

PROVIDER NAME: CCT College Dublin (CCT)			
POLICY AREA: Programme Validation, Monitoring and Review			
Policy and Procedure Title:	CCTP404: Blended Learning Policy	Document Number: CCTP404	Version: 2.0
<p>Purpose: This policy acts as an umbrella policy under which all CCT blended learning programmes leading to QQI awards will be developed, operated, managed and reviewed and our learners managed and supported. The purpose of the policy is to outline CCT College Dublin’s quality assurance arrangements specific to blended learning programmes leading to QQI awards, complementing CCT’s approved quality assurance policies and procedures, many of which include consideration of blended learning programmes. The policy operates in the context of the CCT Strategic Plan, the Teaching, Learning and Assessment Strategy and the Blended Learning Strategy. The policy applies to blended learning, including where:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A full module or modules may be delivered wholly online within a blended learning programme. • Parts of a module, modules or programmes may be delivered through a planned and designed blend of onsite and online elements 			
<p>Definitions: From first embarking on strategic developments to implement blended learning in CCT College, terminology has evolved from reference to flexible and distributed learning, e-learning, online learning and blended learning to more current terms of technology-enabled and technology-enhanced learning. For the purpose of clarity, the term blended learning is used by CCT in a quality assurance context to ensure consistency with terminology within QQI policy and guidelines. Alternative naming conventions may apply in other contexts or further evolve over the life of this policy. CCT College relies upon Torrissi-Steele’s definition of blended learning as <i>“enriched, student-centred learning experiences made possible by the harmonious integration of various strategies, achieved by combining F2F (face-to-face) interaction with ICT”</i> (2011). This aligns with Kanuka’s definition incorporated into QQI’s Blended Learning Guidelines which refers to <i>“the integration of classroom face-to-face learning experiences with online learning experiences”</i> (Kanuka, 2004 in QQI March 2018) but further reflects the potential that the blend can comprise of face-to-face learning interacting with technology outside of the online context also. According to QQI (2023, p. 9): <i>Blended Learning refers to a type of programme where teaching, learning and assessment occur using a mix of on-site and online learning, with the online components taking place synchronously, asynchronously, or in combination.</i></p> <p>CCT advocates the application of the pedagogy first approach to blended learning whereby the curriculum content and learning outcomes inform the choice of tools and the sequencing of these within a lesson or a module and not vice versa. Within this approach CCT encourages the use of the Flipped Classroom, explained within the EADTU publication <i>“Quality Assessment for E-learning: a Benchmarking Approach, Third edition, 2016”</i> as the situation where <i>“students no longer acquire content knowledge by attendance at a traditional lecture but through independent study, reserving teacher-student contact time for more interactive sessions such as seminar discussion or problem-solving classes. The flipped approach is a natural fit with blended learning, where the independent study can be online using the VLE or the internet (including OER and MOOCs) and the teacher-led sessions can be face to face.”</i> (EADTU, 2016). The use of the flipped classroom is advocated in CCT College Dublin as a technique within the pedagogy first approach meaning it is a tool to support effective learning but is not the pedagogy itself. Moreover, CCT College Dublin advocates more than a flipped classroom. It adopts a systematic approach to designing learning environments that are flexible, inclusive and informed by the ABC Learning Design Model, with embedded UDL principles.</p>			

Scope:

This policy applies to all Programmes leading to a QQI awards validated for delivery through blended learning. The existing governance arrangements apply.

- The Dean of Academic Affairs holds executive responsibility for quality assurance and academic standards in respect of blended learning programmes.
- The Dean of Teaching & Learning holds executive responsibility for teaching, learning and assessment including in respect of blended learning programmes.
- The Dean for Administration and Finance holds executive responsibility for the administration of the College including operations and facilities.
- Programme Leaders are responsible for the management of programmes in accordance with validation requirements and monitoring the quality of teaching, learning and assessment and the learner experience on the programmes they lead.

Staff Involved:

All administrative, technical and academic staff, student support services, the Management Team and Executive Leadership Team.

Policy

All blended learning developments in CCT College will reflect the strategic intentions of the College at the given time and will naturally evolve within and alongside the strategic development of the College. Blended learning environments will be intentionally designed into a programme, with students' needs at the centre, and informed by ABC Learning Design Model with embedded UDL principles. Furthermore, blended learning developments, through programme design, will be informed by CCTP401 Validation Policy with Procedures for Managing Devolution of Responsibility for Arranging (Programme Validation Related) Independent Evaluation Reports at QQI's Request.

