

# SECTION 1 – QUALITY ASSURANCE PRINCIPLES

## CCT MISSION STATEMENT

*The Mission of the College of Computing Technology (CCT) is to provide learners with accessible and flexible higher education opportunities, and professional development programmes that reflect current and emerging knowledge and practices relevant to the learner and to employers. CCT specialises in provision of computing and business related programmes of learning.*

*Through a learner-centred culture of enquiry, innovation and excellence, we challenge our learners, staff, and all other stakeholders to create, apply and share knowledge and values in a supportive, responsive, caring, and vibrant learning environment.*

*CCT is committed to developing graduates with personal and professional knowledge and skills that will enable them undertake the roles, responsibilities and challenges posed by business, industry, the professions, public service and society.*

## CCT VISION

***CCT's main Vision is to be a leading specialist college of higher education teaching and learning excellence, inspiring individuals and transforming lives.***

***We will do this through:***

- inspiring a lifelong passion for learning, exploration and discovery that will ensure leadership with a global outlook and innovative approaches to sustainable economic, social, cultural and personal development.
- embracing access, equality of opportunity and progression in order that our diverse learner population is empowered to succeed as citizens of a challenging world.
- blending theory with applied enquiry, industry-aligned, scholarly, professional and vocational pursuits with scientific and creative expression in the broad disciplines of Business and Information Communications Technology. Through these we serve to improve our region, our country and our world.
- championing a co-operative teaching and research culture that connects with other higher education institutions, schools, industry, local communities, government and non-governmental development agencies.
- actively nurturing continuous enhancement of all of our relationships to progress excellence in innovation, knowledge transfer and reputation in an international higher education landscape.

The layout of this manual is in 12 sections, to mirror the Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area.

## QUALITY ASSURANCE PRINCIPLES

The College of Computing Technology (CCT) has committed itself to embracing an inclusive Quality Assurance (QA) culture.

As an independent, third-level educational institution, providing full-time and part-time ICT and Business programmes, CCT has ownership of its QA policies and procedures. In this context, it aims to be benchmarked against the most reputable institutions in national, European and global contexts. CCT is conscious that it is required under statute to agree its policies and procedures for QA with Quality & Qualifications Ireland (QQI), to continuously improve its quality assurance instruments and to assess their effectiveness.

This updated manual is the third major revision of CCT's Quality Assurance Policies, Procedures, and Practices. CCT was established in 2005, and agreed the first version of its QA Handbook with the Higher Education and Training Awards Council (HETAC<sup>1</sup>) in 2009. A second major version was produced in December 2013, after a review of policies and procedures. This third version is the most comprehensive revision to date.

Under the College Archiving Policy, previous versions of the CCT QA system handbooks (2009 and 2013) are available<sup>2</sup>. This updated manual is stored on the CCT website and is available, for download electronically, or may be consulted in hard copy format in the college Library<sup>3</sup>. This Manual is presented in modular form to facilitate accessibility, transparency, and ongoing modifications.

Following an internal review during 2014, an external gap analysis of the Institutional Quality Assurance Policies and Procedures against current requirements was performed by an expert higher education consultant. This took into account potential developments in those requirements, as QQI develops its policies and procedures under the Quality and Qualifications (Education and Training) Act 2012. The statutory basis for agreement of quality assurance procedures and reviews of their effectiveness is contained in Part 3 of the Quality and Qualifications (Education and Training) Act 2012.

An overarching element of review was an examination of CCT's QA Policy and Procedures for consistency with emerging developments in the European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ENQA) Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area.

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<sup>1</sup> HETAC was dissolved and its functions were passed to Quality and Qualifications Ireland (QQI) on 6 November 2012.

<sup>2</sup> These are available on request.

<sup>3</sup> Please note; the most up to date version of the manual is always available on the website. If in doubt as to the applicability of any policy or procedure in a printed version, please consult the website.

