



# QUALITY ASSURANCE MANUAL

**September 2019**

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## Preamble

American College Dublin (ACD) was established in 1993 as a non-profit educational trust by Lynn University, Boca Raton, Florida. In January 2009 ACD became a constituent college of Irish American University, which is composed of American College Dublin and American College Delaware.

The College's commitment to quality education encompasses all aspects of the academic, personal, and professional development of its learners and staff, with particular emphasis on excellence, competence, knowledge and communication skills. The College's objective is to provide quality international education for learners from all over the world, by combining the excellent traditions of the American and Irish educational systems.

The College is currently running the following QOI degree programmes:

- Bachelor of Arts (Hons) in International Business (level 8)
- Master of Business in International Business (level 9)
- Bachelor of Arts (Hons) in Liberal Arts (level 8)

In addition to the above programmes the College offers, under its accreditation with the Middle States Commission on Higher Education (MSCHE), the following degree programmes:

- Bachelor of Fine Arts in Creative Writing
- Master of Fine Arts in Creative Writing
- Master of Fine Arts in Creative Writing Practice
- Bachelor of Fine Arts in Performing Arts
- Associate of Fine Arts in Musical Theatre
- Bachelor of Fine Arts in Musical Theatre
- Bachelor of Arts in Event Management
- Bachelor of Arts in Hospitality Management
- Master of Fine Arts in Performance
- Master of Business Administration
- Master of Business Administration in Oil and Gas Management

## Introduction

Quality assurance as part of an academic accreditation process started in American College Dublin in 2003 in the context of the institution's self-study report submitted to HETAC (now QQI) in January 2002. Following the review the first Quality Assurance Manual was submitted to HETAC in November 2004 and granted approval in April 2005. The Quality Assurance Committee was subsequently established in October 2005 to oversee the maintenance and update of the Quality Assurance Manual (QAM) and procedures, and to monitor the implementation of quality assurance policies. It was decided from the outset that the quality assurance policies and procedures would be designed and developed so that they provided default guidelines for the entire institution, including its non-HETAC (and, subsequently, non-QQI) programmes and commitments, thus avoiding duplication of process, with any relevant deviations noted in the QAM as it evolved.

In February 2009 the Quality Assurance Committee was reconstituted with enlarged membership. The Committee met twice yearly to discuss updates and improvements to the QAM, to ensure that it reflects the institutional effectiveness and functioning of the College, and helps maintain the quality of education the College provides. In September 2010 the functions of the Quality Assurance Committee were incorporated into the working of the Academic Council.

Following a consultation process with HETAC, the College undertook a review of its quality assurance procedures and offered a new QAM, subsequently agreed with HETAC in November 2010 after an exhaustive internal process of research and consultation with external quality assurance peers. The resulting QAM provided a comprehensive description of the procedures that underlie the College's practice and allow that practice to be monitored and enhanced on an ongoing basis.

In the following year the QAM underwent further revisions as part of the College institutional review and the Quality Improvement Plan, completed in June 2011. The version of the QAM which emerged incorporated the recommendations made by HETAC as part of the institutional review to improve the quality assurance procedures and their implementation by the College, and incremental revisions of the document in keeping with changing circumstances and developments in the institution. In 2016 the College underwent a programmatic review processes with HETAC's successor organization, QQI. The revisions arising out of this programmatic review also informed the development of the QAM in the following years.

The procedures for internal quality assurance established by the College and developed up to the introduction of the present revised version of QAM followed the structure of the *Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area* (Helsinki 2009, 3<sup>rd</sup> edition, pages 16–19). This document identified 'seven elements' of internal quality assurance within higher education institutions, including the following:

Standard 1: *Policy and procedures for quality assurance*

Standard 2: *Approval, monitoring and periodic review of programmes and awards*

Standard 3: *Assessment of learners*

Standard 4: *Quality assurance of teaching staff*

Standard 5: *Learning resources and learner support*

Standard 6: *Information systems*

Standard 7: *Public information*

In 2016 the College began a process of pursuing a revision of this structure and associated content of its quality assurance policy and procedures. This revision was envisaged as more of a root-and-branch reassessment and recasting of the procedures that had been revised on an annual basis incrementally since 2011. It was thought that the completion of the 2016 programmatic review provided a useful starting point from which to explore a fundamental review and reworking of the QA procedures, which would also allow the review to tie in with the institution's QQI re-engagement process and an alignment with [new guidelines](#) on quality assurance procedures, issued by QQI in April 2016.

The QQI quality assurance policy and guidelines were informed by the requirements of the [Qualifications and Quality Assurance \(Education and Training\) Act, 2012](#). The act's third part, sections 27 to 42, deals specifically with quality assurance. Section 27 sets out the general principles for the implementation of quality assurance policies and procedures among providers (under these guidelines, ACD is defined as a relevant provider); section 28 establishes the obligation for providers to submit approved quality assurance procedures; section 29 deals with established universities (not applicable to ACD); section 30 establishes the obligation for providers to submit quality assurance policies and procedures to QQI for approval, and to maintain them appropriately once approved; section 31 allows for the right of QQI to decline approval of submitted quality assurance measures; section 32 relates to designated awarding bodies (not applicable to ACD); section 33 relates to linked providers (not applicable to ACD); section 34 outlines the procedures for regular review of the provider's quality assurance procedures once approved; section 35 authorises QQI to establish directions arising out of the review of the provider's quality assurance procedures; section 36 allows for QQI to withdraw approval of a provider's quality assurance procedures; section 37 relates to review of procedures between designated awarding bodies and linked providers; section 38 relates to directions to designated awarding bodies (not applicable to ACD); section 39 relates to the withdrawal by designated awarding body of approval of quality assurance procedures (not applicable to ACD); sections 40 and 41 concern the National University of Ireland (not applicable to ACD), and section 42 allows for QQI to conduct periodic reviews of a provider's quality assurance policies.

The College's quality assurance policies were developed out of these statutory provisions and the European revision of 2009 guidelines in the publication [Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area \(ESG\)](#) (Brussels, 2015), pages 11 to 16. The 2015 publication suggested a 10-part structure for quality assurance, which the College initially used as the basis for its revision of the QA Manual. However, in the course of 2017–18 the College decided to adopt the 11-part structure suggested in QQI's 2016 QA core guidelines, in acknowledgement of the 2012 Act's stipulation in section 28 that the provider's quality assurance policies should exhibit due regard to QQI's guidelines. Accordingly, the new revision of the College's quality assurance manual has the following structure for its QA policies and procedures:

Standard 1: *Governance and management of quality*

Standard 2: *Documented approach to quality assurance*

Standard 3: *Programmes of education and training*

- Standard 4: *Staff recruitment, management and development*
- Standard 5: *Teaching and learning*
- Standard 6: *Assessment of learners*
- Standard 7: *Supports for learners*
- Standard 8: *Information and data management*
- Standard 9: *Public information and communication*
- Standard 10: *Other parties involved in education and training*
- Standard 11: *Self-evaluation, monitoring and review*

The extent to which the above standards for quality assurance meet the regulator's guidelines and enhance the educational and administrative operations of American College Dublin is discussed in detail in the following chapters of the present document.



## **1. Governance and management of quality**

### **1.0 Overview**

The chief policy of American College Dublin is to ensure a high level of quality in all areas of its operation, including institutional mission, objectives, planning and assessment, programme content and development, learner assessment, learner retention, progression and completion, learner relations, learner-lecturer relations, staff management, administrative procedures, and facilities management. In each of these areas the College has established procedures for quality of delivery and processes to allow for institutional assessment of the outcomes of those procedures. In this way the College seeks to monitor and ensure quality for its chief stakeholders: its academic, administrative, and technical staff, its learners and the community.

Quality assurance can only be implemented on the basis of sufficient and balanced governance and management structure and an associated system of planning. American College Dublin is committed to the development of the quality of its operations and procedures, implicitly in the day-to-day running of the institution, and explicitly by the monitoring of its procedures through the Academic Council, which regularly publishes the updated policies, rules, and procedures to reflect and enhance the quality of the institution's operations. The chief working document that reflects these rules and procedures is the present document, the Quality Assurance Manual, available in hardcopy in the College Library and electronically on the College's [website](#). The Manual is continually updated following the feedback from all of its stakeholders, by updates as necessary during the academic year, and following the annual review which takes place at the end of each academic year.

### **1.1. The College's mission, vision and the strategic plan**

The mission and vision set out the overarching purpose of the institution. These are assessed and revised at least once every five years, as part of the review of the current strategic plan at the end of the five-year cycle and the preparation of the strategic plan for the next cycle.

The strategic plan sets out the institutional objectives and initiatives designed to meet and facilitate the achievement of the institution's mission and vision. The planning and outcomes assessment processes are driven by the Academic Council, which oversees the quality of these processes by way of an annual assessment (each August/September) of progress on each of the strategic goals and initiatives from the previous year, including the recommendations for their pursuit over the coming year. This evaluation may lead to amendments of the strategic plan, and, if necessary (though less commonly), of the institution's mission and vision. Each new quinquennial version of the mission, vision and the strategic plan, and any amendments provided in a new edition of the strategic plan inside the five-year period, must also be approved by the Board of Trustees.

The mission and vision of American College Dublin are as follows:

**Mission**

To offer the best characteristics of Irish and American higher education in an intimate environment underpinned by the holistic liberal arts model of learning, enabling learners to realize their potential and participate successfully in the world.

**Vision**

American College Dublin will provide a high-quality undergraduate and postgraduate education: one that is rigorous, stimulating and valuable. The institution will emphasize the core values of academic excellence, innovation, ethical integrity and multiculturalism. The institutional ethos and programmes of study will inculcate and reflect the best of the Irish and American higher education traditions, engaging the learner in an educational experience that is active, participative and challenging. American College Dublin will uphold the highest standards of ethical conduct in all its activities, including support for academic freedom, appropriate disclosure of information to the institution’s stakeholders, equality of access and opportunity. The College will strive to instil a passion for education that advances the development of the individual’s talents and a process of lifelong learning.

QA documentation	Status
a/ Current Strategic Plan	
b/ Annual review of the Strategic Plan	

**1.2. Organizational structures**

American College Dublin has established organizational structures for ensuring that its mission and subsidiary strategic goals are appropriately pursued. These structures and the activities they facilitate all serve quality assurance; this is equally the case, whether in explicit quality assurance processes (such as this document), or in implicit quality assurance processes which may not carry the phrase ‘quality assurance’, yet in their evaluating and enhancement activities contribute fundamentally to the maintenance and improvement of quality in the institution.

**1.2.1 Governing body**

At the foundation of American College Dublin in 1993, a [Board of Trustees](#) was appointed to control and manage the strategic affairs of the College. Dr Donald E. Ross, President and CEO of Lynn University, Boca Raton, Florida, was appointed President and CEO of American College Dublin. The Board of Trustees consisted of the President and seven Board members (now eighteen), of which three were Irish and four were American. The Board members consists of distinguished and accomplished individuals who serve the College as volunteers and who are dedicated to the College’s successful accomplishment of its mission. The Board is a self-perpetuating governing body in that it alone is responsible for election of its new members.

Dr Ross remained President of the institution until June 2018, when he was succeeded by Dr Joseph A. Rooney.

The President reports to the Board of Trustees, a body that regularly quality assures the activities of the President through an annual evaluation, completed by the directors, all trustees themselves, who liaise with the other trustees in completing the evaluation, sharing it with the Chair and with the President. The Board of Trustees also quality assures its own activities through an annual evaluation. The Board is independent of the President and all other constituencies of the institution, enabling it to maintain autonomous oversight over policy and strategic direction, even as it remains at an appropriate remove from the day-to-day operations of the institution.

The Board of Trustees oversees the duties of the Senior Management Committee and the Academic Council, whose members periodically provide the Board with a written (and orally presented) report on their respective areas of responsibility; the members of the Board ask questions and discuss the reports as appropriate. The Board of Trustees also reviews and approves or makes appropriate recommendations regarding the institution’s accounts and the Risk Register. The members of the Board of Trustees receive no compensation for their service to American College Dublin.

The Board of Trustees is charged with overseeing the policy development, academic quality, financial integrity, strategic direction and institutional management of the College. The Board provides the President with advice and counsel regarding the operation and development of the institution.

The President maintains an office to assist him in the discharge of his duties. Staffed by the Vice President, Business Office Manager and Financial Advisor, it deliberates on a day-to-day basis with him on matters of strategic planning and oversight, executive management and decision making, budgetary and financial decision making and oversight. When the President is required to be absent from Dublin for attendance at conferences, meetings and the like, all matters are reported to the Vice President, who in turn reports these responsibilities directly to the President.

The Board of Trustees records the discussions and decisions of its meetings in minutes, which are distributed to all members of the board, along with designated areas of responsibility for follow-up as required, and are reviewed for further action if necessary at the next meeting under matters arising.

QA documentation	Status
a/ Minutes of Board of Trustees meetings	
b/ Board evaluations of President	
c/ Board self-evaluations	

### 1.2.2 Senior Management Committee

The College’s operational management is directed by the Senior Management Committee, whose functions include:

- To ensure the efficient performance of the College in all its operations;
- To ensure that the physical resources of the College are properly maintained;
- To make recommendations on the allocation of resources, human, financial and physical (including HR disciplinary and grievance appeals), within the discretion of the College, to review the facilities report and the ICT report, and to review the past year’s expenditure and budgetary documents and projections for the year ahead for these resources each summer;
- To maintain a Risk Register, reviewed for resource, legal, reputational and academic (based on findings provided by the Academic Committee and Academic Council) risk at least once a semester, and to recommend and action appropriate follow-up; also, to report the Risk Register to the Board of Trustees at its annual reporting meeting.

The Senior Management Committee consists of the College’s President as Chair, the Vice President, Director of Administration, Academic Dean, Director of Student Life, Registrar, Director of Admissions, Director of ICT, and Business Office Manager. In the case of the President’s absence the meetings are chaired by his nominee.

The Committee meets usually once a month or whenever otherwise necessary, and the required quorum is four members. At a meeting each member presents matters of relevance to the Committee. After the matters presented are discussed a decision is taken on such actions as are deemed necessary. Each meeting is recorded in minutes, which are subsequently circulated to all those on the committee; decisions requiring action along with those responsible are so noted in the minutes and are revisited for follow-up under matters arising at the next meeting. A file with the minutes of all meetings that have taken place is held in the Vice President’s Office.

QA documentation	Status
a/ Minutes of meetings	
b/ Follow-up on decisions for action as appropriate by minuted reporting back at next meeting	

### 1.2.3 Academic Council

The Academic Council is responsible for overseeing and ratifying matters related to academic planning, quality assurance and standards. It is the governing body of the academic affairs of the institution. The Council consists of the Vice President and Academic Dean as chair, Registrar and Quality Assurance Officer, Director of Administration, Director of Admissions, Director of Student Life, Director of ICT, Heads of Programmes, representatives of the Faculty, and Librarian. The Director of Student Life also meets regularly with members of the Student Union and reports on issues raised by class representatives through the Student Union; the outcomes of these meetings are reported to the Academic Council.

The specific responsibilities of the Academic Council include:

- Overseeing and approving or modifying as appropriate the planning and management of the institution’s academic affairs and management;
- Monitoring compliance with and ensuring the update and maintenance of institutional assessment and quality assurance procedures and the Quality Assurance Manual, under the direction of the Quality Assurance Officer;

- Following approval of the updated version of the QA Manual, directing that the new version be published on the institutional website;
- Reviewing on an annual basis the strategic plan, progress on strategic initiatives, and providing amendments as required;
- Reviewing and discussing the findings of the Annual Internal Programmatic Review, and making decisions on acceptance of the findings or further action as appropriate;
- Reviewing annual reports from the Academic Committee, Admissions, ICT, and Student Life, and considering recommendations for implementation arising out of them;
- Monitoring and implementing necessary measures to maintain accreditation and regulatory compliance;
- Monitoring the overall adequacy of facilities and resources for delivery of the institution's educational programmes and making recommendations as appropriate to the SMC for action as appropriate;
- Establishing standing committees (the Academic Committee, the Internal Learner Learning Assessment Board and the External Peer Review Board), and working groups and ad hoc committees for special tasks as they arise (these committees, which are formed and meet as required, rather than on an ongoing and scheduled basis, currently include the QQI Re-engagement Steering Committee), and monitoring the progress of the same;
- Considering and ratifying as appropriate recommendations from the Academic Committee regarding academic policies and academic standards concerning teaching, learning and assessment, learner admission and progression, staff development, and academic resources;
- Final approval of new programmes and amendments to existing programmes, of academic regulations, faculty appointments, academic quality and standards;
- Responsibility, subject to appropriate consultation with MSCHE, QQI, and other regulatory bodies, for considering and ratifying the academic regulations of the institution;
- Making recommendations as appropriate for the selection, admission, retention and dismissal of students;
- Making recommendations to the president for the award of scholarships, prizes and other awards;
- Making general arrangements for tutorial and other academic counselling;
- Assisting in implementing any actions that may be directed by the president on any of the aforesaid issues.

The Academic Council meets at least two times each year. A report on its findings and decisions is circulated to the Board of Trustees.

Before each meeting an agenda is prepared by the chair and circulated to all members of the council. At the meeting each item is introduced by the chair and offered for discussion. Any resolutions arising are recorded in the minutes. Standing items on the agenda include 'any other business' and academic committee reports. The latter normally includes a summary of the findings of the Academic Committee since the last Council meeting, and particularly the findings of the Annual Internal Programmatic Review, along with discussion and approval as appropriate of recommendations made by the Academic Committee.

The required quorum for the Academic Council is four, and if the quorum for a meeting is not met, the meeting is adjourned by the chair until a suitable date. Decisions, if formally required, are taken according to a majority vote. A formal count is only taken in cases of a close division; in the event of an even division the chair has the casting vote. If a member of the meeting wishes to have his or her dissent from a decision recorded, it will be so noted in the minutes.

At each meeting the minutes of the previous meeting are circulated among those in attendance. If there are amendments to the minutes, these are either advised informally in advance and noted at the meeting, or raised formally at the meeting and discussed and amended accordingly. Items that have not been notified to the chair in advance may, at the discretion of the chair, be introduced at the conclusion of the meeting.

Minutes are taken for each meeting and circulated to all those on the council; decisions requiring action along with those responsible are so noted in the minutes and are revisited for follow-up under matters arising at the next meeting. A file with the minutes of all past meetings is held in the office of the Vice President and Academic Dean.

With the approval of the president the Academic Council may establish standing committees, working groups or ad hoc committees as it thinks proper to assist the Council in the discharge of its duties. At present the standing committees of the Academic Council include the Academic Committee, the Internal Student Learning Assessment Board and the External Peer Review Board. Working groups and ad hoc committees, which are formed and meet as required, rather than on an ongoing and scheduled basis, currently include the QQI Re-engagement Steering Committee.

QA documentation	Status
a/ Maintenance of minutes of meetings	
b/ Review of Quality Assurance processes and approval of new QAM	
b/ Strategic Plan annual review and quinquennial review	
c/ Follow-up on decisions for action by minuted reporting back at next meeting	

#### 1.2.4 Academic Committee

The Academic Committee is responsible for planning, management, and the operational oversight of the degree programmes offered by the institution.

The functions and responsibilities of the Academic Committee include:

- To assess and implement recommendations by the QA Officer for immediate changes in QA procedures, with amendment as required and ratification by the Academic Council in the annual review of the QA Manual;
- To review and make decisions as appropriate on matters of student assessment and progression, including action to address academically at-risk learners;
- To prepare the annual internal programmatic review assessing the programmes and student performance and making recommendations for improvement for the consideration of the Academic Council, the report to include grade and attendance

data points for the two academic semesters, reducing them to cumulative statistical information on grade profiles, progression, attendance, retention and completion for each programme and providing a narrative discussion of this information and feedback by external examiners in the annual external examination form and consequent recommendations for the improvement of curriculum content (as part of the annual programmatic review, all syllabi are reviewed, modified as required, and approved for the next academic year), pedagogy, support services, budgetary allocations and educational effectiveness;

- To review on an ongoing basis the operation of the academic programmes and consider proposals for their enhancement;
- To consider proposals for new programmes, conducting research and development, analysing findings and making recommendations for action to the Academic Council;
- To monitor the implementation of academic policy, maintenance of standards, and administration of the programmes, including staffing (reviewed in the meeting preceding each new semester), teaching, academic counselling and internship placement (where relevant), review and discuss Admissions Committee access and transfer policy and make amendments as appropriate for action;
- To review matters concerning student life and take actions as appropriate;
- To monitor and implement improvements in academic discipline procedures for appropriateness, effectiveness and security.

The Academic Committee consists of the Vice President and Academic Dean as chair, Registrar, heads of programmes, faculty members, and learner representatives. The required quorum is four. The Academic Committee meets twice each semester, or whenever otherwise necessary. Before each meeting an agenda is prepared by the chair and circulated among all members of the Committee. Standing items on the agenda are ‘matters arising’ and ‘any other business.’ Each meeting is recorded in minutes, which are subsequently circulated to all those on the committee; decisions requiring action along with those responsible are so noted in the minutes and are revisited for follow-up under matters arising at the next meeting. A file with the minutes of all meetings that have taken place is held in the office of the chair.

The Academic Committee also reports feedback from students concerning curriculum development, academic developments in their fields, suggestions from the external community (internship placements are particularly useful for generating this information), and the changing requirements for admission to undergraduate and graduate programmes; this feedback provides material justifying alteration to existing modules or introduction of entirely new modules. The Academic Committee reports on the main findings of its meetings to the next meeting of the Academic Council. Also, at the end of each academic year the Academic Committee presents its annual findings, both in the form of the annual internal programmatic review to the Academic Council and in a general presentation and discussion.

The Academic Committee has two standing committees that report to it: the Internal Learner Learning Assessment Board and the External Peer Review Board.

<b>QA documentation</b>	<b>Status</b>
a/ Maintenance of minutes of meetings	
b/ Follow-up on decisions for action by minuted reporting at next meeting	
c/ External Peer Reviewer reports and College responses	

d/ Learner feedback forms and commentary by Academic Committee	
e/ Annual Internal Programmatic Review form (see below, Appendix 13.2)	
f/ Statistical data analysis of pass/fail rates, progression rates, completion rates	

### 1.2.5 Internal Student Learning Assessment Board

The Internal Student Learning Assessment Board has the following functions and responsibilities:

- To review and approve grades from the most recent student learning assessment and final examination session, subject as required to external review;
- To review award levels of graduating students, subject as required to external approval;
- To monitor student progress and recommend interventions where appropriate;
- To establish and update regulations and practices for student and learning assessment and the conduct of examinations, subject to the approval of the Academic Committee;
- To oversee the grade review process;
- To oversee and decide on issues relating to academic discipline;
- To report as necessary to the Academic Committee on its findings and operations.

