weaknesses.
- fit for purpose and of value to the learner in planning their progression through the relevant programme of study.
- outline the strengths and weaknesses of the assessment.
- offer guidance for improvement.
- timely to allow learners to apply it to future learning and assessments.
- provided within the published timeframe so that learners can still recall how they addressed each assessed task.
- provided within the timeframe indicated on academic timetables. The process for providing feedback is outlined in ***Section 4.5.7*** below.

4.5.7 Formative Assessment of/as Learning

Formative assessment of learning is designed to have benefits for both learning and teaching. It is a crucial part of the learning process. Formative assessment as learning offers learners an opportunity to receive feedback on their knowledge, comprehension and integration of module material.

Formative Assessments are typically ungraded and do not contribute to an overall grade.

Formative Assessment of and as Learning are critical teaching and learning methodologies on highly experiential programme such as counselling and psychotherapy training programmes delivered at ICPPD.

Formative Assessment to support teaching:

Formative Assessment benefits teaching staff by helping them to focus on learning. On-going formative assessment will help determine what learners have learned and also what is unclear, so that tutors can focus the class more effectively to meet the learning needs of a particular cohort. Faculty can recognise where learners are struggling and address problems effectively.

An essential aspect of formative assessment is to help learners identify what they can do to close the gap between where they are now with their learning and where they need to be.

Formative Assessment should:

- be linked to learning outcomes.
- take place during the module delivery before they complete the final summative assessments for the module/programme, particularly in the early stages of a programme.
- be incremental – it should assess discrete elements of modules/programmes.
- provide actionable, constructive and motivational feedback to learners.
- provide opportunities to close the gap between current and desired performance.
- facilitate the development of self-assessment/self-evaluation.
- deliver high quality information to learners about their learning.
- provide information to tutors that can be used to help shape the teaching.

Feedback on Formative Assessment:

Formative assessments are intended to measure learning in order to provide feedback. This kind of formative feedback is given throughout the duration of the module/programme and is given in a spirit of growth and improvement.

Formative feedback benefits learning by helping learners to:

- see how well they are understanding and communicating course concepts.
- critically evaluate material.
- recognise areas for improvement.
- identify additional resources they may need.
- identify learning strategies required to meet learning outcomes.
- see where they can improve and deepen their learning.

Examples of formative feedback in ICPPD programmes:

- on-going in-class tutor feedback.
- skills practice and observation.
- dialogue between tutors and learners.
- verbal feedback on impromptu questions during class discussion or lecture.
- self-evaluation (for example self-evaluation of competencies in advance of Fitness to Practice meetings in Year 2 of the BA (Hons) in Holistic Counselling and Psychotherapy).
- in-class presentations.
- literature/book reviews.

- posters/concept maps.
- quizzes.
- facilitation of in-class and online discussions.
- group work – triads/dyads.
- class check-in/check-out.

Learner Support and Progression Meetings:

In addition to module-based formative assessment and feedback, learners on the BA (Hons) in Holistic Counselling and Psychotherapy participate in mandatory Learners Support and Progression meetings to collaboratively discuss with faculty and receive feedback on their on-going development as trainee counsellors/psychotherapists. Learners are evaluated via these forums to explore the integration of Personal, Professional, and Academic components of the programmes.

4.5.8 Responsibility for Assessment

Responsibilities of the Learner:
Learners are responsible for ensuring they understand and remain informed of assessment due dates and related penalties for late submission of assessment material. Learners are expected to strive for academic integrity with the support of the College and to undertake assessment tasks honestly and truthfully, shunning plagiarism and other forms of academic misconduct.

Role and Responsibilities of the Internal Examiner:
Tutors for each module are responsible for assessing learners is deemed to be an Internal Examiner. The role of an Internal Examiner is to:

- Prepare and co-ordinate assessments in accordance with the approved module descriptor.
- Ensure that they are familiar with all assessment policies and procedures
- Submit examination papers and model answers to the Registrar where they are reviewed by the Academic Director and forwarded to the External Examiner
- Consider any suggestions or recommendations proposed by the External Examiner and implement as appropriate in consultation with the Academic Director
- Grade the assessments and submit provisional grades and feedback to the learners within the relevant timescale directly via Moodle or in hard copy via the Administration Office
- Return any hard-copy assignments, portfolios or journals and any associated forms to the Administration Office
- Receive feedback from the External Examiner and, in conjunction with the Academic Director/Moderator, if necessary, agree the marks proposed to be awarded to each candidate (prior to the meeting of the Board of Examiners).
- Attend the Examination Board, to verify marks and contribute to the deliberations concerning grades and awards
- To attend faculty days to discuss learners integrated development
- To maintain contact with Programme Leader to support integrated development.

Role and Responsibilities of the Second Marker:
A Second Marker cross-marks a sample of a cohort's continuous assessment assignments and written assignments. The Second Marker is normally another tutor with similar expertise.

A Second marking is required for the BA (Hons) in Holistic Counselling and Psychotherapy (4th Year) Research Project Module. For this module, the Internal Examiner is the Supervisor. A second marker

(another Research Supervisor) is allocated to each research project. The first marker and second marker individually grade the project and consult to reach agreement on the final grade and feedback.

Role and Responsibilities of the Moderator:
The role of the Moderator is to work closely with the Internal Examiner (tutor) in a monitoring and advisory role to ensure the assessment instrument assesses the learning outcomes, and that successful learners have attained the standards required.

This involves ensuring that assessments are:

- appropriate, consistent, fair and transparent
- set in line with learning outcomes of the module per the module descriptor
- marked in line with the expressed aims and learning outcomes of the assignment/examination, and the marking criteria

Role and Responsibilities of the Registrar:
The Registrar has overall responsibility for the implementation of the Assessment Policies and Procedures, including safeguarding and promoting the academic integrity and academic standards in assessment processes.

The Registrar is responsible for overseeing the Administration Office in the recording and management of assessment data and maintenance of Examinations Broadsheets. Examination Broadsheets are reviewed and approved for accuracy by the Registrar prior to presentation to the Examination Boards.
The Registrar has responsibility for timely transmission of the recommendations of meetings of the Examination Board to Academic Board, and ultimately to the relevant accreditation agency, if/as required.

Role and Responsibilities of the Administration Staff:
The Administration Staff are responsible for:

- managing and recording of assessment records and for exporting of the assessment data to the Examination Broadsheets
- ensuring all learners are registered on Moodle (through programme registration), in order to facilitate online continuous assessments and that learners are registered for examinations including repeat examinations
- appropriate assessment/examination arrangements are made for each learner (including those with particular needs)
- security of all assessments and data and the storage of assessment material

The Administration Staff take receipt of hard-copy assessment material (written examination papers, portfolios and journals), update records and forward material to the relevant tutors. The Administration Staff are responsible for forwarding of feedback and grades by electronic means for assessments which have not been graded via Moodle.

Role of the External Examiner:
The role of the External Examiner is to provide independent, external quality assurance for the assessment process and the marking of learner work.

The External Examiner assists in assuring standards appropriate to the award level are maintained. Their function is also to ensure that appropriate standards with regard to Overall Results are applied and that comparability of standards between institutions is achieved and maintained as far as is possible.

The role of the External Examiner is detailed further in ***Section 5.1 below.***

Role of the Programme Board:
The relevant Programme Board is charged with determining a general assessment policy, detailing the assessment mode and the allocation of marks to each piece of continuous assessment work across the programme, to ensure a level of consistency across programmes, modules, stages and centres.

Any special assessment requirements are identified and specified, as is the rationale for implementing any such special arrangement. Opportunities for re-assessment are also defined for each pro- gramme/module.

Role of the Examination Board:
The Examination Board ratifies all results at Examination Board Meetings held twice yearly.

The Examination Board has the final decision relating to moderated assessment results and determines whether learners have been appropriately graded and classified. The Examination Board may consider and make decisions on any borderline cases ***(See Section 5.2.1 below)***.

Role of the Academic Board:
The Academic Board has overall responsibility for the approval of Assessment Policies and Processes and for their oversight and execution. The Academic Board approves the nomination of External Examiners.

The Registrar forwards a report to the Academic Board informing them of the proceedings of the Examination Board meetings, including the minutes of the meeting and External Examiners Report. The Academic Board reviews examination results data, External Examiners' reports and verifies that they comply with assessment policy and procedures.
Role of Learner Support, Progression and Fitness to Practice Panels:
Learners integrated Personal and Professional Development together with Academic progress is discussed at Learner Support Meetings, Progression Meetings and Fitness to Practice Meetings. The outcome and recommendations will determine learners' progression from one stage to another of the programme

4.5.9 Assessment Schedule

A schedule of assessment, a summary of the assessment requirements for the programme, is specified in the Approved Programme Schedule for each programme, and in the Module Descriptor document for each individual module, at the time of the development of the programme, as outlined in ***Section B, Chapter 1, 1.2: Programme Design/Development: Internal Process*****.** The Assessment Schedule states the module title, the modes of assessment applied for that module, the percentage of marks allocated to each piece of work, the submission deadlines, and the date by which the learner can expect written feedback from the tutor on the marked assessment material, as per timetable.
Where a Programme Board deems that re-assessment (repeat assessment) may be conducted for the module, this is also reflected in the schedule of assessment, and the associated dates identified.

4.6 Continuous Assessment

Continuous assessment methods implemented are dependent on the programme of study and the individual modules making up a programme.

Continuous assessment facilitates learning by:

- assessing the learners' practical application of module material as well as their theoretical knowledge in each module (reinforcing the programme's holistic ethos)
- assessing the learners' ability to conduct research as well as their reporting and presentation skills
- providing feedback to learners and tutors

- enhancing the learners' overall chances of success within the programme
- requiring and motivating learners to work throughout the programme
- reinforcing and expanding learning
- encouraging and supporting creativity and diversity in learning styles amongst learners.

ICPPD endeavours to use a variety of continuous assessment mechanisms to optimise learner opportunity to provide feedback on their learning outcome achievement.
The programme team identify and set out the rationale for the relevant assessment activities employed to determine achievement of the learning outcomes, at the time of programme design/development. This is defined in more detail within ***Section B, Chapter 1: Design and Approval of Programmes*** which describes ICPPD's procedures for the design and approval of new programmes.

4.6.1 Preparation of, and for, Continuous Assessment

Tutors prepare assessment material, identify topics, solutions and marking schemes and normally act as Internal Examiners for these assessments. The scope and standard of all assessment is required to be appropriate to the level for which it is intended.
Assessment material is reviewed by the External Examiners in accordance with their role as identified in ***Section 5 below***.
Dates for submission of assessment material to the College are determined annually by the Academic Director, in consultation with the Registrar, at the time of generation of the programme timetable, and these deadlines are published in the Academic Timetables on Moodle.

4.6.2 Communication re: Continuous Assessment Regulations and Results to Learners

At the commencement of the module/programme/stage/year, as appropriate, each learner has access to the following material via Moodle

- an overview of the allocation of the assessment marks for each piece of assessment, for each module, as set out in the programme schedule
- an indication of those elements of the continuous assessment that are recoverable and those which are non-recoverable (reference ***Section 4.6.4 below***).
- the title of each continuous assessment assignment, project or exercise to be completed
- the date on which the work is to be submitted, and the procedure and documentation required for submission of this work (including use of the assignment cover sheet for hard-copy assignments)
- any additional guidelines that the Tutor feels are necessary to support the completion of the work.

Each Tutor checks the relevant programme schedule and verifies how their particular module is to be assessed. The Tutor reminds their relevant learners of the deadline by which the assessment/coursework must be completed, with an explanation of how the continuous assessment marks are compiled for the module.

Journaling forms an integral part of most modules' continuous assessment within the counselling/psychotherapy programmes at ICPPD. ICPPD believes that the use of journaling, to engender self-reflection as a support to personal and professional development, is critical. Additionally, the importance of reflection, and the resulting journaling, is supported through the use of allocated continuous assessment marks for the effort and/or on a successful/unsuccessful basis.
Continuous assessment results are communicated to each registered learner, in a timely fashion, in accordance with ICPPD's Learner Feedback policy ***(reference Section 4.6.7 below***).

4.6.3 Maintenance of Continuous Assessment Records at ICPPD

The responsibility for managing the receipt of a piece of assessment at ICPPD rests with Administration Staff.
For the majority of modules, Learners are required to upload their assessments on Moodle by the specified date and time. Where a creative portfolio is to be submitted as an assessment piece or to accompany an assessment piece, Learners are to send these in hard copy to the Administration Office. Learners are advised to retain a copy of their submitted work, where possible.

The Administration Staff maintain accurate and verifiable records of all assessment submissions, and of the allocated marks for each continuous assessment component, for each learner. Such records are available for review by the external examiner(s).

Every reasonable effort is made to ensure that all marking of continuous assessment material/work is completed and feedback returned to the learners within four weeks of the assessment submission (in accordance with ***Section 4.6.7 below***).

On completion of assessment marking, the Tutor returns all hard-copy examination material to ICPPD's administration office for retention in accordance with the College's record management policy ***(reference Section C, Chapter 10 Data Protection, Record Management and Retention, below).***

4.6.4 Learner Absence from Assessment/Late Submission of Assessment Material

Owing to the continuous assessment nature of ICPPD programmes, assessment conducted within a formal location, on a particular day/date, is rare within the College. In this situation it is critical that each learner appreciates the importance of their attendance on that day/at that session.

- If a learner is absent from a continuous assessment session for which they consider there to be extenuating circumstances, which they wish to be taken into consideration by the College to facilitate an alternative/re-assessment (where possible) without penalty, it is imperative that they inform the Administration Staff via the *Consideration of Extenuating Circumstances* form (accompanied by supporting information) as defined in ***Section C, Chapter 4, 4.9*** below. All relevant documentation is retained in the learner's file for access by the Examination Board.

- All medical information provided by the learner to support their absence will be treated in strictest confidence and such information will be limited to the personnel directly involved in administering and evaluating the circumstances. In the instance where ICPPD considers it necessary to verify the documentation provided it will attempt to do so in a way that does not compromise the learner's privacy.

- Late submission of request for consideration of Extenuating Circumstances will only be considered in the event of valid reasons for this absence. The Programme Leader will review the application, decide on the matter and inform the learner of the outcome of their application.

- Where it is accepted that an absence/non-submission of an assessment is legitimate, and depending on the circumstances, the nature of the module, and the assessment in question, the Programme Leader, in consultation with the Module Tutor, and with reference to the Chair of the Programme Board, has discretion to decide what course of action to take.

- In the case of a recoverable assessment, where it is possible to set another assessment to replace the

element missed by the learner, e.g., a written assignment with an alternative assessment title could be given to learners to assess the learning outcomes. Available options for consideration include

- repeating the assessment that was missed (as a first attempt)
- assignment of an alternative assessment opportunity in lieu of the missed exercise
- the deadline for submission of the assessment may be extended
- the other assessment components may be re-weighted for that learner to take account of the missing assessment mark

- A non-recoverable assessment is one where, due to the nature of the assessment and/or where the Programme Board decides, it is not possible to provide learners with an opportunity to repeat a particular assessment to facilitate the learner to demonstrate achievement of learning outcomes. Non-recoverable assessments may occur where the assessment
  - is by way of a group (dynamics) exercise
  - requires participation/attendance in class
  - requires external resources/specialist equipment e.g., clinical practice
  - is just not feasible/appropriate to repeat.

  In this instance the result of the assessment for that element of the module/programme is deferred for consideration by Examination Board until the learner can complete all the assessment material for the module (it may be necessary for the learner to defer the module, as per ***Section C, Chapter 2, 2.4***, or seek to progress with credit deficit, reference ***Section C, Chapter 4, 4.8 below***).

The Tutor reports all absences to the designated Administration Staff and liaises with the Programme Leader/Academic Director in regard to the learner's assessment impact/result.

The overall impact of any such absences on the learner's final mark in a module/programme is a matter for consideration by the appropriate Examination Board.

The Examination Board may propose one (or a combination) of the following options:

- adjust the learner's assessment results, as it deems appropriate in light of the recorded legitimate absences
- facilitate the learner's re-assessment/re-attendance as a first attempt
- propose the learner's progression with a credit deficit *(reference* ***Section C, Chapter 4, 4.8 below****)*.
- encourage the learner's deferral of the module/stage/programme.

4.6.5 Request for an Extension of an Assessment Date/Submission Deadline

As outlined in ***Section C, Chapter4, 4.6.2 above***, learners are advised of assessment submission dates on commencement of their course and are expected to adhere to these dates. Only in exceptional personal or family circumstances, as defined in ***Section C, Chapter 4, 4.9 below***, may learners apply for a formal extension on their assessment submission date.

- A request for extension must be submitted to Administration Office, on the ***Assignment/Assessment Extension Request form***, prior to the published submission date.
- The Administration Staff determines whether the learner has used their allotted 2 extensions.
- If an extension is granted, the Administration Staff communicates the outcome and new due date to the Learner, Tutor and Programme Leader. (This date to be recorded on Moodle and Learners file)

- A maximum of two requests for extension is allowed from any learner in any academic year. Third and subsequent 'late' submissions will be subject to penalties for lateness ***(Section 4.6.8 below)***.

4.6.6 Marking of Continuous Assessments

The assessment requirement for each module, within each course provided by ICPPD, varies, and details are included on the module/programme schedule. Assignment due dates are provided to learners on commencement of their course/module/programme of study. The assessment dates are clearly indicated on the academic timetable.