This Quality Manual describes the key structures, processes, policies, procedures, performance measures, and quality assurance mechanisms that facilitate a systematic approach to embedding a continuous quality improvement ethos within CCT. This revision has been conducted to take on board feedback from the following internal and external sources over last two years:

- internal audit findings by the staff of CCT
- external Gap Analysis review conducted by a Higher Education Consultant
- recommendations made by previous QQI programme validation panels
- recommendations following programmatic review

The new QA system at CCT has been written with due cognisance and where applicable, in compliance with a number of documents, most notably the following:

- *Policy and Criteria for Renewed Access to QQI Validation for Voluntary Providers of Further Education and Training, 2014*
- *Policy and Criteria for Renewed Access to QQI Validation for Voluntary Providers of Higher Education and Training, 2014<sup>4</sup>*
- *European Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance, Revised May 2015<sup>5</sup>*

## **1.1 PRINCIPLES OF QUALITY ASSURANCE AT CCT**

The following principles underpin the college's Quality Assurance strategy.

- Transparency and Accountability
- Communications and Information
- Equality and Diversity
- Learner Participation
- Access, Transfer and Progression
- Dynamic and Active Learning
- Learner Support
- Fair and Consistent Assessment
- Engaging and Innovative Teaching
- Programme Development, Delivery and Review
- Lifelong Learning
- Staff Development
- Campus Learning Environment
- Verifiable Data and Monitoring Mechanisms
- Provision and Maintenance of Resources
- Continuous Improvement
- Research, Development, and Innovation

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<sup>4</sup> Available at: <http://www.qqi.ie/Pages/Re-engagement-with-QQI-Policy-and-Criteria-for-Renewed-Access-to-QQI-Validation-for-Voluntary-Providers-of-Higher-Education.aspx>

<sup>5</sup> Available at:  
[https://revisionesg.files.wordpress.com/2015/05/revised\\_esg\\_2015\\_adopted.pdf](https://revisionesg.files.wordpress.com/2015/05/revised_esg_2015_adopted.pdf)

Quality Assurance draws on overarching principles, as set out in QQI and ESG Standards and Guidelines for QA<sup>6</sup>:

a) *The Learning Outcome Principle*; Higher and Further Education and Training exists principally for the purpose of enabling people to learn and accordingly, provision should be designed, implemented and evaluated with learning outcomes in mind.

b) *The Implementation Principle*; Quality Assurance procedures should be fully implemented by providers.

c) *The Externality Principle*; A provider-owned quality assurance system makes appropriate use of external persons who are independent of the provider and who are expertly qualified to make national and international comparisons.

d) The ESG Principles;

- Providers have the primary responsibility for the quality of their provision and its assurance,
- The interests of society in the quality and standards of higher and further education, need to be safeguarded,
- The quality of academic programmes needs to be developed and improved for students and other beneficiaries of education,
- There needs to be efficient and effective organisational structures within which those academic programme can be provided and supported,
- Transparency and the use of external expertise in quality assurance processes are important,
- There should be encouragement of a culture of quality within higher and further education institutions,
- Processes should be developed through which institutions can demonstrate accountability, including accountability for the investment of money,
- Quality assurance for accountability purposes is fully compatible with quality assurance for enhancement purposes,
- Institutions should be able to demonstrate their quality at home and internationally,
- Processes should not stifle diversity and innovation.

e) The Irish Higher Education Quality Network (IHEQN) Principles as outlined in the following documentation,

- *IHEQN Principles of Good Practice in Quality Assurance / Quality Improvement for Irish Higher Education and Training 2005,*
- *IHEQN Principles for Reviewing Effectiveness of QA Procedures in Irish Higher Education and Training 2007,*
- *IHEQN Common Principles for Student Involvement in QA 2009*

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<sup>6</sup> Available at: <http://www.qqi.ie/Pages/Re-engagement-with-QQI-Policy-and-Criteria-for-Renewed-Access-to-QQI-Validation-for-Voluntary-Providers-of-Higher-Education.aspx>