The Internal Student Learning Assessment Board consists of the Registrar as chair, and of internal examiners, who are typically the lecturers delivering the courses. The board meets as soon as possible after each semester when final grades have been received by the Academic Office, and before the summer External Peer Review Board takes place; and as soon as possible after all August repeat session final grades have been received by the Academic Office, and before the fall External Peer Review Board takes place.

During a meeting the Registrar reads through the grade lists for each of the modules offered. There is a discussion of all 'A,' 'F' and 'NP' grades, as well as of any borderline grades or results that warrant attention. For final awards, all firsts and borderline results are considered, together with any adjustments that might be proposed. Minutes are taken for each meeting, and a file with the minutes of all meetings that have taken place is held in the office of the Registrar.

QA documentation	Status
a/ Maintenance of minutes of meetings	
b/ Follow-up on decisions for action by minuted reporting back at next meeting	
c/ Note of review and sign-off on each module's grade sheet	

### 1.2.6 External Peer Review Board

The External Peer Review Board has the following functions and responsibilities:

- To review and confirm grades from the most recent student assessment and final examination session;



- To review and confirm award levels of graduating students;
- To monitor learner progress and recommend interventions where appropriate;
- To monitor assessment processes and recommend improvements as appropriate;
- To report as necessary to the Academic Committee on its findings, programme delivery and development.

The External Peer Review Board consists of Registrar as chair, Academic Dean, internal examiners and external peer reviewers. The required quorum is four, including at least one external examiner. The board meets as soon as possible after the semester-two Internal Learner Learning Assessment Board has met. The autumn meeting takes place as soon as possible after the August repeat session Internal Learner Learning Assessment Board has met.

During a meeting the Registrar reads through the grade lists for each of the modules offered. At the conclusion of the reading for each stage the broadsheets are circulated among those in attendance at the meeting for signing by the relevant internal examiners and external peer review examiners. There is a discussion of any grades or awards that are signalled for consideration by those attending the meeting. In these meetings all internal examiners are present and their views are given predominant weight, so as to protect academic freedom in the learner learning assessment process.

Each meeting of the External Peer Review Board is recorded in minutes. A file with the minutes of all meetings that have taken place is held in the office of the Registrar. A copy of the signed grade broadsheets is held in the Academic Office.

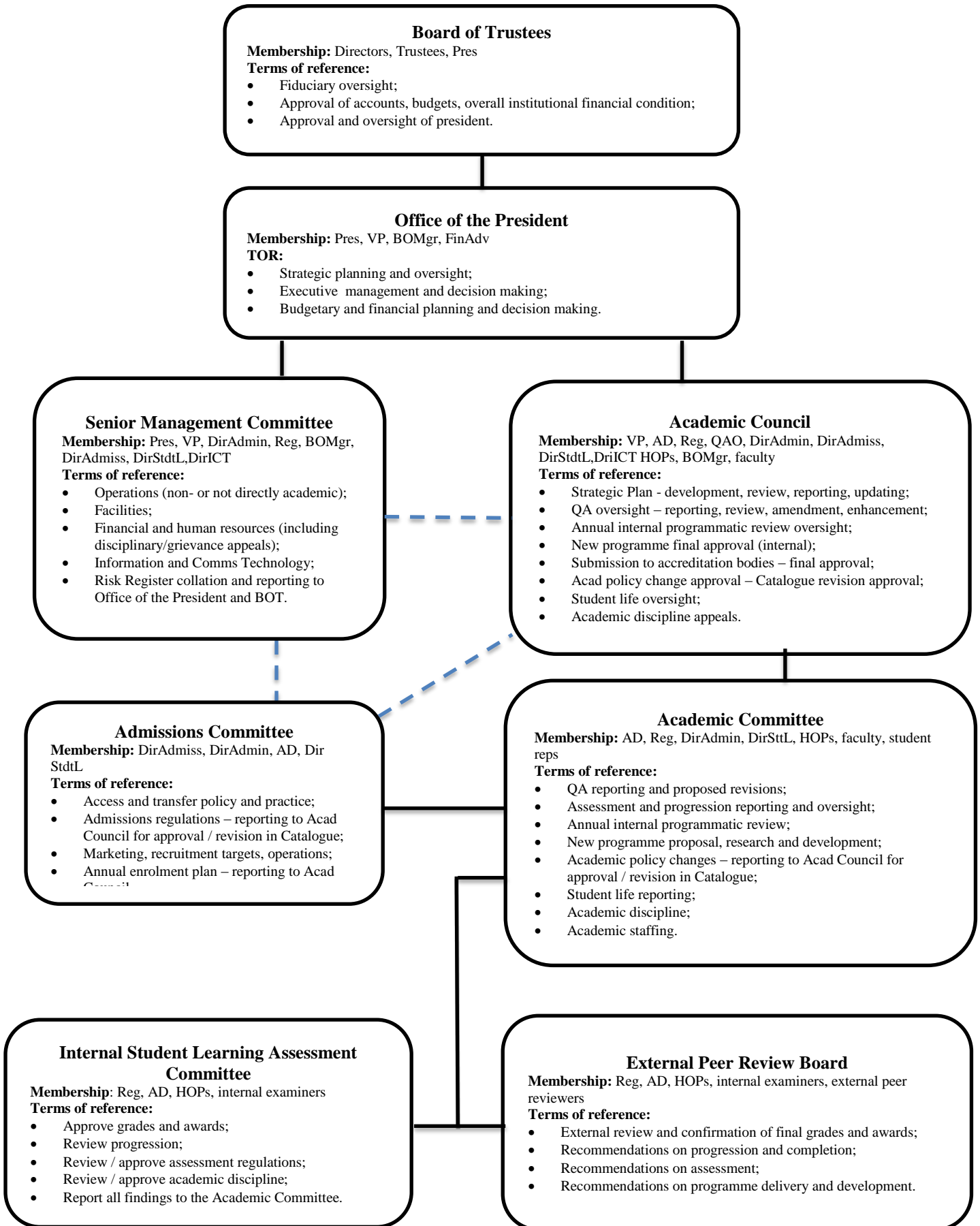
QA documentation	Status
a/ Maintenance of minutes of meetings	
b/ Signed broadsheets and covering correspondence to QQI	

### 1.2.7 Admissions Committee

The Admissions Committee meets regularly, its frequency depending on the time of year. The committee consists of the Director of Admissions as chair, the Director of Administration, the Academic Dean, the Director of Student Life and others as required. The committee discusses access and transfer arrangements, proposing changes in admissions regulations for the Admissions Handbook as required and seeking approval of the changes from the Academic Council for insertion in the Catalogue and Quality Assurance Manual, reports on recruitment planning, forthcoming travel, marketing and advertising and ongoing results. The Chair reports findings to the Academic Council, including the annual Enrolment Management Plan in its report to the fall meeting, and regularly discusses admissions policy and practice with the Academic Committee and the Senior Management Committee.

QA documentation	Status
a/ Maintenance of minutes of meetings and follow-up	
b/ Reports to Academic Council	

### 1.2.8 Organizational chart



**Abbreviations (alphabetical order):** AD-Academic Dean; BOMgr-Business Office Manager; DirAdmin-Director of Administration; DirAdmiss-Director of Admissions; DirICT-Director of Information and Communications Technology; DirStdL-Director of Student Life; FinAdv-Financial Advisor; HOP-Head of Programme; QAO-Quality Assurance Officer; Pres-President; Reg-Registrar; VP-Vice President

### 1.3 Management of quality assurance

Quality assurance takes place within an assessment and institutional improvement context that is fundamental to the College's management structures and activity. The College is guided by its mission and strategic plan. These primary statements of institutional intention are in turn informed by a range of assessment procedures that enable the institution to assess how well it is fulfilling its mission and goals, and what actions are necessary to maintain and enhance the achievement of the broad objectives as well as those that flow from them (these actions extend from ongoing revision and adjustment of the mission and strategic plan down to the minutiae of ongoing revision and adjustment of module content, learning outcomes and learner assessment).

Collectively, these activities form the greater part of the College's quality assurance arrangements. As stated earlier in this document, these multifarious assessment and improvement processes all contribute to the institutional aim of assuring and enhancing institutional quality, whether they are attended explicitly by the phrase 'quality assurance' or not.

#### 1.3.1 Processes, evaluation, follow-up

The central record of the institution's purpose and planning is the Mission and Strategic Plan. The Strategic Plan has eight institutional goals, each with four or five specific initiatives formulated to facilitate the achievement of the goal over the lifetime of the plan. Goal seven of the Strategic Plan addresses quality assurance:

*VII. Develop and enhance the College's quality assurance procedures.*

The chief means by which the institution assesses itself is its quality assurance procedures. The College will revise and develop its quality assurance procedures and its Quality Assurance Manual on a continuous basis.

*Initiatives:*

1. Revise the Quality Assurance Manual and provide for its ongoing revision annually.
2. Ensure that all faculty, staff and learners are aware of the role of quality assurance in the assessment and monitoring of institutional performance.
3. Explore and apply the full potential of quality assurance as a means of maintaining and improving institutional effectiveness.
4. Embed quality assurance in the fabric of the institution by publicizing the quality assurance procedures and Quality Assurance Manual to the College community.

The present document, the Quality Assurance Manual (QAM), records the institution's quality assurance processes and procedures. These are subject to an ongoing review for

effectiveness as they operate on a day-to-day basis, with provision for immediate changes by the Quality Assurance Officer, notified to the Academic Committee, as well as to a formal assessment for completeness, ratification of immediate changes, modification and follow-up as required by the Quality Assurance Officer annually, in the last Academic Council of the academic year.

The structures of governance through which the Strategic Plan’s objectives for quality assurance and the attendant quality assurance processes operate are set out in the sections above (1.2.1–8). The processes and their findings are subject to an ongoing assessment and appropriate action and follow-up, as described below:

- Chapter 2 addresses the documentation of quality assurance;
- Chapter 3 outlines quality assurance arrangements for the design and continuous improvement of the institution’s educational programmes;
- Chapter 4 sets out the quality assurance process for staff recruitment and development;
- Chapter 5 outlines quality assurance activities in the area of teaching and learning;
- Chapter 6 reviews quality assurance of learner assessment;
- Chapter 7 sets out quality assurance processes for learner support;
- Chapter 8 details quality assurance measures for the management and caretaking of information and data;
- Chapter 9 outlines quality assurance provisions for the appropriate conveyance of public information and communication;
- Chapter 10 reviews quality assurance arrangements, insofar as they are relevant to American College Dublin, for working with other educational parties;
- Chapter 11 sets out the institution’s quality assurance procedures for self-evaluation, monitoring and continuous review.

QA documentation	Status
a/ Current Strategic Plan	
b/ Annual review of the Strategic Plan	
c/ Quality Assurance Manual review and report to Academic Council	
d/ Academic Council minutes	

**1.3.2 Resources**

A primary means by which the institution seeks to assure and enhance its quality is by continuously assessing the sufficiency of its resources to fulfil its mission and its institutional objectives. Goal eight of the Strategic Plan sets out this aspect of the institution’s activities:

*VIII. Enhance the financial resources available to the institution.*

A sufficient financial base is essential for the effective functioning of the institution. The institution will manage its financial resources with increasing efficiency and expand the range of funding for the institution.

*Initiatives:*

1. Maintain balanced budgets and fiscally sound resource allocation.
2. Examine ways to reduce unnecessary costs and pass those savings into productive areas of institutional operations.
3. Increase revenue by way of enrolment expansion in the postgraduate, liberal and fine arts and business fields.
4. Increase revenue from the US study abroad market.
5. Pursue gifts and grant opportunities for capital growth.
6. Establish endowed chairs for programmes in business and the liberal and fine arts.
7. Reach out to alumni for advice on revenue generation and for contributions to the institution.

As a non-for-profit institution, ACD does not need or seek to put pressure on its educational operations in order to produce profits for directors, shareholders and other investors; educational profit is by institutional and legal definition explicitly excluded from ACD's objectives. Nevertheless, as a small and private institution, one that does not receive the benefit of state funding, ACD must constantly assess its financial resources and the control the costs of meeting its mission. Evaluation and planning for financially prudent decision making is one of the institution's key quality assurance processes, allowing it to plan realistically and to assess and take action to avoid financial risks.

American College Dublin has the necessary human, financial, technical, information and other material resources to achieve its mission and goals. These resource areas are interrelated by planning, budgeting, and services to learners, faculty, and staff. Ultimately all decision-making processes regarding the allocation of institutional resources are connected to the mission and strategic plan and the annual budget process. From these budgetary activities, weekly and monthly budgets are derived for the purposes of meeting the institution's ongoing operational requirements

The University's primary method of institutional resource allocation is this budgetary process, overseen by the Business Office, reporting to the Senior Management Committee and the Office of the President. In May each year the University's academic and administrative units are given estimated cost centre revenue estimates and asked to submit to the Office of the President budgetary requirements for the forthcoming financial year, beginning on 1 July. The financial requirements are accompanied as required by a narrative explaining and justifying the requested expenditures, and are usually supplemented by teleconference and face-to-face meetings between the relevant personnel in order to discuss the requests.

The budgetary requests are subsequently subjected to analysis by the Business Office and the Office of the President and returned to the respective cost centres for discussion and negotiation. Within this process the human, financial, technical and physical facilities as well as programmatic and institutional development resource requirements are established for the

next fiscal year. The outcomes of these analyses and negotiations are incorporated into the final institutional annual budget in July each year. The Strategic Plan 2015–20 is costed line-by-line for each of its five years. These costings are reviewed and revised each fall on the basis of the plan’s annual evaluation by the Academic Council and the funding possibilities arising out of the annual budget projections. In this way the allocations for the pursuit of the goals and initiatives in the plan are kept up-to-date and subjected to budgetary rigour and analysis. Although financial and budgetary parameters are established for academic programmes through this process, and although financial viability is one of the means by which the fitness of a programme is assessed, financial decisions are not brought to bear on any of the academic content, delivery or assessment aspects of its educational programming; these fall entirely within the responsibility of the Academic Council and the committees which report to it.

The annual budget is revised on a monthly basis thereafter to take account of the finalized data from each month and the changing circumstances as the financial year progresses. The Business Office oversees the preparation of weekly and monthly expenditure spreadsheets, from which current budgets for the month are finalized and ongoing expenses are paid.

At the conclusion of each financial year the accounts are closed, and an independent audit follows within four months. The final accounts and independent audit provide empirical data which inform the predictive calculations of the current and future budgets.

The institution also prepares institutional budgetary forecasts for up to five years into the future, though without the same levels of detailed inputs from individual units and, inevitably, with diminishing accuracy as the years become more distant. These projections are used to inform forward planning and to assess, in as much as is possible, the likelihood of future events or constraints emerging which might place a strain or risk on the institution’s financial resource base.

The College’s relatively small scale makes it possible for institutional resource requirements planning and risk assessment to be achieved effectively through this process. A localized approach, in which each cost-centre makes a case for its requirements directly to the Business Office and arrives at a feasible costing for resource allocation through a dialog with the Business Office, Senior Management Committee members and Office of the President, is appropriate and effective for an institution of ACD’s size.

QA documentation	Status
a/ Current Strategic Plan, including line-item costings	
b/ Annual review of the Strategic Plan	
c/ Annual budgetary projections and updates; regular ongoing updates, analysis and decision making based on weekly and monthly cash flows	
d/ Audited accounts, including review and approval by the Board	

### 1.3.3 Embedding a quality culture

The continuous assessment of the institution’s activities and the ongoing enhancement of them proceeding from that process of analysis is fundamental to what American College Dublin does. Many of these processes are not freighted with the phrase ‘quality assurance’ or

‘quality’. However, they all are implicitly and substantively engaged with the pursuit of quality and its improvement. Moreover, given their explicit reference to quality assurance in day-to-day administrative and academic workings of the College (whereby, for example, matters such as external examiner arrangements or Academic Committee review of grades and progression are commonly referred to as aspects of ACD’s quality assurance processes, or in documents such as recorded minutes or in the present document), the processes that allow the institution to analyse and improve itself are understood and recognized by the College community as constituting a quality culture and a regime of quality assurance.

The quality assurance processes have been designed to be appropriate in their extent and scope to the scale of the institution. Quality assurance is supposed to be an enabling administrative paradigm and method of work, not an end in itself or the *raison d’être* for American College Dublin. It is supposed to help, not to be an obstacle or a problem. If quality assurance becomes unnecessarily burdensome, it will alienate those who operate within it, and instead of an embedded culture of collaboration and involvement there will be a culture of avoidance. The College’s quality system is, therefore, strictly designed not to create work for its own sake. It is designed to be relevant to what the College does. The intention of the ongoing review of the QAM is, apart from establishing that the current quality assurance procedures are being followed, to ensure that all processes are relevant, necessary, and useful. If a process is found not to serve these requirements, it is modified, reduced or dropped. The College seeks therefore to limit the administrative overhead that attends its quality assurance regime; it is encouraged by the recent QQI advice that procedures should be ‘integrated into the normal activities of the provider, with the minimum unnecessary administrative requirements’ (Guidelines, 2016, p. 9).

The quality culture of American College Dublin, understood as the continuous assessment and the application of that assessment of the quality of the institution’s activities, is thus embedded in everything that the College does. This document outlines the main procedures by which the quality culture is enabled and applied in the institution’s operations; it is referred to regularly as a guideline for procedure by all the institution’s stakeholders; students are referred to it for guidance on admission, learning, assessment and grade reviews; it is published on the College’s website; and, apart from ongoing review and modification as required through the Academic Committee; and it is subjected to a formal examination, revision for enhancement and re-approval by the Academic Council once every year, a process that necessitates the active participation of all those in the institution who are primarily involved in developing, superintending and implementing the quality assurance system.

QA documentation	Status
a/ Current Quality Assurance Manual	
b/ Annual review of the QAM (Academic Council minutes)	
c/ QAM on the College website	
d/ Recorded minutes and reports of College meetings	

## 2. Documented approach to quality assurance

### 2.0 Overview

All of the institution's planning and operational functions take place within a quality assurance framework. Quality assurance procedures and overarching institutional assessment and functioning are themselves subject to an ongoing monitoring process. In order to demonstrate the functioning of these processes and to provide a recorded basis from which their development and enhancement can be tracked, it is necessary to provide for an appropriate level of documentation of both the processes and their performance.

### 2.1 Documented policies and procedures

Quality assurance procedures and compliance are the responsibility of the Academic Council, which nominates from within its number a Quality Assurance Officer, with responsibility for ensuring internal QA compliance. The procedures are recorded in the present document, the Quality Assurance Manual (QAM). The QAM is subject to external approval by QQI; as noted above in the Introduction, the current version has been informed by the 2016 QQI document, *Statutory Quality Assurance Guidelines*, which itself is based on the requirements of the Qualifications and Quality Assurance (Education and Training) Act, 2012.

The QAM is reviewed internally on an ongoing basis. The key documentation to verify QA procedures is reviewed using the 'QA documentation' boxes in the QAM, whereby at the end of each academic year the document trails are checked for completeness and follow-up, and their status recorded in the QAM. The QA documentation check is conducted through a Summary Check List (see Appendix 9.4). On the basis of the document check and other feedback from the QA processes provided by staff, faculty and learners, at the end of each academic year revisions to enhance both the quality of practice in the institution and processes to allow that practice to be monitored and documented are proposed to the Academic Council. As part of the QQI institutional review (see chapter 11 below), the institution's quality assurance procedures and policies are subject to a comprehensive review and revalidation procedure.

QA documentation	Status
a/ Academic Council minutes on proposed amendments to QAM	
b/ Current and preceding versions of QAM	
c/ Correspondence and other feedback on changes and updates to quality assurance practice and the QAM	
d/ QAM documentation checklist reviewed, evaluated and signed off by Academic Council at the end of each academic year	



## 2.2 A comprehensive system

The pursuit of quality and its enhancement within an educational organisation only works if it operates at fundamental level, touching and guiding all aspects of what the institution does. A system that deals with the surface of things or with circumscribed areas of activity will not fulfil the requirements of the Irish higher education legislative framework. American College Dublin's quality assurance procedures date in their formal appearance to the very beginnings of the Irish high education quality assurance paradigm; they have therefore had a long period of gestation, development and improvement, and ongoing integration into all areas of the institution's operations. Moreover, given that the institution's academic and administrative procedures were of a high quality before the term 'quality assurance' entered the Irish higher education lexicon, the system which the institution operates is deeply rooted, its development stretching back over two and a half decades, and very broad, having extended over that time frame to every part of the College's activities.

The comprehensive nature of ACD's quality assurance system is substantially described in the present document, which sets out procedures which touch and provide a guiding framework for all aspects of the institution's governance, management of resources, planning, academic delivery and assessment, and communication both internally and externally. The document also provides a guideline for recording and assessing adherence to these procedures, and regularly enhancing them, both on an ongoing basis and in the formal review of the assurance regime that takes place at the beginning of each academic year under the auspices of the Academic Council.

QA documentation	Status
a/ Academic Council minutes on proposed amendments to QAM	
b/ Current and preceding versions of QAM	
c/ Correspondence and other feedback on changes and updates to quality assurance practice and the QAM	
d/ QAM documentation checklist reviewed, evaluated and signed off by Academic Council at the end of each academic year	
e/ Strategic Plan, including its annual review.	

### 3. Programmes of education and training

#### 3.0 Overview

The commitment of the institution to academic development is reflected in the work of its faculty, offices and committees, whose joint task is to ensure that programmes are well designed, regularly monitored, and periodically reviewed. At present, the institution's only location of academic programme delivery is at American College Dublin.

American College Dublin recognizes and supports the need to design and deliver programmes (in an efficient and flexible manner) that anticipate the changing needs of society and the world, in line with national and international requirements, the national qualifications framework, and stakeholder requirements. The College strives to cultivate initiative which supports the best practice in modern programme development, to keep ACD a stimulating and attractive educational institution.

The programmes provided by ACD lead to awards by the Quality and Qualifications Ireland (QQI), (in accordance with Section 25 of the *Qualifications [Education and Training] Act, 1999*, and sections 27 to 42 of the *Qualifications and Quality Assurance [Education and Training] Act, 2012*), or (in the case of MSCHE-accredited programmes) by Irish American University. The application of academic quality principles requires that the College satisfy itself and its accrediting bodies that a learner may attain knowledge, skills and competence for the purpose of an award, and to ensure that programmes offered by ACD have academic and intellectual currency and standards comparable to similar awards offered anywhere in the world.

The College's portfolio of academic programmes is constantly developing through an extensive and ongoing process of designing and validating new programmes and revising and updating the existing ones. The stages of the process involve groups and committees both from within the College and in consultation with external academics and accrediting bodies, including heads of programmes, teaching staff, Academic Dean, Academic Council and Academic Committee, and QQI.