Assignments are marked as follows:

- Upon submission, the Tutor, using the relevant marking scheme, marks assignments/reviews in the first instance.
- A sample of each batch of assignments (approx. 10%) may be cross marked by a second marker assigned by the Academic Director.
- In instances where a learner appears to be in danger of failing an assignment, a second marking is always carried out.
- In exceptional circumstances, for example, where a significant discrepancy exists between a first and second marking, a third marking may be carried out. The Academic Director may conduct third marking or will oversee this process, assigning a suitable third marker.
- The Tutor returns the examination material to the administration office for retention in accordance with the College's record management policy (reference S***ection C, Chapter 10: Data Protection, Record Management and Retention***).
- Following the cross-marking process, learners are provided with a provisional mark and feedback on their assignment. ICPPD aims to ensure that the learner receives their provisional mark and written feedback in a timely manner, usually not more than four weeks after the continuous assessment submission deadline.

4.6.7 Tutor Feedback to Learner on Assessment

Following to the marking process, *provisional* assessment results are communicated to each registered learner within a reasonable period, and normally not more than four weeks from the date for submission. Feedback is communicated via Moodle. This is to allow the learner to manage their performance and is implemented in a manner that respects the confidentiality of the marks for each learner.

Learners have the opportunity to discuss their cumulative (provisional) continuous assessment marks for the programme on an on-going basis with the Programme Leader and their Tutors (by appointment). They may also request from Administration Staff/Registrar an explanation of how their overall continuous assessment mark is calculated.

4.6.8 Late Submission of Continuous Assessment Material

As outlined above in ***Section C, Chapter4, 4.6.2 above***, learners are advised of assessment submission dates on commencement of their course and are expected to adhere to these dates.

In exceptional personal or family circumstances, learners may apply for a formal extension prior to the submission date (as per ***Section C, Chapter 4, 4.9*** below).

As approved by the Academic Board, where the above procedure is not adhered to, the following **penalties** are imposed on work submitted:

Up to 1 week/7days late	A penalty of 5 marks will be deducted

Up to 2 weeks/14 days late	A penalty of 10 marks will be deducted
Up to 3 weeks/21 days late	A penalty of 15 marks will be deducted
Up to 4 weeks/28 days late	A penalty of 20 marks will be deducted
After 4 weeks/28 days	A fail grade will be awarded

After 4 weeks (28 days) no submissions are accepted.
The Programme Board, Examination Board and External Examiners are informed of instances where penalties have been applied.

ICPPD does not accept more than two late submissions (where penalties are imposed), from any learner without a formal discussion between the learner, the Tutor, Programme Leader and the Academic Director.

Third and subsequent late submissions may not be accepted for marking for that course/academic year. The learner may submit these assignments in a subsequent offering of the module/course, or in a subsequent year, as a repeat attempt. There may be a fee for this facility.

The Programme Board, Examination Board and External Examiners are informed of instances where penalties have been applied.

4.6.9 Opportunity for Repeat/Re-Assessment

Programme Boards decide for each module those components of continuous assessment that can be repeated without re-attendance of the module, and those which cannot.

Permission for a Learner to repeat or re-submit certain continuous assessment components without re-attending the module, due to extenuating circumstances, is granted by the Academic Director.

As it is mandatory for a learner to pass each individual element of the module, where a learner has been awarded less than 40% for any assessment elements, the learner may re-submit/repeat those continuous assessment components for consideration at the Examination Board, as a second attempt.

A learner may only achieve a Pass mark in the repeat/re-assessment elements (subject to consideration of extenuating circumstances (reference ***Section C, Chapter 4, 4.9***). The overall module mark is calculated taking into consideration the re-marked components (as a second attempt).

In the of case non-recoverable continuous assessment elements (reference ***Section C, Chapter 4, 4.2.4*** above), these can only be repeated by means of re-submission of assessment material, re-engagement with the assessment and, in some cases, re-attendance of the module. These repeats/re-assessments are treated as a second attempt (subject to extenuating circumstance considerations).

A candidate who does not achieve an overall Pass in all modules at a particular stage of a programme is exempted from further assessment in those modules which they have passed. Any candidate who has been granted exemptions for passed modules may waive the exemptions in order to present all modules' assessment as a repeat sitting. This waiver of exemptions cancels the original result(s) which cannot be restored for the purpose of further attempts at the examination.

Learners who re-enrol and re-attend a module, in addition to repeating the assessment in that module, forfeit their original continuous assessment marks and must take all of the assessments offered during the

repeat attendance. Only the marks awarded, as a result of the repeat assessment are considered.

Learners taking repeat assessments without re-enrolling for the modules carry forward their continuous assessment marks from the non-failed elements.

Learners may be liable to additional fees for repeating, re-attending and re-assessment.

At ICPPD candidates are normally allowed a total of three repeat examinations sittings, i.e., the autumn of the same year, and summer and autumn of the subsequent year.

4.6.10 Grading Schemes

At ICPPD grading is only applied to an overall award, and not to individual modules or stages i.e., only at final year/award stage/on completion of the programme.

ICPPD uses the grading scheme, as outlined in **Table 4.6.10.1**, for the BA (Hons) in Holistic Counselling and Psychotherapy (Level 8) and the college's self-certified academic programmes.
NOTE: 60 ECTS credits will be used, with the associated module grades, to classify the relevant award.

4.6.10.1 Grading Schemes and Major Award Classifications

	Classification: ICPPD Awards	**Classification: BA (Level 8) Programmes**	**Descriptor**
70%, or more	Distinction	1st Class Honours	Candidate's achievement includes that required for a Pass and in most respects is significantly and consistently beyond this
60%-69%	Merit, Grade 1	2nd Class Honours, Grade 1	Candidate's achievement includes that required for a Pass and in many respects is significantly beyond this
50%-59%	Merit, Grade 2	Second Class Honours, Grade 2	Candidate's achievement includes that required for a Pass and in some respects is significantly beyond this
40%-49%	Pass*	Pass*	Candidate has attained all of the minimum intended programme learning outcomes
0%-39%	Fail	Fail	Candidate has not attained all of the minimum intended programme learning outcomes

* 40% is the pass mark in all subjects. A pass mark must be achieved in all assessments of each module, and in all modules of the programme.

4.6.10.2: Sample Grade Descriptor

Grade Descriptors are additionally used to provide further explanation to learners on their achievement in

assessments – see ***Table 4.6.10.2***

GRADE Marks Range %	GRADE DESCRIPTOR
90-100	**Supreme performance** engaging profoundly, systematically and comprehensively with question set, brilliantly demonstrating: • a superlative mastery of the subject matter, richly supported by evidence and citation, reflecting deep and broad knowledge and understanding as well as extensive reading. • an outstanding ability to organise, analyse and express ideas and arguments in an original, sophisticated and discriminating manner. • an optimal capacity for critical analysis • the display of rare penetrative insight, originality and creativity • profound reflexivity on personal development and synthesis of related topics
80-89	**Exceptional performance** engaging deeply and systematically with the question set, with consistently impressive demonstration of • a comprehensive mastery of the subject matter; amply supported by evidence and citation. • reflecting deep and broad knowledge and critical insight as well as extensive reading • an exceptional ability to organise, analyse and present arguments fluently and lucidly with a high level of critical analysis. • a highly developed capacity for original, creative and logical thinking • exceptional demonstration of personal awareness and development of the Self
70 -79	**Excellent performance** engaging closely and systematically with the question set, with consistently strong evidence of • a comprehensive mastery of the subject matter, ably supported by evidence and relevant citation. • excellent ability to organise, analyse and express arguments fluently and lucidly with a high level of critical analysis. • a highly developed capacity for original, creative and logical thinking • excellent illustration of how the content impacts self-awareness and personal development.
60-69	**Very Good performance** engaging substantially with the question set, demonstrating strong grasp of the subject matter, well supported by evidence and relevant citation. • well-developed capacity to analyse issues, organise material, present arguments clearly and cogently. • some original insights and capacity for creative and logical thinking. • very good engagement and reflection on personal process related to content.

50-59	**Good performance** - intellectually competent answer (i.e., factually sound) with evidence of a reasonable familiarity with the relevant literature and techniques • acceptable grasp of the subject material. • ideas stated rather than developed and insufficiently supported by evidence and relevant citation. • writing of sufficient quality to convey meaning but some lack of fluency and command of suitable vocabulary. • omission of parts of the subject in question or the appearance of several minor errors. • average critical awareness and analytical qualities. • limited evidence of capacity for original and logical thinking. • Good awareness of the impact of the content as it applies to personal development.
45-49	**Satisfactory performance** – intellectually adequate answer with evidence of some familiarity with the relevant literature and techniques • basic grasp of subject matter but somewhat lacking in focus and structure. • main points covered in answer, but lacking detail. • some effort to engage, but only a basic understanding of the topic portrayed. • some development of argument. • only some critical awareness displayed. • no evidence or relevant citation supplied. • appearance of several minor errors or one major error. • lacking evidence of capacity for original and logical thinking. • Satisfactory demonstration of content linked to self-awareness and personal development.
40-44	**Acceptable performance** – intellectually adequate answer with limited familiarity with the relevant literature and techniques • basic grasp of subject matter but limited focus on question asked. • unclear presentation of argument, random layout, with some omissions or inaccuracies in answer. • argument insufficiently developed. • no evidence or relevant citation supplied. • appearance of one major error and minor errors. • inclusion of unsubstantiated statements and/or irrelevant material. • descriptive rather than argumentative or analytical answer presented. • an attempt to solve moderately difficult problems related to the subject material and an attempt to examine the material in a critical and analytical manner only partially successful. • adequate connection between theory and self-awareness demonstrated.

35-39	**Unacceptable performance**, with either - insufficient understanding of the question displayed - failure to address the question resulting in a largely irrelevant answer - a display of some knowledge of material relative to the question posed, but with very serious omissions / errors and/or major inaccuracies included in answer - or answer left somewhat incomplete for lack of time Also: • limited understanding of question displayed. • a random layout / underdeveloped structure - not planned sufficiently. • poor analytical skills, with an absence of argument. • random and undisciplined development - limited structure. • lack of clarity, poor spelling. • material of marginal relevance predominating. • Insufficient self-awareness and personal development demonstrated.
<35	**Wholly unacceptable performance**, with • deficient understanding of the question displayed. • complete failure to address the question resulting in an irrelevant answer. • inadequate knowledge displayed relative to the question posed. • or answer left incomplete for lack of time. • No demonstration of personal development. Also: • very poor analytical skills, with an absence of argument. • random and undisciplined development - poorly structured answer. • confused expression, poor spelling. • irrelevant material predominating.

4.7 Deferral of Candidates Results (at Examination Board recommendation)

The Examination Board may, in exceptional circumstances, as defined in Section C, Chapter 4, 4.1.4, recommend that a final decision on a candidate's result be deferred (to the next scheduled sitting of the Examination Board) to enable the candidate to complete specific outstanding requirements of the course. Any deferral of a decision in relation to a candidate's result shall be for a limited period, not exceeding one academic year

4.8 Progression with Credit Deficit (Carrying a Module to the Next Stage)

Before progressing to the next stage of a programme at ICPPD, Learners are required to pass all modules identified as essential prerequisites for progression, in accordance with the programme assessment strategy and approved programme schedule.

In exceptional circumstances, and on a case-by-case basis only, ICPPD may allow learners to carry modules, to a maximum of 10 credits, while progressing to the next stage within the programme, provided the module is not a prerequisite for any module in this stage and provided this is consistent with the requirements of the relevant programme assessment strategy. Learners are required to pass a carried module in the stage into which it is carried.

The carried module must be considered by the Examination Board, and passed by the learner, before the subsequent stage modules may be considered by the Board.

4.9 Extenuating Circumstances

Extenuating circumstances at ICPPD are defined as the occurrence of unforeseen events which may have

- prevented a learner from attending a substantial volume of class-time
- affected their ability to study or complete assessments
- resulted in assessment deadline(s) being missed
- adversely affected the learner's performance in any assessment undertaken

Extenuating circumstances must be extraordinary in nature and, more specifically, they must

- be unexpected
- be beyond the learner's control
- have a significant impact on attendance/assessment performance.

Such extenuating circumstances include serious personal or emotional circumstances. The following examples would be likely to be considered as valid if the timing were such as to have a significant impact on the learner's attendance/assessment

- death, or sudden serious illness, of a close relative or friend
- a serious or incapacitating injury, illness, or medical condition (or a sudden, marked deterioration in an on-going or longer-term condition) or an emergency operation
- serious unexpected disruption of personal life
- premature childbirth (self or partner), or related post-natal care.

ICPPD considers requests for consideration of extenuating circumstances on an indivudual case-by-case basis however, normally, the following would be unlikely to be considered valid extenuating circumstances within ICPPD

- On-going or longer-term conditions or circumstances: these are likely to give rise to valid claims only if they first become known or are diagnosed, or become unexpectedly and markedly worse, during the academic year/at assessment time
- Claims without appropriate, independent supporting documentary evidence
- Minor illnesses or ailments
- Personal/domestic events which could have been anticipated and/or planned otherwise (e.g. moving house; marrying; routine childcare)
- Choices and preferences in personal life (e.g. attending a wedding; holidays; attending social events, sporting fixtures)
- Poor time management (including oversleeping, missing public transport, miscalculating commuting time) or misunderstanding deadlines/dates
- Assessment nerves or self-diagnosed stress
- Failure of computer or other equipment being used to produce work to be assessed, including work not backed up, or not making appropriate arrangements for the receipt of assessment material to the college
- Individual transport/travel problems (unless due to strikes or disruptions which could not be foreseen or worked around)
- Relative cost of travel arrangements
- Financial difficulties - if very serious, deferral or suspension of study might be appropriate
- Demands of paid or unpaid employment, and job interviews (unless exceptional circumstances prevail in work that is undertaken as a condition or necessary counterpart of the programme of study)
- Failure of others to submit group assignments
- Multiple examinations within a short period
- Language of assessment not being the learner's main language

- Late applications for consideration of extenuating circumstances (unless good evidence of the unavoidability of the delay is also provided)
- Long-term illness or disability where earlier disclosure would have allowed appropriate adjustments/arrangements to be made, or special arrangements have already been made to accommodate known conditions
- Claims which fail to make clear how learner performance was significantly affected by the issues for consideration

To seek consideration for extenuating circumstances, the learner is required to complete a **Consideration of Extenuating Circumstances form**, which includes a formal statement of the circumstances which have affected them, an outline of the impact of these circumstances and supporting appropriate written verification.

This verification must comprise a medical certificate, bereavement notice or a statement from an appropriate professional, or other recognised person, verifying the circumstances described in the application and indicating their impact on the learner's ability to meet the demands of the programme.

The documentation must be submitted to the Registrar for authorisation by the Academic Director (as Chair of the relevant Programme Board) , in advance of or not more than 7 days after the assessment submission deadline or the scheduled class attendance.

Extenuating circumstances do not cover events which are foreseen, e.g., social, sporting or cultural commitments. Where appropriate, those learners should follow procedures for the request for an Extension of an Assessment date /submission deadline ***(Section 4.6.5 above)***.

All information provided in relation to extenuating circumstances will be treated in strictest confidence and such information will be limited to the personnel directly involved in administering and evaluating the circumstances. In the instance where ICPPD considers it necessary to verify the documentation provided it will attempt to do so in a way that does not compromise the learner's privacy.

As a result of the extenuating circumstance a learner may also request a deferral of a module (as per ***Section C, Chapter2, 2.4***).

4.10 Academic Integrity and Academic Impropriety in Assessments

The integrity of ICPPD's awards is dependent upon the integrity of the assessment processes. Therefore, all learners are expected to be honest in all their academic endeavours, relationships and dealings with the College.

ICPPD will take all necessary steps/precautions to prevent any undermining of the academic assessment process, and the associated standards and credibility attached.

4.10.1 Context

ICPPD is committed to establishing an ethical academic integrity culture informed by the guidance provided by the National Academic Integrity Network (NAIN) specifically -

- NAIN Academic Integrity Guidelines
- NAIN - Academic Integrity National Principles and Lexicon of Common Terms

This includes raising awareness of academic integrity college-wide and encouraging behaviours and

attitudes which enable a culture of trust, openness and integrity in relation assessment. This applies in all situations involving academic work and learner assessment including all continuous assessment, and in-class presentations.
The importance of academic integrity will be woven into all teaching, learning and assessment approaches, including programme development, assessment strategies, pedagogical approaches, tutor- learner relationships and provision of supports for learners (e.g., Academic Writing Workshops).
ICPPD will take all necessary steps and precautions to prevent any undermining of the academic assessment process, and the associated standards and credibility attached.

4.10.2 Responsibility for Academic Integrity

Responsibility for academic integrity extends college-wide across governance structures, academic staff, learners and administrative staff. The College approaches academic integrity with a focus on best practice and support for learners rather than misconduct. This approach is supported by procedures for identifying and prohibiting behaviours that run counter to the principles of integrity.

4.10.3 Communication of Academic Integrity Policy

An ethical Academic Integrity culture is fostered through communication to learners via Learner hand-book, Induction Sessions, Academic Writing Workshops. An awareness of academic integrity is communicated to faculty and support staff through programme board meetings, academic board meetings and college handbooks.

4.10.4 Academic Misconduct

The following actions within the assessment process are described by NAIN as academic offences and will be dealt with in accordance with ICPPDs Academic Misconduct procedures:
Plagiarism is presenting work / ideas taken from other sources without proper acknowledgement including:

- Submitting work as your own for assessment, which has, in fact, been done in whole or in part by someone else.
- Submitting work which has been created artificially, e.g., by a machine or through artificial intelligence. Submitting work completed for a learner by a peer, family member or friend or which has been produced, commercially or otherwise, by a third party for a pre-agreed fee (contracted)
- It may be work in which the learner has included unreferenced material taken from other source(s) it may be use of Artificial Intelligence software or a ghost writer to carry out assessed work which is then submitted as the learner's own work.
- It may be using a previous assignment as submitted by a peer claiming it to be your work.
- It may be that references have been falsified to give credibility to the assignment and to show evidence of research.
- It may be a claim for authorship which is false.