CCT College Dublin blended learning programmes will satisfy the quality assurance guidelines of QQI and the policies and procedures of CCT College Dublin and in doing so shall satisfy the academic quality and standards required of all programmes leading to QQI awards and reflect the underpinning concepts outlined within the CCT Teaching, Learning and Assessment Strategy.

CCT College Dublin recognises the ever-evolving nature of technology and the continuum that is blended learning and thus does not specify the technologies, approaches or the blend applied to blended learning programmes, beyond the requirement for programmes to use CCT approved platforms and technologies only. The exact breakdown of the onsite/online elements per programme, or the use of technologies within programme delivery are determined by programme development teams in the context of the best suited pedagogic approach for the discipline, programme level and award type, target learners and available technologies.

The existing quality assurance policies and procedures of CCT College, as approved by QQI, remain applicable in all instances and this policy seeks to supplement those with explicit requirements with regard to blended learning programmes. In the absence of explicit requirements being documented herein, the quality assurance policies, as published apply.

<p>2. Programme Development, Validation, Monitoring and Review</p> <p>The existing Programme Validation Policy, Programme Review and Revalidation Policy and the Programme Management and Annual Monitoring Policy apply. See QA Manual section 4.</p> <p>For the purpose of blended learning programmes, the programme proposer (in the case of new programmes) or programme leader (in the case of established programmes) is responsible for defining the technical resources and infrastructure requirements of the programme and identifying any specialist tools, hardware or software requirements. This is established in the curriculum planning stages when the nature of the blend is determined. CCT encourages the application of the ABC curriculum design model established by UCL (See ABC Learning Design and enhanced to include the UDL principles developed by DCU).</p> <p>The ELT is responsible for undertaking budget planning and allocation of resources in accordance with requirements or advising where budget or resource constraints require consideration of alternative approaches.</p> <p>Workload considerations in blended learning programmes are determined on the basis of contact hours being defined as those hours which require student engagement with faculty, with other students or with content as part of a structured lesson / supervision / learning activity. This can include synchronous and asynchronous activity but excludes independent study required for assessment preparation or homework for example.</p> <p>Independent study is defined as the notional learning hours a student is required to employ to complete elements of the programme independently, including any revision or assessment preparation time.</p> <p>Programme development teams are required to be mindful of the potential for overload in blended learning programmes.</p> <p>Programme Development Teams are required to consult CCTP401, CCTP402 and CCTP403 when designing all CCT College Dublin programmes, including blended learning programmes.</p>	<p>Proposer</p> <p>ELT</p> <p>Programme development team</p>	<p>Minutes of meetings Validation documents / programme documents</p> <p>Budget records</p> <p>Programme documents</p>
<p>3. Policies, Regulations and Processes</p> <p>The Dean of Academic Affairs is responsible for ensuring the continued relevance and fitness for purpose of quality assurance arrangements in the context of blended learning programmes. This will be managed through the annual QA monitoring processes, as reported to Academic Council, supported by the Quality Enhancement Committee. As the extent or nature of blended learning provision evolves within CCT, consideration will be given to continued suitability of policies, procedures and mechanisms for their implementation.</p> <p>The CCT Privacy Statement reflects the collection, processing, storage and sharing of personal data in the online environment, in accordance with GDPR, outlining the legal basis upon which it relies and the purpose for its collection and with whom it is shared.</p>	<p>Dean of Academic Affairs</p>	<p>QA Manual, policies and procedures Annual review records</p> <p>Privacy Statement</p>