#### 3.1 Design and approval of new programmes and modules

##### 3.1.1 New modules and major modifications to existing ones

Modifications to existing modules or the submission of entirely new modules, which in themselves do not alter the essential structures or learning aims of the programme constitute curriculum development that falls within the responsibility of the Academic Council and the Academic Committee that oversees the monitoring of each programme.

At the end of each academic year the Academic Committee considers (as a standing item on the agenda for the final Academic Committee meeting of the year) feedback from learners (past and present), academic developments in the field, suggestions from the external community (internship placements are particularly useful for generating this information),

and the changing requirements for admission to post-graduate programmes of study—these provide the primary justification for proposals to alter existing modules or introduce entirely new modules. If the Academic Committee agrees to accept the changes, these are presented as part of the Academic Committee’s annual report to the Academic Council. Once the Academic Council has given its approval, the appropriate changes are made. For QQI programmes, if changes are proposed to the course schedule, these are submitted to QQI for approval (or indications of additional submissions and actions in order to attain approval). Following completion of the process, a new syllabus is entered in the College’s annual in-house file of modules, together with module outlines.

Minor modifications to existing modules (updating of reading lists and stylistic revisions or correction of errors of fact that do not have an effect on the substance of the module) need only be notified and noted in the final Academic Committee of the academic year.

QA documentation	Status
a/ Relevant Academic Committee documentation as noted above at 1.2.4	

**3.1.2 New programmes and major modifications to existing ones**

The process of introducing new award programmes develops through a number of stages, incorporating both internal and external activity. Typically, identification of opportunities for a new programme development comes through informal or formal market research and from consultation with the academic community within and outside the College, followed by programme quality assurance and associated self-evaluation processes. The strategic and logistical reasons for introducing a new programme are considered, to make sure that the proposed programme falls within the existing fields of competence within the College, and that there exists an identifiable market demand for a new programme as well as employment opportunities for prospective graduates.

The task of proposing, preparing, and revising degree programmes lies primarily within the remit of the Academic Committee (see section 1.2.4). Introduction of a new degree programme involves the following stages:

- A proposal to introduce a new programme is tabled, normally at the initiative of either the Academic Committee or the Senior Management Committee;
- An outline plan is presented to the Academic Committee for evaluation: the strengths and weakness of the proposal are discussed;
- Approval to conduct a feasibility study is granted, notified to the next Academic Council (although the Council’s endorsement is not required for the study to proceed);
- The feasibility study includes a description of the initial consultative process, an assessment of intellectual content and coherence, market research on need and probable demand for the programme, consultation with potential employers, evaluation of financial, human, time and other resource requirements, outline projections for delivery of the programme, a cost-benefit analysis, and, for QQI submissions, an outline of the rationale for seeking QQI validation;
- Submission of results of the feasibility study to the Academic Committee, input and discussion as required by the Senior Management Committee on financial parameters, followed by provision of approval to make a preliminary programme submission, including needs and demand analysis, outcomes of consultations with potential

- employers, learning outcomes, alignment with the appropriate award standards, compliance with the statutory requirements of access, transfer and progression;
- Consideration of the preliminary programme submission by the Academic Committee, input as required from the Senior Management Committee on financial and resourcing matters, followed by the Academic Committee's recommendations and provision of approval to make a full programme submission;
  - Full programme submission to the Academic Council: if conditional approval is granted the programme is re-submitted to the next Academic Council; if unconditional approval is granted the submission is completed; the Senior Management Committee is notified accordingly and, providing there are no objections from the SMC on resourcing grounds requiring resubmission, implementation proceeds;
  - For QQI-accredited programmes, submission of the proposal to QQI follows. For such programme submissions, the College explicitly follows the policies and procedures and produces the documentation set out in the QQI publications, *Policies and criteria for the validation of programmes of education and training* (November 2017/QP.17-V1.03) and *Programme Validation Manual for Programmes of HET and Apprenticeships* (Edition 3, 2018).

QA documentation	Status
a/ Maintenance of minutes of Academic Committee, Academic Council and SMC meetings	
b/ Outline plan of proposed programme	
c/ Programme document	
d/ QQI programme validation submission, if applicable	

### 3.2 Learner admission, progression and recognition

American College Dublin welcomes all applicants and operates a fair and transparent admissions process. Applicants are selected on the basis of merit, ability and potential. The College supports the application of access, transfer and progression policies as defined by Quality and Qualifications Ireland (QQI).

The admissions procedures include all activities to attract, select, admit and register learners to the College programmes. The fair and consistent implementation of these policies and procedures is the ultimate responsibility of the Director of Admissions, working through the Admissions Office, and supported by the Academic Office.

All applicants seeking admission to a first year of a QQI undergraduate programme apply directly to the Central Applications Office (CAO) as outlined in the CAO handbook for the year of admission. All applicants other than those seeking admission to a first year of a QQI programme must apply directly to the American College Dublin. In both cases applicants must satisfy the minimum entry requirements for the relevant programme, and must also use the appropriate Application Form, available in paper or online format. Admission to all programmes is subject to availability and space.

Students are advised of admission by way of a rejection or offer letter. The rejection letter provides the reasons for declining the application, and any appropriate recommendations. The

acceptance letter includes directions for paying fees and presenting for registration (induction) and orientation. Students present for registration (induction) and orientation the week before the semester begins. They are registered on the appropriate programme, given a packet and brought through the Student Handbook, including the College rules and regulations, a document for which all students are required to sign, attesting that they have read, understood and agree to the requirements of it. Health and counselling facilities are also dealt with in the handbook. An orientation programme introduces students to the College, its facilities, clubs and societies. Later in the day, each student is introduced to his or her programme, its particular content, requirements and policies.

QA documentation	Status
a/ Current Admissions Handbook	
b/ Current Catalogue	
c/ Current QAM	
d/ Learner applicant files	

### 3.2.1 Applicants with recognized prior learning

Recognition of prior learning (RPL) is a process that allows learners to gain admission to a programme of study or to gain exemptions/credit from some parts of a programme, based on demonstrated learning achieved prior to admission. The process is governed by rules and recommendations as defined by *Principles and Operational Guidelines for the Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) in Further and Higher Education and Training*, published by the National Qualifications Authority of Ireland (June 2005). The document stresses the importance to recognize all learning achievements by supporting the development of alternative pathways to qualifications or awards, and by facilitating the recognition of prior learning.

There are two main types of RPL:

1. Recognized Prior Certified Learning (RPCL)
2. Recognized Prior Experiential Learning (RPEL)

The College has for many years facilitated RPCL, whereas RPEL has only recently been accepted by the College as a means of attaining credit for prior learning, and is currently being piloted on a limited basis for one programme, the MFA in Performance.

#### *Recognized Prior Certified Learning (RPCL)*

Applicants may be given credit for prior learning against specific elements of a programme (such as a module), if their prior learning is judged to be equivalent to the learning outcomes of the proposed programme of study. The provisions for such learners are as follows (these provisions are noted also in the Catalogue):

Transfer learners are those who come from another accredited institution of higher education and seek exemptions for previously completed subjects at that institution. Subject transfers for such learners are decided in consultation between the Admissions Office and the Academic Office (these offices may also seek further

advice as appropriate from subject-area peers regarding course content and intended learning outcomes). A final decision on the granting or denial of transfer credit rests with the Academic Dean or Registrar. Learners seeking transfers for previously completed higher education study should send original copies of their transcripts and copies of the relevant course descriptions from the institution's Catalogue to the Admissions Office when making an application.

American College Dublin, Irish American University, may grant transfers from subjects completed at other higher education institutions under the following conditions:

- Transfers may be granted only for those subjects in which a 'C' grade or higher was awarded;
- The intended learning outcomes achieved in the completed subject must be substantially the same as those achieved in the subject for which the transfer is sought. If this is not possible satisfactorily to determine from the Catalogue course description, it may be necessary for the applicant to provide a full course syllabus before the transfer can be accepted;
- Transfers are accepted on the basis of completion of a notional minimum of approximately 40 classroom-contact hours and 80 hours of self-directed study per 3-credit subject;
- IAU / ACD only delivers 3-credit (or multiples of 3-credit) courses; thus, it awards transfer credit only for 3-credit (or multiples of 3-credit) courses. Fractions of credits from other institutions may not be accumulated or rounded up for transfer purposes. However, fractions of suitable courses may be rounded down (for example a 4-credit Microeconomics course from another institution that matches IAU / ACD's 3-credit Microeconomics course in all other respects may be accepted for transfer credit, but only 3 credits, not 4, will be granted for transfer);
- Learners must complete the last 25% of their degree at IAU in order to earn a degree from the institution; credit transfer cannot be awarded for the final 25% of studies at IAU / ACD;
- As IAU does not presently provide distance or correspondence education, transfer credit for subjects delivered by these modes is not presently awarded;
- Capstone courses, theses and research projects are not available for transfer credit;
- Pre-requisite subjects at lower levels on a chosen programme must be completed before higher-level transfers can be approved;
- Transfers are awarded on a subject by subject basis, not on a year by year basis. For example, if the learner is entitled to 10 subject exemptions, this may not necessarily mean that the learner is exempt from a full academic year as the subjects may not all be first year subjects, but could include some second year subjects. Should this be the case, then the learner is required to complete the outstanding subjects in first year in order to progress fully to second year.

Exemptions from subjects taken at institutions not accredited by agencies recognized by IAU / ACD will be evaluated only after a learner has submitted a complete institutional Catalogue and a course syllabus for each subject under consideration.

Only credits transfer, not grades. Transfers are indicated on the institution's transcript by an 'X', which has a neutral grade point value; grades for subjects for which transfer credit is accepted have no influence on the learner's grade point average or on the calculation of the

final degree award level at Irish American University.

Transfer learners are required to submit the same documentation as other applicants: an application form, secondary school results, higher education transcripts and, if applicable, proof of English language competency.

#### *Recognized Prior Experiential Learning (RPEL)*

IAU currently offers credit for RPEL on only one programme, the MFA in Performance.

The maximum credit that may be granted in MFA in Performance is 15 credits (out of a total 36 credits). No credit may be granted under RPEL (or RPCL) for the performance project and portfolio. If RPEL is extended to other programmes, it is expected that no more than 50% of any programme will be available for transfer of credit under RPEL.

In order to be considered for RPEL, the learner must present a detailed curriculum vitae and an extended portfolio detailing the evidence that the submitted prior experiential learning meets the minimum intended learning outcomes for the relevant module or modules. An interview may also be required in order for the evidence to be tested further. Candidates who wish to be considered for RPEL should contact the head of programme for guidance on the appropriate material to be submitted. The final decision on awarding credit under RPEL is made by the head of programme, in consultation with the registrar; once the agreed amount of transferable credit is established, this is conveyed formally to the registrar in a recommendation by the head of programme; the registrar then records the credit on learner's transcript.

As with RPCL, only credits transfer, not grades. Transfers are indicated on the institution's transcript by an 'X', which has a neutral grade point value; grades for subjects for which transfer credit is accepted have no influence on the learner's grade point average or on the calculation of the final degree award level at American College Dublin.

QA documentation	Status
a/ Current Admissions Handbook	
b/ Current Catalogue	
c/ Current QAM	
d/ Learner applicant files	

### **3.2.2 International applicants**

With regard to the admission of international learners the College strives to adhere to the Code of Practice regarding marketing, recruitment, enrolment, orientation and induction of new learners, as recommended by the *Provision of Education to International Students*, published by the Irish Higher Education Quality Network (September 2009).

The marketing of programmes to non-EU countries and admission of learners from such countries is the responsibility of the Admissions Office and the Academic Office upon recommendations of the Senior Management Committee. In addition to satisfying academic

requirements, applicants who are non-EU nationals are required to produce proof of residency in the Republic of Ireland outlining their reasons to remain in the state.

QA documentation	Status
a/ Current Admissions Handbook	
b/ Current Catalogue	
c/ Current QAM	
d/ Learner applicant files	

### 3.2.3 English language requirements

Regardless of the mode of admission all English language requirements agreed at programme validation must be verified and adhered to. Where applicants do not have a formal English language qualification, they must provide evidence of equivalent competence through other examinations, or achievement of a minimum standard in recognized tests of English.

International applicants satisfy the College's English language requirements by holding relevant score taken within the last two years in the following English language tests: IELTS, TOEFL, Cambridge Certificate, and when they have been educated through English on an internationally recognized, accredited programme of at least one in duration in an English speaking country.

QA documentation	Status
a/ Current Admissions Handbook	
b/ Current Catalogue	
c/ Current QAM	
d/ Learner applicant files	

### 3.2.4 Applicants with disabilities

Learners with disabilities can enrol in the College via the standard procedures used by all learners. Learners with disability applying via the CAO are encouraged to disclose their disability by writing 'Medical Condition/Disability' on their CAO application form. In this way the College is alerted to the particular needs of the learner, so that appropriate preparations can be made to provide the necessary supports and arrangements. In the case of direct applications, candidates with disabilities can explain their particular circumstances on the direct application form. They are then invited to the College to view the facilities.

QA documentation	Status
a/ Current Admissions Handbook	
b/ Current Catalogue	
c/ Current QAM	
d/ Learner applicant files	



### 3.2.5 Fraudulent applications

All applicants must produce the original copies of supporting documentation, such as identification, transcripts, at the admission stage. Applicants need also to declare any personal information that may affect their performance in the course of study. The College reserves the right to refuse admission (or cancel registration) to any applicant (or learner) whose application details are found to be false.

QA documentation	Status
a/ Current Admissions Handbook	
b/ Current Catalogue	
c/ Current QAM	
d/ Learner applicant files	

### 3.2.6 Monitoring and action on learner progression and completion rates

The subcommittees of the Academic Committee, the Internal Student Learning Review Board and the External Peer Review Board, review in detail assessment results for each student at the institution each semester. The Academic Committee takes these data points and reduces them to cumulative statistical information on grade profiles, progression, attendance, retention and completion for each programme, and provides a narrative review of the programmes annually and consequent recommendations for the improvement of curriculum content, pedagogy, support services, budgetary allocations and educational effectiveness. The Academic Committee makes these reports available at the end of each academic year to the Academic Council. A summary annual report on academic affairs to the Board of Trustees, both written and delivered orally with questions asked by the Board, provides for an annual assessment of design and delivery of the student learning experience by the governing body.

QA documentation	Status
a/ Maintenance of minutes of meetings of internal and external assessment review boards, Academic Committee, Academic Council	
b/ External Peer Reviewer reports and College responses	
c/ Student feedback forms and commentary by Academic Committee	
d/ Annual Internal Programmatic Review form (see Appendix 13.2 for template of form)	
e/ Statistical data analysis of pass/fail rates, progression rates, completion rates	

### 3.3 Programme monitoring and review

American College Dublin has established quality assurance procedures for obtaining feedback from internal and external sources for the purpose of further improving and maintaining the quality of education it provides. These procedures enable the College to monitor, review, and develop the quality of current and proposed programmes of study.

Programmes are routinely monitored throughout the academic year and are also reviewed at the end of each academic year in the Annual Internal Programmatic Review to ensure that:

- The programme and its modules are progressing satisfactorily, both administratively and academically;
- Programme and module content, teaching schemes and the practice of teaching are appropriate;
- Programme and module content and delivery are appropriate to facilitate the achievement of the minimum intended learning outcomes;
- Learner workloads are appropriate;
- Resources available to the programme, including human, financial, physical, ICT resources, are appropriate and sufficient;
- Assessment methods are appropriate to determine the achievement of learning outcomes for the different modules and are distributed appropriately throughout the semesters and academic years;
- Academic procedures, including entry, transfer and assignment of credit values, and graduation requirements are fit for purpose and being adequately followed;
- Current learner achievement, retention, progression and completion are satisfactory, as demonstrated or otherwise (in such cases indicating responsive action), in programme statistical analyses and narrative reports compiled and reviewed annually by the Academic Committee;
- The existing programmes are suitable to meet the current and future needs of students, employers and society.

Responsibility for the implementation of ongoing review of programmes rests primarily with the relevant academic staff, the Academic Committee, and the Academic Dean. Ultimate responsibility for ensuring that QA procedures for programmatic review are followed, here as elsewhere, rests with the Registrar, who functions as the QA Officer. Information obtained through the monitoring activities may ultimately result in modifications and improvements to delivery and assessment of programme modules. The review process thus enhances the programme academic quality and the learner experience within the boundaries of the formal programme structure.

QA documentation	Status
a/ Relevant Academic Committee documentation as noted above at 1.3.4	

### 3.3.1 External programmatic evaluation

The College’s programmes are subject to a full internal and external evaluation once every five years or less. For non-QQI awards the programmatic review takes place by the following means:

- Research by the College on the programmes under review, based on the ongoing review criteria noted above at 3.2.1, analysed longitudinally and in greater depth than in the ongoing and annual reviews by the Academic Committee;
- Feedback from learners involved in the reviewed programme;
- Preparation of a Self-Evaluation Report (SER);

- Peer review by way of a paper-based consideration of the SER and a comprehensive evaluation; peer review findings submitted in a written report;
- College response to the peer review group’s report and preparation of a response to its findings and an implementation plan; application by the College’s Academic Council to the College SMC for revalidation or otherwise of the programmes;
- Ongoing annual programme review within the processes set out in section 3.2.1, above.

For QQI awards, the programme evaluation follows the procedures set out in the QQI publication, *Policies and Criteria for the Validation by QQI of Programmes of Education and Training*, 2017. In accordance with these procedures, the programmatic review takes place by the following means:

- Research by the College on the programmes under review, based on the ongoing review criteria noted above at 3.1.2, analysed longitudinally and in greater depth than in the ongoing and annual reviews by the Academic Committee;
- Feedback from learners involved in the reviewed programme;
- Feedback from learners and other relevant stakeholders, including potential employers, involved in the reviewed programme;
- Preparation of a Self-Evaluation Report (SER) in accordance with the QQI guidelines;
- Appointment of an independent external peer review group according to QQI guidelines;
- Independent peer review by way of an independent paper-based consideration of the SER and a comprehensive site evaluation; peer review findings submitted in a written report;
- College response to the independent peer review group’s report and preparation of a response to its findings and an implementation plan; application by the College’s Academic Council to QQI for revalidation or otherwise of the programmes;
- Determination of the application by QQI;
- Implementation of QQI recommendations following revalidation;
- Ongoing annual programme review within the processes set out in Section 3.3 above.

QA documentation	Status
a/ Relevant minutes of working group, Academic Committee, Academic Council and SMC meetings	
b/ Research materials for programme evaluation	
c/ Self-Evaluation Report	
d/ Independent Peer Review Group Report	
e/ College response	
f/ Application by Academic Council to QQI (or SMC for non-QQI programmes) for revalidation of programmes	
g/ Determination by QQI on application for revalidation and response as required	

## **4. Staff recruitment, management and development**

### **4.0 Overview**

American College Dublin has an outstanding record in terms of staff recruitment, management and development. Many of the institution's employees have been with the College for over a decade, and the low rate of employee turnover is testimony to the quality of ACD human resources management and development. Nevertheless, this area, the most important resource area in an education institution, is not one that the College takes for granted. Robust and appropriate procedures have been developed to assure the quality of its recruitment, management and development of its staff.

### **4.1 Staff recruitment and induction**

American College Dublin has developed recruitment and selection procedures which ensure that appropriately qualified teaching staff are employed to meet academic and professional requirements.

Full-time academic staff employed in the College are recruited through advertising on the College website, recruitment websites, in Irish newspapers and relevant academic journals. Part-time academic staff may be recruited by similar means, although employment agencies and professional contacts of existing academic staff are also used. Only candidates who satisfy the minimum criteria specified are considered for appointment. In line with similar third-level institutions, the minimum qualification for a lecturing position in the College is a Master's degree in the relevant academic discipline (in certain cases, candidate with appropriate and extensive relevant practical expertise and experience may be considered for a teaching position). Applications are screened by the Academic Dean and head of programme and a short list of qualified candidates is drawn up. Those on the short list are invited to present for interview. An appropriate interview panel is constituted, normally chaired by the Academic Dean.

Each candidate is required to provide an up-to-date professional curriculum vitae and the names of two referees. On acceptance, a contract of employment is provided to successful candidates. All faculty are provided with an electronic copy of the Employee Handbook, which sets out policies on academic freedom, disciplinary and grievance procedures.

New appointees are provided with an induction programme, overseen by the relevant head of programme and Academic Dean, which provides a valuable information reference and guide. The induction introduces the new lecturer to the College's background, ethos and culture, its structure and organization, its development strategies and plans. The new lecturer is also introduced to his/her roles and responsibilities, including codes of conduct, pedagogical standards, and the teaching and assessment strategies followed by the College. The staff induction also includes academic and administrative procedures and regulations, general terms and conditions of employment, and human resource policies and regulations. During the induction period a new lecturer also enjoys the benefit of informal mentoring both from the head of programme and senior colleagues.

At induction, it is explained to part-time teaching staff that they will be given all reasonable opportunity to work with the relevant programme management staff to establish teaching times and office hours that fit conveniently with their schedules. Teachers are required to inform the Academic Office of an absence before 9 am or as soon as practicable. The College is normally able to ensure that fulltime or other part-time staff are available to cover unforeseen absences; in the event cover cannot be arranged, all hours lost are delivered at a later date.

QA documentation	Status
a/ Employee files, including curriculum vitae, academic transcripts, references	
b/ Contract of employment and employment policies in employee and lecturer handbooks	
c/ Faculty development forms	

## 4.2 Equal opportunities

American College Dublin is committed to achieving equality of opportunity for staff and learners in all aspects of its operations. Equality of opportunity is the right of all persons to receive fair, equal, and non-discriminatory consideration in access to and the processes of education and employment, as outlined in various equality and anti-discrimination legislation. American College Dublin believes that commitment to principles of fairness and respect for all helps create a climate that is favourable to the free and open exchange of ideas, and to the welfare of staff and learners. The College endeavours to ensure that all of its activities are governed by principles of equality and opportunity, and that all staff and learners are encouraged to achieve their full potential.

In its commitment to promoting equal opportunities in education and employment the College recognizes the principles of equity and social justice in conformity with equality and anti-discrimination legislation. This involves recognizing the rights of individuals and groups to be free from discrimination and harassment on the grounds of marital status, family status, sexual orientation, religion, age, disability, race, nationality or social group. American College Dublin affirms the right of all staff and learners to work and study in an environment that is free from harassment and bullying. The College does not tolerate discrimination, sexual harassment, harassment or victimization of learners and employees. Behaviour of this kind may lead to disciplinary action and other sanctions at the discretion of the College.

The College's vision statement includes a commitment to 'uphold the highest standards of ethical conduct in all its activities, including support for academic freedom, appropriate disclosure of information to the institution's stakeholders, equality of access and opportunity. The institution has a conflict of interest statement for its Board of Trustees and executive management.