Other forms of Academic Misconduct include:

- Self-Plagiarism i.e., the use of one's own previous work in another context without appropriate citation.
- Cheating in projects (e.g., collusion; using 'essay mills' to carry out the allocated part of the project)
- Selling or simply providing previously completed assignments to other learners.
- Misrepresenting research (e.g., data fabrication, data falsification, misinterpretation)
- Bribery, i.e., the offering, promising, giving, accepting or soliciting an advantage as an inducement for an action.
- Falsification of documents
- Improper use of technology, laboratories, or other equipment
- Helping a peer to do their assignment which develops into the helper doing some or all of the

assignment.
- Sharing or selling staff or institutional intellectual property (IP) with third parties without permission.
- Undeclared or excessive use of AI to produce, translate, or write assessment content constitutes academic impropriety.

Where assignments are uploaded to Moodle by learners, learners are required to declare that the work submitted by them for assessment purposes is their own.

Text-matching software (Turnitin) is utilised by ICPPD as an aid to tutors to help monitor, prevent and detect plagiarism. The software is also utilised as a support to learners to ensure that citations and referencing in their assessments have been documented in accordance with ICPPD's academic writing requirements.

4.10.5 Provisions for dealing with Academic Impropriety

- A Tutor who, in the course of grading a learner's continuous assessment work, or through any other means, has reasonable grounds to believe that a learner has engaged in aca- demic impropriety is required to discuss the issue with the Academic Director/Programme Leader and, if satisfied that an incident has most likely occurred, the tutor completes an incident report for submission to the Registrar. The Tutor may not impose a sanction on the learner as the alleged infringement is considered serious misconduct, as defined in the Code of Conduct ***(Section C, Chapter 7, 7.1).***

- In the interim, until there is a final outcome of any proceedings, the Tutor will complete the marking process and enter a "pending" notation on the assessment feedback.

- Upon receipt of an Incident Report, the Registrar notifies the learner that an allegation has been made and indicates that the incident is being referred to the relevant Programme Leader or the Academic Director, as appropriate. The Registrar includes relevant sections of the Quality Assurance Manual with the correspondence.

- Once the matter has been referred to the Programme Leader, a meeting between the Learner, a Learner Advocate (if desired), Programme Leader and relevant tutor is arranged - normally within ten days.

- When the offence involves more than one learner, normal practice is that each learner is afforded an individual hearing, however, either the learner(s) or the Registrar may request a joint hearing. The consent of each of the learners involved is obtained prior to proceeding with a joint hearing. Within a joint hearing, the Programme Leader and Tutor have discretion to uphold or dismiss the charge against each learner and to apply an appropriate individual sanction.

- Where a learner fails to attend the panel proceedings, without the provision of a valid extenuating explanation, the Academic Director/Programme Leader and Tutor may progress in their absence, or the start of the hearing may be postponed. If the hearing proceeds in the learner's absence, all rights contingent on the learner's presence, with the exception of the right to have an advocate present to plead for postponement, are forfeited. In such a case, a learner's right of appeal is limited to a consideration of the reasonableness of his or her reason for not appearing. If the Registrar finds that the explanation is reasonable, a new meeting may be arranged. The decision of the new hearing with the learner present is appealable as if it were a first hearing.

- If the case against the learner is upheld, the Programme Leader/Tutor determines an appropriate

sanction which may be one (or a combination) of the following:

- formally reprimand the Learner
- direct that a piece of work be resubmitted (subject/format to be agreed with the tutor)
- enter a grade of 'Zero' for the piece of work, the module, or the programme.
- cap the grade at 40%, for the piece of work, the module, or the programme.
- enter a grade reduction for the piece of work, the module, or the programme.
- enter a failing grade for the piece of work, the module, or the programme.
- enter a failing grade and ineligibility for a supplemental examination, or any other evaluative exercise, for the piece of work, the module or the programme.
- impose a suspension for a period of academic terms. Suspensions shall entail the withdrawal of all College privileges, including the right to enter and be upon college premises.
- expulsion from the College. Expulsion entails the permanent termination of all College privileges, including the right to enter and be upon college premises.

- The Registrar and Administration Staff member (responsible for recording of assessments) is informed of the outcome of the process.

- The Registrar informs the learner of the outcome of the process, in writing, within five days of the hearing, and informs the learner of the option of appeal available to him/her, and the grounds on which the appeal may be based.

- This is documented on the learner's permanent academic file within ICPPD.

- A sanction of suspension or expulsion is subject to confirmation and ratification by the Academic Board.

- The learner may appeal the decision of these proceedings, as identified in Section C, Chapter 6, 6.3.– Appeals Procedure. Notification of a request for an appeal must be made, indicating the grounds on which the appeal is based, within ten days after the date of transmission of the panel's decision.

4.10.6 Academic Integrity in Digital, Online, and Blended Contexts

ICPPD recognises that academic integrity must be upheld equally across all teaching and learning modes, including online synchronous, blended, and face-to-face environments. The same ethical and academic standards apply regardless of delivery mode.

4.10.6.1 Ethical Use of Technology and Digital Professionalism

All learners and staff are expected to use technology responsibly and professionally in accordance with ICPPD's values of honesty, respect, and confidentiality. This includes:

- Using ICPPD systems (Moodle, Zoom, Teams, email, and related tools) only for authorised academic purposes.
- Respecting privacy and intellectual property e.g., not recording, screenshotting, or sharing class materials or participants' contributions without consent.
- Maintaining professional online conduct and digital etiquette during live classes, discussions, and communications.
- Ensuring all submitted work and online interactions adhere to ICPPD's Code of Conduct and Academic Integrity Policy.

4.10.6.2 Data Privacy, GDPR, and Cybersecurity Responsibilities

ICPPD upholds full compliance with GDPR and related data protection legislation. Staff and learners share responsibility for ensuring that:

- Personal data, learner submissions, and assessment materials are stored securely and accessed only through approved ICPPD systems.
- Digital files are not shared via unauthorised platforms or stored on personal, unsecured devices.
- Passwords and login credentials are kept confidential.
- Any data breach or suspected cybersecurity incident is reported immediately to the Registrar or IT Administrator.

These obligations form part of ICPPD's **Data Protection Policy (Section C, Chapter 10)** and are reinforced through induction and ongoing staff CPD.

4.10.6.3 Generative Artificial Intelligence (AI) and Academic Integrity

ICPPD recognises the evolving role of generative AI tools in education and professional practice. The College's approach is guided by integrity, transparency, and reflective learning principles.

- **Permitted use:** AI tools may only be used to support learning (e.g., idea exploration, language editing, or summarising readings) when this use is declared and is **approved by the tutor.**
- **Declaration requirement:** Learners must include an AI Use Statement in assessment submissions, specifying how AI tools were used (if at all).
- **Prohibited use:** Undeclared or excessive use of AI to produce, translate, or write assessment content constitutes academic impropriety.
- **Tutor responsibility:** Tutors must guide learners on acceptable AI use within each module, ensuring alignment with learning outcomes and assessment integrity.
- **Educational approach:** ICPPD promotes digital literacy and ethical awareness around AI through Academic Writing Workshops, staff CPD, and learner induction.

4.10.6.4 Staff Responsibilities in Online Teaching and Assessment

Tutors and academic staff are expected to:

- Model ethical digital practice and data security.
- Design assessments that promote authentic, reflective, process-based learning and reduce opportunities for academic impropriety.
- Incorporate discussion of academic integrity and ethical technology use into online teaching sessions.
- Engage in regular CPD relating to online pedagogy, assessment integrity, and evolving technologies.

4.10.6.5 Monitoring and Continuous Improvement

Academic integrity in digital contexts is reviewed annually through:

- Learner feedback and module evaluations.
- Analysis of academic misconduct incidents.
- Review of AI-related declarations and emerging sectoral guidance (QQI, NAIN, ENQA).

Findings from these reviews will inform updates to staff training, learner support, and assessment design.

4.11 Audit/Review of Learner Centred Learning, Teaching and Assessment Policies

ICPPD is committed to ensuring that Learner Centred Learning, Teaching and Assessment Policies and procedures are adhered to and used in a proper and adequate manner. It endeavours to continuously review the process on an annual basis so that the best practice is always applied. This review will be conducted by the QA and Enhancement Committee.

Chapter 5 External Examiner, Examination Board, Progression and Certification

5.1 External Examiner System

ICPPD operates an external examination process for academic programmes in accordance with QQI's Effective Practice Guidelines for External Examining (Revised February 2015). ICPPD, through the Academic Board, appoints external examiners who are considered appropriately qualified and experienced, and independent from the assessment process, in accordance with the criteria identified in ***Section C, Chapter 5, 5.1.2*** (***below).***

5.1.1 Role of the External Examiner

The function of the external examination process is to

- Review the appropriateness of the minimum intended programme learning outcomes (i.e. the programme's basic educational goal), and other programme objectives.
- Determine whether or not the applied procedures for assessment are valid, reliable, fair and consistent.
- Review the actual attainment of learners using information supplied by ICPPD i.e., a representative sample of assessment material presented by learners including borderline cases, usually between 10%-15% of a course/programme, dependant on class size.
- Ensure the validity and reliability of assessment procedures, the equity of marking procedures and standards is uniform and in line with national and international standards
- Review the appropriateness of the programme assessment strategy and the assessment procedures and, flowing from this, consider subsidiary module assessment strategies
- Ensure appropriate standards with regard to Overall Results are applied and that comparability of standards between institutions is achieved and maintained as far as is possible
- Review of the programme/module descriptors and relevant matrices/marking schemes to ensure that assessment is appropriate.

5.1.2 Criteria for Selection of External Examiner(s)

Academic Board have approved the following criteria for consideration during the appointment of proposed external examiners, and all appointments must be approved within this forum.

- The External Examiner's academic/professional qualifications should be appropriate and cognate to the level and the module(s)/programme(s) being examined.
- The External Examiner's standing, expertise and experience should be sufficient to enable fulfilment of their responsibility in the maintenance of the academic standards of the module/programme(s), in the context of higher education both nationally and internationally.
- External Examiners are drawn from academia and, where appropriate and possible, from business, industry and professional practice. Standing, expertise and breadth of experience may be evidenced through the present (or last, if retired) post and place of work; the range and scope of experience across higher education/professions; the current and recent active involvement in research/scholarly/professional activities in a relevant field of study.
- Where possible, the External Examiner should have had significant recent examining experience as an internal examiner, or comparable related experience to indicate competence in assessing learners in the subject area. If the proposed examiner has no previous external examiner experience at the appropriate level, their nomination can be supported by either other external examining experience with extensive internal examining experience at this level, or other relevant and recent professional or academic experience likely to support the external examiner role.

- Consideration is given in those exceptional situations where the pool of potential External Examiners is especially limited. This is most likely where provision of the subject is particularly limited within the sector. Every effort is made to mentor proposed External Examiners who do not have prior experience.
- For any one programme, External Examiners should not be appointed consecutively from the same organisations - ICPPD seeks to draw nominations from a variety of institutions, and should avoid multiple nominations within a single discipline, from the same institution.
- External Examiners should not be over-extended by their external examining duties. As a norm, an External Examiner should not hold more than two concurrent external examining appointments for taught programmes. This policy can only be waived in exceptional circumstances, with the approval of Academic Board, and with cognisance of the awarding body's policies in this regard.
- Former members of college staff are not eligible to be invited to become an External Examiner before a lapse of at least three academic years.
- Those registered for an award of the relevant awarding body, or on a training programme within the College are ineligible for appointment as External Examiners in any part of the College.
- It is the responsibility of the External Examiner to declare an interest if placed in a position of making a judgement about any learner with whom there has been direct contact. e.g.
    - as a sponsor, relative or friend
    - as a close professional colleague
    - having been involved with the supervision of the learner on clinical practice or professional training
- The College takes due cognisance of the desirability of gender balance when nominating External Examiners.
- The Registrar is responsible for resolving conflicts of interest in the appointment of an External Examiner.

5.1.3 Communication with External Examiner

All communication between the College and External Examiners in relation to assessment of learners is conducted through registered post, or other secure and traceable means of delivery, and is coordinated by Administration Staff. ICPPD requires external examiner(s) to acknowledge receipt of assessment and assessment material though email.

5.1.4 External Examiner's Attendance at ICPPD

The External Examiners' attendance at ICPPD, for Examination Boards or other meetings, may take place in-person or virtually. All completed and marked assessment material is made available for review by the External Examiner(s). All course work undertaken by learners, in addition to all course materials, marking schemes, assessment material and assessment feedback are reviewed by the External Examiner(s), and ICPPD staff are available for the duration of the visit for discussion, as necessary, and to answer any queries or questions.

The External Examiner(s) also takes the opportunity to review any appeal requests at this stage, if any have been received in relation to the assessment process to date.

The duties of external examiner(s) also include:

- review borderline cases and, if necessary, interview Learners
- review the work of learners who have requested a review through the appeals procedure and make a recommendation to the Examination Board on the mark to be awarded in relation to the appeal
- agree with the respective internal examiner(s) the proposed final marks/grades for consideration by the appropriate Examination Board

- attend meeting(s) of the appropriate Examination Board as required
- provide feedback to the College through the Academic Director on the overall standard of marking and learner academic achievement, the appropriateness of the assessment tools utilised and to make recommendations or suggestions for improvements.

5.2 Examination Board

An Examination Board is established by ICPPD for each programme for which the College conducts assessment of learners, on a bi-yearly basis. Dates for Examination Board meetings are published at the start of the academic year. The composition of the Examination Board is determined by and in accordance ICPPD procedures which have been based on current regulations and requirements of the relevant validating body, where appropriate. The number and composition of individual Examination Board varies depending on the nature of the academic programme. The Examination Board considers and ratifies the results of assessments conducted for the relevant programmes.

Matters to be discussed by the Examination Board include:

- Determining if learners have been appropriately graded and classified.
- Consideration of borderline cases
- Determination of eligibility for progression

The terms of reference for the Examination Board are detailed further in ***Section A, Chapter 2, 2.2.6***.

Reminder notification of the dates, time and venue of each Examination Board meeting is provided in writing to all Board members, a minimum of one week in advance, by the College Administration Staff.

The quorum for an Examination Board normally consists of the Chair, the Academic Director, the Programme Leader(s), the Secretary (administrative staff member), at least one External Examiner and enough Internal Examiners/Tutors to competently deliberate on the assessment and ensure proper discharge of the Board's responsibilities.

5.2.1 Proceedings and Deliberations

ICPPD Examination results/grades are generated by the designated Administrator Staff member using Excel to generate Broadsheet of the results, and relevant statistics. The Examination Board reviews all marks for all courses/modules for all learners on academic programmes within the College, and determines and overall grade for each learner, following discussion by the Examination Board. The proceedings and deliberations of meetings of each Examination Board are strictly confidential and are minuted for record purposes.

In discharging its responsibility, the Examination Board may exercise discretion in marginal cases by minor modification of marks. Learners who are 'borderline', as defined in ***Table 5.2.2***, are discussed and a decision made based on the cumulative evidence presented by college staff in consideration of the views of the Extern Examiner(s).

Such modification is normally be limited to an increase of one percentage point in any one module in situations such as the following:

- The recognition that, taking all modules into account, the candidate's result is borderline in terms of pass/progression or class of honours
- Certification of extenuating circumstances.

Learners' results are recorded on the Results Broad Sheet either as the appropriate number (percentage) or in accordance with ***Table 5.2.1***, below.

Table 5.2.1: Module Examination Results' Classifications

Module Result/ Outcome	Result Code	Definition	Effect on Sitting Number
Deferred	I	Result deferred due to exceptional circumstance (on learner request)	Is not counted as an attempt
Exempt	X	Candidate is exempt based on certified prior learning (as a result of admission process)	Is counted as an attempt
Not Present	NP	Candidate did not submit any module assessment material	Is counted as an attempt
Failed	FE	A 'must pass' assessment component has been failed.	Is counted as an attempt
Withdrew	W	Candidate withdrew before end of module, and formally notified the College	Is not counted as an attempt
Withheld	WH	Candidate's result(s) withheld, pending further results, deliberation, additional clarification, etc.	Institute to decide

Table 5.2.2: Borderline Grade for discussion within Examination Boards

Relevant Percentage Point Average (PPA) Boundary Values	Current Award Classification Diploma and other ICPPD programmes	Current Award Classification* BA (Hons)	Borderline Percentage Point Averages for which Reconsideration is Permitted
70%	Distinction	First Class Honours	≥69%
60%	Merit, Grade 1	Second Class Honours, Grade 1	≥59%
50%	Merit, Grade 2	Second Class Honours, Grade 2	≥49%
40%	Pass	Pass	≥39%
35%	Pass by Compensation (if eligible)	Pass by Compensation (if eligible)	N/a

Where a learner's overall average mark, for the purpose of the calculation of an award classification, is at a borderline, the rule of preponderance is used. The preponderance rule means that a learner will not automatically be uplifted unless more than half of the modules giving credit for the award stage have higher marks than the award classification requires. The resulting uplift will impact the award classification only (and not the individual modules).

Individual learner marks are not normally changed without consulting the examiner(s) who awarded the original mark. It follows that the Board does not normally change a mark without the relevant internal examiner being present. However, if a relevant internal examiner's other obligations prevent him/her from attending the Board, they may be consulted in advance about the potential for moderating the mark or the Academic Director in consultation with the external examiner may agree changes.

