

## POLICIES AND PROCEDURES



<b>POLICY TITLE</b>	<b>DISTANCE LEARNING PROVISION QUALITY ASSURANCE POLICY</b>
<b>POLICY NUMBER</b>	<b>WLCBMS 046</b>
<b>RESPONSIBLE</b>	<b>QUALITY ASSURANCE MANAGER</b>
<b>APPROVAL BY</b>	<b>QUALITY ASSURANCE COMMITTEE</b>
<b>APPROVAL DATE</b>	<b>AUGUST 2017</b>
<b>NEXT REVIEW</b>	<b>AUGUST 2018</b>

## **Distance Learning Provision Quality Assurance**

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## **Distance Learning Provision Quality Assurance**

### **1. Purpose and scope**

The purpose of this policy is to set out mechanisms for the quality assurance of distance learning

### **2. Principles**

2.1. The College promotes inclusive and flexible learning provision in order to respond to student diversity and to the needs of practising professionals.

2.2. Distance learning contributes to a student's independent learning thereby improving their career prospects.

2.3. The College aims to secure the high quality and standard of units, programmes and awards taught and supported on a distance learning basis ensuring comparability with programmes delivered on campus of a similar nature.

### **3. Context**

Distance learning is learning which takes place remotely from the College but which is part of a programme or unit of study. Distance learning programmes are delivered through a virtual learning environment. Units and programmes of study designed and approved by the College in association with awarding organisation and leading to an award but taught and/or supported at a distance.

### **4. Responsibilities and approval of distance learning programmes**

4.1. The Quality Assurance Manager is responsible to ensure that QA procedures are fully functional within the College QA system and to regularly inform the QA Committee .

4.2. The Distance Learning Manager is responsible for ensuring that new programmes with a distance learning element are developed in accordance with the principles in this statement.

4.3. It is the responsibility of Academic /Teaching Committees to give strategic approval for new distance learning programmes, ensuring that they are set within the context of the College's Mission and are compatible with the College Strategy 2015-18.

4.4. It is the responsibility of Distance Learning Manager to approve and monitor the appointment of all staff who teach on distance learning programmes. .

4.5. confirmation that all learning materials will be of appropriate quality and that all technologies and systems used regularly undergo testing and are updated when necessary to ensure suitability of the mode of delivery.

4.6. details of the periodic review arrangements for distance learning materials and the programme/unit as a whole quality assurance

procedures including information on student support mechanisms, communication methods, assistance available for students with disabilities, student feedback, assessment arrangements, feedback to students on assessed work, student access to tutors, arrangements for External Examiners (including sampling of work), monitoring of student progression.

## **5. Evaluation of learning opportunities**

5.1. At the point of admission students should confirm that they have understood the requirements of studying on a distance learning programme and that any APL is considered before admission.

5.2. consider and disclose any limitations in using their workplace environment to complete their studies

5.3. the College is the responsible authority for all matters relating to security of communications and information whilst studying and to ensure equality and diversity within the distance learning environment is adhered to and monitored through its quality assurance systems and procedures

5.4. the student should be encouraged to sign a learning agreement with the College

## **6. Support for students**

6.1. The Distance Learning Manager is responsible for ensuring that students on distance learning programmes have access to appropriate resources, learning opportunities and support in order to meet the learning outcomes of the programme.

6.2. Prior to the start of a distance learning programme/unit of study all students should be issued with a handbook. The programme handbook should set out students' responsibilities as distance learners, including assessment requirements, a named contact for academic matters and their entitlements and expectations with regard to learning resources.

6.3. Prior to the start of a distance learning programme/unit of study, students should receive information regarding the minimum technical specifications for electronic equipment which will be needed to undertake the distance learning programme e.g. for PCs, headsets, microphones etc.

the support mechanisms available to them including information on the personal tutoring system, a clear schedule for the availability and delivery of study materials, availability of technical support (accessing Moodle etc.) and for the assessment of their work, appropriate feedback mechanisms, access to tutors and appropriate communication methods.

6.4 Both anticipatory and reasonable adjustments should be used for distance learning and all other forms of off-campus learning in consideration of disabled students. Advice is available from the Student Welfare Officer who can be contacted directly and on line.

6.5 It is the responsibility of the tutor to maintain regular contact with distance learning students to ensure that they have adequate learning opportunities to achieve the learning outcomes of the unit or programme.

## **7. Assessment**

7.1. Where marking is undertaken at a distance, mechanisms should be in place for the effective moderation of work within the Department to ensure comparability of standards with provision.

7.2. If a student is unable to find a suitable environment in which to achieve the learning outcomes of the programme, the Distance Learning Manager, with the approval of the Deputy Principal may have to ask the student to withdraw from the programme.

## **8. Use of technology**

Where technology is used as a primary delivery mechanism and for the purposes of summative assessments, only institutionally-supported technologies (e.g. Ulearn VLE) should be used and contingency plans in case of technical failure should be in place and clearly communicated. The Distance Learning Manager should ensure that students have a clear point of contact to support their use of technology on the programme

## **9. Equipping staff to undertake their roles through CPD**

Staff associated with the development and delivery of all distance learning should receive appropriate support and development particularly in the use of technology. Appropriate arrangements for peer observation and review is made as part of the CPD engagement.

## **10. Monitoring and review**

10.1 Appropriate mechanisms, such as unit and programme feedback , should be employed to ensure effective feedback from students on all aspects of their learning experience.

10.2. Periodic Monitoring and review of distance learning provision will be carried out by the Deputy Principal in collaboration with the Distance Learning Manager, QA Manager and Coordinator for Distance Learning and reported on in the relevant Committees.

## **11. Relevant Documents**

11.1. Distance Learning & Assessment Policy (WLCBMS 045)