American College Dublin adheres to the principles of academic freedom articulated in the joint statement from the Association of American Colleges and the American Association of University Professors, the *1940 Statement of Principles on Academic Freedom and Tenure*. The institution undertakes to disclose information about academic policies and procedures through its annual Catalogue and its Quality Assurance Manual, both available to the College

community and wider public in hardcopy and electronic formats, and to accept the spirit and letter of the [Freedom of Information Acts](#) (1997, 2003), whereby in the post-secondary educational sector learners and other institutional stakeholders are entitled to appropriate disclosure of information and explanation as to status, performance and progression. These commitments are also noted in the Employee Handbook and Lecturer Handbook.

QA documentation	Status
a/ Current Catalogue	
b/ Current QAM	
c/ Current employee and lecturer handbooks	

### 4.3 Staff communication and development

American College Dublin is committed to ensuring the calibre and competence of the teaching staff by encouraging continuing enhancement of staff development. The small size of the institution and regular contact between all levels of management facilitate a constant flow of information regarding matters relevant to staff, which are also communicated through formal channels, such as committee meetings.

Each programme is overseen by a Head of Programme, who reports to the Academic Dean. Both the Head of Programme and Academic Dean communicate regularly with the other programme teaching staff to ensure the appropriate faculty are hired for teaching all classes, and that all classes are delivered as required, with alternative arrangements provided in cases of unforeseen circumstances preventing a scheduled class from running. Programme teaching staff attend programme meetings and Academic Committee meetings, in which they are informed developments regarding the programme, and are involved in discussions relating to quality improvement of support services, content and delivery. All programme staff are required to be involved in programme review processes, through attendance at meetings and written course and programme appraisal submissions, both for the annual internal programmatic review and the quinquennial external programmatic review.

The College provides in service training on a regular basis. Recent activities have included workshops on information technology use in teaching, and the new policies regarding assessment and standards that have been introduced by QQI under the requirements of the National Framework of Qualifications. The College's small size also allows for considerable staff development to take place through informal mentoring and peer skills and knowledge sharing. The staff policy of the College is to ensure that academic staff involved in designing, delivering and assessing programmes and modules are capable and competent to do so.

Administrative staff are also sent to conferences and workshops to aid professional development; attendance at these events is reviewed and approved by the College on a case-by-case basis.

QA documentation	Status
a/ Contract of employment	
b/ Employee development forms	
c/ Faculty development forms	

d/ Current employee and lecturer handbooks	
e/ Academic Committee and SMC meeting minutes	

### 4.3.1 Staff evaluation

Academic competence to teach is evaluated at the recruitment stage on the basis of the candidate's prior professional experience as recorded on his or her CV, and of the testimonies of the referees. During the initial period of employment in the College a lecturer's teaching competence is regularly assessed by performance reviews, initially after three months' employment, then after six months, and thereafter on an annual basis. The performance reviews involve learner evaluations, discussion of grading profiles and course review comments, and interactions with academic colleagues and administrative staff.

Lecturers are also encouraged to attend workshops and to undertake courses and attend conferences which help their professional development and broaden the portfolio of subjects they might be able to teach. At the end of each academic year lecturers complete Faculty Development Forms, which record their current non-teaching academic activities and planned work and projects for the year ahead.

QA documentation	Status
a/ Contract of employment	
b/ Faculty development forms	
b/ Employee development forms	
c/ Current employee and lecturer handbooks	

### 4.3.2 Learner evaluations

The effectiveness of teaching is also assessed by learner evaluation forms distributed to each class in the final weeks of the semester. The completed forms are read by the relevant heads of programme, Registrar and the Academic Dean. Once final grades have been posted the findings of the learner evaluation forms are discussed with the faculty member in question. The final Academic Committee of the academic year discusses the main findings of the learner evaluation forms and recommends actions for the following academic year as appropriate.

QA documentation	Status
a/ Learner evaluation forms and covering form recording discussion with teacher and conclusions	
b/ Academic Committee minutes	

## 5. Teaching and learning

### 5.0 Overview

The foundation of the institution's work is the process of teaching and learning. This is an area which requires and benefits greatly from an ongoing structure development, monitoring, evaluation and enhancement. The institution's quality assurance policies in this area are directed primarily towards advancing these activities.

### 5.1 Teaching and learning methods

In ACD teaching is seen as a multidimensional activity that promotes quality learning through a learner-centred interaction between the teacher, learner and the curriculum. The teaching methods are designed to help the learner to understand how to use study resources to facilitate their educational experience, and to achieve the learning outcomes of their programmes and modules. Learning and teaching methods are intended to facilitate learners taking ownership of, and responsibility for, their own learning in partnership with the academic faculty. The methods adopted provide learners with varied learning opportunities and experiences, and include conventional lecturers, tutoring, mentoring, case studies, e-learning, workshops, project supervision, research supervision, and learner observation.

In essence, the learning and teaching strategy of the College is based on a set of key principles and sets of specific goals and objectives for learning, teaching and assessment. Among the main goals of this strategy is academic achievement and progression, assessment as a learning experience, flexibility of learning and teaching methods, holistic approach to curriculum design, continuous learner support, professional development and employability.

As learners progress from year to year the subject matter of their studies becomes increasingly complex and challenging. The focus of learning moves from acquisition of knowledge and understanding to critical analysis and application of conceptual knowledge to practical situations. In the final year in particular learners learn to critically evaluate and apply knowledge and skills through earlier years of study. Ultimately, learners are brought to a position where they can demonstrate, through a variety of assessment processes, that they have achieved the learning outcomes of their programmes.

The e-learning management system Moodle provides lecturers and learners with a virtual learning environment to complement and enrich the more traditional learning process. This has made it possible for lecturers to create new learning opportunities for learners. Adapting this technology as an integral part of teaching methodology has enabled lecturers to provide course material in a variety of media formats outside the classroom, thus fostering effective self-learning techniques.

QA documentation	Status
a/ Programme learning and assessment strategies in program document	
b/ Module learning and assessment strategies in each syllabus	



c/ Faculty Handbook	
d/ Academic Committee documentation as in 1.3.4, above	

## 5.2 Promoting learning

Since its foundation in 1993 American College Dublin has promoted learning developed from the American higher education model that places emphasis on flexibility, variety and creativity in the pedagogical process. ACD has been a pioneer in the Irish higher education landscape in promoting high proportions of continuous assessment, and variegated delivery and assessment methods (quizzes, presentations, multiple-choice, short papers); indeed, the College had to campaign vigorously in its early years to be permitted to use such varied forms of assessment (for example, for several years the institution was denied permission to use multiple choice questions or short answer questions in continuous assessment; these methods are now used widely in the Irish higher education system). ACD regularly reviews and develops teaching methods through the workings of the Academic Committee. Teachers are formally reviewed at least once a year through the Faculty Development Plan procedures. The institution also provides training workshops to develop teachers' skills; in recent years these have included workshops on teaching learners with learning differences, workshops on using Moodle in the classroom, and workshops on the use of tablet computers in the classroom.

Learning and assessment methods are reviewed on an ongoing basis at the Academic Committee meetings throughout the academic year, and are subject to a comprehensive review at the end of the academic year, with a report by the Academic Committee to the Academic Council. These reviews consider the use of alternative delivery and assessment modes and pedagogies, and, when approved, are implemented in the following academic year. ACD has been at the forefront of offering accommodations to students with learning differences. On foot of appropriate documentation from educational psychologists or other approved individuals, normally provided at admission though which may be made available once a student has commenced a programme, these include providing students with lecture notes, recording of lectures, special tutorial assistance, extensions of time in examinations, recording of examinations, use of information technology in taking examinations, spelling and grammar waivers in examinations. Other accommodations are considered upon submission of the relevant evidence on a case-by-case basis.

Learner complaints and appeals may be made through the grade review process, or in registering a grievance through the grievance procedure. Both of these processes, along with their appeal mechanisms, are set out in the [Student Handbook](#). All learners must sign a form indicating that they have read and understood the contents of the Student Handbook at registration. The College maintains a Register of Grievances and Complaints, in which all formal submissions of this type and their outcomes are collected. All learners are canvassed on their views about each class through the student evaluation process. Student evaluation forms are completed at the end of each semester and reviewed with the relevant teachers in order to see improvements to the learner learning experience as appropriate. Additionally, learners are able to register suggestions and collective proposals through the Learners Union and through the submissions made by classroom representatives who sit on Academic Committee meetings.

QA documentation	Status
a/ Learner evaluation forms and covering form recording discussion with teacher and conclusions	
b/ Academic Committee minutes	
c/ Academic Council annual review minutes	
d/ Student Handbook	
e/ Register of Complaints and Grievances	

### 5.3 National and international practice

ACD is highly engaged with national and international effective practice networks. It is a member of [ASAPI](#) (Association of Study Abroad Providers Ireland), and is also a member of [AAICU](#) (Association of American International Colleges and Universities). With both these organisations ACD attends their annual general meetings and regular workshops on effective practice. ACD has also been accredited by the Middle States Commission on Higher Education ([MSCHE](#)) since 2013. As part of this process it is required to submit programme and institutional data, which is required to achieve benchmarked levels or trigger requirements for follow-up explanations and action. Following a comprehensive self-study and on-site evaluation, the College received in June 2018 an eight-year renewal of its grant of accreditation. ACD has attended every MSCHE annual meeting since its accreditation, along with numerous best-practice workshops. The Vice President of ACD is also a peer evaluator with MSCHE, serving on site visits to other international institutions, thereby learning of best practice from fellow peer evaluators and from the sites under evaluation.

QA documentation	Status
a/ MSCHE statement of accreditation and related documentation	
b/ AAICU membership and related documentation	
c/ ASAPI membership and related documentation	

### 5.4 Learning environments

American College Dublin has always provided a range of learning environments. Although the traditional classroom remains the core place of teaching, the institution has since its foundation laid stress on taking opportunities to learn outside the classroom. These opportunities include a range of accompanied field trips and, for all business programmes, supervised internships. The field trips are quality assured through written approvals and the direct supervision of the accompanying faculty; the internships have detailed approval, site agreement, reporting and assessment requirements which provide assurances of the appropriateness of the learning environment.

Within its environs, ACD is committed to providing high-quality resources to assist learners in their study. The physical resources include the classrooms, all of which are required to be equipped with appropriate seating, high-speed Wi-Fi, computer and projection equipment, the Rooney Library, a student lounge, quiet study rooms, and a café. The Rooney Library provides a range of books and written resources relevant to all programmes offered by the College.

At the start of every academic year the Library is provided with reading lists for each of the academic programmes and modules, along with approximate class numbers. All lists are updated on an annual basis. The Library consistently strives to maintain an equitable book-to-learner ratio, either with hard copy or electronic materials. Emphasis is also placed on providing the most current and up-to-date information available, including the latest editions of all textbooks.

QA documentation	Status
a/ Field trip approval documentation	
b/ Internship documentation	
c/ Senior Management Committee minutes and papers	

#### 5.4.1 Evaluating premises, equipment and facilities

The College's facilities are overseen by the Director of Administration, who reports on these matters to the Vice President and to the Senior Management Committee. Requirements for these areas are made known to the Director of Administration through the Maintenance Officer, the Academic Dean and programme heads. These requirements may be advised on a one-to-one basis (the Director of Administration meets with the Maintenance Officer regularly, and these meetings cover immediate and short term maintenance issues), or by requests or proposals made formally through the Academic Committee or the Senior Management Committee. As part of the Director of Administration's financial responsibility, budgetary requirements for the upkeep and development of the physical plant are costed and incorporated into the annual and weekly/monthly budgets overseen by the Business Office and reported to the Office of the President.

The Director of Administration reports to the Strategic Management Committee on an ongoing basis, and presents a formal report to it annually on facilities, reviewing the year just gone and plans for the year ahead. The taking of additional educational facilities is overseen by this officer. A report on the facilities is provided, including an assessment of suitability in terms of cost and terms of lease, legal requirements, location, and the appropriateness of the teaching and other educational spaces for the activities intended to take place within them.

The Strategic Plan, 2015–20, includes goals and initiatives that are related to the planning process for facilities, infrastructure and technology.

QA documentation	Status
a/ Senior Management Committee minutes and papers	
b/ Facilities report	
c/ Strategic Plan annual review	

## 6. Assessment of learners

### 6.0 Overview

Matters relating to the assessment of learners' performance are overseen by the lecturers, Academic Committee, the Internal Student Learning Assessment and External Peer Review Boards and by the Academic Council, whose joint task is to ensure the adherence to the [QQI assessment procedures](#) used in the College.

The broad objective of the learner assessment process in ACD is to establish the extent to which each learner has achieved the intended learning outcomes both in the modules they have undertaken and in their overall programme. Assessment can be defined as any process that appraises an individual's knowledge, understanding, abilities or skills, and competence. The College's assessment regulations govern written examinations and continuous assessment in the form of coursework assignments, projects, reports, oral presentations, reviews, internships, theses, dissertations, and such other forms of assessment as may have been approved or prescribed in any programme or course of study. Assessment procedures are based on clearly expressed intended learning outcomes.

Assessments are set by the lecturer responsible for delivering the module. They typically involve continuous assessment (term papers, reports, presentations, practical exercises, research projects) and final examinations. Draft examination papers are sent to external examiners for approval. Final examinations are conducted in strict observance of regulations, including publication of examination timetables, registration of learners, invigilation of examinations, and academic discipline during examinations. After examination papers are marked, sample scripts are sent to external examiners for approval. The final grades are then calculated, discussed, and approved by the Internal Student Learning Assessment Board. The results are finally approved at the Summer and Autumn External Peer Review Boards.

### 6.1 Credit values

Irish American University's credit-award system is based on notional requirements of time and effort a learner is expected to expend in achieving intended learning outcomes during the course of a semester and academic year. These requirements are derived from a quantum of higher education time and effort measurement known as the 'Carnegie unit,' or 'credit hour'; this is the predominant credit measuring tool in American higher education. The values expressed by this system are not exact, but represent average, indicative quantifications of notional learner attendance, input and activities directed towards the achievement of intended learning outcomes.

The College's academic offerings are based on the award of 3 credits (or multiples thereof) per course. Accordingly, ACD requires that each 3-credit undergraduate academic course based on classroom instruction involves approximately 40 hours of classroom-contact and -instruction time and 80 hours of out-of-class study and related work, to provide a total of 120 hours of notional student work (also often referred to as 'total student participation'). Undergraduate 3-credit performance classes in the BFA in Performing Arts and the BFA in

Musical Theatre (the degrees' studio-based courses in acting, voice, dance and movement) have the same total student participation requirement of 120 hours, but the proportions of the total are approximately the reverse of the institution's academic courses. Instructional contact hours are roughly 80 hours and the out-of-class, self-directed study hours are roughly 40. Postgraduate 3-credit courses are based on a requirement of 120 hours of total student participation, but the proportions of the total are adjusted to reflect an expectation of a higher degree of self-directed learning at the master's level: postgraduate 3-credit courses involve approximately 30 hours of classroom-contact and -instruction time and 90 hours of out-of-class study and related work.

In the case of internship modules, the class contact and out-of-class hours are combined. Thus, every 3 credits awarded for an internship placement requires a minimum of 120 hours in the placement position. An internship will have additional time requirements attached to it based on the need for researching and writing the internship report, which equates to approximately five hours for every forty hours of practical work in the internship position (thus, a 3-credit internship has a minimum total time requirement of 135 hours).

In the case of research projects and theses, the credit values awarded are based on a required minimum learner input of 120 hours of research and writing for every 3 credits. For every 3 credits thus awarded, it is expected that the learner will spend a minimum of approximately three hours in direct, individual consultation with his or her instructional supervisor.

The approximate time requirements derived from the institution's credit-award system allow for rough extrapolations of time and effort required of a learner over the course of average weeks, semesters and academic years. Thus, the standard full-time undergraduate and graduate learner load of a fifteen-credit, fifteen-week semester requires a notional minimum of 40 hours of total student participation per week. A semester requires 600 hours of total learner participation and a full academic year (two fifteen-week semesters for thirty credits) requires a notional minimum of 1200 hours of total student participation.

American College Dublin also offers courses which are accredited by QQI. The credit values for these courses are based on the European Union's standard credit award system, the European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System (ECTS). Under ECTS the credits have a value which is approximately half that of the learner credit hour derived from the Carnegie unit. Thus, each of the College's modules for which it awards three credits produces six ECTS credits; any other of the College's credit values may be similarly calculated as ECTS credits by multiplying by two the credits which the College awards.

## 6.2 Assessment policy

In ACD learners are assessed using published criteria, regulations and procedures applied fairly and consistently. In particular, the College is committed to ensuring that

- Learners have the opportunity to demonstrate their learning achievement;
- Assessment opportunities support standards based on learning outcomes;
- Assessment opportunities promote effective learning and teaching;
- Type of assessment (whether diagnostic, formative, or summative) is explicitly stated;
- Assessment procedures are fair, valid and reliable;
- Assessment methods are monitored and reviewed to fit evolving requirements;
- Assessment requirements are explicit and accessible to learners;

- Assessment procedures have appropriately robust security arrangements to protect the integrity of the assessment processes.

The operation and development of assessment procedures is the responsibility of the Internal Student Learning Assessment Committee, which reports its findings each semester to the Academic Committee. The External Peer Reviewers also provide an annual evaluation of the functioning of the assessment procedures. The Academic Committee's annual programmatic review includes an item that takes these inputs and those of the programme staff and provides an evaluation of the utility and integrity of the College's assessment procedures and recommendations for improvement as required.

QA documentation	Status
a/ Statement of programme assessment strategy in programme documentation	
b/ Statement of module assessment strategy in each module's syllabus	
c/ External Peer Reviewer feedback and College responses	

### 6.3 Assessment objectives

The College has endorsed and implemented the following underlying principles for assessment practice:

- Assessment is an integral part of the course design process, and is constructively aligned with the programme/module intended learning outcomes;
- There are clear and consistent assessment criteria prepared by the examiner, which are provided to the learner at the time of assignment;
- Assessment is transparent, valid, secure, reliable and free from bias;
- The assessment framework facilitates learner learning and supports learner progression;
- Learners are provided with feedback on assessment that is timely, promotes learning and facilitates improvement;
- The management of assessment is efficient both with regard to the amount and timing of assessment and to staff and learner workload;
- Assessment standards are maintained consistently and appropriately to the award;
- Assessment standards are comparable across programmes and across other higher education institutions in the country.

QA documentation	Status
a/ Statement of programme assessment strategy in programme documentation	
b/ Statement of module assessment strategy in each module's syllabus	
c/ External Peer Reviewer feedback and College responses	
d/ Academic Committee minutes	

## 6.4 Internal examiners

Assessments are set by the lecturer responsible for delivering the module. Draft examination papers are required by the Academic Office by the end of week seven of each semester, so as to allow adequate time for the materials to be seen by the External Peer Reviewers and for such changes as are necessary. In particular, the role of the Internal Examiner is to:

- Provide assessment questions that reflect the module content and that test fairly and with appropriate rigour the achievement of module learning outcomes as stated in the module description;
- Prepare assessment in line with the approved module description format;
- Submit on the appointed time draft examination papers and marking schemes to the Academic Office;
- Take account of suggestions and recommendations proposed by the External Peer Reviewer;
- Mark the assessment, submit the mark sheets and originals of assessments to the Academic Office on the appointed time;
- Receive feedback from the External Peer Reviewer and agree to revise if necessary the grades proposed to be awarded to each learner, at the latest during the Internal Student Learning Assessment Board;
- Attend meetings of the assessment boards to verify marks and contribute to the discussion of grades and awards.

After examination papers are marked, final grades calculated and approval of sample scripts from external examiners received, there is an Internal Student Learning Assessment Board, at which each module under examination is reviewed, with a discussion of all ‘A’ grades, fails and borderline cases. In semester one, results are made available to learners as soon as practicable following the Internal Student Learning Assessment Board (these results are subject to final approval at the Summer and/or Autumn External Peer Review Board). In semester two, results are made available to learners as soon as practicable following the Internal Student Learning Assessment Board (these results are subject to final approval by the Summer and/or Autumn External Peer Review Board. In the repeat examination session results are made available to learners as soon as practicable following the Internal Student Learning Assessment Board (these results are subject to final approval following the Autumn External Peer review Board).

QA documentation	Status
a/ Syllabi	
b/ Examination papers and marking schemes	
c/ Examination scripts	
d/ Grade sheets	
e/ External Peer Reviewer comments	
f/ Internal Learner Learning Assessment Board meeting minutes	

## 6.5 External Peer Reviewers

The role of the External Peer Reviewer is aligned with the document *Effective Practice Guidelines for External Examining, Revised February 2015*, published by the Irish state accreditation agency QQI. This document is made available to the External Peer Reviewer upon appointment by the College. Accordingly, the External Peer Reviewer is an independent peer who is a member of the broader community of practice within the programme's field of learning, and whose accomplishments attest to his/her likelihood of having the authority necessary to fulfil the responsibility of the role.

External Peer Reviewers are appointed to a particular programme or module. Their role is to provide independent quality assurance for the assessment process and to ensure that standards appropriate to the award level are consistent with national standards and comparable to other institutions. In particular, the role of the External Peer Reviewer is to

- Review the appropriateness of the minimum intended programme learning outcomes and other programme objectives;
- Probe the actual attainment by learners of actual programme learning outcomes using information agreed with and supplied by the College;
- Compare and contrast both the minimum intended programme learning outcomes and the actual attainment of learners with the relevant awards standards, with the National Framework of Qualifications, and with corresponding data from other programmes in the same discipline in other higher education institutions in Ireland and abroad;
- Determine whether or not the applied procedures for assessment are valid, reliable, fair and consistent;
- Review the appropriateness of the programme assessment strategy and the assessment procedures, and consider subsidiary module assessment strategies;
- Review key assessment tasks prior to their assignment in light of the programme and module assessment strategies and learners' prior learning;
- Report findings and recommendations regarding the assessment process to the College.

An External Peer Reviewer is proposed by the Academic Committee after making sure that the proposed person has no existing relationship with the College or key personnel; in other word, that there is no conflict of interest between the proposed person and the College. The proposed name is then put to the Academic Council for approval. If the nomination is approved the Academic Dean or the Registrar contacts the nominee with the request to serve as an External Peer Reviewer and with an explanation of the position's duties. The criteria for appointing an External Peer Reviewer include the following:

- An External Peer Reviewer should be a person with considerable third-level academic experience and standing in the field for which he or she is responsible;
- The External Peer Reviewer should hold a qualification in the appropriate discipline that is at a higher level than the course for which he or she is responsible;
- An External Peer Reviewer is appointed for a maximum period of three years; he or she may be reappointed after a minimum of three years has elapsed.