Changes to marks by an Examination Board otherwise are only permitted if:

- a clerical or administrative error in transmission of marks has occurred
- a late change to a mark is recommended by an External Examiner.

On completion of/in conjunction with the external examiners' annual visit, the Examination Board also discusses the feedback obtained from the external examiner(s) on the module/programme.

The Examination Board attempts to reach a consensus decision regarding learner results. In the event of disagreement between board members, all members of the examination board present at the meeting may vote. In the event of a tie the Chair will have a casting vote. A board member who continues to dissent at the meeting, may choose to have a dissenting opinion recorded on the Broadsheet of Results.

Any dissenting opinion by an External Examiner is recorded on the Broadsheet of Results and is brought to the attention of the Academic Board. The decision of the Academic Board in relation thereto is final.

At the Examination Board meeting, the Broadsheet of Results shall be agreed which records the result achieved by each candidate in the stage as shown in *Table 5.2.3*, below.

Table 5.2.3: Final/Overall Broadsheet Results for Programme Award/Stage as agreed within the Examination Board*

Module Result/ Outcome	**Result Code**	**Definition**	**Effect on Sitting Number**
Deferred	I	Result deferred due to exceptional circumstance (on learner request)	Is **not** counted as an attempt
Exempt	X	Candidate is exempt based on certified prior learning (as a result of admission process)	Is counted as an attempt
Not Present	NP	Candidate did not submit any module assessment material	Is counted as an attempt
Failed	FE	A 'must pass' assessment component has been failed.	Is counted as an attempt
Withdrew	W	Candidate withdrew before end of module, and formally notified the College	Is not counted as an attempt
Withheld	WH	Candidate's result(s) withheld, pending further results, deliberation, additional clarification, etc.	Institute to decide

The Examination Board finalises its recommendation to Academic Board in relation to Learner performance and appeals. On conclusion of each Examination Board meeting, the Chair and Secretary of the meeting, and all the Examiners (Internal and External) present at the meeting must sign the presented Broadsheet of Results, which is generated by the Administration Staff.

The Registrar forwards the examination results to the Academic Board for review.

5.3 Accumulation of Credits and Exemptions

All ICPPD programmes operate completely on a modular basis. This supports a system of accumulation of credits and facilitates the College to operate an exemption process. Through the Accumulation of Credits and Certification of Subjects (ACCS) scheme learners may undertake a series of modules from a college academic programme and be awarded credits on successful completion of each module passed. These credits, which are typically allocated in increments of 60 ECTS (European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System) credits per programme stage, may be accumulated to gain an award; for example,

typically, a total of 120 credits are required to obtain a Higher Certificate (or level 6 equivalent), 180 credits to obtain an ordinary Bachelor's degree (or level 7 equivalent), and 240 credits for an honours Bachelor's degree award (or level 8 equivalent). Since they are not aligned to the National Framework of Qualifications, ICPPD's professional programmes do not attract ECTS credits
The ACCS scheme is designed specially to facilitate learners, wishing to follow courses on a part-time basis, and to gain full benefit for all education and training, and all experiential activities, undertaken.

5.3.1 Exemptions and Recognition of Prior Learning

As previously stated in ***Section C, Chapter 1, 1.1***, Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) is important for widening access to education and supporting lifelong learning and is reinforced through the Qualifications and Quality Assurance (Education and Training) Act, 2012. The RPL process at ICPPD allows learners to gain admission to a module/programme or to gain exemptions/credit from some parts of a programme, based on demonstrated learning achieved prior to admission. Further details on the application of RPL at ICPPD, and the processes involved, are provided in ***Section C, Chapter 1, 1.3.2***. RPL removes the requirement for the learner to complete the assessment within the exempted modules.

Where exemptions are granted, the exempted module is excluded when calculating the overall average mark (grade) for the programme. Therefore, exemptions are not granted against the award stage of a programme at ICPPD.

5.3.2 Accumulation of Credits

Each module of an academic programme within ICPPD, which is aligned with the National Framework of Qualifications, carries a credit weighting as per the ECTS (European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System) process to facilitate accumulation and the transfer process.

These credits are attached to the modules/programmes on design/development as outlined in ***Section B, Chapter 1, 1.2: Programme Design/Development: Internal Process.***

In the case of a learner who, for personal or family reasons, needs to defer their course of study for a period they may request deferral of the submission of their assessment, using the ***Learner Deferral of Assessment or Academic Year Form [AS07]***. Deferral will require the learner to re-sit the outstanding assessment elements in the future, and the learner must complete all the modules in a stage before they can progress to the following stage. Owing to the linear nature of ICPPD programmes, deferral mid-module is not permitted. For further information relating to deferrals see ***Section C, Chapter 2, 2.4.***

When seeking a deferral, learners are also cautioned that relevant professional bodies may have other requirements which may be impacted by decisions to defer, seek exemptions, etc., for example, a minimum of 2 consecutive years of study. It is the learner's responsibility to determine and consider the implications of any such regulations on their progression through the programme, and subsequent professional accreditation.

5.3.3 Requirements for Progression

A learner may not be admitted to a second or subsequent assessment stage without having passed all (required) modules at the previous assessment stag**e.**

Learners must also be approved by Progression Panels at the end of the academic year. (Reference Section C, Chapter 1, 1.5)

5.4 Management of Corrected Works and Broadsheets

All marks achieved by learners are inputted by the designated Administration Staff member and maintained in secure Excel files, which are routinely updated on completion of the marking process for each assignment and examination.

The completed spreadsheets are made available to the relevant internal and external examiners and the Examination Board meeting for each module/course. Where appropriate, and prior to the meeting of the Examination Board, the agreed marks are transferred to the official external broadsheets by the designated Administration Staff member.

The spreadsheet/broadsheet documents are finalised and signed on conclusion of the Examination Board meeting.

All examination spreadsheets/broadsheets (College and external) are securely maintained in accordance with the College's record management policy ***(reference Section C, Chapter 10, Record Management and Data Retention)*** and Data Protection legislation.

For the duration of their studies with ICPPD, each learner is assigned a 'Learner file' which is maintained by the Administration Staff and in which the following is kept

- all completed hard-copy assignments
- completed marking schemes for each assignment
- copy of written feedback given to learner on each assignment(s)
- all progression relevant forms, including personal therapy forms, supervision confirmation and clinical practice material.

On conclusion of the assessment processes the Tutor returns the hard-copy assessment material to the Administration office for retention in archive in accordance with the College's Record Management policy ***(reference Section C, Chapter 10, Record Management and Data Retention).*** ICPPD has moved to using Moodle for the submission of Continuous Assessment assignments and for grading of same for the majority modules and assessments.

5.4.1 Awards / Certification

Awards are determined at meetings of an Examination Board. At ICPPD grading is only applied to an overall award, and not to individual modules or stages i.e., only at final year/award stage/on completion of the programme.

Awards on the results of the final year assessment/award stage only in accordance with the grading intervals outlined in ***Section C, Chapter 4, 4.6.10, Grading Schemes***. 60 ECTS credits are used, with module grades, to classify the award at that level. Policy and Criteria for Making Awards.pdf (qqi.ie).

Following ratification of results at examination board, final results are submitted to the awarding body, QQI in the case of QQI-validated programmes, submitted through the QBS system.

Parchments are prepared by the awarding body (ICPPD / QQI where appropriate) and issued at a conferring ceremony arranged and managed by the Registrar.

5.5 Audit/Review of External Examiner, Examination Board, Progression and Certification Policies

ICPPD is committed to ensuring that External Examiner, Examination Board, Progression and Certification Policies and procedures are adhered to and used in a proper and adequate manner. It endeavours to continuously review the process on an annual basis so that the best practice is always applied.

This review will be conducted by the QA and Enhancement Committee reporting to Academic Board

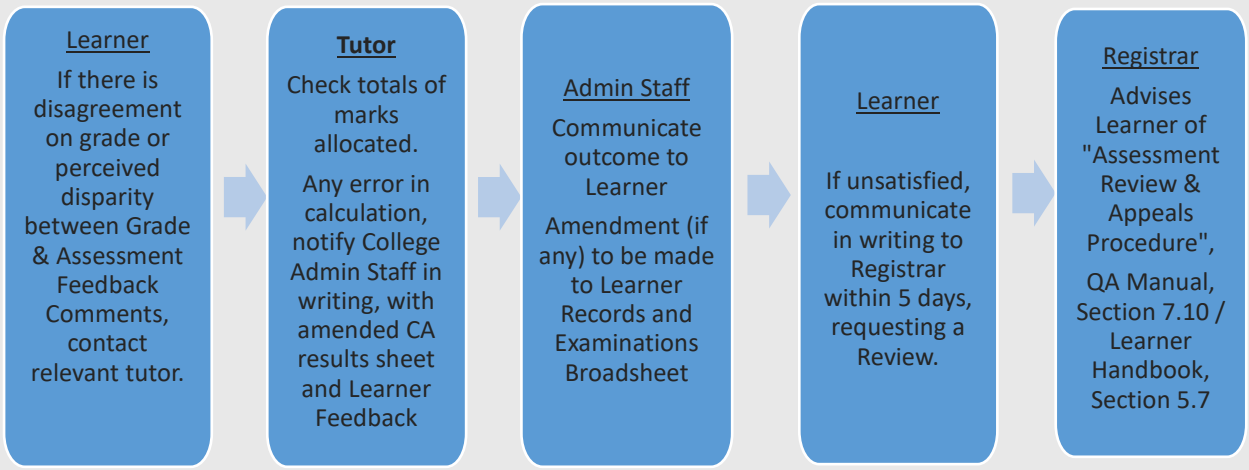
Chapter 6 Assessment Review and Appeals Policy and Procedure

6.1 Appealing Continuous Assessment Marks

All continuous assessment marks provided to the Learner, with their feedback, during the academic year, are provisional and subject to ratification by the Examination and Academic Boards.
ICPPD offers all learners undertaking programmes at ICPPD the opportunity to request verification of an assessment result and the accurate recording of all component marks and the overall mark.

i) Where a learner does not agree with the continuous assessment marks awarded, they are required to discuss the mark with the Tutor/Programme Leader involved, particularly if there is a perceived disparity between the mark and the Tutor comments provided on the Assessment Feedback Sheet.
ii) Subject to this discussion the Tutor may check that the marks allocated were totted correctly. If the Tutor finds an error in the calculation of CA marks, they inform Administration Staff in writing of this fact and the learners' marks, the CA results sheet, and learner feedback sheet are amended accordingly (prior to their communication to the Examination Board).
iii) The Administration Staff communicates the outcome to the learner and makes any relevant changes to learner records and examination broadsheets.
iv) Following discussion with the Tutor, if the learner remains unsatisfied with the mark awarded, they should write to the Registrar, within 5 days of having their discussion with the Tutor, requesting a review of the (continuous assessment) mark. The learner is advised that an appeal of the CA result will only be permitted in accordance with the rules laid out ***in Section 6.2 below – Assessment Review Procedure.*** The learner is advised that any further deliberation on CA results is conducted as part of the end-of-stage assessment material review/appeal process prior to the Examination Board meeting.
v) Requests for review of individual continuous assessment marks will not be allowed after the final mark in a module has been allocated by Examination Board and ratified by the Academic Board.

Figure 6.1 Appealing Individual Continuous Assessment Marks

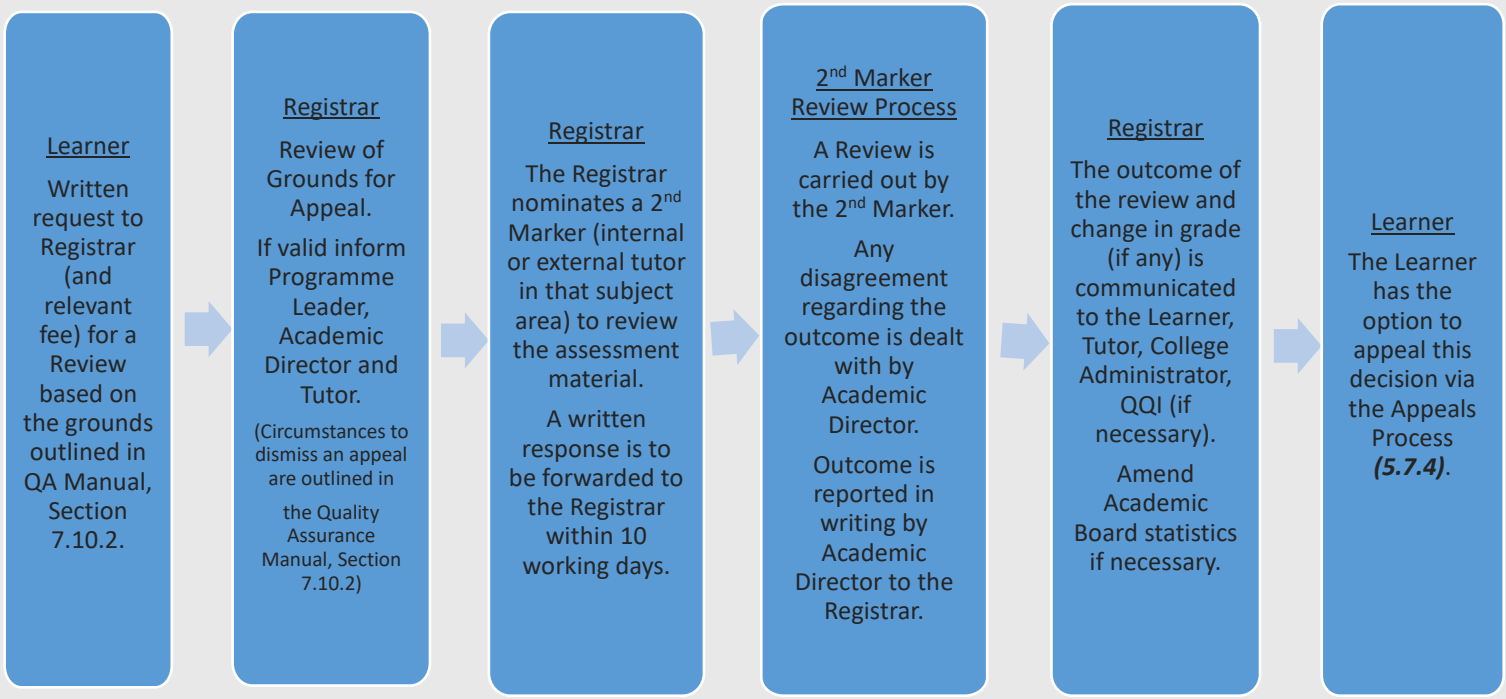


6.2 Assessment Review Procedure

ICPPD recognises the right of learners to appeal against a decision of a lower-level decision-making authority by making a request to a higher one. Academic appeals and decisions are the responsibility of the Academic Board, and an Appeals sub-committee of Academic Board will be appointed to hear the appeal. This is the final decision-making authority and there is no further right of appeal against an appeal decision.

Reviews/Appeals submitted simply because a learner disagrees, or is unhappy, with the mark they have been awarded will not be considered.
There is a fee for the review/appeal of assessment results. These fees are determined on an annual basis and details on the specific amount is available from the College Administration Staff.
NOTE: The learner is also advised that the outcome of a review/appeal may not change the awarded marks, and therefore any learner should avail himself/herself of any opportunity to re-sit an examination where necessary, on the understanding that the re-sitting of an examination does not prejudice their appeal in any way.

Figure 6.2 Assessment Review Process



6.2.1 Definition of Review/Appeal

A review/appeal means the consideration of factors which may have influenced a learners' performance, and a request for consideration may be made only on the following grounds

a) the assessment was not conducted in accordance with the current regulations for the programme
b) an administrative error or some other material irregularity relevant to the assessment has occurred
c) for a learner where extenuating circumstances were considered, but there are circumstances of which the examination board was unable to take proper account. This refers to a situation where the extenuating circumstances were not drawn to the attention of the examination board because:
    - they were unknown to the learner at the appropriate time.
    - or the learner was unable to present the information because of circumstances outside their control:
d) for a learner with disability or special educational need, the agreed revised assessment procedures were not implemented, or agreed support was not made available.
e) for a learner wishing to appeal the decision of a Progression / Fitness to Practice panel.

The Registrar/nominee reviews the content of the review/appeal request to ensure that a prima facie case

exists, and may dismiss an appeal in the following circumstances

a) when the appeal is lodged late, without a satisfactory explanation
b) when it can be demonstrated that the appeal does not comply with the College's assessment
c) when it can be shown that the appeal, although complying with these regulations, could not lead to any change in the assessment which is the subject of the appeal. (Such a conclusion may follow from the assessment structure of the programme concerned but may not be based on qualitative judgements concerning the possible outcome of the appellant's case.)

If the notification of review/appeal is considered valid and complies with college regulations, the Registrar/nominee informs the Academic Director, the relevant programme leader and the tutor in writing, that a review/appeal has been requested, and that it may proceed to an appeals committee hearing.

6.2.2 Review of Assessment Material

The Registrar will nominate a Second Marker. A review (reconsideration in detail of all or part of the existing examination material) will be carried out by a second marker - a third-party internal examiner or external examiner(s) with expertise in the relevant topic – within 10 working days. Where there is disagreement between the internal examiner (tutor) and the third-party examiner regarding the outcome of the review, this is dealt with by the Academic Director.