<p>All remaining policies, procedures and regulations as published by CCT remain applicable to blended learning programmes. In the absence of a specific policy relating to blended learning provision, it is assumed that the mainstream policy applies along with any specific requirements within the policy as documented.</p> <p>The Centre for Teaching and Learning, under the direction of the Dean of Teaching & Learning, is responsible for the provision and maintenance of guidelines for blended learning to ensure satisfaction of CCT approved minimum requirements.</p> <p>4. Appointment, induction, training, professional development and appraisal arrangements</p> <p>The ELT in conjunction with Academic Council for academic staffing matters, is responsible for monitoring the suitability of minimum requirements of teaching and support staff, and arrangements for addressing these.</p> <p>In addition to the minimum requirements of academic staff as outlined in the relevant job descriptions of those academic staff engaged in blended learning programmes will be required to evidence suitable technical competence and experience and a sound understanding and experience of facilitating learning through technology. Where this is not apparent, completion of specific induction and professional development programmes will be a mandatory requirement. The Centre for Teaching and Learning (CTL) provides ongoing support, resources and training for all things teaching, learning and assessment (TLA), including blended learning. CCT College TLA Strategic Priorities drive the work of CTL. The CTL Working Group informs design and delivery of CPD, including monthly Conversations and Assessment Community of Practice, GenAI Projects, and Peer Observation of TLA.</p> <p>The appointment of specialist support staff to facilitate the delivery of the blended learning strategy will continue in accordance with existing policy and practices. The nature of appointments will reflect the requirement for academic, pedagogic, design, pastoral and technical support and the applicable criteria for selection and appointment will be determined accordingly. The sourcing of appropriate expertise can also include sub-contracting to third parties where specialist expertise is required. The ELT must approve any such proposal.</p> <p>See also CCTP805 Scholarship, Professional Development Innovation and Research Policy.</p> <p>5. Intellectual Property, copyright and data protection</p> <p>All staff involved in the provision of blended learning programmes are notified of the legal limitations and parameters associated with IP, copyright and data protection.</p> <p>Intellectual property rights associated with materials developed for CCT programmes are clearly articulated in staff contracts and the staff handbook.</p>	<p>CTL / Dean of Teaching & Learning</p> <p>ELT, Academic Council</p> <p>ELT</p> <p>ELT All staff</p>	<p>Learning space guides</p> <p>Recruitment and selection records</p> <p>Prof. Dev. Register</p> <p>CPD plans</p> <p>Approval records / contracts</p> <p>Staff contracts / handbook QA policy</p>
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<p>Support guides are issued to all staff designing materials for use on the VLE to assist in strengthening understanding of legal parameters and ensuring legal compliance.</p> <p>The CCT College Library and the Centre for Teaching and Learning provides additional support to staff on matters of copyright, IP, open source and creative commons licencing.</p> <p>See also CCTP803: Staff Code of Conduct Policy, CCTP1001: Privacy Statement and CCTP1002: Data Protection Policy.</p> <p>Matters of intellectual property created by students are addressed specifically in CCTP514: Intellectual Property Created by Students Policy</p>	<p>CTL / Library</p> <p>Dean for Admin and Finance</p>	<p>Learning space</p> <p>Contract</p>
<p>6. Contingency Arrangements in the event of platform, hardware or software failure</p> <p>The College has a contract with a specialist E-Learning provider and Moodle certified services provider for the management, maintenance and back-up of learner records and the VLE. The service provider implements industry standard offsite security and back-up arrangements to facilitate continuity in the event of frontline technology failure. Network management and administration is undertaken in-house with the support of expert consultancy as required.</p> <p>7. Learning Resources, Materials and Delivery Mechanisms</p> <p>Programme and content developments will be a collaborative effort with input of discipline, technical and pedagogic expertise along with library and student services. The collaborative approach should seek ensure appropriate arrangements to reduce the potential for overburdening the student in the online elements of the programme.</p> <p>All faculty are responsible for ensuring blended learning programmes for which they have responsibility will be delivered in the context of the learner centred approach advocated in the CCT Teaching, Learning and Assessment Strategy and informed by the ABC Learning Design Module with embedded UDL principles.</p> <p>Faculty are supported by the Centre for Teaching and Learning and IT Services to ensure the suitability of teaching materials and learning resources and ensuring the use of CCT approved platforms and tools for the delivery of their modules.</p> <p>The fitness of purpose and functionality of uploaded content is reviewed prior to issuing it to learners. A peer process is implemented to support this and considers academic, technical and instructional design requirements / recommendations. Where lecturers are engaging in synchronous learning such as webinars or virtual classroom activities, or undertaking recording of asynchronous content for uploading they are required to:</p>	<p>Dean of Faculty Programme Leaders</p> <p>Faculty</p> <p>CTL / IT Services / Ed Tech / Faculty</p>	<p>Programme validation documents Annual monitoring reports</p> <p>Student feedback Annual monitoring reports</p> <p>Peer review Student feedback Monitoring outcomes</p>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Upload online content quickly and easily in a range of formats • Enhance the learner experience • Provide access to support services and materials • Integrate with virtual classroom software, plagiarism detection software, library services and the student information system • Monitor learner engagement with online elements of programmes • Support assessments • Facilitate communication with learners <p>CCT has procured virtual classroom software which is used to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase the range of learning interactions available through the VLE • Facilitate live lectures / webinars/ tutorials • Enable multi-group breakout activities in the online environment • Promote and facilitate accessibility for all learners • Enable recording of live sessions for students to revisit. <p>The virtual classroom software also provides the means for secure, online meetings between learners and the college should physical attendance not be a feasible option for a given meeting.</p> <p>See also CCTP911 Learning Environment Policy.</p> <p>8. Information to Learners</p> <p>Programme Development Teams are responsible for specifying information relating to any technical requirements, ICT capabilities and the nature of the blended learning elements of the programme. Subsequent to validation, this detail should be made available to learners in advance of enrolling on a programme, as per the requirements of the CCTP1101 Public Information Policy</p> <p>Specifically, learners must be advised of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The minimum requirements outlined in the CCT Public Information Policy • Detail relating to the online element of the programme and any specific requirements relating to participation times online and attendance requirements and timings onsite • The anticipated independent learning commitment • The technical equipment / hardware/ software / internet and skills essential for participation in the programme • Learner responsibilities and obligations in respect of the online and onsite elements of the programme. 	<p>Programme Development Teams Admissions Head of Marketing</p>	<p>Student and faculty feedback</p> <p>Validation documents Sign off records Publicity materials</p>
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<p>9. Supports for Learners Academic, technical and support staff are responsible for the provision of and access to supports in the online environment.</p> <p>All learners are provided with a dedicated online induction programme which is scaffolded with a range of easy to access video and text support materials.</p> <p>CCT employs a range of digital support tools including online interactive guides, integrated online reading list software, library support classes, careers guidance support services and live chat and discussion forums across a range of departments. <i>“Communication and Interaction in the Online Environment: A Guide for Students”</i> outlines the expected standards and norms of behaviour and communication in the outline environment.</p> <p>Faculty and staff are required to operate within the stated requirements of existing policies specific to student support.</p>	Head of Student Services	Minutes of student services meetings Class rep feedback Student survey
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Monitoring		
Monitor (Job Title)	Frequency	Monitoring Method(s)
Academic Council / ELT	Annual	Annual Monitoring Reports
QA Office	Annual	VLE review for compliance with Quality Standards
Head of Student Services	Annual	Annual Monitoring Report