The specific duties of the External Peer Reviewer are the following:

- To become acquainted with the recommendations regarding the duties of the External Peer Reviewer as specified by the QQI document *Effective Practice Guidelines for External Examining, Revised February 2015*;
- To read the module outlines of the modules for which the External Peer Reviewer is responsible and to be aware of their academic content and learning outcomes;
- To read the draft version of final examination papers and marking schemes; the External Peer Reviewer has the right to suggest amendments or alterations to the examination materials as deemed appropriate;
- To review a representative sample of examination scripts, including all ‘A’ grades, fails and borderline cases;
- To be available for consultation with Internal Examiners on suggested changes to module content, final examination content or grades. In matters where there is a difference of opinion between the Internal and External Peer Reviewer there should be a common effort to achieve a mutually agreeable resolution (it should be noted: in the interests of academic freedom and institutional autonomy, the final decision on the award or award-level of a grade or degree, rests entirely with the internal examiner and the governing bodies of the institution);
- To attend the summer and autumn Examination Boards and to approve the process and award levels of the grades and final awards under consideration;
- To complete at the conclusion of the academic year and submit to the Academic Dean/Registrar a report on the administration and academic quality of the examinations and the comparability of the standards to other third-level institutions (see the *External Peer Reviewer’s Report Form* in Appendix 13.1). This report is passed on to the Academic Committee. Any comments or necessary responses or actions are discussed at the final Academic Committee meeting of the academic year. The External Peer Reviewer is subsequently informed of any responses to comments.

QA documentation	Status
a/ External Peer Reviewer Report forms, including College responses to extern feedback	
b/ College-extern correspondence	
c/ Correspondence with regulatory bodies on extern appointments and provision of report copies	
d/ Academic Committee minutes	

## 6.6 Continuous assessment

All academic programmes offered by the College use some elements of continuous assessment. This form of assessment provides insight into the learners’ knowledge, skills and competences in areas not normally assessed in final written examinations. Different forms of continuous assessment and the specific learning outcomes they address include the following:

- *Research using primary and secondary sources*, which aims at developing the learners’ ability to conduct original scholarly work, to assess critically professional literature, and to present the research results in a professionally acceptable format;

- *Literature review*, which assesses the learners’ ability to find relevant professional sources, both printed and in electronic format, and to evaluate critically their contents;
- *Critical review of a published text*, which should display the learners’ ability to understand and evaluate professional literature in the form of a written review;
- *Term essays and reports*, which should display both the learners’ familiarity and understanding of a specific field of knowledge relating to course material, and their ability to conduct independent critical research within the field covered by the course;
- *Practical project work*, which aims at developing the learners’ ability to apply academic knowledge to specific practical problems encountered in social experience;
- *Oral presentations*, which should display the learners’ skill to share their academic knowledge with others in the context of direct social interaction and public debate;
- *Class test and quizzes*, which assess the degree of the learners’ familiarity with and comprehension of specific issues relating to currently discussed course material;
- *Internship assessments*, which are based not on knowledge and skills learned at the workplace, but on the application of classroom knowledge, along with workplace comportment and attitude; all internship marks are double-marked and approved or amended as required by the internal examiner;
- *Group work and team projects*, which assess the learners’ ability to work collaboratively and share responsibility in a joint endeavour (Appendix 13.6);
- *Practical performed work*, in the performing arts. Guideline rubrics for summative assessment are provided at Appendix 13.7;
- *Practical creative written work*, for creative writing. Guideline rubric: Appendix 13.8.

Other assessment instruments may be added, following approval of the next year’s syllabi in the Annual Internal Programmatic Review process or the external programmatic review.

Continuous assessment can provide formative and summative evaluation to support learning; it is essential that the provision of grades is always supported by feedback to learners on their understanding of the module material as they progress through it and in preparation, when applicable, for the final examination. The weighting of elements of continuous assessment varies depending on the nature of the module, and is determined at the time of module design and review by the programme team. Examiners are required to ensure that they are aware of the weightings attached to the continuous assessment elements in each module they deliver.

Learners repeating a module must not only re-sit the final examination but also submit new versions of the prescribed continuous assessment. In modules assessed entirely by continuous assessment copies of continuous assessment projects are sent to the externs for evaluation.

QA documentation	Status
a/ Academic Committee documentation as at 1.2.4	

### 6.7 Final examination regulations

The regulations and procedures for administering final examinations in the College include the following:

- All candidates are automatically entered for final examinations for those modules which have a final examination component. It is the responsibility of the candidate to register for repeat examinations;

- It is the responsibility of the candidate to make himself/herself aware of the dates, locations and times of examinations. Copies of examinations timetable are posted on the Intranet and are available from the Academic Office;
- If a candidate is absent from an examination an explanation must be submitted to the Academic Office or Registrar immediately. Such documentation as is appropriate (for example, a doctor's certificate in the case of an illness) must be delivered to the Academic Office or Registrar within five working days of the examination. If the candidate has submitted an acceptable explanation within five working days of the examination an 'I' (incomplete) will be awarded. (An 'I' indicates an excused non-completion of the module; if the final examination is the missing component it does not count as an attempt.) If an acceptable explanation is not submitted to the Academic Office within five working days the candidate will be awarded an 'NP' (not present). (An 'NP' indicates that the candidate did not have a valid explanation for non-attendance at the final examination and the examination is counted as an attempt). In the case of an award stage module, the awarding of an 'NP' would mean that the candidate can only graduate with a pass degree;
- Candidates should assemble at the examination room ten minutes before the examination is scheduled to commence;
- Upon entering the examination room the candidate becomes subject to the authority of the invigilators and must follow their instructions;
- Candidates should seat themselves according to the instructions of the invigilators;
- Strict silence must be observed at all times in the examination room; no form of communication is permitted between candidates in the examination room;
- Candidates will not be admitted to an examination room once another candidate for the same module has left the examination. If a candidate finishes the examination in less than the time allowed, it is permissible to submit the papers and leave the examination room. However, no candidate may leave within thirty minutes of the commencement of an examination or within fifteen minutes of the end of an examination;
- Answers must be written in blue or black ink. The candidate should write on both sides of the sheets in the answer book. Rough work should only be written in the answer book, with a clear indication provided that it is rough work;
- No paper, pencil cases, books or bags may be brought to the candidate's desk; the candidate will be advised by the invigilators where bags and other materials not permitted to be brought to the desk should be deposited;
- No mobile phones are allowed on the candidate's person or at the desk. All phones in bags and jackets should be turned off. If a phone in a jacket or bag rings, the offending article will be removed from the room by an invigilator until the noise has ceased;
- In examinations for which use of a calculator is approved, only a model up to the scientific calculator level may be used;
- No writing may take place until the examination begins. The candidate should read the instructions on the examination answer book, fill out his/her details on the cover of the examination answer book, and read the entire paper before attempting the questions;
- If for some reason the examination does not start at the time scheduled, the appropriate extra time is provided at the end;

- A candidate who arrives late for an examination finishes at the same time as the other candidates (that is, no additional time is provided to make up for the amount of time lost up to the commencing of the examination);
- All learners must initial on the components marks sheet in order to verify their attendance at the examination;
- Candidates must not get up from their seats without the permission of an invigilator once the exam has commenced, except to hand in their papers and leave. Candidates who have a question of any sort should raise their hands and wait for an invigilator to come to them;
- Candidates who need to go to the toilet should raise their hands and wait for an invigilator to come to them. Only one candidate may go to the toilet at a time. The candidate must be escorted by an invigilator. The use of the toilet should not take longer than two minutes;
- Candidates are not allowed to take examination answer booklets (used or unused) away or have any access to them except for writing their answers during the examination;
- In the event that a candidate is noticed copying from another learner’s paper, requesting assistance from another learner, having unauthorized materials with him/her, making an unauthorized departure from the room, or acting in a disturbing manner, the candidate will be directed by the invigilator immediately to desist from the offending behaviour, while the name of the candidate and the circumstances will be noted on the invigilator’s report. The candidate will be allowed to complete the examination, but will be advised upon handing up the paper to report as soon as possible to the Academic Dean or Registrar in order to discuss the matter. The invigilator should attempt to inform the Academic Dean or Registrar or Academic Office immediately of the matter. In the event of repeated instances of the behaviours mentioned above by a single candidate, the invigilator should contact the Academic Dean or Registrar or Academic Office immediately. Any such incidents will be reported to the Academic Dean as examination irregularities; they will be investigated and a decision on them taken at the next meeting of the Academic Standards Committee, normally to take place within two weeks of the end of final examinations;
- Any other digression by a candidate from examination procedures will be noted on the invigilator’s report and considered by the Academic Council.

QA documentation	Status
a/ Current examination regulations	
b/ Invigilator reports	
c/ Final mark sheets	
d/ Academic Office correspondence with learners	

**6.7.1 Guidelines for invigilators**

The guidelines for examinations invigilators include the following:

- Invigilators should ensure that they have a copy of and are familiar with the College’s current final examination regulations;
- Before candidates are admitted to the exam room, check the following:

1. There are sufficient examination papers and booklets for the examinations taking place in the room, and that they are arranged so as to facilitate their being distributed in an efficient manner;
  2. That the desks are arranged in rows and that the room is in good order (no notes, papers or other materials should be on the desks or floors);
  3. That the whiteboard clearly displays the module code, title and exam duration for the papers being attempted in the room.
- Ensure that all candidates leave bags, jackets, coats and books at the top of the examination room. Each learner is allowed pens, pencils, rulers and a scientific calculator at their desks. No pencil cases are allowed at the desks. No notes or paper of any sort are allowed to be brought to the learner's desk. If a learner wishes to produce rough work, it should be entered in the examination book, with an indication to show that it is not part of a final answer;
  - Before the examination commences, announce the following:
    1. The module code and title of the examinations being attempted and the duration of the examinations;
    2. Candidates may not leave their seats without the permission of the invigilator. If candidates have a question or wish to be allowed to go to the toilet they should raise their hands and wait for the invigilator to come to them;
    3. Candidates are not allowed to have mobile telephones on them once the exam has begun. All telephones in bags and jackets should be turned off; if a telephone in a jacket or bag rings, the offending article will be removed from the room by an invigilator until the noise has ceased;
    4. Candidates may only go to the bathroom one at a time. Candidates will be accompanied by an invigilator. The bathroom break should be taken as quickly as possible; any absence of unusual duration will be noted in the invigilator's log sheet;
    5. Candidates may not leave the examination room within the first 30 minutes of the commencement of the exam or within fifteen minutes at the end of exam;
    6. Ask learners to read the examination paper carefully before starting to write; explain that lecturers will be at the exam for the first twenty minutes to answer any questions the candidates may have;
    7. If the examination does not start on time, explain that the appropriate extra time will be added at the end.
  - When handing out the examination papers, place them face down on the desks. Instruct candidates not to turn exams over until directed: all candidates must commence the exam together;
  - If a candidate arrives late and no other candidate has left the examination in the meantime the candidate may be allowed into the examination. However, no extra time is given to the candidate;
  - Once the examination is in progress, ensure that all candidates initial on the components marks sheet (beside their name only and not in the boxes as this sheet is used by the lecturer to record the examination results). This is necessary in order for the College to have an independent record of whether a candidate was present or not present at the exam;
  - It is important that the invigilators walk and look around the room at regular intervals. Candidates should be aware that the exam is supervised and monitored to a high standard;

- In the event that a candidate is noticed copying from another candidate’s paper, requesting assistance from another candidate, holding unauthorized materials, making an unauthorized departure from the room, or acting in a disturbing manner, the candidate should be advised immediately to desist from the offending behaviour; the name of the candidate and the circumstances should be noted on the invigilator’s report. The candidate should be allowed to complete the examination, but advised upon handing up the paper to report as soon as possible to the Academic Dean or Registrar in order to discuss the matter. The invigilator should attempt to inform the Academic Dean or Registrar or Academic Office immediately of the matter;
- In the event of repeated instances of the behaviours mentioned above, the invigilator should contact the Academic Dean or Registrar or Academic Office immediately;
- Any other digression by a candidate from examination procedures should be noted on the invigilator’s report;
- At the conclusion of the examination, ensure that completed examination scripts together with the components mark sheet and any examination papers left over are put back into the envelopes supplied and returned to the Academic Office. Also check the number of candidates attending against the number of papers submitted for each examination;
- Ensure that the invigilator’s report sheet is filled out and returned to the Academic Office with each packet;
- Ensure that the examination room is locked at the conclusion of each examination;
- Ensure that that all examination answer booklets are kept securely; candidates are not allowed to take answer booklets away or have any access to them except for writing their answers during the examination;
- Lecturers can collect the examination scripts only from the Academic Office.

QA documentation	Status
a/ Current invigilator guidelines	
b/ Invigilator reports	

### 6.7.2 Grade reviews

Learners have the right to request a review of final grades for any module they have attempted, providing the appeal for a grade review is lodged within ten working days of the examination results being posted. The review procedure includes the following steps:

1. The learner making the appeal fills out a grade review form and returns it to the Academic Office (within ten working days of the examination results being posted);
2. The Academic Office checks the examination transcript and results broadsheet for any arithmetical errors and to verify that the lecturer’s handwritten grades were correctly inputted on the system;
3. The relevant academic staff meet with the Academic Dean/Registrar to consider any grades under review. Any previously unknown circumstances are considered and the final examination paper is reviewed. The staff and the Academic Dean/Registrar decide on whether there should be any changes made to the grade;
4. The Registrar presents the findings to the Internal Learner Learning Assessment Board.

5. If the Board accepts these findings, it is resolved to communicate the outcome to each learner immediately;
6. The learner is sent a letter indicating the result of the review by the Registrar.

The grade review process applies to individual modules only. The College does not provide for appeals of GPA or final award levels; these are objectively based on the grade point values for modules attempted and are not subject to interpretation. A copy of the Grade Review Form is included in Appendix 13.3.

QA documentation	Status
a/ Completed grade review forms	
b/ Internal Learner Learning Assessment Board minutes	
c/ Examination scripts and mark sheets	
d/ Learner-College correspondence	
e/ College correspondence with regulatory bodies, if necessary	

## 6.8 Academic discipline

The College imposes penalties for infringements of academic discipline. These provisions may be invoked in combination with, and do not exclude, the disciplinary procedures set out in the most current version of College's publication, [Student Handbook](#), in the section entitled 'Academic Discipline'. Matters which fall within the range of academic discipline include, but are not limited to, the following:

- *Cheating*, that is, intentionally using or attempting to use unauthorised materials, information, or study aids in any academic exercise;
- *Fabrication*, that is, intentional and unauthorised invention or falsification of any information or citation in an academic exercise;
- *Facilitating academic dishonesty*, that is, intentionally or knowingly helping or attempting to help another to commit an act of academic dishonesty;
- *Plagiarism*, that is, intentionally or unintentionally representing the words or ideas of another as one's own in an academic exercise;
- *Internet plagiarism*, that is, intentionally or unintentionally representing the words or ideas of another as one's own in an academic exercise. As with books and journals, information from the Internet must be acknowledged in footnotes and bibliography. The correct form for citations is available in the library;
- *Falsification*, that is, intentionally or unintentionally falsifying academic records;
- *Unacceptable conduct in the academic environment*, that is, disruptive or otherwise unacceptable behaviour in class, on the College premises, or towards any of the College's employees or learners;
- *Vandalism and theft*, that is, defacement or theft of library material or other College resources.

The College's procedures for occurrences of academic indiscipline relating to examination infringements and plagiarism are set out below in sections 6.8.1 and 6.8.2. In the event of infringements of academic discipline that lie outside the range of provisions of these areas, the following procedures apply:

The lecturer, invigilator or other relevant member of College staff informs the Academic Dean or the Registrar, and the learner. If considered appropriate, there may be an initial meeting of the learner with the Academic Dean and/or relevant academic staff in order to achieve a resolution. If this meeting does not produce a satisfactory resolution, the matter may be referred to a formal process, in which the case is presented to the Academic Committee. In such a case, the Committee hears the evidence of the teacher, learner and any other relevant parties. If the learner is unable or unwilling to attend, the matter is heard in his or her absence. The learner is permitted to have his or her representative present at the hearing. The Academic Committee discusses and decides on the case once the learner has been heard and excused from the meeting. A letter is sent by the Registrar, informing the learner of the outcome of the process.

A learner found to have infringed academic discipline is subject to the following maximum penalties:

*First Offence:* An ‘F’ grade for the module in which the infringement occurred and/or—in the cases of multiple infringements, unacceptable conduct, vandalism and theft—withdrawal from a module or number of modules, withdrawal from a semester or dismissal from the College.

*Second Offence:* Dismissal from the College.

QA documentation	Status
a/ Intra-College correspondence	
b/ Material evidence of academic irregularity or dishonesty	
c/ Minutes of learner-College meetings	
d/ Learner-College correspondence	

### 6.8.1 Plagiarism

American College Dublin seeks to develop a culture of academic integrity among faculty, staff and learners. Honesty, fairness and trust are essential characteristics of integrity. Thus, in an academic community, academic honesty is a key principle. Acknowledging original sources of information and having respect for the rights of intellectual property are, therefore, fundamental.

Plagiarism is an act of academic dishonesty. To plagiarize and fail to appropriately acknowledge the sources that have been used is the antithesis of academic integrity. A form of intellectual theft, plagiarism is viewed as a serious offence committed against academic staff, fellow-learners, the college and the wider academic community. It involves reproducing another person’s or group of persons’ ideas or work, either in whole or in part, and deliberately misrepresenting this material as one’s own.

Plagiarism can take many forms, including, but not limited to:

- Presenting work authored by a third party (e.g. other learners, friends, family members, individuals paid to complete work on one’s behalf) as one’s own;



- Presenting work that is copied directly or copied with only minor textual modifications from another source (e.g. journal articles, book chapters, websites, internet blogs, transcribed interviews, TV or radio programmes etc.);
- Paraphrasing a third party’s work in whole or in part without acknowledging the source material.

Please note that referring to common knowledge or established facts (for example, ‘Barack Obama was the President of the U.S.A. from 2008 to 2016’) cannot be categorized above and does not constitute plagiarism.

Any submitted work which is an assessed component within a programme of study must include proper acknowledgement of all original sources through citation and referencing. Plagiarism is defined by the act and the end product. Therefore, to claim that the act was unintended cannot be accepted as a justification or defence in cases of alleged plagiarism. The College’s plagiarism statement will be disseminated as widely as possible to all staff and learners. All learners are expected to familiarize themselves with this. All assessed coursework must be submitted with a completed and signed plagiarism declaration form, which reads as follows:

‘We certify that:

I/We have read and understood the College statement on plagiarism.

I/We understand that the College reserves the right to use detection technology to uncover cases of plagiarism.

I/We understand that submitting plagiarized work will result in disciplinary procedures being invoked, up to and including, dismissal from College.

I/We certify that this work is my/our own, and all sources have been acknowledged appropriately.

Signed:

QA documentation	Status
a/ Minutes of meetings	
b/ Signed plagiarism statements	
c/ Intra-College correspondence	
d/ College-learner correspondence	

### 6.8.2 Disciplinary procedures (plagiarism)

American College Dublin regards plagiarism as a serious offence. Accordingly, if plagiarism is established, the learner will be subject to the College’s disciplinary procedures. These will consist of the following stages:

- In instances where a first offence has been established, the learner’s work will be downgraded. The scale of downgrading will be at the discretion of the member of

academic staff to whom the work has been submitted, in consultation with the Registrar/Academic Dean, but will be proportional to the scale of the offence. In instances of appeal requests, the submitted work will be reviewed by the relevant academic staff and Registrar/Academic Dean. As part of the appeal process, the learner may also be required to attend an interview with the academic staff member and the Registrar/Academic Dean;

- If a further instance of plagiarism has been established, the learner will be issued with a letter from the Academic Committee (AC) informing the learner that s/he will be called before a hearing of the AC to examine the instance of plagiarism. The learner will be entitled to nominate one other person to accompany him or her at the hearing. However, the Registrar should be notified of such a nomination in advance of the hearing. If an offence has been clearly established, the outcome will be the award of grade F for the entire module for which the plagiarized work was submitted. The learner will be issued with a formal written warning, a copy of which will be placed in the learner’s file;
- In the case of multiple instances of plagiarism being committed in the same semester, the learner may be subject to the following penalties: dismissal from a module or number of modules, dismissal from the College for a specified time;
- Following the issue of a first formal written warning from the AC, in the event of a further instance of plagiarism being established, the learner will be issued with a letter calling the learner to a hearing of the AC (following the same procedures as outlined in 2. above). The learner will face further penalties such as dismissal from a module or number of modules, dismissal for a semester, and dismissal from the College. If dismissal from the College does not ensue, the learner will be issued with a final written warning, a copy of which will be placed in the learner’s file advising him/her that any further offences will lead to dismissal from the College.

QA documentation	Status
a/ Intra-College correspondence	
b/ Material evidence of academic irregularity or dishonesty	
c/ Minutes of learner-College meetings	
d/ Learner-College correspondence	

### 6.8.3 Academic discipline in examinations

Infringements of academic discipline in examinations can take many forms including, but not limited to:

- Using unauthorized notes in any form e.g. on pieces of paper, paper dictionaries, body parts, stationery etc;
- Copying, or attempting to copy, in whole or in part, from another candidate’s script;
- Requesting or receiving assistance from another candidate;
- Providing assistance to another candidate;
- Using or holding books, calculators, mobile phones, or electronic devices that are unauthorized. Candidates are wholly responsible for any materials in their possession;
- Making an unauthorized departure from the exam room;
- Obtaining, giving, or receiving the answers to or a copy of an exam paper prior to its

- administration;
- Completing an exam for another candidate or allowing another candidate to represent the actual candidate in an exam.

QA documentation	Status
a/ Minutes of relevant meetings	
b/ Intra-College correspondence	
c/ College-learner correspondence	

### 6.8.4 Procedures for infringements of academic discipline in examinations

In an identified instance of academic indiscipline at examination the candidate will be directed by the invigilator to immediately desist from the offending behaviour. Unauthorized notes or materials that the learner is using will be confiscated. If notes are written on body parts, the learner will be escorted to the toilets by an invigilator and asked to remove the offending material. The name of the candidate and the circumstances of academic indiscipline will be noted on the invigilator’s report. The candidate will be allowed to complete the examination, but on handing up the paper will be advised to report as soon as possible to the Registrar to discuss the matter. The invigilator will report the instance of academic indiscipline to the Registrar immediately after the examination.

If the Registrar, in consultation with the Academic Dean, deems an infringement has occurred, the learner will be issued with a letter from the Registrar. This letter will serve to inform the learner that he/she will be called before a hearing of the Academic Committee, which will determine the instance of academic indiscipline as an examination irregularity. The meeting will normally take place within two weeks of the end of final/repeat examinations. The learner will be entitled to nominate one other person to accompany him/her at the hearing. However, the Registrar should be notified of such a nomination in advance of the hearing. If an offence of academic indiscipline is established, the outcome will be the award of grade F for the exam. The learner will be issued with a formal warning, a copy of which will be placed in the learner’s file. The learner will be required to repeat the module in which the offence of academic indiscipline occurred in its entirety, and will not be permitted to repeat the examination component separately.