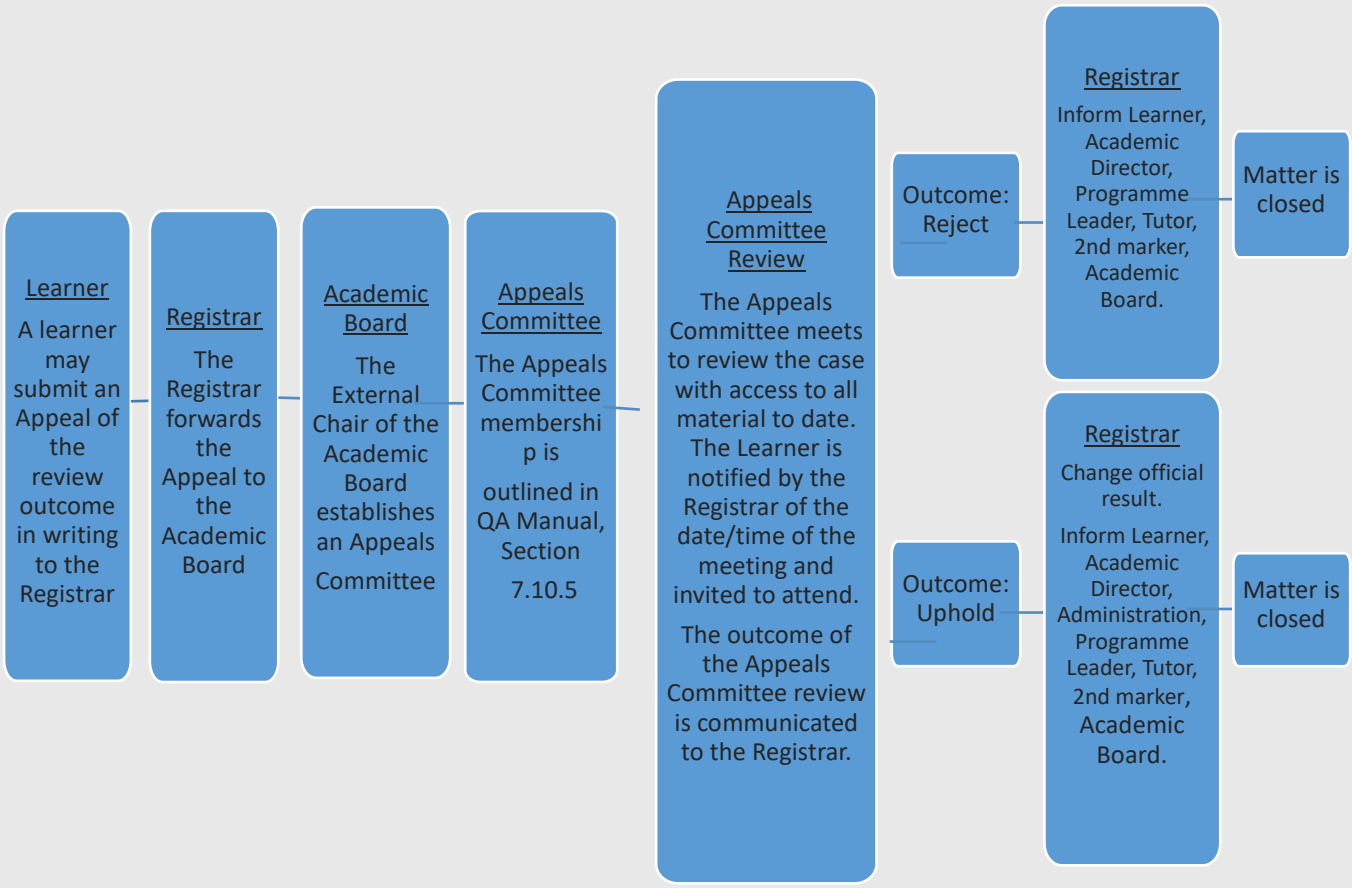
The Academic Director forwards a report on the outcome of the review to the Registrar. If a change in a result is recommended by the report, the Registrar makes the necessary arrangements to have the official result amended i.e., informs the Academic Director and the College Administration Staff and the learner (and QQI, if necessary) of the outcome. Statistics reports for academic council are amended where necessary.

The Registrar communicates the outcome of the review to the Learner.

6.3 Appeals Procedure

Where the Learner wishes to appeal the outcome of the review, they communicate this in writing to the Registrar. The registrar forwards to the Academic Board the Academic Directors report accompanied by all relevant supporting documentation e.g., examination board meeting minutes, broadsheets, copies of assessment material, etc.

Figure 6.3 Assessment Appeals Procedure



6.3.1 Appeals Committee

Where an appeal is warranted, an Appeals Committee is established. The Appeals Committee has delegated powers to act on behalf of ICPPD's Academic Board under its Terms of Reference, ***Section A, Chapter 2, 2.2.8.***

The Appeals Committee:

- meets on one pre-arranged/published date to review any/all cases.
- has access to the results of the review of the examination material to date.
- bases its decision on the evidence of the learner's submission and, as appropriate, consults with the testimony of the chairperson of the examination board concerned, together with any further evidence which it considers relevant

The chairperson has discretion to declare inadmissible any matter introduced by the learner if it is not directly related to the contents of the appeal previously lodged in writing within the stipulated deadline.

6.3.2 Appeals Committee Hearing

The Registrar will notify the Learner of a date/time to present their case to the Appeals Committee. Where the Learner wishes to present new evidence, this must be identified at the point of applying for an appeal. Beyond this point, new evidence not identified will not be considered by the Appeals Committee unless exceptional circumstances are identified, and these are accepted at the Chair's discretion.

If the learner does not present himself/herself at the date and time scheduled for the appeal hearing, the Appeals Committee considers whether any reasons advanced for non-attendance are valid, and

- if members so judge, adjourn proceedings to a later meeting.
- if no reasons are advanced, or if they are judged invalid, proceed in the Learner's absence.

6.3.3 Appeals Committee Decision/Outcome

The Appeals Committee is empowered to take either of the following decisions and secretary of the committee informs the Registrar in writing of the decision.

Reject. If the appeal is rejected, no further action is taken. The Registrar informs the learner, the appropriate programme leader, the Academic Director, the internal and external examiner(s), and the Academic Board of the decision.

Uphold. If the appeal is upheld, the committee, in consultation with the internal and/or external examiner(s), determines any change to the level of marks and/or award, as appropriate.

If a change in a result is recommended, the Registrar makes the necessary arrangements to have the official result amended and informs the learner, the Office Administrator, the internal examiner(s), the external examiner(s), Academic Director and the Academic Board of the final outcome, in writing.

6.3.4 Conclusion of the Appeals Process

The decision of the Appeals Committee of the Academic Board is final, and the process is concluded at this point.

6.3.5 Complaints about the Appeals Process

There is no internal appeal against the finding of an Appeals Committee, however, allegations of procedural irregularities in the conduct of an appeal may be made to the Complaints Committee under the terms of the ***Complaints Policy, Section C, Chapter 2, 2.10.***

6.4 Audit/Review of Assessment Review and Appeals Policies and Procedures

ICPPD is committed to ensuring that Assessment Review and Appeals Policies and procedures are adhered to and used in a proper and adequate manner. It endeavours to continuously review the process on an annual basis so that the best practice is always applied. This review will be conducted by the QA and Enhancement, reporting to Academic Board.

Chapter 7 Dignity and Respect for Staff and Learners

7.1 Learners' Code of Conduct

7.1.1 Introduction

ICPPD has developed the following Learners' Code of Conduct which is consistent with the ethics and beliefs of the College. This Code of Conduct outlines what is acceptable behaviour and sets out the learner's responsibility to peers, colleagues and the College.

7.1.2 Purpose

The purpose of this Code of Conduct is to provide a framework of good practice at ICPPD to provide a safe and welcoming environment for learners, staff and all other stakeholders.

7.1.2 Scope

This policy applies to all registered learners at ICPPD in relation to their activities on ICPPD academic and training programme including training events, work placements and supervision.

When registering on an ICPPD programme, learners agree to abide by the Code of Conduct. Learners are required to familiarise themselves with this Code, and with all other relevant College regulations and policies which are outlined in the Quality Assurance Manual (available publicly on the ICPPD website) and Learner Handbook (available on Moodle).

Learners should respect fellow-learners, staff, property and activities of ICPPD, any staff/supervisors or property linked to off-site programme activities, associated venues and partners (e.g., outreach sites, volunteer and placement organisations, etc.), including local residents where appropriate.

'The College' is defined as any ICPPD event or anywhere the ICPPD provides education and training.

7.1.3 Code of Conduct

- Each learner shall behave in a manner which ensures that all staff and learners are treated with dignity and respect.
- Learners are expected to always behave responsibly, and to not engage in any activity which might bring the good name of the College, fellow learners or staff into disrepute.
- Every learner shall behave in a manner which does not disrupt the functioning of the College
- Learners must conform to the directions of the academic and support staff members in the performance of their duties.
- Every learner shall behave in a manner which ensures that the College's property and facilities are used appropriately.
- The property of all members of the ICPPD community shall be respected.
- It is the responsibility of the learner to always maintain communication with the College, maintain current contact details on the College files, and inform the College of any reason for non-participation in their studies.
- Learners are required to attend punctually the classes, assessments, learner support and internal supervision sessions for which they have registered and to which they have been assigned. Class attendance and etiquette regulations apply to both face-to-face and virtual class environments.
- It is the learners' responsibility to familiarise themselves with the Assessment Standards that govern the programme upon which they are enrolled and the policies and procedures of the College, to which

they must adhere.

- Every learner shall comply with their academic programme requirements and with all associated ICPPD policies including but not limited to Learner Attendance, Assessment and Examination regulations, Registration and Fees Policies.
- Every learner shall approach their academic and professional endeavours with honesty and integrity.
- Every learner shall respect the intellectual property rights in the work others produce individually or in partnership with them.
- Learners who are members of any professional body (e.g., IACP), should conduct themselves within the general ethics, professional attitude and integrity of the body and comply with any professional guidelines in so far as they are applicable to Learners. However, a breach of professional ethics may also amount to a breach of ICPPD College requirements.
- When engaged on placement/client work, learners are required to conduct themselves in such a way as to reflect credit on the College and its learners, and not to bring ICPPD or the volunteer/placement organisation into disrepute.
- Learners should comply with the reasonable and lawful instruction of college and/or volunteer/placement organisation staff and their disciplinary procedures
- Codes governing the conduct in ICPPD venues (outreach centres) and the use of their facilities, equipment or services should be adhered to
- Criminal Offences shall be referred to the Civil Authorities.

7.2 Rights of Learners

The provisions of the Learner Code of Conduct are without prejudice to the legal rights of learners.

In the context of the Code, no person may be charged twice with the same offence in relation to the same incident.

No member of the Disciplinary Committee, Academic Council or Board of Directors shall prosecute or be a witness in any case which he or she is assigned to adjudicate.

In the case of major offences, the learner shall be given notice in writing, through the appropriate channel, detailing the precise charge being made and the basic facts alleged to constitute the offence.

In the case of major offences, the learner has the right to speak in their own defence, to call witnesses and to cross-examine prosecution witnesses. The learner may also have representation of their choice at any hearing.

The learner must submit the name(s) and profession of the person(s) who will be representing them to the Registrar 48 hours in advance of the meeting. Failure to do so may mean that the meeting will be postponed for a period.

The Disciplinary Committee reserves the right to have a legal advisor present if it is deemed appropriate, or to seek legal advice on any matter arising before or during the hearing.

7.3 Roles and Responsibilities

The **Academic Board** is responsible for formally approving this policy and for overseeing its implementation.

All staff of the College are expected to ensure that those who infringe the Learner Code of Conduct and

Discipline are identified and dealt with according to the College regulations.

The **Academic Director** in consultation with the Registrar is responsible for deciding whether disciplinary procedures are warranted.

The **Registrar** is responsible for carrying out an investigation.

The **Academic Board** is responsible for convening a Disciplinary Committee.

All staff and learners of ICPPD College are jointly responsible for the effective implementation of this policy.

Learners are required to cooperate with any investigation under this policy, including provision of additional information and attendance at any necessary interviews or hearings. Failure to cooperate may be a disciplinary matter.

Appeals - the Registrar is responsible for managing Appeals. The Academic Board is responsible for convening an Appeals Committee.

7.4 Learner Disciplinary Policy

7.4.1 General Principles

ICPPD is committed to fair, equitable and appropriate disciplinary procedures. This policy is intended to ensure a proportionate and timely resolution of issues.

Learner Disciplinary Procedure shall be invoked where a learner has allegedly acted contrary to the Learner Code of Conduct.

Where appropriate, all reasonable efforts shall be made to resolve a case informally before formal procedures are invoked.

At each stage of this procedure the learner should be:

- Asked to explain why the inappropriate behaviour has occurred
- Counselled as to why it is unacceptable
- Advised/reminded of the Support Services available
- Encouraged to be accompanied at meetings and put forward their views
- Kept informed of actions/outcomes
- Advised of the possible consequences of any further inappropriate behaviour.

No disciplinary consequence will be imposed upon a learner until the case has been investigated. The College may, however, take action to protect staff, learners, clients and the public, and/or to fulfil the professional responsibilities of its staff, during an investigation

Learners are required to cooperate fully with any hearing. Failure to cooperate is itself a disciplinary matter.

Subject to concerns for the welfare and wellbeing of others, the disciplinary process is confidential to the College and should only be discussed with those who are a part of the proceedings (including those who support the parties), or for the purposes of the proper functioning of the College. Breaches of confidentiality may lead to disciplinary action being taken. This does not prevent ICPPD from fulfilling its safeguarding responsibility, or from acting in accordance with legal and regulatory reporting requirements.

At all stages of the Disciplinary Procedures the learner will have the right to be accompanied by a representative. Where the learner choses to exercise this right then prior notification of the person to accompany them and their status must be given to the Registrar prior to any formal hearing or informal meeting.

Attention is drawn to the ICPPD Appeals Procedures.

Record Keeping. Records are kept of any relevant meeting, whether formal or informal, and ICPPD's College's privacy statement and policy on Retention Periods apply to such records.

7.4.2 Breaches of Learner Code of Conduct

Any act or omission, which affects adversely the rights of any other member of the academic community (staff or fellow-Learner), or which disrupts the orderly and responsible conduct of any ICPPD activity, or which violates any College regulation, (or those of placement organisations) shall constitute a breach of discipline and be dealt with under the College disciplinary procedures.

This policy is intended to ensure that responses are fair, reasonable and proportionate. In furtherance of these aims the College distinguishes between various levels of infringements of Code of Conduct and College Regulations.

In particular, and without prejudice to the generality of the foregoing, the following are examples of offences:

Minor Breaches:
This includes, but is not limited to:
- minor incidents of disorderly conduct which obstructs activities of the College or any person carrying out their normal duties
- minor disruption of classroom activities
- conduct which is disruptive of, or which may disrupt, teaching, study or engagement in client work.
- conduct which is likely to interfere with any meeting or other activity, including non-academic and social activities, within the College or organised by the College.
- minor damage to property of the college (or any support facility used by the college)
- minor damage to personal property of other members of the ICPPD community
- breach of housekeeping rules
- eating and drinking in unauthorised areas
- smoking in unauthorised areas
- being in unauthorised areas without permission
- failure to identify oneself on request
- an activity (including social conduct and engagement with social media) which adversely affects, or is likely to adversely affect, the reputation of the ICPPD, the learners, members of staff or the relevant profession.

Major Breaches:

This includes, but is not limited to:
- Conduct which interferes, or is likely to interfere, with good health safety and welfare at work practices as defined in the College's Safety Statement
- Conduct interfering with the proper conduct of assessments.
- Academic Impropriety as outlined in ***Academic Impropriety in Assessments (Quality Assurance Manual, Section C, Chapter 4, 4.10)***.

- repeated minor offences including refusal or failure to pay a fine or comply with any other penalty (subject to the right of appeal applicable) imposed for offences against the Code of Conduct
- harassment, bullying, abusive or dangerous behaviour or threats to the person
- acts or omissions by learners while outside the College engaged in client work, volunteering activity, clinical practice or assignment, organised by the College, or while representing the College which would breach these regulations if committed in ICPPD.
- actions intended to cause harm to the College or its members
- Incitement or encouragement of any other person or persons to do any of the aforementioned things/breach the Code of Discipline.
- furnishing false information to the College with intent to deceive
- forging, alteration, or misuse of college documents, records, or identification cards
- serious damage to property of the college
- serious damage to the personal property of other members of the ICPPD community

Gross Misconduct:

This includes, but is not limited to,
- assault causing serious harm (including sexual assault)
- serious or repeated harassment
- extreme nuisance
- serious damage to property (or any support facility used by the college)
- use of alcohol/illegal substances
- any activity that could raise child protection concerns or concerns for vulnerable adult

7.5 Reporting a Breach of Conduct

Minor Breaches of Conduct:
Allegations or incidents of a minor breach of the Code of Conduct should be reported to the relevant Programme Leader.

Major Breaches of Conduct:
Allegations of a major breach of conduct should be brought to the notice of the Registrar for the next appropriate action to be taken.

Gross Misconduct:
Allegations of gross misconduct should be reported to the Registrar for the next appropriate action to be taken.
If a learner is alleged to have behaved in such a manner that, if proven in a court of law, they would have committed a criminal offence the College may suspend the Learner Disciplinary Procedure and refer the matter to the appropriate authorities.
Anonymous allegations about a learner will not be considered.

7.6 Learner Disciplinary Process

7.6.1 General Principles

It is expected that in most cases a progressive, staged approach to learner discipline will be implemented.

Written records will be maintained at each stage of the procedure.

At any stage in the process the Registrar may determine that the suspected infringement cannot be substantiated, in which case no further action shall be taken, and no record shall be retained in the learner file.