POLICY CONTROL SHEET

Policy Title	Blended Learning Policy
Responsible Officer(s)	Dean of Faculty, Dean of Academic Affairs
Issuance Date	September 2025
Effective Date	October 2025
Last Review Date	September 2021
Supersedes	Version 1.2
Next Review Date	August 2027
Designated Reviewer	QA Office with Dean of Faculty and Head of Student Services
Scope	All blended learning provision

Revision History

Revision	Approval Date	Revision Description	Originator	Approved By
1.0	March 2020	Pre- QQI draft for approval	ELT	Academic Council
1.1	Sept 2020	Edits to reflect changes arising from QQI Blended Learning approval panel report	Dean of Academic Affairs	Academic Council
1.2	June 2025	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Minor Presentation Revision and Amended responsibility of CTL to Dean of T&L.Included link to new Teaching and Learning strategy.	Dean of Academic Affairs	Academic Council
2.0	Sept 2025	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Review of policy and updates made to bring in line with new QQI Blended Learning Guidelines	Dean of Academic Affairs	Academic Council

References upon which the Policy section is based

CCT Policy area	Programme Validation, Monitoring and Review
Statutory & System Wide Basis	The Irish Qualifications and Quality Assurance (Education and Training) Act, 2012; QQI Core Statutory Guidelines for Quality Assurance QQI Statutory Guidelines for Providers of Blended Learning Programmes

Related CCT Policies / Forms	CCT Quality Assurance Manual CCT Standards and Guidelines for the Design and Development of Blended Learning Programmes, Materials and Learning Resources
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