In the case of multiple instances of academic indiscipline being committed in the same semester, the learner may be subject to such further penalties as dismissal from the College for a specified time, or permanent dismissal from the College.

Following the issue of the first formal written warning from the Academic Dean, in the event of a further instance of academic indiscipline being established, the learner will be issued with a letter from the Registrar calling the learner to a hearing (as described above). The learner will face further penalties including dismissal for a semester, or dismissal from the College. If dismissal from the College does not ensue, the learner will be issued with a final written warning, a copy of which will be placed in the learner’s file advising him/her that any further offences will lead to dismissal from the College.

QA documentation	Status
a/ Intra-College correspondence	

b/ Material evidence of academic irregularity or dishonesty	
c/ Minutes of learner-College meetings	
d/ Learner-College correspondence	

### 6.8.5 Appeals procedure

The College allows for appeals for learners who have been sanctioned for infringements of academic discipline or have not been satisfied by the outcome of the grade review process. The learner is required to write to the Academic Dean within fourteen days of being notified of the result of the academic indiscipline or grade review process. The Academic Dean and the Registrar review the salient facts and seek to determine if there was evidence that was not taken into account or a questionable judgement made at the previous process. If the determination is that there is no new evidence or anything to suggest a questionable judgement, the appeal is dismissed and the learner, the Academic Dean, and the Registrar are so informed immediately.

If the determination is that the matter warrants further investigation, or if the learner is unhappy with the outcome of the process, the Academic Dean and the Registrar refer the matter to the Academic Council for a final decision. The result of this is passed immediately to the learner, the Academic Dean and the Registrar. The decision of the Academic Council represents the end stage of the College's appeals procedure.

QA documentation	Status
a/ Written appeal by learner	
b/ Intra-College correspondence	
c/ Material evidence of grounds for appeal	
d/ Minutes of learner-College meetings	
e/ Minutes of Academic Council meetings	
f/ Learner-College correspondence	

## **7. Supports for learners**

### **7.0 Overview**

The College's learning support builds on practical advancements and experience within the College, within the College's founding institution, Lynn University, as well as on Irish and international developments in higher education over recent years. The College's mission is to offer student-centred learning support through excellence in teaching that produces graduates who are equipped to lead successful lives and to contribute effectively to society.

Studying in ACD is designed to build a repertoire of effective learning strategies in a way that assists learners in functioning as self-motivated individuals. The strong focus is on enabling and empowering learners to achieve the learning outcomes of their programmes and modules while recognizing diversity in individual learning styles. The College promotes active learner engagement with material in a meaningful and genuine way that supports the linking of new knowledge to previous understanding gained in formal and informal learning experiences.

### **7.1 Integrated learning resources and supports**

The College's policy is to provide tangible learning support to learners throughout their studies. At the commencement of the academic year each learner is issued with information designed to guide them through their studies and to inform them about the range of and access to services, including a Student Handbook (for which they must sign to indicate they have read it and accept the policies contained in it), Student Welcome, detailed module descriptions, continuous assessment schedule, past examination papers, and reading lists. Library and computer service staff members participate in the induction of new learners, providing information on the library service and the use of IT resources. The induction is complemented by library instruction given to groups or to individuals upon request.

Students are sent a Student Satisfaction survey each year which includes questions on the range and adequacy of learning resources and supports. This information is collected by the Director of Student Life and presented to the annual Academic Council review, with recommendations for enhancement.

The annual internal programmatic review, the quinquennial external programmatic review and the MSCHE accreditation revalidation provide for assessments of programme resources and implementation of required improvements; the external review processes provide for bench marking of learner resources and supports against external and international standards.

### **7.2 Pastoral care**

The relatively small size of the College is conducive to the development of close and frequent direct interactions between lecturers and individual learners, who often enjoy the benefits of their lecturers' attention and guidance outside teaching hours. The academic support thus obtained involves familiarizing learners with standard research methods and conventions,

developing learners' ability to critically evaluate research and critical material, encouraging learners to think independently and critically, assisting learners in revising for and answering examination questions effectively. Overall responsibility for determining the level of academic supports is the Registrar, who reviews the effectiveness of these supports through the annual quality assurance review, reported to the Academic Council.

All learners attend courses in Academic Communication, in which they learn how to improve their skills in clear and effective writing, how to conduct research and to present its results, how to give an oral presentation in front of an audience in a professional manner.

The Student Life Office provides facilities for the Students' Union to organize social activities, sports events, and special interest groups. Learners' human support also includes regular and relatively unimpeded direct access to lecturers and high-level College management. Additional support is provided by the Director of Student Life, special needs tutors, counselling service, accommodation service, and internships co-ordinator.

The institution was an exclusively international college at its foundation in May 1993, as a study abroad site of Lynn University, and although it soon began welcoming domestic students to its programmes, international students have remained at the heart of its mission and activities to the present day. The institution provides through its Student Life Office ongoing personalised advice for international students. A Welcome Book also provides a range of guidelines and advice on supports for international students. ACD is a member of the Association of American International Colleges and Universities and the Association of Study Abroad Providers in Ireland, and follows and explicitly endorses the practice recommendations of *The code of practice for provision of education and training to international learners* (QCI, 2015).

QA documentation	Status
a/ Programme learning and assessment strategies in programme document	
b/ Module learning and assessment strategies in each syllabus	
c/ Academic Committee documentation as in 1.3.4, above	
d/ Minutes showing learner participation on committees below the Academic Council	
e/ Student Union administrative records	
f/ Director of Student Life records	

### 7.3 Services related to programmes

Services related to programmes are reviewed for adequacy and effectiveness on a regular basis. As also noted above at section 5.4, processes are in place to assure the quality of these services.

The institution's facilities are overseen by the Director of Administration, who reports on these matters to the President and to the Senior Management Committee. Requirements for these areas are made known to the Director of Administration through employees or by requests or proposals made formally through the Academic Committee or the Senior Management Committee. As part of the Director of Administration's financial responsibility,

budgetary requirements for the upkeep and development of the physical plant are costed and incorporated into the annual and weekly/monthly budgets overseen by the Business Office and reported to the Office of the President.

The Director of Administration reports to the Senior Management Committee on an ongoing basis, and presents a formal report to it annually on facilities, reviewing the year just gone and plans for the year ahead.

The Director of ICT oversees assessment and planning of the University's information and communications technology. The overriding technology plan for the institution is goal six of the Strategic Plan 2015–20, with five initiatives for advancing the institution's information technology laid out. As with all items in the Strategic Plan, these are costed line by line for five years, with the costings reviewed and revised as required each fall following the annual review of the Strategic Plan. Each summer the Director of ICT reviews progress and prospects for the initiatives in the plan and any additional ICT items that have emerged or are likely to emerge; he presents a summary report to the Senior Management Committee and, following discussion, this is used as the basis for assessing the progress and prospects for the items on the Strategic Plan. It is in the nature of ICT that issues and opportunities present themselves in the short term. Planning items such as these are typically presented to the Senior Management Committee as they arise, for discussion and approval, with implementation following agreement on the budget for them. These additional items are then incorporated into the annual review of ICT, either as matters related to the Strategic Plan initiatives, or as additional items. The Director of ICT also provides a report on the University's technology on an annual basis to the Board of Trustees.

QA documentation	Status
a/ Senior Management Committee minutes and papers	
b/ Facilities report	
c/ ICT Report	
d/ Strategic Plan annual review	

### 7.3.1 Services related to programmes: students with disabilities

Students with disabilities are encouraged to apply directly to the College. Documentation from appropriately qualified professionals relating to the disability should accompany the application and the student is requested to attend an interview to determine the level of accommodation needed, and the degree to which it lies in the institution's power to provide the required accommodation. Every effort is made by the Admissions Office, Student Life Office, and the faculty to facilitate students' special requirements as recommended in medical reports. Disabled students who have attended Irish secondary schools may apply through open competition with the CAO, without seeking special assistance; those who do so must meet the minimum Leaving Certificate entry requirements, but are exempted from meeting the relevant points requirements. The officer with overall responsibility for determining the scope of academic accommodations that may be offered is the Registrar; the effectiveness of these supports is monitored through the annual review of the QA Manual.

Students who report a disability subsequent to admission should submit appropriate professional documentation of the condition to the Academic Office; once the documentation

has been reviewed, the Registrar advises the student of the accommodations which the College is able to provide.

A student with reported and accepted disabilities has the disability recorded on his or her file and taken into account as appropriate through his or her life cycle as a student at the institution.

QA documentation	Status
a/ Admissions Handbook	
b/ Catalogue	
c/ Student files	

#### 7.4 Learner representation

Learner representation is provided by a number of means. Learner representatives are chosen by their peers to sit on the Academic Committee, where they raise matters of student concern with the academic and administrative staff and are invited to provide input on an ongoing basis to all matters related to quality assurance. The Student Union also provides an avenue for learners to register their views on the quality of student life and learning and propose means by which it might be improved. The Director of Student Life presents these views and proposed means to achieve improvements around them to the Academic Committee and the SMC on an ongoing basis. Student evaluations are completed by all learners for all classes at the end of each semester, to be reviewed by the Academic Office and the results shared with the relevant teaching staff, along with discussion as appropriate for enhancement of the learning and teaching experience.

As noted at Section 7.1, students are sent a Student Satisfaction survey each year which includes questions on the range and adequacy of learning resources and supports. This information is collected by the Director of Student Life and presented to the annual Academic Council review, with recommendations for enhancement.

The College's small size, small classes, and open-door practice and policy mean that learners also have a variety of informal avenues by which they can make representations to all levels of the institution.

QA documentation	Status
a/ Academic Committee, Academic Council, Senior Management Committee minutes and papers	
b/ Learner evaluations and review	
c/ Student Union records	

#### 7.5 Guidance

The small size of classes in the institution means that ongoing academic guidance is regularly provided on a personalized basis. Incoming learners are counselled thoroughly on possible career and further education pathways before admission, and descriptions of these possible outcomes are provided in hardcopy materials and on the institutional website.



The College also provides mental health counselling services through a near-by independent provider, Spectrum.

<b>QA documentation</b>	<b>Status</b>
a/ Admissions hardcopy materials and website	

## **8. Information and data management**

### **8.0 Overview**

Institutional self-knowledge is the starting point for effective quality assurance designed to improve the daily functioning of the College in all its areas of operation. In fact, in the modern world it is impossible for an institution to operate without computerized systems for collecting, accessing, analysing and utilizing information about its own activities.

### **8.1 Information systems**

The College appreciates the paramount importance of collecting and analysing relevant information for the effective management of its degree programmes and administrative activities. The quality-related information systems used by the College include Prestige academic management software (supported by hard copy back-up files) to document registration of learners, course allocation, contact details, academic results. All these areas are managed by the Academic Office. Apart from comprehensive records retained for each individual learner, the electronic information on learner cohort progression, pass/fail rates, and course completion is made available to the Academic Committee and forms a part of ongoing monitoring, along with the provision of statistical information on retention, progression and completion for the annual programmatic review and the published student information statistics, and the quinquennial external programmatic review.

Information relating to the College's alumni is collected by the Director of Student Life.

The management of College finances is the responsibility of the Business Office, reporting to the Director of Administrative Services. The system used the office is the Pegasus Opera II business software.

The daily flow of professional information between staff is facilitated by Microsoft Outlook, while Moodle software is used by learners to access lecture notes and interact with their lecturers and other learners. The materials posted on Moodle can be accessed both locally and remotely, thus facilitating learners who prefer to study at home rather than in the Library's reading room. Learners who have missed classes for whatever reason can use the facility to catch up on missed material. This on-line facility is seen as a valuable addition to the more traditional, direct and personal learning resources.

The Director of ICT oversees assessment and planning of the University's information and communications technology, including the library. The overarching technology plan for the institution is goal six of the Strategic Plan, 2015–20. As with all items in the Strategic Plan, these are costed line by line for five years, with the costings reviewed and revised as required each fall following the annual review of the Strategic Plan. Each summer the Director of ICT reviews progress and prospects for the initiatives in the plan and any additional ICT items that have emerged or are likely to emerge. The Director of ICT also presents a summary report on ICT security, current capacity and sustainability, planning for future development and improvement to the Senior Management Committee which, following discussion, is used

as the basis for assessing the progress and prospects for the items on the Strategic Plan. It is in the nature of ICT that issues and opportunities present themselves in the short term. Planning items such as these are typically presented to the Senior Management Committee as they arise, for discussion and approval, with implementation following agreement on the budget for them. These additional items are then incorporated into the annual review of ICT, either as matters related to the Strategic Plan initiatives, or as additional items. The Director of ICT also provides a report on the University's technology on an annual basis to the Board of Trustees.

QA documentation	Status
a/ Academic reports generated by information systems	
b/ Financial reports generated by information systems	
c/ College intranet content	
d/ ICT annual report by Director of ICT	
e/ Strategic Plan annual review	

## 8.2 Student and management information systems

The College uses the Prestige learner information system. It provides secure and readily accessible student details and data, and it is able to provide reports from which annual data on learner progression and completion are gathered to present the statistical data analyses which are a part of the annual programme review. These statistical analyses are also available for the use of external accrediting bodies.

The system also generates transcripts, which are available for students on-demand and are sent out within a month of the end of each semester with final grades, along with instructions on accessing clarifications and grade reviews for students who require them.

## 8.3 Information for planning

The College uses information and data extensively for planning and quality assurance purposes. Financial information, historically audited materials and current cash flows are used to make budgetary projections and expenditure plans for educational delivery. Admissions data information is used to plan class allocations. Learner data relating to progression, retention and completion is collected and reviewed annually, and used to inform forward planning on course content delivery, assessment, classroom logistics.

QA documentation	Status
a/ Academic reports generated by information systems	
b/ Financial reports generated by information systems	
c/ Strategic Plan annual review	

#### 8.4 Records maintenance and retention

The College's policy and procedures on the maintenance and retention of records is set out in the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) Policy, available on the institutional [website](#). The GDPR officer presents a review of policy adherence and amendment on an annual basis to the SMC.

QA documentation	Status
a/ General Data Protection Regulation – institutional policy statement	
b/ SMC minutes	

#### 8.5 Data protection and freedom of information

The institution adheres to the requirements of the GDPR; the policy on GDPR is publicly available at the institutional website under the Publications tab. All requirements of the Freedom of Information Act are adhered to; all information concerning the assessment and grading of learners is freely available to them following an application period; and all learners and staff have freedom of access to any materials or records kept on file on them by the institution.

Learner assessment data is approved by the internal and external assessment boards and entered on the student information system, overseen by the Registrar. The Registrar sends the updated transcripts at the end of each session to all students for verification of results and clarifications / review as required.

QA documentation	Status
a/ General Data Protection Regulation – institutional policy statement	
b/ SMC minutes	

## 9. Public information and communication

### 9.0 Overview

Like all third-level educational institutions in the modern world, American College Dublin regularly publishes up-to-date, impartial and objective information, both quantitative and qualitative, about the programmes and awards it offers. It takes the utmost care to ensure that the information it conveys is current, accurate and clear.

### 9.1 Public information

Through its regulatory activities with QQI, the institution makes available to the public (through both QQI's and its own [website](#)) a range of information, including the fundamental record of institutional academic information, the [Catalogue](#), the current [QA manual](#), the institutional review self-evaluation quality assurance reports, QQI panel report, College response and follow-up report.

The College also makes available on its website a student information document required by the [US Higher Education Opportunity Act \(2008\)](#), Student information. The College's General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) Policy is also available to be reviewed on the College website.

### 9.2 Student information

The College's main publication of record is its annual [Catalogue](#), available both in printed and electronic format. This is not a marketing document but an objective record of the institution's current academic offerings, policies and procedures. The Catalogue contains up-to-date information about the College's mission, accreditation and awarding bodies, the degree programmes it offers, including information on accreditation, award titles, awarding bodies and award levels, placement on the National Framework of Qualifications, application methods, transfer and progression policies, student life and internships, academic policies and procedures, protection for enrolled students. The Catalogue is updated at the end of each academic year and, following approval by the Academic Council, is issued each September; interim updates may be sanctioned by the Academic Committee, with ratification or modification as required by the next Academic Council. All other College publications, electronic and hardcopy, are required to take the Catalogue as the authoritative point of reference for any information they provide about programmes; they may summarise or paraphrase representatively information in the Catalogue, but they may not deviate or divert from the Catalogue.

The College [website](#) provides both impartial information derived from the College Catalogue (a link to the Catalogue is provided in the website, as is a link to the current QA Manual), as well as current news and events and marketing information for potential applicants to the institution. The update and monitoring of accuracy of the website is the joint responsibility of the Director of Information and Communications Technology and the Academic Dean.

Information on individual student assessment and progression and any other matters of academic relevance are maintained within the Prestige student information system, and on hardcopy student files. The Registrar oversees secure access to the student information system and is responsible for its updating as new academic results and other information become available and ensuring that the results once approved by the internal and external assessment boards are accurately and completely added to the system; students are sent updated transcripts once each semester's results are approved and updated, so that they may verify their results and seeks clarifications or review as required. The Registrar is also responsible for ensuring that student data management conform to GDPR requirements.

The College's marketing materials, which include brochures, pamphlets and media advertisements, provide a range of information about the College. Given its nature, the tenor of the material is promotional and lays a strong stress on the positive features of the institution, but the Admissions Department is responsible to the Academic Council for the accuracy and integrity of the information conveyed. The College is keen to keep the wider public informed, both in Ireland and internationally, about its educational services, by organizing several Open Days during the year, by participating in numerous educational fairs in Ireland and abroad, and by social networking through a number of Internet sites such as Facebook. Since its inception in 1993 the College has maintained an extremely valuable if unrecorded extensive informal and personal network of communication with learners, alumni, their families, wider academic community, as well as local and international community.

QA documentation	Status
a/ College hardcopy publications	
b/ College website (including publications available on the website)	
c/ College marketing materials	

## 10. Other parties involved in education and training

### 10.0 Overview

American College Dublin was founded in 1993 by an external institution, Lynn University, Boca Raton, Florida, and so has always been associated with the notion of working in partnership with other parties in education. Although the institution is independent and works largely within and on its own resources, it does rely on some external engagements in pursuing its mission.

### 10.1 Peer relationships with the broader education and training community

Apart from its programmes accredited by QQI and the relevant awards placed on the National Framework of Qualifications, the College is accredited by the Middle States Commission on Higher Education ([MSCHE](#)). MSCHE is responsible for higher education accreditation in the states of New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Maryland, Washington, DC, and Delaware. According to the 2018/19 QS World University Rankings, MSCHE accredits five of the world's top twenty higher education institutions: Princeton University, Columbia University, University of Pennsylvania, The Johns Hopkins University and Cornell University. There are more MSCHE-accredited institutions ranked in the top 200 universities in the world than those accredited by any other regional body.

American College Dublin became a Candidate for Accreditation with MSCHE in 2009; it received its initial grant of accreditation in 2013, which was followed in 2018 by a renewal of its grant of accreditation for another eight years. This accreditation is quality assured by an extensive process of evaluation and enhancement. Each of the grants of accreditation was made following the submission of a detailed self-study and supporting documentation and a three-day on-site assessment of the submission by a team of seven peer evaluators. Additionally, the institution is required to submit a detailed report on its current operations, functioning and financial condition, the Annual Institutional Update (AIU).

All of the institution's current accreditations are displayed on the [website](#) and in the [Catalogue](#), including contact information for the accreditation bodies.

QA documentation	Status
a/ QQI accreditation documents	
b/ MSCHE accreditation documents	

### 10.2 External partnerships and second providers

American College Dublin does not currently have any external partnerships or relationships with second providers, and does not currently envisage any for its QQI-accredited programmes. Any external partnerships take place through the overarching body of which ACD is a constituent college, Irish American University.

### 10.3 Peer review panellists, examiners and authenticators

American College Dublin follows QQI guidelines for the retaining of external peer reviewers and peer panellists for programmatic review exercises. See sub-section 6.5 above for further detail on the retaining and monitoring of external peer reviewers.

QA documentation	Status
a/ External Peer Reviewer Report forms, including College responses to extern feedback	
b/ College-extern correspondence	
c/ Correspondence with regulatory bodies on extern appointments and provision of report copies	
d/ Academic Committee minutes	



## 11. Self-evaluation, monitoring and review

### 11.0 Overview

American College Dublin is subject to comprehensive and near constant institutional reviews by its Irish and its American accreditation agencies, QQI and MSCHE. The MSCHE institutional review activities follow those currently required by the institution's accreditation status with MSCHE. The QQI institutional review, last completed by the institution in 2011, is in a transitional phase and it is expected that the institution will enter upon the process of going through reengagements and institutional review from 2018/19 on, in accordance with the current [QQI re-engagement](#) requirements.

### 11.1 Institutional internal review, self-evaluation and monitoring

The institution has a history of a deep and extensive process of internal review, which extends down from the Strategic Plan and the assessment of progress in realising its recommendations. The process is ongoing, supported by the Academic Council through the levels of assessment of academic content and delivery that take place throughout the educational programmes offered by the institution. Assessment methods and results are assessed at the programme design and approval stage, to be subsequently analysed through the quinquennial programmatic review process (the last of which was conducted in 2016–17). The Academic Committee reports at the end of each academic year to the Academic Council the cumulative assessment results, and provides a narrative on the performance of the academic programmes and recommendations for improvement in the annual internal programmatic review. A Student Satisfaction Survey gathers student feedback and is collated and presented for review and actions as required to the Academic Council annually. The overall finances of the institution are monitored regularly through budgetary documents prepared by the Business Office and their outcomes are assessed annually by way of an external independent audit, which is in turn reviewed and approved by the governing body. Facilities and ICT are reported to the Senior Management Committee. Summary annual reports from the main units of the University are also presented to the Board of Trustees, both in written form and delivered orally. The questions asked by the Board allow for annual evaluation of planning, resources and institutional improvement by the governing body.

QA documentation	Status
a/ Academic Committee, Academic Council, SMC and Board of Trustees meetings minutes	
b/ Financial audit, budgetary and monthly cash flow documents	
c/ Strategic Plan and documented assessment of it	

## 11.2 Internal self-monitoring

The institution has a number of key performance indicators that allow it to check that it is achieving its quality assurance targets and taking appropriate follow-up action. The targets include those identified in the Strategic Plan, which are comprehensively assessed each year by the Academic Council. Other performance indicators include data on attendance, retention, completion and progression evaluated by the Academic Committee and brought together in the annual internal programmatic review, submitted to the Academic Council; ongoing checks on attendance; analysis of grading profiles conducted each semester and at the end of the academic year to check that learners are achieving satisfactory academic progress; feedback from external examiners and follow-up; the Student Satisfaction Survey; reports on facilities and ICT; annual independent audits and weekly cash-flow reviews; review of student evaluations; and regular ongoing monitoring that takes place in the context of Academic Committee, Senior Management Committee and Academic Council meetings, documented in the minutes of these bodies.