The learner has the right of appeal against the findings at any of the stages of the process. At the completion of each of the stages in the procedures where there is written communication, the learner will be advised in writing of how they may take the matter further, if they so wish.

7.6.2 Minor Breaches of Learner Code of Conduct – Informal Process

In cases of minor infringements, ICPPD seek to resolve disciplinary matters informally, and as close to the time of the incident as possible.

Usually, the first stage of these is a conversation between the staff member and the learner, unless there are compelling reasons not to do so. This respects the rights of the learner, ensures that his or her voice is heard, and establishes conditions for a timely, managed resolution.
In many instances the infringement will be of a minor nature and as such can be dealt with locally and informally by the member of staff most closely involved, by way of advice and guidance to correct the behaviour or conduct. This can include advice that any repetition or escalation of the behaviour could lead to disciplinary proceedings under these Regulations.
In the case of a minor breaches relating to damage of property, these should be reported to and dealt with by the College Manager.
In certain cases, a record of the incident may be placed on the learner's file, removable after six months, provided there are no further instances of misconduct.
Where a resolution cannot be found at the informal stage, the Registrar should be notified, and the **Formal Process** is followed.

7.6.3 Formal Process – Stage 1

The Formal Process – Stage 1 will be followed where:

- the Informal Stage has not brought about a resolution
- there is repetition of Minor Breaches of Conduct
- the alleged incident constitutes a Major Breach of Conduct.

The Registrar (or other senior member of staff who has not had prior involvement in the situation), will carry out an investigation, unless it is determined that any one of the following apply:

- The matter is not sufficiently serious to justify disciplinary action
- The alleged breach cannot be substantiated
- A Major Breach of the Code of Conduct or College regulations has occurred, in which case more prompt action is required
- A decision is taken to report the matter to statutory authorities
- The matter should be dealt with under another of the College's Policies or Procedures.

A learner who is the subject of a complaint of misconduct and against whom a criminal charge is pending or who is the subject of police investigation may be suspended or excluded immediately by the College Managing Director pending either the disciplinary hearing or a trial.

7.6.3.1 Investigation:

i) The Registrar shall review all information and / or documentation.

ii) Any investigation into an alleged breach of conduct should include where appropriate the offer of a meeting with the learner who is the subject of the allegation and should inform them that they will have the right to be accompanied to the meeting.
iii) The invitation to any such meeting should be in writing and should inform the learner of the evidence that has been presented against him or her, and their right to be accompanied to this meeting.
iv) Where possible this invitation should give the learner at least 5 working days' notice of the meeting. This period may be shortened if a delay may adversely affect the welfare or health of any person, including the learner.
v) The Registrar, accompanied by another staff member, should interview the learner, and give the learner an opportunity to respond.
vi) The Registrar may, if appropriate, interview any other person involved.
vii) If, following the investigation, Registrar considers it appropriate, then a summary finding can be made. In reaching a decision on whether the matter should be dealt with summarily, the Registrar should consider the nature of the allegation and whether the possible outcomes would be sufficient. The Registrar will have discretion to consider the individual extenuating or aggravating circumstances of a matter. For example, extenuating circumstances (e.g., illness at the time of the incident) may exist which justify the matter being dealt with summarily. Aggravating circumstances (e.g., a disciplinary record) may justify the matter being dealt with under the formal procedures.
viii) If, following the investigation, Registrar does not consider it appropriate to make a summary finding, then he or she may refer the case under the Formal Processes to the Disciplinary Committee.
ix) A decision will normally be relayed to the learner in writing within 10 working days of the completion of the investigation. The investigation should be completed where reasonably possible within 30 working days of notification to the Registrar of the alleged breach.
x) A copy of the decision will be kept on the learner's file

7.6.3.2 Outcomes of the Investigation/Summary Decision:

If the Registrar is satisfied that there has been a breach of the Code of Conduct, one or more of the following courses of action may be taken:

- resolve that no action be taken
- informal warning (not held on learner's file)
- requirement for a verbal or written apology
- guidance and advice regarding future behaviour
- issue a written warning to the learner indicating the consequences of future misconduct, to be entered into the learner's academic file removable any period up to three months after the completion of the learners' programme, at the discretion of the Registrar, provided there are no further instances of misconduct
- require the learner to compensate for or make good any damage caused to property
- impose a fine payable to ICPPD.
- Reasonable restrictions on communication with named learners or members of staff, either verbally or via written or electronic or other means.
- require the learner to vacate immediately any ICPPD owned, or ICPPD contracted or managed property, when their continued presence might affect the safety, security or welfare of other occupants at the property or ICPPD employees.
- confirm any disciplinary decision made by the officer in charge of a building, equipment or service, in cases which involve infringement of the Code governing the use of the building, equipment or service concerned.

- restrict access to any part of ICPPD's campuses (or its outreach sites or other contracted premises), or to any services of ICPPD, where this is deemed desirable for the welfare of other learners, or staff, or where continued access may interfere with the smooth running of that building or service or otherwise compromise it.

7.6.3.3 Appeal of Investigation Outcome/Summary Decision

The learner has a Right of Appeal of the summary decision to the Disciplinary Appeals Committee. This application should follow the procedure laid out in Section 7.7 below. Learners should note that an appeal must be lodged with the Registrar within 10 working days of notification of the summary finding.

7.6.4 Formal Process – Stage 2

Where, in the judgement of the Registrar, the alleged infringement should not be dealt with by summary means then the Registrar shall notify the learner as soon as possible, in writing, that the College is preparing a disciplinary case against him/her.

i) The Registrar will request the Academic Board to convene a Disciplinary Committee and to appoint a chair. No person with any prior involvement in the case shall be appointed to the Committee.

ii) The Registrar will provide the learner with the following information:
- The intended time, data and place of the hearing, and give at least 10 working days' notice
- The consequence of non-attendance
- The precise charge being made
- The facts alleged to constitute the alleged offence
- The evidence that will be presented to the Disciplinary Committee
- The format of the scheduled disciplinary hearing
- The learner's right to be accompanied/ represented, their right to hear the evidence presented, to challenge the evidence and to present their own evidence.

iii) Within 10 working days of the hearing, or as soon as possible thereafter, the Chair of the Disciplinary Committee will notify the learner of the outcome of the hearing. Where the Chair of the Disciplinary Committee is satisfied that an incident of misconduct has arisen, the associated disciplinary action shall be identified, if any, and the learner's right of appeal explained.

iv) In the event of the learner choosing to exercise their right of appeal, a Request for Appeal must be lodged within 10 working days from the date of receipt of Outcome of the Disciplinary Committee. An appeal will not be considered where the duly completed form is not lodged within this timeline, other than in exceptional circumstances, such as illness, which may have prevented the learner acting within the timeline

v) The application of the disciplinary outcome may be suspended pending the outcome of the appeal. In the event of the learner not choosing to exercise his / her right of appeal, the disciplinary outcome shall be applied.

7.6.4.1 Disciplinary Outcomes:

Possible outcomes from the Disciplinary Committee include the outcomes available following the Investigation/Summary Decision plus the following where appropriate:
- Dismissal of the case
- Requirement for a verbal or written apology

- Informal warning (not held on learner's file)
- Formal warning, to be held on the learner's file for a period up to completion of studies and which will be considered in any future disciplinary cases within that timescale
- Requirement for the learner to attend a relevant support service
- Reasonable restrictions on communication with named learners or members of staff, either verbally or via written or electronic or other means
- require the learner to vacate immediately any ICPPD owned, or ICPPD contracted or managed property, when their continued presence might affect the safety, security or welfare of other occupants at the property or ICPPD employees
- confirm any disciplinary decision made by the officer in charge of a building, equipment or service, in cases which involve infringement of the Code governing the use of the building, equipment or service concerned.
- restrict access to any part of ICPPD's campuses (or its outreach sites or other contracted premises), or to any services of ICPPD, where this is deemed desirable for the welfare of other learners, or staff, or where continued access may interfere with the smooth running of that building or service or otherwise compromise it.

With the authority of the Academic Board the following outcomes may be carried out:

- report to the relevant professional or statutory body (this may be mandatory)
- suspend or exclude the learner with immediate effect from ICPPD programmes

A further major breach of conduct subsequent to the issuance of a formal reprimand shall normally lead to the learner's suspension or expulsion. A permanent record of shall be retained on the learner's file.

7.7 Appeals of the Learner Disciplinary Process

A learner may appeal a Summary Judgement or an Outcome of the Disciplinary Committee.

7.7.1 Grounds for Appeal

A learner wishing to appeal may do so only on the following grounds:

- A material procedural irregularity has occurred which has impacted significantly on the validity of the original hearing and the subsequent consequence.
- The consequence imposed by the disciplinary hearing was too severe bearing in mind the circumstances of the case.
- The learner wishes to present new evidence or information of extenuating circumstances which were not known to the Disciplinary Committee. In this case the learner must also show good reason why such circumstances could not have been made known prior to or at the Disciplinary Hearing.
- That the decision was made without due regard to the facts, evidence or circumstances.

7.7.2 Disciplinary Appeals Process

i) To initiate an appeal, the learner must submit to the Registrar a Request for Appeal in writing, within 10 working days from the date of receipt of Summary Judgement or an Outcome of the Disciplinary Committee.
ii) The Written Request for Appeal should outline the grounds for Appeal. The Request for Appeal should be accompanied by supporting documentation that shall be relied upon in the event of a hearing.
iii) The purpose of the Appeal Hearing is to examine the Grounds of Appeal made by the learner. Its

purpose is not to re-hear the case.

iv) An Appeal should not result in any increase in consequence.
v) Upon receipt of the written Request for Appeal, the Registrar will evaluate whether the Appeal is rooted in one of the named grounds for Appeal. The Registrar may dismiss an appeal which does not provide a prima facie case.
vi) Within 10 working days of the Request for Appeal, or as soon as possible thereafter, the Registrar will acknowledge receipt and inform the learner whether an Appeals Committee will be constituted, or the Request for an Appeal has been refused.
vii) Where the Request for an Appeal has been refused, then any outcome decided by the Disciplinary Committee and suspended pending Appeal will be implemented.

Where the Appeal comes within the stated grounds, then the Registrar will ask the Academic Council to convene a Disciplinary Appeals Committee.

7.7.2.1 Proceedings of the Disciplinary Appeals Committee

The purpose of the Disciplinary Appeals Committee is to ascertain whether the complaint was correctly and appropriately addressed, whether all evidence was examined and whether proper procedures were followed.

i) A minute taker will also be appointed to the Disciplinary Appeals Committee and will take minutes of the process.
ii) The Disciplinary Appeals Committee will be convened where reasonably possible within 30 working days of the receipt of the written request for an appeal.
iii) The learner must be given a minimum of 10 working days' notice of the date of Appeal Hearing.
iv) The Disciplinary Appeals Committee will be provided with a written report from the Registrar, which details the management of the investigation to date and the appeal documentation submitted by the learner.
v) In exceptional circumstances, where it is considered that witnesses are appropriate (such as where a witness is introducing information that was not available at the previous meeting), witnesses may be invited to attend the Appeal Hearing.
vi) The Disciplinary Appeals Committee will have power to gather any additional information that is necessary to evaluate the grounds of the appeal. This may include further interviews and meetings with the parties and witnesses to any alleged infringement.
vii) It is the responsibility of the Disciplinary Appeals Committee to ensure fairness and accuracy. Every effort will be made to resolve disputes as quickly as possible.
viii) The Appeals Committee will, where reasonably possible, issue its findings within 10 working days of the Appeals hearing. The Chair has responsibility for ensuring that the decision is communicated to the parties as soon as is practicable. If any delay is necessary, the Chair will inform all parties, in writing, outlining the proposed change to the timeline and the rationale for the delay.

7.7.2.2 Outcome of the Appeal:

The Outcome of the Appeal may rescind or uphold the original decision of the Disciplinary Committee. Where the grounds for an appeal related to the severity of a consequence, then the Appeals Committee may vary the consequence, if this does not result in any increase in consequence.
The Appeals Committee will report to the Academic Board within 30 working days of the Appeal hearing.
The Chair of the Disciplinary Appeals Committee will notify the appellant, in writing, of the following:

- The outcome of the appeal.
- Formal confirmation that the Disciplinary Appeals Committee's decision is final and binding on

all parties.

7.8 Audit/Review of Learner Disciplinary Policies and Procedures

ICPPD is committed to ensuring that Learner Disciplinary Policies and procedures are adhered to and used in a proper and adequate manner. It endeavours to continuously review the process on an annual basis so that the best practice is always applied. This review will be conducted by the QA and Enhancement Committee, reporting to Academic Board.

Chapter 8 Policies relating to ICPPD's Clinical Practice

8.1 Clinical Practice in ICPPD's Counsellor/Psychotherapist Training Programme

Clinical Practice is at the heart of ICPPD's /all counselling and psychotherapy training and education programmes. The focus in this module is to facilitate the learner as they move from classroom to clinical practice by developing their awareness around the client's process and their own and for the learner to integrate the skills and theory from other modules

The Clinical Practice modules will develop an informed and critical appraisal of the core principles associated with an adaptable integrative framework for practice. Prior to commencing any work with clients each learner is required to meet an ICPPD Fitness to Practise Panel (comprised of Programme Leader and Core Tutor) for an in-depth interview, as outlined in ***Section C, Chapter1, 1.5.***

8.2 Clinical Practice Co-ordinator (CPCO)

The Clinical Practice Coordinator, supported by the Programme Leader, is responsible for the overall delivery and administration of the Clinical Practice module. This role is described in further details in *Section A, Chapter2, 2.3.7* and in the Clinical Practice Handbook.

8.3 Clinical Practice Handbook

The ICPPD **Clinical Practice Handbook** is provided to ICPPD learners/trainee counsellors for the purpose of outlining the necessary requirements, and to give clear directions to learners commencing work with clients as part of their training. It outlines the policies and procedures they must adhere to in order to meet the requirements of these modules. The Clinical Practice Handbook is available to learners via Moodle.
The Clinical Practice Handbook covers areas for learners including:

- Monitoring ICPPD Learner's Level of Professional Development and Readiness to practise
- Information/Professional Guidelines for ICPPD Learners Relevant to their Client Work
- Supervision during Client Work
- Next Steps/Getting Ready for Clinical Practice
- Professional Bodies' Codes of Ethics

8.4 Clinical Practice - Over-arching policies

8.4.1 ICPPD Client Complaint Procedure

Policy Statement
ICPPD requires that it's learners/trainees treat clients with consideration and respect, and act within the Ethical Framework for Good Practice in Counselling and Psychotherapy of the Irish Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy (IACP).

All complaints/allegations made by Clients, either directly to ICPPD will be taken seriously, given due consideration in a timely fashion, and processed in a manner which respects the confidentiality of all parties.
ICPPD aims to resolve all complaints/allegations as close to the source of the complaint/allegation as possible.

Purpose

This procedure will be used to investigate and resolve a complaint or allegation made by a client with regard to an ICPPD learner/trainee within a Clinical Practice Host Organisation.

Any other issue is processed through the **ICPPD's Code of Conduct**, *Section C, Chapter 7, 7.1*.

Confidentiality

- All aspects of any complaint/allegation will be dealt with in a confidential manner.
- The complainant, and the person complained against, will be kept aware of the extent and detail of any information divulged to the other, on a need-to-know basis.
- The maintenance of the file, and administration of the procedure in connection with a complaint/allegation, will be the responsibility of a named individual, normally ICPPD's Academic Director.
- The complainant, and the person complained against will be provided with the Academic Director's name and contact details, and be informed that they are responsible for the conduct of the relevant proceedings.

Initial Procedure

1. Any complaint/allegation made (by telephone, email or in person) either directly to ICPPD or to the Clinical Practice Host Organisation is reported immediately to the Clinical Practice Manager (Host Organisation) and/or ICPPD's Academic Director, as appropriate.
2. The Academic Director contacts the complainant to discuss the nature of the complaint/allegation, and to determine the complaints preferable outcome.
3. If the complainant declines to pursue the complaint/allegation, the date of the conversation, and the fact that the matter is considered closed, is entered on the Learner's File by the Academic Director.
   The Learner and the Clinical Practice Coordinator/In-house Supervisor (CPCO) will be advised by the Academic Director of the complaint/allegation to prevent any possible reoccurrence of the alleged situation.
   The Learner is required to inform their External Supervisor of the complaint/allegation and confirm this to the Academic Director and the Clinical Practice Coordinator/In-house Supervisor (CPCO).
4. If the complainant wishes to pursue the complaint/allegation, the Academic Director will send them a copy of this ICPPD Complaints Procedure and request a formal, written statement outlining the substantive matters which give rise to the complaint/allegation.
5. The Academic Director informs the Learner, the CPCO, the Programme Leader, and the Clinical Practice Manager - Host Organisation of the complaint/allegation, at the earliest opportunity, and no later seven days after its receipt.
6. A brief note of the complaint/allegation is recorded and dated on the Learner's File.

Formal Procedure - Stage One (Mediation)

1. When a written complaint in relation a learners' engagement with Client Work is received by ICPPD, the Academic Director will acknowledge receipt, in writing, within 48 hours.
2. The Learner, the CPCO, the Programme Leader and the Clinical Practice Manager (Host Organisation) are notified by the Academic Director that a formal complaint has been made and the Learner is requested to make a written response to the complaint/allegation, within seven days.
3. On receipt of the Learners' Written statement, the Academic Director copies it to the complainant, and follows-up to check if the complainant wishes to proceed with the complaint/allegation.
4. If the complainant declines to pursue the complaint/allegation, the date of the communication, and the fact that the matter is considered closed, is entered on the Learner's File by the Academic Director.