QA documentation	Status
a/ Academic Committee, Academic Council, SMC and Board of Trustees meetings minutes	
b/ Financial audit, budgetary and monthly cash flow documents	
c/ Strategic Plan and documented assessment of it	

## 11.3 Self-evaluation, improvement and enhancement

ACD is accredited by both Irish and American accreditation agencies (QQI in Ireland and MSCHE in the USA). The fact of having two highly-regarded accreditation agencies assessing the institution is beneficial not only because the accreditation cycles are such that the College is constantly in a process of preparing for and going through external assessment, but also because the two agencies, though complementary, offer contrasting approaches to assessing postsecondary institutions, which means ACD never settles into one set process of external peer evaluation, but must regularly review itself from different perspectives. Effectively, the institution is required to prepare a self-evaluation document and host a site visit every two to three years in order to maintain compliance with its accreditation requirements in Ireland and the USA. Given that the self-evaluation document takes 18 to 24 months to prepare, and typically results in a year of follow-up actions to achieve the optimal enhancements arising out of the self-evaluation process, and that preparations for the next self-evaluation exercise preparations immediately begin after this, the College is involved in a perpetual cycle of structured self-evaluation, improvement and enhancement.

Self-evaluation processes are documented through the accreditation reports that are generated (including findings and action plans), and also through the copious QA documentation that underpins QA self-evaluation, recorded in this document at the end of every section, and reviewed annually by the Academic Council.

QA documentation	Status
a/ MSCHE and QQI accreditation reports and responses	
b/ Correspondence with regulatory agencies	

#### 11.4 Institution quality assurance and engagement with external quality assurance

ACD's quality assurance system is explicitly modelled on the requirements of the *Qualifications and Quality Assurance (Education and Training) Act 2012*, and the interpretations and guidelines regarding that statute provided by QQI. Accordingly, the current document, setting out the constituent parts of the institution's quality assurance regime, is aligned with the guidelines set out in the 2016 publication, *Statutory quality assurance guidelines developed by QQI for use by all providers*, and the evaluation of those processes in the institution is followed in consultation with QQI.

QA documentation	Status
a/ QQI accreditation reports and responses	
b/ Correspondence with QQI	

## **12. Concluding remarks**

American College Dublin is committed to practicing quality assurance in a way that delivers the optimal benefits to students and staff. This document sets out the policies and procedures which underpin the College's current practice of quality assurance. The Quality Assurance Manual is the definitive source of quality policies and procedures used in American College Dublin, both as part of the compliance with Irish legislation and QQI, and as a useful internal reference source to help the smooth administrative functioning of the College.

Many of the quality policies, regulations and procedures described in this manual have in their essential forms been in place in the College since its foundation in 1993. Although these practices are not always accompanied by the phrase 'quality assurance' or its derivatives, the forms into which they have been developed and continue to develop support the administrative processes and the design, delivery and assessment of the College's academic programmes. Documentation of these arrangements provides a definitive reference of process for the College staff, and it also furnishes evidence that the College continues to meet the external accreditation requirements and standards for the quality provision of its programmes.

The Quality Assurance Manual and the procedures it sets out are overseen by the College's Quality Assurance Officer, reporting to the Academic Council, and are updated both on an ongoing basis as necessary, and through a formal review annually. Feedback from all stakeholders in the College is welcomed in the process of updating and improving the document and the processes it describes. The Manual is designed to be comprehensive, accessible and as easy as possible to use, so as help ensure reasonable adherence to the administrative practices of the College in pursuing its academic mission.


Quality procedures and arrangements are kept under continuous review by the College management, following feedback and consultations with staff and students. Periodic and regular review and general improvement of administrative structures, regulations and procedures is essential for continued effective development, delivery and assessment of the College as an educational institution. The student learning experience is affected not just by direct teaching, learning and assessment processes, but is also strongly influenced by many related factors, such as the physical environment, the learning support provided, and the learners' broader engagement with College life.

The philosophy underlying the Quality Assurance Manual is to provide a structural basis for recording and evaluating the processes and procedures that support higher education academic activities. American College Dublin has always taken pride in maintaining a close relationship with its students, enabling not only to acquire formal education but also to grow and develop as valuable people and members of the community. The Quality Assurance Manual offers an administrative context for the College to continue to prioritize student needs and requirements in a way that supports high standards of student care.

It is the College's conviction that the Quality Assurance Manual should be more than a mere accreditation compliance exercise: it is much more useful to seek to explore the full potential of adapting quality assurance processes so that they assist in serving higher learning and administrative effectiveness and functioning. In this sense the Quality Assurance Manual is a living document, which the College continues to update and revise in the light of experience and feedback provided from all areas of its operation. The present latest version of the Quality Assurance Manual is therefore a helpful step in the ongoing efforts to run ACD effectively and to seek to improve its functioning as a good higher education institution.

## 13. Appendices

### 13.1 External Peer Reviewer's Report form

 <b>External Peer Reviewer's Report 2019/20</b> American College Dublin						
Date						
<b>Programme Details</b>	Programme Reference <sup>1</sup>					
	Award Title:					
	Area Of Specialisation (ISCED CODE):					
	Main Modes of Delivery Offered:					
	Stage (1,2,3,4,..., or Award Stage):					
	Semester (if applicable indicate whether first or Second):					
<b>Classification Distribution and Trend</b>		Current Year	Previous Year	Previous Year	Previous Year	Previous Year
	% H1/D					
	% H21/M1					
	% H22/M2					
	% P					
<b>Completion Rate Data</b>	Number who started the programme					
	Number who started the stage					
	Number who completed the stage (i.e. attempted final stage examinations)					
<b>External Peer Reviewer Details</b>	Name					
	Main Employment					

<sup>1</sup> The institution should complete the factual parts of the cover sheet before forwarding the template to the External Peer Reviewer.

	Email address	
	Other contact details	
<b>Please consult QQI's document <i>Effective Practice Guidelines for External Examining, Revised February 2015</i>, for more detailed information concerning expectations.</b>		
<b>In presenting opinions under the following headings the External Peer Reviewer should make national and international comparisons.</b>		

### **The Evidence Considered**

*The purpose of this section is to indicate how well informed the External Peer Reviewer is about the institution, the programme and its context. Summarize the documentary evidence considered (see QQI's document *Effective Practice Guidelines for External Examining, Revised February 2015*) and any visits, meetings and interviews with learners and academic staff and others.*

### **Minimum Intended Programme Learning Outcomes**

*The purpose of this section is to comment on the educational objectives including their explicitness, appropriateness and consistency standards with the relevant awards standards and the National Framework of Qualifications. If there are gaps these should be identified. If the standard is too low this must be stated explicitly so that it can be addressed.*

### **Actual Attainment of Learners**

*This section should present the External Peer Reviewer's informed perception of the actual attainment of learners (knowledge, skill and competence). This is the most important finding of the external peer review process. This should be based on consideration of:*

- *The institution's assessment instruments (e.g. assessment strategies, examination papers, marking schemes), procedures and findings*
- *Representative samples of learner responses to assessment tasks (e.g. examination scripts, dissertations, etc.)*
- *Interviews with learners*
- *Benchmarking data prepared by the institution*
- *Any other appropriate evidence*

*In presenting those perceptions the External Peer Reviewer should make national and international comparisons. Opinions (e.g. satisfaction with the actual attainment) should be explained (e.g. by outlining the rationale and criteria).*

### **The Programme**

*Often External Peer Reviewers' experience of the programme might lead to suggestions about particular aspects of the programme. This might involve the curriculum or the approach to teaching and learning. This section should identify some notable strengths and areas for improvement. It is not intended that the external reviewer would attempt systematically to review the programme.*

### **Assessment Procedures**

*The External Peer Reviewer plays a vital role in the ongoing quality assurance and enhancement of assessment. This section should address:*

- *The quality of the assessment instruments (programme and module strategies, examination papers, dissertation guidelines, etc.) and scoring rubrics/schemes etc.*
- *The fairness, consistency and fitness for purpose (valid, reliable, authentic, robust) of assessment procedures.*
- *The reliability of the provider's benchmarking of its assessment procedures.*

### **Trends**

*Evidence concerning the extent to which teaching, learning and assessment arrangements have changed in response to the feedback provided by previous External Peer Reviewer reports; and*

*Progress on recommendations in recent External Peer Reviewer and other relevant reports on the programme.*

### **Conclusions and Recommendations**

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**External Peer Reviewer's signature, date**



## **13.2 Annual Internal Programmatic Review form**

### **Annual Internal Programmatic Review, 2019/20**

**Programme:**

**Academic content:**

**Assessment processes and effectiveness:**

**Student performance:**

**Student satisfaction:**

**Resources:**

**External examiner comments:**

**Comparative trends:**

**Industry and external environment considerations:**

**Recommendations:**

**13.3 Grade Review form**

**American College Dublin  
GRADE REVIEW FORM**

**SECTION A – TO BE COMPLETED BY LEARNER AND BUSINESS OFFICE**

**Learner Name:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Learner Number:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Module under review** (only one module should be entered): \_\_\_\_\_  
(code & subject title)

**Address to which correspondence on the review should be sent:** \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Learner's signature:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Type of review requested** **Technical grade review (€10.00):** \_\_\_\_\_  
(See note 1 below; tick one):                      **Full grade review (€50.00):** \_\_\_\_\_

**State briefly why you want your grade reviewed** (this need only be entered in the case of a full grade review): \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Signature from Business Office confirming receipt of review fee:** \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
(See note 2 below)

-----  
**SECTION B – TO BE COMPLETED BY INTERNAL EXAMINER AND HEAD OF DEPARTMENT**

***Outcome of review (see note 3 below; for internal College use only):***

*The original grade stands for the following reason(s):* \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

*The grade has been adjusted for the following reason(s):* \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

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1. There are two types of grade review: a technical review involves a check of the arithmetic in calculating the grade and a check of the inputting of the grade on the College's records system; a full review involves a complete reassessment of the final examination paper (including a check for technical errors) and any other relevant circumstances cited by the learner. The charge for a technical review is €10.00 per module; the charge for a full review is €50.00 per module. In either case, if the grade review results in the grade being raised the money paid is refunded in full to the learner.

2. The College can only accept a grade review that is presented to the Academic Office with this form and the appropriate fee paid within ten working days of the posting of final results. The Academic Office can only accept the grade review form if the Business Office has signed to indicate that it has received the required payment.

3. Once the grade review request has been considered by the Internal Examiner and the relevant academic staff, they report on their findings to the Internal Learner Learning Assessment Board; this board discusses the findings and makes a final decision on the outcome of the grade review. The chairperson of the Internal Learner Learning Assessment Board then writes to the learner to inform him or her of the outcome of the grade review.

4. Appeals of grade review outcomes must be submitted in writing within 14 days of receipt of formal notification of the grade review outcome.

**Internal Examiner:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Registrar:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Signed:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Signed:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

### 13.4 Marking scheme and grade descriptors

The marking scheme and grade descriptors used at ACD consist of the following components:

#### **A (80–100%) Excellent**

The highest grade is equivalent to first class honours and shows an excellent understanding of the question and of the complexity of issues involved, with a very good command of relevant factual material, and an ability to analyse and interpret facts and to handle theoretical concepts. There should also be evidence of an original approach and of wide reading, and a presentation of a well-reasoned argument.

#### **B+ (70–79%) Very Good**

This grade is equivalent to high second class honours and shows a very good grasp of the main issues and a sound understanding of the relevant material and critical debates. There may not be as much originality of interpretation as in the A grade, but the material is presented clearly and logically, and provides evidence of thoughtful reading.

#### **B (60–69%) Good**

This grade is equivalent to lower second class honours and shows strong awareness of the issues involved and of the main lines of interpretation. The work may, however, contain some inaccuracies, irrelevance, or poorly substantiated claims. It also shows organization of material that is in places erratic or inconsistent. While a strong response, it is weaker in terms of general discussion, knowledge of sources, and factual information than higher grades.

#### **B- (55–59%) Above Average**

This grade shows adequate and sufficient awareness of the issues involved and of the interpretations and concepts involved. There are, however, obvious factual gaps and inaccuracies, and the argument is inconsistently and poorly presented. The knowledge of relevant sources is deficient, the work contains some unsubstantiated claims and is at places unconvincingly argued.

#### **C+ (50–54%) Fair**

This grade is equivalent to higher third class honours and shows poor and insufficient understanding of the issues involved. There are considerable gaps in factual knowledge and source material. The awareness of theoretical issues is vague and patchy. The answer is poorly planned, with little sense of direction and poor development of basic arguments. Significant errors occur, and parts of the answer may be irrelevant.

#### **C (40–49%) Pass**

This grade is equivalent to lower third class honours and shows barely adequate and insufficient understanding of the issues involved. There are obvious and serious factual gaps, relevant parts of the material are omitted, there is hardly any awareness of theoretical debates, and the argument is chaotically and inconsistently argued.

**D (35–39%) Poor**

The response is barely adequate in terms of the knowledge of factual material or critical debates. The presentation is confused and erratic, and much of the argument is either irrelevant or illogical.

**F (0–34%) Fail**

A fail answer demonstrates no grasp of the issues involved. Factual knowledge may be missing, insubstantial, or incorrect. The entire presentation is confused and erratic, and most or all of the answer is irrelevant or illogical.

### 13.5 Assessing oral presentations

Written work such as term essays or final examinations is in some respects less problematic to assess than the more volatile live oral class presentations, whose assessment relies more on impressionistic and subjective on-the-spot evaluation. To ensure maximum objectivity and transparency in grading oral presentations, ACD lecturers use the following assessment rubric:

#### Class presentation: assessment rubric

	<b>Content</b>	<b>Structure</b>	<b>Audience engagement</b>
<b>A (excellent: 80–100%)</b>	accurate, exhaustive, relevant to the topic	effective introduction, development of argument, and conclusion; appropriate timing; total control over presented material	High ability to hold audience's attention and interest throughout the presentation
<b>B+ (very good: 70–79%)</b>	accurate, comprehensive, with a high degree of relevance to the topic	good control over material; clear transition from introduction to development to conclusion	good ability to hold audience's attention and interest for most of the presentation
<b>B (good: 60–69%)</b>	fairly accurate, some omission of material, mostly relevant to the topic	fair amount of control over material; some imbalance between introduction, development, and conclusion	considerable ability to hold audience's attention and interest most of the time
<b>B- (above average: 55–59%)</b>	clear omission of relevant material, inaccuracies	problems with control of the structure of presentation; inadequate introduction or conclusion	problems with keeping audience's attention and interest for parts of the time
<b>C+ (fair: 50–54%)</b>	considerable gaps in relevant material	problems with overall coherence and order of argument	considerable struggle to hold audience's attention and interest
<b>C (pass: 40–49%)</b>	serious omissions of relevant material	lack of overall coherence, omission of introduction or conclusion	poor ability to hold audience's attention
<b>D (poor: 35–39%)</b>	material mostly irrelevant, poor preparation	incoherent and improvised presentation	inability to hold audience interested
<b>F (fail: 0–34%)</b>	inadequate preparation, material mostly irrelevant	chaotic, incoherent, and confused structure of presentation	lack of engagement with audience

### 13.6 Group work assessment

Group work assessment has been utilized in many of the modules especially in the business programmes since the College's foundation. Group work and team projects are valued as formative and summative assessment tools which assess the learner's ability to apply and articulate learning outcomes collaboratively, develop team working skills and share responsibility in a joint academic endeavour.

Learners can either be placed in groups or asked to arrange their own groups. Group members are directed to participate equally in group work. The learners are advised by the lecturers that any problems occurring within the group should be initially be dealt with, and a solution sought by, the group members themselves. If this is not possible then the lecturer will intervene to resolve the issue. If a successful solution is still not forthcoming the head of programme or Academic Dean meets with the lecturer and group members. All points of view are aired and a consensus arrived at.

Group members' participation in projects is determined through feedback and discussion in the preparation phase and in the group presentation. Further examination can be done in the questions and answers session at the end of the presentation.

Groups are marked as a unit for the written project, whereas individual marks are assigned in the presentation. In all modules, the majority (80%) of the group work grade is awarded for the group work written report and/or class presentation. The written reports are assessed according to the applicable assessment criteria described in the QA Manual, while class presentations are assessed according to the guideline rubric which follows:

#### *Class presentation: assessment rubric*

	<b>Content</b>	<b>Structure</b>	<b>Audience engagement</b>
<b>A (excellent: 80–100%)</b>	accurate, exhaustive, relevant to the topic	effective introduction, development of argument, and conclusion; appropriate timing; total control over presented material	High ability to hold audience's attention and interest throughout the presentation
<b>B+ (very good: 70–79%)</b>	accurate, comprehensive, with a high degree of relevance to the topic	good control over material; clear transition from introduction to development to conclusion	good ability to hold audience's attention and interest for most of the presentation
<b>B (good: 60–69%)</b>	fairly accurate, some omission of material, mostly relevant to the topic	fair amount of control over material; some imbalance between introduction, development, and conclusion	considerable ability to hold audience's attention and interest most of the time
<b>B- (above average: 55–59%)</b>	clear omission of relevant material, inaccuracies	problems with control of the structure of presentation; inadequate introduction or conclusion	problems with keeping audience's attention and interest for parts of the time
<b>C+ (fair: 50–54%)</b>	considerable gaps in	problems with overall	considerable struggle to

	relevant material	coherence and order of argument	hold audience's attention and interest
<b>C (pass: 40–49%)</b>	serious omissions of relevant material	lack of overall coherence, omission of introduction or conclusion	poor ability to hold audience's attention
<b>D (poor: 35–39%)</b>	material mostly irrelevant, poor preparation	incoherent and improvised presentation	inability to hold audience interested
<b>F (fail: 0–34%)</b>	inadequate preparation, material mostly irrelevant	chaotic, incoherent, and confused structure of presentation	lack of engagement with audience

The remaining 20% of the group work grade is awarded according to the four 5% divisions below. The examiner interviews and interacts with the groups on a regular basis during the course of the group work exercise and on the basis of these meetings assesses the precise numerical value to award within each of the bands. All learners within the group receive the same grade.

*Group work functioning: assessment rubric*

<b>Marks out of 100</b>	0–39	40–59	60–79	80–100
<b>Decision making</b>	–One learner dominates decision-making.	–Some learners contribute to decision-making.	–Most learners contribute to decision-making.	–All learners contribute to decision-making.
<b>Group dynamics and interaction</b>	–Learners frequently interrupt and/or are disruptive. –Learners do not ask questions or build on others' comments.	–Learners pay attention to group discussions. –Some learners ask questions and build on others' comments.	–Responses indicate active listening. –Most learners ask questions and build on others' comments.	–All learners respect and encourage the views of others. –All learners ask questions and seek clarification. –All learners build on others' comments.
<b>Contribution</b>	–Learners do not contribute in positive ways to the group work.	–Some learners contribute positively to the group work.	–Most learners contribute positively to the group work.	–All learners consistently contribute in a positive way to the group work.
<b>Group planning and task achievement</b>	–Learners have difficulty sequencing steps. –Exercises and final report are not completed on time.	–With assistance, learners are able to sequence steps. –Rush to complete exercises and final report. –Inefficient division of tasks and responsibilities.	–Learners complete a sequence of steps. –Completion of exercises and final report on time. –Efficient allocation of responsibilities and tasks.	–Learners complete a clear and logical sequence of steps. –Completion of exercises and final report on time and with appropriate analysis, reflection and revision. –Learners volunteer to



				take responsibilities and tasks.
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### 13.7 Performing Arts assessment rubrics

For Performing Arts, the additional rubrics below are used.

Acting and voice exercises are assessed according to the following rubric:

<b>Grade</b>	<b>Concentration</b>	<b>Imagination</b>	<b>Movement</b>	<b>Reaction</b>	<b>Memorization</b>
<b>A</b>	Total immersion in character and scene	Total engagement with character, props, and setting	Fully believable, “natural” body movement and gesture	Character behaviour appears fully spontaneous and natural	Total ownership of the lines, organic stage business
<b>B+</b>	Convincing identification with character and scene	Creative invention of vocal and physical behaviour to create a character	Body movement and gesture convincing and consistent with character and scene	Reactions believable and consistent with character and scene	Full memorization and believable line delivery
<b>B</b>	Good focus on character and scene	Convincing expression of character engaging with props and setting	Appropriate and believable but technical blocking	Most of the actor’s responses are congruent with character and scene	Competent if not fully emotionally convincing line delivery
<b>B-</b>	Superficial identification with character and scene	Stereotyped construction of character, lacking subtlety and nuance	Occasional lapses in blocking	Responses often incongruent with character or badly timed	Lines sound rote and disconnected
<b>C+</b>	Self-conscious, insecure performance	Mechanical delivery of lines, unconvincing characterization	Mechanical body movement, not always consistent with character	Reactions often either too fast or too slow, incongruous with character and scene	Mechanical line delivery without meaning what one says
<b>C</b>	Occasional losses of concentration, poor immersion in character and scene	Distracted, unbelievable characterization	Incoherent blocking mismatched with character emotion	Physical reactions frequently distracted and unmotivated	Occasional loss of lines, delivery without meaning or conviction
<b>D</b>	Frequent lapses of concentration, loss of character,	Problems with understanding character, props, and setting	Unmotivated or improvised blocking	Unmotivated, incongruous reactions to other actors, props and setting	Frequent loss of lines, failure to understand their meaning
<b>F</b>	Incomprehension of character and scene, lack of	Wrong characterization, incomprehension of dramatic and	Unprepared performance, incoherent and	Incomprehension of character behaviour, totally incoherent	Lines or parts of text missing, altered meaning

	concentration	emotional meaning of a scene	unmotivated movement out of sync with character	physical reactions	
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Musical performances are assessed according to the following rubric:

<b>Grade</b>	<b>Vocal technique</b>	<b>Acting through song</b>	<b>Individual interpretation</b>	<b>Ensemble singing</b>	<b>Musicianship</b>
<b>A</b>	High level of command and control of breath and support, range, vowel formation, tone, pitch, accuracy.	A high level of ability in engaging with the part, inhabiting and projecting the character believably, conveying the meanings of the lyric or lines through singing, speaking, moving.	A high level of personal and individual identification with the performed part, combining control and creative and original expression.	A high level of engagement and interaction with other learners' singing parts, harmonies and performance; adds a very high level to the group's overall performance.	Displays a high level of competency in understanding and employing musical skills of sight reading, harmonization, musical theory.
<b>B+</b>	Superior level of command and control of breath and support, range, vowel formation, tone, pitch, accuracy.	A superior level of ability in engaging with the part, inhabiting and projecting the character believably, conveying the meanings of the lyric or lines through singing, speaking, moving.	A superior level of personal and individual identification with the performed part, combining control and creative and original expression.	A superior level of engagement and interaction with other learners' singing parts, harmonies and performance; adds a superior level to the group's overall performance.	Displays a superior level of competency in understanding and employing musical skills of sight reading, harmonization, musical theory.
<b>B</b>	Good level of command and control of breath and support, range, vowel formation, tone, pitch, accuracy.	A good level of ability in engaging with the part, inhabiting and projecting the character believably, conveying the meanings of the lyric or lines through singing, speaking, moving.	A good level of personal and individual identification with the performed part, combining control and creative and original expression.	A good level of engagement and interaction with other learners' singing parts, harmonies and performance; adds a good level to the group's overall performance.	Displays a good level of competency in understanding and employing musical skills of sight reading, harmonization, musical theory.
<b>B-</b>	Adequate level of command and control of breath and support, range, vowel formation, tone, pitch, accuracy.	An adequate level of ability in engaging with the part, inhabiting and projecting the character believably, conveying the meanings of the lyric or lines through singing, speaking, moving.	An adequate level of personal and individual identification with the performed part, combining control and creative and original expression.	An adequate level of engagement and interaction with other learners' singing parts, harmonies and performance; adds an adequate level to the group's overall performance.	Displays an adequate level of competency in understanding and employing musical skills of sight reading, harmonization, musical theory.
<b>C+</b>	Passable level of	A passable level of	A passable level	A passable level	Displays a

	command and control of breath and support, range, vowel formation, tone, pitch, accuracy.	ability in engaging with the part, inhabiting and projecting the character believably, conveying the meanings of the lyric or lines through singing, speaking, moving.	of personal and individual identification with the performed part, combining control and creative and original expression.	of engagement and interaction with other learners' singing parts, harmonies and performance; adds a passable level to the group's overall performance.	passable high level of competency in understanding and employing musical skills of sight reading, harmonization, musical theory.
<b>C</b>	A poor level of command and control of breath and support, range, vowel formation, tone, pitch, accuracy.	A poor level of ability in engaging with the part, inhabiting and projecting the character believably, conveying the meanings of the lyric or lines through singing, speaking, moving.	A poor level of personal and individual identification with the performed part, combining control and creative and original expression.	A poor level of engagement and interaction with other learners' singing parts, harmonies and performance; adds a passable level to the group's overall performance.	Displays a poor level of competency in understanding and employing musical skills of sight reading, harmonization, musical theory.
<b>D</b>	Inadequate level of command and control of breath and support, range, vowel formation, tone, pitch, accuracy.	An inadequate level of ability in engaging with the part, inhabiting and projecting the character believably, conveying the meanings of the lyric or lines through singing, speaking, moving.	An inadequate level of personal and individual identification with the performed part, combining control and creative and original expression.	An inadequate level of engagement and interaction with other learners' singing parts, harmonies and performance; adds little to the group's overall performance.	Displays an inadequate level of competency in understanding and employing musical skills of sight reading, harmonization, musical theory.
<b>F</b>	No command and control of breath and support, range, vowel formation, tone, pitch, accuracy.	Unacceptably low level of ability in engaging with the part, inhabiting and projecting the character believably, conveying the meanings of the lyric or lines through singing, speaking, moving.	Barely evident level of personal and individual identification with the performed part, combining control and creative and original expression.	An unacceptably low level of engagement and interaction with other learners' singing parts, harmonies and performance; adds nothing useful to the group's overall performance.	Displays an unacceptably level of competency in understanding and employing musical skills of sight reading, harmonization, musical theory.

Dance and movement exercises are assessed according to the following rubric:

<b>Grade</b>	<b>Skill</b>	<b>Presentation</b>	<b>Attitude</b>
<b>A</b>	The dancer demonstrates a clear sense of alignment, centre control, flexibility and strength. He/she has a strong sense of musicality and the	The dancer demonstrates a high level of concentration, energy and confidence when executing movement in class.	The dancer demonstrates a high effort of professionalism by arriving to class on time, dressing properly, and being prepared to dance

	ability to assimilate corrections.		
<b>B+</b>	The dancer demonstrates a superior awareness of alignment, centre control, flexibility and strength.	The dancer demonstrates a superior level of concentration, energy and confidence when executing movement in class.	The dancer demonstrates a superior effort of professionalism by arriving to class on time, dressing properly, and being prepared to dance
<b>B</b>	The dancer demonstrates a good awareness of alignment, centre control, flexibility and strength.	The dancer demonstrates a good level of concentration, energy and confidence when executing movement in class.	The dancer demonstrates a good effort of professionalism by arriving to class on time, dressing properly, and being prepared to dance
<b>B-</b>	The dancer demonstrates an adequate understanding of alignment, centre control, but lacks in flexibility and strength.	The dancer demonstrates an adequate level of concentration, energy and confidence when executing movement in class.	The dancer demonstrates some effort of professionalism by arriving to class on time, dressing properly, and being prepared to dance
<b>C+</b>	The dancer demonstrates a passable understanding of alignment, centre control, but lacks in flexibility and strength.	The dancer demonstrates passable levels of concentration, energy and confidence when executing movement in class.	The dancer demonstrates passable efforts of professionalism by generally arriving to class on time, dressing properly, and being prepared to dance.
<b>C</b>	The dancer is under-developed in alignment, centre control, flexibility. Further work is needed at current level.	The dancer demonstrates a low level of concentration, energy and confidence when executing movement in class.	The dancer lacks in effort of professionalism by arriving to class tardily, dressing improperly, and not being prepared to dance
<b>D</b>	The dancer lacks an understanding of alignment and centre control. He/she lacks in flexibility, musicality and the ability to pick up combinations.	The dancer demonstrates a poor level of concentration, energy and confidence when executing movement in class.	The dancer lacks in effort of professionalism by frequently arriving to class tardily, dressing improperly, and not being prepared to dance
<b>F</b>	The dancer demonstrates none of the required dance skills at an acceptable level	The dancer demonstrates unacceptable levels of concentration, energy and confidence when executing movement in class.	The dancer lacks in effort of professionalism by constantly arriving to class tardy, dressing improperly, and not being prepared to dance

### 13.8 Creative Writing assessment rubrics

For creative writing modules the following assessment rubric is used for creative writing submissions.

#### **A (80–100%) Excellent**

The highest grade is equivalent to first class honours. Work with this award should be at least of a standard that would be expected of a credible submission to a publisher. The work displays a high level of originality and imagination, command of the material, excellence of style and an ability to present complex issues, situations, ideas and characters in a compelling and interesting way.

#### **B+ (70–79%) Very Good**

This grade is equivalent to high second class honours. The work shows very good originality and imaginative capacity, a strong and assured grasp of the material, a high level of stylistic felicity and sound presentation of ideas, plot, character and other qualities as the work requires.

#### **B (60–69%) Good**

This grade is equivalent to lower second class honours. The work shows good originality and imaginative capacity, a convincing grasp of the material, a pleasing style and a persuasive presentation of ideas, plot, character and the like. The work may contain some inconsistencies, erratic organization, stylistic infelicities. While a strong response, it is weaker in terms of command of the material and presentation than higher grades.

#### **B- (55–59%) Above Average**

This grade shows adequate originality and imagination, is generally of a sufficient stylistic and technical quality, and exhibits interesting ideas, plot, character and the like. There are, however, numerous inconsistencies, connections and developments within the material are often unconvincingly resolved, and there are too many passages with stylistic and technical deficiencies.

#### **C+ (50–54%) Fair**

This grade is equivalent to higher third class honours. The work shows poor and insufficient originality and imagination, style and technique are patchy, the work is poorly planned and organized, and the ideas, plot, character, scenarios presented are unconvincing or dull.

#### **C (40–49%) Pass**

This grade is equivalent to lower third class honours. The work shows barely adequate and insufficient originality and imagination, the writer displays a poor command of the material, and the work is replete with significant stylistic and technical problems. understanding of the issues involved.

#### **D (35–39%) Poor**

This grade is equivalent to a conditional pass. The work is barely adequate in terms of originality and creative presentation. Though a recognizable account may be detected, its presentation is confused and erratic, and much of it is irrelevant, illogical or boring.

**F (0–34%) Fail**

This is a fail. The work demonstrates no grasp of the imaginative or technical requirements of creative writing. The presentation is confused and erratic, organization of the work is chaotic and most or all of the work is irrelevant, illogical or nonsensical.

**13.9 Summary Check list****Summary Check List**

Date:

**1. Governance and management of quality****1.1. Mission and vision and the strategic plan**

QA documentation	Status
a/ Current Strategic Plan	
b/ Annual review of the Strategic Plan	

**1.2.1 Governing body**

QA documentation	Status
a/ Minutes of Board of Trustees meetings	
b/ Board evaluations of President	
c/ Board self-evaluations	

**1.2.2 Senior Management Committee**

QA documentation	Status
a/ Minutes of meetings	
b/ Follow-up on decisions for action as appropriate by minuted reporting back at next meeting	

**1.2.3 Academic Council**

QA documentation	Status
a/ Maintenance of minutes of meetings	
b/ Review of Quality Assurance processes and approval of new QAM	
b/ Strategic Plan annual review and quinquennial review	
c/ Follow-up on decisions for action by minuted reporting back at next meeting	

**1.2.4 Academic Committee**

QA documentation	Status
a/ Maintenance of minutes of meetings	
b/ Follow-up on decisions for action by minuted reporting back at next meeting	



c/ External Peer Reviewer reports and College responses	
d/ Learner feedback forms and commentary by Academic Committee	
e/ Annual Internal Programmatic review form	
f/ Statistical data analysis of pass/fail rates, progression rates, completion rates	

### 1.2.5 Internal Student Learning Assessment Board

QA documentation	Status
a/ Maintenance of minutes of meetings	
b/ Follow-up on decisions by minuted reporting back at next meeting	
c/ Note of review and sign-off on each module's grade sheet	

### 1.2.6 External Peer Review Board

QA documentation	Status
a/ Maintenance of minutes of meetings	
b/ Signed broadsheets and covering correspondence to QQI	

### 1.2.7 Admissions Committee

QA documentation	Status
a/ Maintenance of minutes of meetings and follow-up	
b/ Reports and minutes to Academic Council	

### 1.3.1 Processes, evaluation, follow-up

QA documentation	Status
a/ Current Strategic Plan	
b/ Annual review of the Strategic Plan	
c/ Quality Assurance Manual review and report to Academic Council	
d/ Academic Council minutes	

### 1.3.2 Resources

QA documentation	Status
a/ Current Strategic Plan, including line-item costings	
b/ Annual review of the Strategic Plan	
c/ Annual budgetary projections and updates; regular ongoing updates, analysis and decision making based on weekly and monthly cash flows	
d/ Audited accounts, including review and approval by the Board	

### 1.3.3 Embedding a quality culture

QA documentation	Status
a/ Current Quality Assurance Manual	
b/ Annual review of the QAM (Academic Council minutes)	
c/ QAM on the College website	
d/ Recorded minutes and reports of College meetings	

## 2. Documented approach to quality assurance

### 2.1 Documented policies and procedures

QA documentation	Status
a/ Academic Council minutes on proposed amendments to QAM	
b/ Current and preceding versions of QAM	
c/ Correspondence and other feedback on changes and updates to quality assurance practice and the QAM	
d/ QAM documentation checklist reviewed, evaluated and signed off by Academic Council at the end of each academic year	

### 2.2 A comprehensive system

QA documentation	Status
a/ Academic Council minutes on proposed amendments to QAM	
b/ Current and preceding versions of QAM	
c/ Correspondence and other feedback on changes and updates to quality assurance practice and the QAM	
d/ QAM documentation checklist reviewed, evaluated and signed off by Academic Council at the end of each academic year	
e/ Strategic Plan, including its annual review.	

## 3. Programmes of education and training

### 3.1.1 New modules and major modifications to existing ones

QA documentation	Status
a/ Relevant Academic Committee documentation as noted above at 1.2.4	

### 3.1.2 New programmes and major modifications to existing ones

QA documentation	Status
a/ Maintenance of minutes of Academic Committee, Academic Council and SMC meetings	
b/ Outline plan of proposed programme	
c/ Programme document	
d/ QQI programme validation submission, if applicable	

### 3.2 Learner admission, progression and recognition

QA documentation	Status
a/ Current Admissions Handbook	
b/ Current Catalogue	
c/ Current QAM	
d/ Learner applicant files	

#### 3.2.1 Applicants with recognized prior learning

QA documentation	Status
a/ Current Admissions Handbook	
b/ Current Catalogue	
c/ Current QAM	
d/ Learner applicant files	

#### 3.2.2 International applicants

QA documentation	Status
a/ Current Admissions Handbook	
b/ Current Catalogue	
c/ Current QAM	
d/ Learner applicant files	

#### 3.2.3 English language requirements

QA documentation	Status
a/ Current Admissions Handbook	
b/ Current Catalogue	
c/ Current QAM	
d/ Learner applicant files	

**3.2.4 Applicants with disabilities**

QA documentation	Status
a/ Current Admissions Handbook	
b/ Current Catalogue	
c/ Current QAM	
d/ Learner applicant files	

**3.2.5 Fraudulent applications**

QA documentation	Status
a/ Current Admissions Handbook	
b/ Current Catalogue	
c/ Current QAM	
d/ Learner applicant files	

**3.2.6 Monitoring and action on learner progression and completion rates**

QA documentation	Status
a/ Maintenance of minutes of meetings of internal and external assessment review boards, Academic Committee, Academic Council	
b/ External Peer Reviewer reports and College responses	
c/ Learner feedback forms and commentary by Academic Committee	
d/ Annual Internal Programmatic review form	
e/ Statistical data analysis of pass/fail rates, progression rates, completion rates	

**3.3 Programme monitoring and review**

QA documentation	Status
a/ Relevant Academic Committee documentation as noted above at 1.3.4	

**3.3.1 External programmatic evaluation**

QA documentation	Status
a/ Relevant minutes of working group, Academic Committee, Academic Council and SMC meetings	
b/ Research materials for programme evaluation	
c/ Self-Evaluation Report	
d/ Independent Peer Review Group Report	
e/ College response	

f/ Application by Academic Council to QQI (or SMC for non-QQI programmes) for revalidation of programmes	
g/ Determination by QQI on application for revalidation and response as required	

## 4. Staff recruitment, management and development

### 4.1 Staff recruitment and induction

QA documentation	Status
a/ Employee files, including curriculum vitae, academic transcripts, references	
b/ Contract of employment and employment policies in employee and lecturer handbooks	
c/ Faculty development forms	

### 4.2 Equal opportunities

QA documentation	Status
a/ Current Catalogue	
b/ Current QAM	
c/ Current employee and lecturer handbooks	

### 4.3 Staff communication and development

QA documentation	Status
a/ Contract of employment	
b/ Employee development forms	
c/ Faculty development forms	
d/ Current employee and lecturer handbooks	
e/ Academic Committee and SMC meeting minutes	

#### 4.3.1 Staff evaluation

QA documentation	Status
a/ Contract of employment	
b/ Faculty development forms	
b/ Employee development forms	
c/ Current employee and lecturer handbooks	

**4.3.2 Learner evaluations**

QA documentation	Status
a/ Learner evaluation forms and covering form recording discussion with teacher and conclusions	
b/ Academic Committee minutes	

**5. Teaching and learning****5.1 Teaching and learning methods**

QA documentation	Status
a/ Programme learning and assessment strategies in programme document	
b/ Module learning and assessment strategies in each syllabus	
c/ Faculty Handbook	
d/ Academic Committee documentation as in 1.3.4, above	

**5.2 Promoting learning**

QA documentation	Status
a/ Learner evaluation forms and covering form recording discussion with teacher and conclusions	
b/ Academic Committee minutes	
c/ Academic Council annual review minutes	
d/ Student Handbook	
e/ Register of Complaints and Grievances	

**5.3 National and international practice**

QA documentation	Status
a/ MSCHE statement of accreditation and related documentation	
b/ AAICU membership and related documentation	
c/ ASAPI membership and related documentation	

**5.4 Learning environments**

QA documentation	Status
a/ Field trip approval documentation	
b/ Internship documentation	
c/ Senior Management Committee minutes and papers	

### 5.4.1 Evaluating premises, equipment and facilities

QA documentation	Status
a/ Senior Management Committee minutes and papers	
b/ Facilities report	
c/ Strategic Plan annual review	

## 6. Assessment of learners

### 6.2 Assessment policy

QA documentation	Status
a/ Statement of programme assessment strategy in programme documentation	
b/ Statement of module assessment strategy in each module's syllabus	
c/ External Peer Reviewer feedback and College responses	

### 6.3 Assessment objectives

QA documentation	Status
a/ Statement of programme assessment strategy in programme documentation	
b/ Statement of module assessment strategy in each module's syllabus	
c/ External Peer Reviewer feedback and College responses	
d/ Academic Committee minutes	

### 6.4 Internal examiners

QA documentation	Status
a/ Syllabi	
b/ Examination papers and marking schemes	
c/ Examination scripts	
d/ Grade sheets	
e/ External Peer Reviewer comments	
f/ Internal Learner Learning Assessment Board meeting minutes	

### 6.5 External Peer Reviewers

QA documentation	Status
a/ External Peer Reviewer Report forms, including College responses to extern feedback	
b/ College-extern correspondence	
c/ Correspondence with regulatory bodies on extern appointments and	

provision of report copies	
d/ Academic Committee minutes	

### 6.6 Continuous assessment

QA documentation	Status
a/ Academic Committee documentation as at 1.2.4	

### 6.7 Final examination regulations

QA documentation	Status
a/ Current examination regulations	
b/ Invigilator reports	
c/ Final mark sheets	
d/ Academic Office correspondence with learners	

#### 6.7.1 Guidelines for invigilators

QA documentation	Status
a/ Current invigilator guidelines	
b/ Invigilator reports	

#### 6.7.2 Grade reviews

QA documentation	Status
a/ Completed grade review forms	
b/ Internal Learner Learning Assessment Board minutes	
c/ Examination scripts and mark sheets	
d/ Learner-College correspondence	
e/ College correspondence with regulatory bodies, if necessary	

### 6.8 Academic discipline

QA documentation	Status
a/ Intra-College correspondence	
b/ Material evidence of academic irregularity or dishonesty	
c/ Minutes of learner-College meetings	
d/ Learner-College correspondence	



**6.8.1 Plagiarism**

QA documentation	Status
a/ Minutes of meetings	
b/ Signed plagiarism statements	
c/ Intra-College correspondence	
d/ College-learner correspondence	

**6.8.2 Disciplinary procedures (plagiarism)**

QA documentation	Status
a/ Intra-College correspondence	
b/ Material evidence of academic irregularity or dishonesty	
c/ Minutes of learner-College meetings	
d/ Learner-College correspondence	

**6.8.3 Academic discipline in examinations**

QA documentation	Status
a/ Minutes of relevant meetings	
b/ Intra-College correspondence	
c/ College-learner correspondence	

**6.8.4 Procedures for infringements of academic discipline in examinations**

QA documentation	Status
a/ Intra-College correspondence	
b/ Material evidence of academic irregularity or dishonesty	
c/ Minutes of learner-College meetings	
d/ Learner-College correspondence	

**6.8.5 Appeals procedure**

QA documentation	Status
a/ Written appeal by learner	
b/ Intra-College correspondence	
c/ Material evidence of grounds for appeal	
d/ Minutes of learner-College meetings	
e/ Minutes of Academic Council meetings	
f/ Learner-College correspondence	

## 7. Supports for learners

### 7.2 Pastoral care

QA documentation	Status
a/ Programme learning and assessment strategies in programme document	
b/ Module learning and assessment strategies in each syllabus	
c/ Academic Committee documentation as in 1.3.4, above	
d/ Minutes showing learner participation on committees below the Academic Council	
e/ Student Union administrative records	
f/ Director of Student Life records	

### 7.3 Services related to programmes

QA documentation	Status
a/ Senior Management Committee minutes and papers	
b/ Facilities report	
c/ ICT Report	
d/ Strategic Plan annual review	

#### 7.3.1 Services related to programmes: students with disabilities

QA documentation	Status
a/ Admissions Handbook	
b/ Catalogue	
c/ Student files	

### 7.4 Learner representation

QA documentation	Status
a/ Academic Committee, Academic Council, Senior Management Committee minutes and papers	
b/ Learner evaluations and review	
c/ Student Union records	

### 7.5 Guidance

QA documentation	Status
a/ Admissions hardcopy materials and website	

## 8. Information and data management

### 8.1 Information systems

QA documentation	Status
a/ Academic reports generated by information systems	
b/ Financial reports generated by information systems	
c/ College intranet content	
d/ ICT annual report by Director of ICT	
e/ Strategic Plan annual review	

### 8.3 Information for planning

QA documentation	Status
a/ Academic reports generated by information systems	
b/ Financial reports generated by information systems	
c/ Strategic Plan annual review	

### 8.4 Records maintenance and retention

QA documentation	Status
a/ General Data Protection Regulation – institutional policy statement	
b/ SMC minutes	

### 8.5 Data protection and freedom of information

QA documentation	Status
a/ General Data Protection Regulation – institutional policy statement	
b/ SMC minutes	

## 9. Public information and communication

### 9.2 Student information

QA documentation	Status
a/ College hardcopy publications	
b/ College website (including publications available on the website)	
c/ College marketing materials	

## 10. Other parties involved in education and training

### 10.1 Peer relationships with the broader education and training community

QA documentation	Status
a/ QQI accreditation documents	
b/ MSCHE accreditation documents	

### 10.3 Peer review panellists, examiners and authenticators

QA documentation	Status
a/ External Peer Reviewer Report forms, including College responses to extern feedback	
b/ College-extern correspondence	
c/ Correspondence with regulatory bodies on extern appointments and provision of report copies	
d/ Academic Committee minutes	

## 11. Self-evaluation, monitoring and review

### 11.1 Institutional internal review, self-evaluation and monitoring

QA documentation	Status
a/ Academic Committee, Academic Council, SMC and Board of Trustees meetings minutes	
b/ Financial audit, budgetary and monthly cash flow documents	
c/ Strategic Plan and documented assessment of it	

### 11.2 Internal self-monitoring

QA documentation	Status
a/ Academic Committee, Academic Council, SMC and Board of Trustees meetings minutes	
b/ Financial audit, budgetary and monthly cash flow documents	
c/ Strategic Plan and documented assessment of it	

### 11.3 Self-evaluation, improvement and enhancement

QA documentation	Status
a/ MSCHE and QQI accreditation reports and responses	
b/ Correspondence with regulatory agencies	

### 11.4 Institutional quality assurance and engagement with external quality assurance

QA documentation	Status
a/ QQI accreditation reports and responses	
b/ Correspondence with QQI	