All parties are advised of this conclusion.

5. If the complainant still wishes to pursue the complaint/allegation, a meeting is arranged, to facilitate mediation between the two parties, as soon as possible, but in not more than two weeks.
6. The Learner is offered the opportunity to be accompanied at the meeting by one other person of their choice (and are strongly advised that this person should be their External Supervisor). This individual may not actively participate in the meeting.
7. The complainant is also offered the opportunity to be accompanied at the meeting by one other person of their choice, but that person may not actively participate in the meeting.
8. This mediation meeting is chaired by an independent individual, appointed by the Academic Director in consultation with the College Registrar, who has not been involved in the process to date, and is independent of both parties. Both parties are invited to identify their desired resolution, and are facilitated to achieve a consensus in this matter, if possible.
9. Following this meeting, the chair/mediator issues a report to the College, which is copied to both parties, who are invited to make a written response (within 48 hours).
10. If the complaint/allegation is resolved at this meeting, the complainant, learner/trainee counsellor/psychotherapist, CPCO, Programme Leader and the Clinical Practice Manager (Host Organisation) will receive written confirmation that the matter is resolved, and that fact is noted on the learner's file.
11. If the complainant is not satisfied with the outcome of the meeting, they will be asked to give a written statement to this effect to the Academic Director, and the complaint will move to Stage 2.

Formal Procedure - Stage Two (Ethics Committee)

1. The purpose of this stage is to review the conduct of the complaint/allegation; to ensure that procedure has been followed correctly; to provide the complainant/client with an opportunity to appeal the outcome of Stage 1; and to arrive at a final ruling for the resolution of the complaint.
2. The Academic Director informs all parties involved in writing of the continuing complaint, and that the procedure has moved to Stage Two.
3. The Academic Director informs the chairperson of the Academic Board of the complaint/allegation and requests that the Ethics Committee meets to review the complaint/allegation.
4. The Ethic Committee is convened, is provided with all relevant paperwork prior to the date of the meeting and reviews the overall conduct of the complaint/allegation to date.
5. Following its deliberations, the findings of the Ethics Committee, in the form of a written report, is provided to the Chair of the Academic Board. The Academic Board determines the final outcome based on this Report and informs all relevant parties, in writing, of the outcome.
6. The communication to the complainant will inform the complainant that ICPPD has exhausted its procedure for complaint, and that if they wish they may refer their complaint to the Irish Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy (IACP).

Note(s):

1. Any complaint by a client about an ICPPD trainee that is made directly to the Host Organisation will be dealt with internally by the organisation unless the complaint relates to the trainee's competency as a counsellor/therapist. Information from the Host Organisation relating to the clinical competencies of the trainee will be communicated to ICPPD via the **CP03 - Contract: ICPPD with Clinical Practice Organisation and the Learner**

2. Learner Client Work may be suspended at any stage during the above complaint/allegation investigation process, pending the outcome of the process

3. At any stage, this procedure may divert into the **ICPPD Learner Disciplinary procedures, Quality Assurance Manual, Section C, Chapter 7, 7.3.**

8.4.2 ICPPD Child Protection Policy

NOTE:

- In line with IACP requirements, ICPPD learners are not insured to work with clients under the age of 18 years, however, ICPPD is cognisant that, in working with Clients in therapy, issues may present which fall within the remit of the Children First: National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children.
- All citizens are mandatorily required to report any activity that endangers a child, and therefore as trainee therapists, they are also required to report such activity.
- As trainee therapists they do not have the experience and required competency to attend court proceedings, nor are they mandated persons.
- Therefore, it is important that trainee therapists have a Designated Person/team in their clinical practice host organisation with whom to receive support on this serious matter.
- Trainee therapists are advised (required) to familiarise themselves with the overall relevant policies and procedures of each organisation they are involved (in clinical practice) with.
- *"The Court of Appeal ruled on Friday 8th December 2023, that child protection legislation does not require Health Service Executive therapists and other mandated people to report to Tusla when an adult discloses historic child abuse, provided there is no reasonable suspicion that a child is at risk." (IACP - December News 2023).*

This protocol outlines how trainee therapists should handle disclosures by adult clients that they were sexually abused in childhood (historical abuse).

The **HSE's Children First Guidelines** indicate that all such disclosures should be notified to the HSE Children and Family Social Work Services. This is because the alleged perpetrator may still pose a risk to children. The guidelines regard child protection as paramount even where it opposes the client's current interests. In practice, however, the client's co-operation is likely to be needed to substantiate any third-party notification.

Trainee Therapists are to familiarise themselves with IACP/IAHIP, and other professional bodies, policies on Child Protection.

Prior to commencing Clinical Practice at ICPPD, learners are required to complete the short **Tusla Child Protection Online training course.**

What the trainee therapist needs to let the client know at the start of the counselling work
In the first session, or as early as possible, the trainee counsellor/psychotherapist needs to discuss their trainee status and confidentiality and its limits. This is outlined in general terms in the ***counselling contract form [CP04].***

Confidentiality may need to be breached where the most serious concerns arise, such as:

1. A concern about a risk to the client.
2. A concern about a risk to another person.
3. A concern about a risk of abuse to children.

The client needs to know that the above reporting obligations will arise if childhood sexual abuse is discussed with their trainee counsellor, and the abuser is identified.
(ICPPD recognises that it has a duty of care to the welfare of the client, which always must be balanced with child protection concerns.)

If the client discloses that he/she suffered childhood sexual abuse
If the client discloses the name and address/identity, of their childhood abuser to their trainee counsellor/psychotherapist, an obligation to report the information to the Social Work Dept. will arise.

The trainee counsellor/psychotherapist must make any such disclosures to the Designated Person/ Director of Counselling/Manager at the Placement Host Organisation. The case will usually be considered by clinical practice host organisation in accordance with the organisation's own Children First reporting procedures (which may involve the trainee counsellor/psychotherapist involved, the in-house supervisor, the director of client services) and appropriate action identified.

The trainee counsellor/psychotherapist is also required to discuss their concerns and seek support from ICPPD – through the CPCO, In-House Supervisor. If a report is being made, trainee therapists are required to inform the Children First Designated Person at ICPPD - the Academic Director - who will guide and support them also.

The obligation to report will be discussed between trainee therapist and client, and the client will be supported in making their own report.

Where the client is not opposed to making the report but feels unready to make the report to, the designated person at the clinical practice host organisation (in consultation with the trainee counsellor/psychotherapist), may do so on their behalf.

The client may be opposed to making the report. In such circumstances the **Designated Person** of the clinical practice organisation will be charged with the responsibility to discuss the relevant points of the client's disclosure with the Duty Social Worker without giving names or identifying information. The Duty Social Worker should be told that the client is unable to provide more information at this time. The S/W response should be noted. The clinical practice host organisation usually does not put a limit on the time it will continue to work with the client prior to full reporting of information. The client will continue to receive counselling and be supported in preparing to make the report; however, it may not be appropriate for the trainee counsellor/psychotherapist to continue working with that client during that time.

Trainee counsellors/psychotherapists are advised to please discuss this with the designated person within the clinical practice host organisation, and the CPCO/Academic Director at ICPPD, to adhere with their policies on the matter.
Follow-up actions which are not the responsibility of the trainee counsellor/psychotherapist
The S/W department at the clinical practice host organisation will conduct a risk assessment.
If the client has already made a report to HSE or Gardaí, the date and location of the notification should be established, and followed up in writing to the HSE, by the Designated Person at the clinical practice host organisation. This report may be made via phone call but should be confirmed in a follow-up email.
If the client identifies a child who may be at immediate risk of abuse, then the HSE Children and Family Services must be notified immediately through the Designated Person at the clinical practice host organisation.

Sharing of information
The trainee counsellor/psychotherapist should not hold information regarding possible child protection issues alone. The Designated Person at the clinical practice host organisation and the Academic Director at ICPPD should be informed immediately, or as soon as practicable.
The trainee counsellor/psychotherapist should bring the matter to their next external and in-house supervision sessions.

Written records should be kept of all child-protection-related activity on each case.

Further Reading/Useful Resources are listed for learners in the Clinical Practice Handbook.

8.5 Suicide Prevention Officer

In line with the ***IACP Guidelines for Counselling and Psychotherapy Placements (November 2018),*** ICPPD have included as part of their site evaluation, the identification of a Suicide Prevention Officer in each clinical placement (Clinical Practice Handbook - CP13: Clinical Practice Host Organisation - Site Evaluation/Visit).

A **Suicide Awareness Officer** is in place at ICPPD to further support the safety of learners, clients and staff a Suicide Awareness Officer *(See Section A, Chapter 2, 2.3.12)*.

8.6 Audit/Review of Clinical Practice Policies and Procedures

ICPPD is committed to ensuring that Clinical Practice Policies and procedures are adhered to and used in a proper and adequate manner. It endeavours to continuously review the process on an annual basis so that the best practice is always applied. This review will be conducted by the Academic Director and the Clinical Practice Co-Ordinator.

Chapter 9 Communication, Information Management and Public Information

9.1 Communication at ICPPD

ICPPD has a responsibility to provide information about the programmes on offer and ensures that the information provided about programmes, and the College is accurate, impartial, objective and readily accessible. ICPPD is committed to ongoing monitoring of its information provision to provide clear and accurate information to the public, prospective applicants, enrolled learners and other stakeholders.

The Academic Director has oversight and provides final approval of content of the public information provided about programmes, in conjunction with the Marketing and Recruitment Consultant and the Registrar.

ICPPD recognises that communication plays a vital role in developing motivation and commitment of staff and learners, and therefore actively supports a positive communications process within the College. ICPPD is committed to supporting the necessary communications channels that allow for easier transfer of information, data, messages, etc. within the College (between staff), between learners, and ICPPD/staff to learners and *vice versa*. ICPPD utilises the following communications systems to facilitate its liaison with learners and staff:

- **Front Office/Reception**

The front office desk/reception is open 09.30hrs to 17.00hrs, Tuesday-Friday, throughout the year, to facilitate current and prospective learner queries in relation to College programmes, academic regulations and requirements, and any learner support issues. Individual issues/queries are dealt with in a professional and confidential manner, in accordance with College policy which is outlined on the Learner Handbook and on the ICPPD's website.

- **Email**

To facilitate the part-time and outreach nature of ICPPD programmes, ICPPD utilises email to distribute much of its general communication, academic and promotional information to stakeholders.

Learners are required to supply ICPPD with a current email address on registration and are advised that this mail address required to register them is the primary channel for the College's communication with its registered Learners. It is the learners' responsibility to keep ICPPD informed of any changes to this email address.

Staff are required to supply ICPPD with their email address on application to the College and are advised that this mail address is the primary channel for the College's communication with staff members. It is the staff members' responsibility to keep ICPPD informed of any changes to this email address. ICPPD provides each staff member/Tutor an ICPPD address which, where possible, should be used for all College communication.

ICPPD has established an acceptable usage policy (AUP) to govern the use and interaction with College IT facilities.

- **College Website**

ICPPD utilises the College website to convey generic communications and programme specific promotional information. The College requests that each staff member directs any feedback, either personal or from third parties to the Marketing and Recruitment Consultant to facilitate continued accuracy of information provided on ICPPD's website. The Academic Director has overall responsibility for the academic content, and the Registrar has oversight of the QA processes involved.

Following QQI Re-Engagement and approval of ICPPD's QA policies and procedures, ICPPD's QA Manual will be available publicly via the ICPPD website.

- **Social Media**

ICPPD has a presence on Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn (and continues to explore the option to engage with other social networking sites) to facilitate its public communications in relation to programme promotion and communication of college activities. These sites are maintained by the Marketing and Recruitment Consultant in conjunction with the Academic Director.

- **Programme Promotional Material**

ICPPD generates programme material for promotional purposes, and relevant information is updated, generated and reviewed annually to ensure accuracy of content. The continual development and updating of ICPPD's website further enhances the information which is available to external and internal stakeholders.

Each programme offered within ICPPD has a detailed programme information leaflets which provides accurate and comprehensive information regarding the programme. The Academic Director has overall responsibility for the academic content of marketing material and the Registrar has oversight of the QA processes involved.

- **College Newsletters**

ICPPD generates newsletters, for different target audiences at varying intervals throughout the year, and these are as follows:

Encounter – a Public Newsletter used to convey generic communications and programme information (including workshop details and promotional material. This document is prepared by the Marketing Working Group, with input from ICPPD staff).

External Communications (Formal/Informal)

- **External Higher Education Links**

ICPPD has developed and continues to build links to other higher education institutions through different and varied fora, particularly through events organised by awarding bodies and relevant professional bodies.

Links have been developed with other third-level colleges, clinical practice support organisations, and employer organisations. ICPPD is an institutional member of the relevant professional bodies and the local chamber of commerce.

Owing to the part-time nature of the academic staff within the College, academic staff may teach with more than one provider and therefore the College's links with organisations are strengthened.

ICPPD additionally has various informal methods of communication with outside individuals and organisations through personal contacts, telephone, e-mail, postal service, press releases and photographs, attending conferences/seminars and the website.

9.2 Information Management System

The learner information management system at ICPPD is hosted on secure CRM (Hubspot) and password-protected Microsoft Excel databases.

Each new learner registered at the College is assigned a unique learner number on the database, which remains with them for the duration of their studies with the institute. Access to the database is strictly limited to authorised ICPPD administration staff only.

Assessment details are inputted into this system and retained for future requirements. Broadsheets of assessment results are generated for each academic year for submission to the Examination Board for certification of learners' academic achievements. These electronic broadsheet files are stored indefinitely in the secure filing system of ICPPD, accessible only to internal staff and may only be amended as authorised by the Registrar. Any amendments required to broadsheets following their ratification by an Examination Board will be notified, in writing by the Registrar, to the External Examiner(s) and relevant external agency.

9.3 Confidentiality

ICPPD is obliged to maintain confidentiality in certain aspects of its work. It is the duty of all staff members to observe such confidentiality, and to maintain this confidentiality after they have left the employment of the College.

9.4 Acceptable Usage Policy

ICPPD has developed internal procedures to define the conditions under which a college employee, contractor, vendor or other person may access the College's Information Technology (IT) systems, which includes computer, internet, email and related services and hardware, software and network facilities. These procedures are distributed to users of the College's IT systems during the relevant induction processes, with which all users of the systems within or on behalf of the College are expected to be familiar with and to comply.

9.5 Audit/Review of Communication, Information Management and Public Information Policies and Procedures

ICPPD is committed to ensuring that Communication, Information Management and Public Information and procedures are adhered to and used in a proper and adequate manner. The college endeavours to continuously review the process on an annual basis so that the best practice is always applied. This review will be conducted by the Executive Management Committee.

Chapter 10 Data Protection, Record Management and Retention Policy

10.1 Context - Data Protection and Information Governance

ICPPD is committed to the systematic collection and use of reliable data to support informed decision-making, programme monitoring, and continuous quality enhancement. Data is collected where it adds value and is aligned with the College's mission, scale, and operational context.

As an education provider, ICPPD processes personal data relating to staff, learners, and other individuals for legitimate purposes, including programme delivery, assessment, administration, staff management, compliance with statutory obligations, and reporting to relevant authorities.

The College processes personal data in accordance with the **Data Protection Act 2018** and the **General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR)**. All personal data is processed lawfully, fairly, and transparently, and in line with the principles of data minimisation, purpose limitation, and security.

ICPPD processes personal data only where a lawful basis applies under Article 6 GDPR, including contractual necessity, compliance with legal obligations, legitimate interests, consent, and protection of vital interests where appropriate.

Data protection policies and procedures are communicated to staff through induction and ongoing training.

A **Data Protection Officer (DPO)** has been appointed to oversee compliance and support best practice in data protection and information governance. ***(See Section A, Chapter 2 – 2.3.14)***

10.2 Scope

This policy applies to all areas of ICPPD's activities and to all individuals who create, access, manage, or use records and data, in any format (digital or hard copy), in the course of their work.

10.3 General Principles

ICPPD recognises the importance of effective records management in:

- complying with statutory and legal obligations.
- supporting transparency, accountability, and audit requirements; and
- ensuring that records are retained only as long as necessary and securely disposed of when no longer required.

All records are managed in a manner that ensures they are accurate, complete, accessible, and securely maintained throughout their lifecycle.

10.4 Responsibilities for Records Management and Data Governance

ICPPD is committed to the effective governance of records and information to support academic, administrative, and regulatory functions.

All staff are responsible for creating, maintaining, and managing records associated with their roles.

Administrative staff, under the oversight of the Registrar, are responsible for the accuracy, completeness, and confidentiality of learner data.

The Data Protection Officer oversees compliance with data protection legislation and supports good data governance practices.

10.5 Legal and Regulatory Compliance

ICPPD manages its records in accordance with applicable legal and regulatory requirements, including:

- the Companies Acts
- Revenue Commissioners' requirements
- employment legislation
- data protection legislation.

Records such as governance documentation, financial accounts, and personnel records are maintained as legally valid evidence of College activities.

10.6 Special Category Data and Criminal Offence Data

ICPPD recognises that certain categories of personal data require enhanced protection due to their sensitive nature. This includes special category data as defined under Article 9 of the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR), and personal data relating to criminal convictions and offences processed in accordance with Article 10 GDPR and applicable Irish legislation.

Special category data processed by the College may include, where relevant:

- medical information and medical certificates
- health and safety records
- disability or reasonable accommodation information
- Garda vetting information
- other sensitive personal data required for statutory, safeguarding, employment, or educational purposes.

Such data will only be processed where a valid lawful basis under Article 6 GDPR applies and where an additional condition for processing under Article 9 GDPR or relevant Irish legislation has been satisfied. ICPPD processes special category and criminal offence data only where necessary and proportionate for purposes including:

- compliance with legal and regulatory obligations
- safeguarding and protection of learners and staff
- employment obligations and rights
- health, safety, and welfare requirements
- programme placement or professional practice requirements
- equality, accessibility, and reasonable accommodation supports.

The College applies enhanced confidentiality and security controls to the processing of such data, including:

- restricted access on a strict need-to-know basis
- secure storage and transmission methods
- password-protected and access-controlled systems
- confidentiality obligations for authorised personnel
- secure retention and disposal procedures
- additional safeguards for Garda vetting documentation and related records.

Garda Vetting information is processed and retained in accordance with applicable legislation, National Vetting Bureau requirements, and relevant regulatory guidance. Access to such information is strictly limited to authorised personnel involved in recruitment, placement, safeguarding, or compliance processes.

ICPPD ensures that all processing of special category and criminal offence data is conducted in a manner that protects the rights, freedoms, dignity, and confidentiality of individuals and complies with the Data Protection Act 2018 and GDPR requirements.

10.7 Data Storage, Security and Systems

Key institutional records, including legal documentation, financial records, governance records, and learner data, are securely stored and supported by appropriate backup procedures, including off-site storage.

ICPPD implements appropriate technical and organisational measures to safeguard information, including:

- secure IT systems and infrastructure
- access controls and restricted user permissions
- anti-virus and firewall protection
- regular system backups and disaster recovery measures
- support from contracted IT service providers.

The College's information systems maintain secure, accurate, and complete learner records and support the generation of reports for internal and external purposes.

Records relating to quality assurance activities, including meetings, actions, and performance indicators, are centrally stored and backed up to ensure integrity and accessibility.

ICPPD's Privacy Policy is publicly available on the College website - https://icppd.com/privacy-policy/ .

10.8 Information and Data Management Principles

ICPPD manages information and data in accordance with ***QQI Core Statutory Quality Assurance Guidelines and ESG (2015),*** ensuring that data supports programme monitoring, review, and institutional effectiveness.

10.8.1 Data Collection and Use

ICPPD systematically collects and analyses data across key areas, including:

- learner enrolment, retention, progression, and completion rates
- learner feedback and engagement
- assessment outcomes and academic performance
- graduate outcomes (where available)
- staff qualifications and development activities
- programme demand and resource utilisation
- quality assurance and review activities.

This information is used to support programme monitoring, reporting, and institutional quality assurance processes.

10.8.2 Data Quality and Integrity

The College ensures that all data is:

- accurate, complete, and up to date
- securely stored and appropriately managed
- accessible to authorised personnel in a timely manner.

Procedures are in place to safeguard the integrity of data and to ensure consistency in data collection, storage, and reporting practices.

10.8.3 Use of Data in Quality Assurance

Information and data are integral to the College's quality assurance system and are used to:

- inform programme design, development, and review
- support institutional planning and decision-making
- monitor the effectiveness of teaching, learning, and assessment
- identify trends and areas for enhancement
- provide evidence for internal and external quality assurance processes, including QQI monitoring and review.

10.9 Data Protection Officer (DPO)

ICPPD has appointed a Data Protection Officer (DPO) to oversee compliance with the ***General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) and the Data Protection Act 2018***, and to support best practice in data protection and information governance across the College.

ICPPD recognises the importance of ensuring the independence, authority, and effective functioning of the Data Protection Officer (DPO) in accordance with the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR). The DPO operates independently and does not receive instructions regarding the exercise of their tasks. The DPO shall not be penalised or dismissed for performing their duties in relation to data protection compliance.

The DPO is responsible for:

- monitoring internal compliance with data protection legislation and College policies
- advising on data protection obligations, including Data Protection Impact Assessments (DPIAs)
- providing guidance on data protection matters to staff and management
- acting as the point of contact for supervisory authorities and data subjects
- supporting the management and investigation of data protection incidents and breaches.

Individuals may contact the DPO in relation to any data protection queries, including the exercise of data subject rights, concerns about the handling of personal data, or to raise a data protection complaint.

10.9.1 Contact details for the Data Protection Officer:

Data Protection Officer (DPO)
ICPPD
Email: collegemanager@icppd.com
Postal Address: ICPPD, Magazine Road, Athlone, Co Westmeath, N37 Y5F6

All communications to the DPO will be treated confidentially and will be addressed in accordance with applicable data protection legislation and statutory timeframes.

10.10 Data Subject Access Request (DSAR) Statement

ICPPD recognises the rights of individuals under the ***Data Protection Act 2018*** and the ***EU General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR)***, including the right of access to personal data.

Individuals have the right to request access to the personal data held about them by the College by submitting a **Data Subject Access Request (DSAR)**. Upon receipt of a valid request, ICPPD will provide confirmation as to whether personal data concerning the individual is being processed and, where applicable, provide access to that data, together with relevant information regarding its processing.

Requests should be made in writing to the College's ***Data Protection Officer (DPO)***. ICPPD will respond to all valid requests within one month of receipt, in accordance with GDPR requirements. Where necessary, this period may be extended in line with legislative provisions.

ICPPD reserves the right to request proof of identity to verify the identity of the requester before processing a request. Requests will be processed free of charge unless they are manifestly unfounded or excessive, in which case a reasonable administrative fee may be applied or the request may be refused in accordance with GDPR provisions.

The College ensures that all personal data disclosed through a DSAR is provided securely and in a format that is accessible to the requester, while also protecting the rights and freedoms of others.

10.11 Data Subject Rights

ICPPD is committed to upholding the rights of individuals under the **General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR)** and the **Data Protection Act 2018**. Individuals whose personal data is processed by the College are entitled to exercise certain rights in relation to their personal data, subject to applicable legal limitations and exemptions.

These rights include:

- the right to be informed about how personal data is collected and used
- the right of access to personal data held by the College
- the right to request rectification of inaccurate or incomplete personal data
- the right to request erasure of personal data ("right to be forgotten") where applicable
- the right to restrict the processing of personal data in certain circumstances
- the right to data portability where processing is based on consent or contract and carried out by automated means
- the right to object to processing carried out on the basis of legitimate interests or for direct marketing purposes
- the right to withdraw consent at any time where processing is based on consent
- the right not to be subject to solely automated decision-making, including profiling, where legally applicable
- the right to lodge a complaint with the Data Protection Commission where an individual believes their data protection rights have been infringed.

Requests relating to data protection rights should be submitted in writing to the College's Data Protection Officer (DPO). ICPPD may request proof of identity before processing a request in order to protect personal data and ensure confidentiality.

The College will respond to requests in accordance with GDPR requirements and within applicable statutory timeframes. Where permitted by law, certain rights may be subject to limitations or exemptions, including where the rights of others may be affected or where the College is legally required to retain certain records.

Individuals also have the right to make a complaint to the Data Protection Commission regarding the processing of their personal data.

10.12 International Transfers of Personal Data

ICPPD may engage third-party service providers, including cloud-based service providers and IT support providers, in the delivery of its academic, administrative, and operational activities. In certain circumstances, this may involve the transfer, storage, or processing of personal data outside the European Economic Area (EEA).

Where personal data is transferred outside the EEA, the College ensures that appropriate safeguards are in place in accordance with the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) to protect the rights and freedoms of data subjects.

Such safeguards may include:

- transfers to countries recognised by the European Commission as providing an adequate level of data protection
- the use of Standard Contractual Clauses (SCCs) approved by the European Commission
- contractual and technical safeguards implemented with third-party service providers
- data processing agreements incorporating GDPR compliance obligations
- appropriate security, confidentiality, and access control measures.

ICPPD undertakes reasonable due diligence when engaging external service providers to ensure that personal data is processed securely, lawfully, and in accordance with applicable data protection requirements.

The College ensures that any international transfer of personal data is necessary, proportionate, and subject to appropriate organisational and technical protections designed to maintain the confidentiality, integrity, and security of personal data.

10.13 Records Retention and Disposal Schedule

ICPPD operates controlled procedures for the retention and disposal of records in accordance with legislative and organisational requirements. Records are retained only for as long as necessary and are disposed of securely and confidentially.

A formal record disposal process is in place, including appropriate authorisation and documentation, to ensure compliance with legal and data protection obligations.

Documents/Records	Detail	Retention requirement
Learners Records including application, interview records, garda vetting, all assessment material and other correspondence	Current or Deferred Learners	Hard copies of documents held on-site. Digital Records stored and with password protected access.
	BA Learners – Graduated/Withdrawn	Transcripts, Award evidence: retained indefinitely retained indefinitely where necessary for legal, regulatory, archival, or academic verification purposes. Learner records stored for 2 years post

Documents/Records	Detail	Retention requirement
		completion/notice of withdrawal.
	ICPPD self-certified courses (short courses)	Transcripts, Award evidence: retained indefinitely retained indefinitely where necessary for legal, regulatory, archival, or academic verification purposes. Learner records stored for 1 year post completion/notice of withdrawal
	Unsuccessful applicants/ Applicants who did not enrol	1 Year from start of relevant programme
	Attendance Records	2 years after course completion
Governance Boards and **Committees**	Minutes of meetings	Retained indefinitely where necessary for legal, regulatory, archival, or academic verification purposes.
	Strategic Plans	Retained indefinitely where necessary for legal, regulatory, archival, or academic verification purposes.
	General Correspondence	3 Years
Academic Programmes	Programme Design and Validation/Revalidation	Retained indefinitely where necessary for legal, regulatory, archival, or academic verification purposes.
	Professional Body Accreditation	Retained indefinitely where necessary for legal, regulatory, archival, or academic verification purposes.
	College Handbooks	Retained indefinitely where necessary for legal, regulatory, archival, or academic verification purposes.
	Timetables	Retained indefinitely where necessary for legal, regulatory, archival, or academic verification purposes.
Assessments and Awards	Examination Broadsheets	Retained indefinitely where necessary for legal, regulatory, archival, or academic verification purposes.
	Conferring Records	Retained indefinitely where necessary for legal, regulatory, archival, or academic verification purposes.

Documents/Records	Detail	Retention requirement
	Alumni Records	Retained indefinitely where necessary for legal, regulatory, archival, or academic verification purposes.
	Examination papers	Retained indefinitely where necessary for legal, regulatory, archival, or academic verification purposes.
	External Examiner Reports	Retained indefinitely where necessary for legal, regulatory, archival, or academic verification purposes.
	Appeals / Complaints records	4 years from learners' completion/withdrawal from programme
Financial Records	Signed Financial Statements/ Audited accounts	Retained indefinitely where necessary for legal, regulatory, archival, or academic verification purposes.
	Legal documents and correspondence	Retained indefinitely where necessary for legal, regulatory, archival, or academic verification purposes.
	Insurance, tenders, purchase requisition, purchase invoices, payments, creditor statements,	7 years
	Payroll – Payslips, Revenue documents, Staff Expenses	7 years
	Bank statements, documentation and correspondence	7 Years
I.T.	Staff I.T. profiles / user accounts	Duration of employment plus 1 month
	Learner I.T. profiles	As per learner records above.
Human Resources	Personal records - employment history, qualifications, training, salary increments, appointment and termination details, medical certificates, leave of absence, birth certificates, staff development	Retained indefinitely where necessary for legal, regulatory, archival, or academic verification purposes.
	Staff personal information (address, email, telephone)	Duration of employment plus 1 year

Documents/Records	Detail	Retention requirement
	Application forms and any other documentation in respect of applicants who are not offered positions	1 year after advertisement of post
	Health & safety statements and records	Retained indefinitely where necessary for legal, regulatory, archival, or academic verification purposes.
	Staff Training / CPD records	Retained indefinitely where necessary for legal, regulatory, archival, or academic verification purposes.

Records retention schedules are reviewed annually and updated as required, taking into account:

- statutory and regulatory requirements
- the nature and responsibilities of programmes reflected in the records
- the purpose and function of the records
- how records are created, used, and managed by staff in the course of their duties
- the organisation and structure of record series, including the consolidation or separation of record categories where appropriate
- the nature and scope of data captured within electronic record-keeping systems, including changes arising from organisational or functional developments.

ICPPD is committed to maintaining robust procedures to ensure the integrity, security, privacy, and confidentiality of all records.

The College takes all reasonable steps to protect information received in confidence and to ensure that it is handled and maintained in accordance with this obligation.

10.14 Cybersecurity Statement

ICPPD is committed to maintaining the security and integrity of its information systems and data, in line with its obligations under the ***Data Protection Act 2018***, the ***General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR)***, and relevant QQI quality assurance requirements.

The College implements appropriate technical and organisational measures to protect personal data and institutional information against unauthorised access, loss, alteration, or disclosure.

These measures include secure IT infrastructure, access controls, password management protocols, anti-virus and firewall protection, data backup procedures, and the use of secure systems for data storage and transmission.

ICPPD ensures that access to systems and data is restricted to authorised personnel on a need-to-know basis, and that all users are responsible for maintaining the confidentiality and security of access credentials.

The College also engages external IT service providers, where appropriate, to support the management,

monitoring, and security of its systems. Regular reviews of cybersecurity measures are undertaken to ensure continued effectiveness and to respond to emerging risks.

Staff receive training and guidance on cybersecurity awareness and best practices, including the identification and prevention of potential threats such as phishing and data breaches.

Cybersecurity forms an integral part of the College's overall risk management and quality assurance framework, supporting the protection of information, continuity of operations, and compliance with statutory and regulatory obligations.

ICPPD maintains procedures for the identification, reporting, and management of cybersecurity incidents, including data breaches, in accordance with GDPR requirements. All incidents are assessed, recorded, and addressed promptly to mitigate risk and prevent recurrence.

Where required under GDPR, personal data breaches will be notified to the Data Protection Commission within 72 hours and to affected individuals where legally required.

10.14.1 Personal Data Breach Notification and Management Procedure

ICPPD is committed to the effective identification, management, and reporting of personal data breaches in accordance with the ***General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR)*** and the ***Data Protection Act 2018.***

A personal data breach includes any incident that leads to the accidental or unlawful destruction, loss, alteration, unauthorised disclosure of, or access to personal data.

1. Identification and Initial Reporting
All staff are required to immediately report any suspected or confirmed personal data breach to their line manager and the Data Protection Officer (DPO) without undue delay.

Examples include (but are not limited to):

- loss or theft of devices or documents containing personal data
- unauthorised access to systems or records
- sending personal data to the wrong recipient
- cyber security incidents such as phishing or malware attacks
- accidental deletion or corruption of personal data

2. Containment and Risk Mitigation
Upon notification, the DPO (or designated officer) will:

- take immediate steps to contain the breach and prevent further data loss
- assess the nature, scope, and sensitivity of the data involved
- identify the potential impact on individuals and the organisation
- implement measures to mitigate harm where possible

3. Risk Assessment
The DPO will assess the risk to the rights and freedoms of affected individuals, considering:

- the type and sensitivity of personal data involved
- the number of individuals affected
- the likelihood and severity of potential harm
- whether the data was protected (e.g. encryption)

4. Notification to the Data Protection Commission

Where a personal data breach is likely to result in a risk to individuals' rights and freedoms, ICPPD will notify the Data Protection Commission without undue delay and, where feasible, within 72 hours of becoming aware of the breach, in accordance with GDPR requirements.

The notification will include:

- a description of the nature of the breach
- categories and approximate number of individuals affected
- categories and approximate number of records affected
- contact details of the DPO
- likely consequences of the breach
- measures taken or proposed to address the breach

5. Communication to Affected Individuals

Where a breach is likely to result in a high risk to the rights and freedoms of individuals, ICPPD will communicate the breach to affected individuals without undue delay. This communication will be clear, transparent, and include guidance on steps individuals can take to protect themselves.

6. Documentation and Record Keeping

All personal data breaches, regardless of whether notification is required, will be:

- documented in the College's breach register
- reviewed by the DPO
- analysed to identify root causes
- used to inform corrective actions and prevent recurrence

7. Review and Improvement

Following any breach, ICPPD will review relevant policies, procedures, and technical controls to strengthen data protection measures and reduce the risk of future incidents.

All breach handling activities form part of the College's wider risk management and data protection governance framework.

10.15 GDPR Risk Register

A GDPR risk register is maintained to identify, assess, and mitigate risks associated with personal data processing, supporting the College's accountability obligations and providing evidence of compliance in the event of regulatory audit or investigation.

10.16 Data Protection Impact Assessment

ICPPD conducts a Data Protection Impact Assessment (DPIA) for any proposed project, initiative, or service involving the processing of personal data where such processing is likely to result in a high risk to the rights and freedoms of individuals. DPIAs are particularly undertaken where new or significantly changed data processing technologies are introduced within the College.

10.17 Policy Governance, Review and Version Control

ICPPD is committed to maintaining up-to-date, effective, and compliant policies in line with legal, regulatory, and quality assurance requirements. This policy is subject to a structured governance and review process to ensure its continued relevance and compliance with the *Data Protection Act 2018*, *GDPR*, and QQI Quality Assurance expectations.

This policy will be reviewed at least annually, or sooner where required due to legislative, regulatory, organisational, or operational changes.

The review process will include:

- oversight and coordination by the College Manager
- input and advisory review by the Data Protection Officer (DPO)
- consultation with relevant academic and administrative stakeholders where appropriate
- formal review and approval by the Board of Directors
- consideration of feedback from audits, incidents, and operational experience.

Any amendments to this policy must be formally approved by the Board of Directors prior to implementation, unless minor administrative updates are required (such as formatting or contact detail changes), in which case these may be approved under delegated authority and subsequently reported to the Board.

The Board of Directors retains ultimate responsibility for the approval, governance, and oversight of this policy.