

[IICP College]

2021

Annual Quality Report (IICP College)
Reporting Period 2019-2020

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PART A: INTERNAL QA SYSTEM
Reporting Period 2019-2020

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Links to Reference Documents Cited in this Template¹

Legislation

- [Qualifications and Quality Assurance \(Education and Training\) Act 2012](#) (as amended)
- [Regional Technical Colleges Act 1992](#) (as amended)
- [Technological Universities Act 2018](#)
- [Universities Act 1997](#)

QQI Documents

Statutory QA Guidelines (QAG)

- [Core QAG](#)
- [Sector-specific QAG for Independent/Private Providers](#)
- [Sector-specific QAG for Designated Awarding Bodies](#)
- [Sector-specific QAG for Institutes of Technology](#)
- [Topic-specific QAG for Providers of Statutory Apprenticeship Programmes](#)
- [Topic-specific QAG for Providers of Research Degree Programmes](#)
- [Topic-specific QAG for Blended Learning](#)

Other QQI Policy Documents

- [QQI's Policy for Collaborative Programmes, Transnational Programmes, and Joint Awards, 2012](#)
- [QQI's Code of Practice for Provision of Programmes of Education and Training to International Learners, 2015](#)
- [QQI Policy Restatement on Access, Transfer and Progression, 2015](#)

Other National/International References

- [European Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area \(2015\)](#)
- [IHEQN Guidelines on Collaborative Provision](#)
- National Policy Statement on Ensuring Research Integrity in Ireland
- [Ireland's Framework of Good Practice for Research Degree Programmes, 2019](#)
- [HEA National Framework for Doctoral Education](#)
- [The Salzburg Principles](#)
- [The Salzburg II Recommendations](#)
- [SOLAS Code of Practice for Employers and Apprentices](#)
- [UN Sustainable Development Goals](#)

¹ These links will be updated as further guidance documents are published.

PART A: INTERNAL QA SYSTEM

Table 1

Table 1 Mapping of ESG (2015) to QQI QA Guidelines (QAG)				
AQR Part A Section	QQI QAG Core Sub-section No.	QAG Core Sub-section Title	ESG Standard No.	ESG Standard Title
1.0 - Internal QA Framework	2.1	Governance and Management of Quality	1.1	Policy for Quality Assurance
	2.2	Documented Approach to Quality Assurance		
2.0 - Programme Development and Delivery	2.3	Programmes of Education and Training	1.2	Design and Approval of Programmes
4.0 - QA of Research Activities and Programmes			1.9	On-going Monitoring and Periodic Review of Programmes
8.0 - Monitoring and Periodic Review				
5.0 - Staff Recruitment, Development and Support	2.4	Staff Recruitment, Management and Development	1.5	Teaching Staff
2.3 - Teaching, Learning and Assessment	2.5	Teaching and Learning	1.3	Student-centred Teaching, Learning and Assessment
	2.6	Assessment of Learners		
3.0 - Learner Resources and Supports	2.7	Supports for learners	1.6	Learning Resources and Student Support
6.0 - Information and Data Management	2.8	Information and Data Management	1.7	Information Management
7.0 - Public Information and Communication	2.9	Public Information and Communication	1.8	Public Information
2.0 - Programme Delivery and Development	2.10	Other Parties Involved in Education and Training	1.9	On-going Monitoring and Periodic Review of Programmes

8.0 - Monitoring and Periodic Review				
9.0 - Details of Arrangements with Third Parties			1.2	Design and Approval of Programmes
2.0 - Programme Development and Delivery	2.11	Self-evaluation, Monitoring and Review	1.9	On-going Monitoring and Periodic Review of Programmes
8.0 - Monitoring and Periodic Review			1.10	Cyclical External Quality Assurance
4.0 - QA of Research Activities and Programmes	QAG for Providers of Research Degree Programmes			

Introduction and Overview of Institution

This is the AQR for IICP College for the reporting period **1 September 2019 - 31 August 2020**.

It is to be submitted by **Friday, 26 March 2021**.

The AQR has been approved by a subcommittee of the Academic Council, and is submitted by Aine O'Reilly, Senior Manager in Quality Assurance and Enhancement

IICP College commenced operation in 2003. Seventeen years later, the College has more than 600 learners across QQI, Professional Body and Continuous Professional Development [CPD] programmes. IICP College is located in Killinarden in Tallaght, a large suburb of Dublin made up of a wide variety of social and economic groups. IICP provides training and education to the wider community of professionals and volunteers working in the caring professions. This is achieved through offering opportunities to learners, both formally and informally, that enhance personal, professional, academic and intellectual development through comprehensive training and education within the context of mental health. To achieve this aim, IICP offers comprehensive programmes for those who wish to pursue professional and academic accreditation in the mental health services. These programmes embrace a multicultural and pluralistic approach with a core philosophical framework reflecting the principles and practices of an integrated method of therapy.

Development of the AQR

The development of this AQR was guided by Policy 2.1 IICP College's Quality and Governance Framework; (i) Quality Assurance, which sets out the process used with QA document construction. This policy is available here: <https://www.iicp.ie/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/2.1-IICP-Colleges-Quality-and-Governance-Framework-i-Quality-Assurance-1.pdf>. First, the AQR was drafted by an identified person, the document author, in this case the QA Manager, using standard format for identifying and tracking the document. The development of the initial draft drew on the review techniques identified for QA review, set out in Policy 9.6 IICP College Reviewing the Effectiveness of Quality Assurance: Institutional Review (Available at <https://www.iicp.ie/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/9.6-IICP-College-Reviewing-the-Effectiveness-of-Quality-Assurance.-Institutional-Review-1.pdf>), as illustrated in Figure 1.

Figure 1 Review techniques used in development of the AQR



The initial draft was submitted to the Senior Management Team for their consideration, who provided feedback to the document author. The policy author implements the feedback from the Senior Management Team, producing a post internal review draft. This was circulated to the Academic Council subcommittee. The policy author implemented feedback from the Academic Council subcommittee, . This produced a post Academic Council draft. This is circulated to the Academic Council. Following approval, the AQR was submitted to QQI.

As part of its documentary analysis, this AQR drew on the following documents:

- IICP College's Re-engagement Report, available at <https://www.qqi.ie/sites/docs/ProviderDocumentsLibrary/PL03052/PRID-3052-ApprovalReport-20200206.pdf>
- Internal records of BL QA Panel Visit
- Annual Quality Reports for each programme
- Minutes of Academic Council and Academic Council Subcommittees
- Minutes of Examination Boards

- External Examiner Reports
- Minutes of Programme Boards

During the reporting period 1st September 2019 to 31st August 2020 IICP College had been through a Panel Visit for the consideration of its QA of BL procedures. Approval was granted by PAEC on 10th September, and therefore these procedures are outside this reporting period. However, the recommendations from the Panel arising both from the site visit and the initial report resulted in actions by the College which were carried out in the reporting period. Therefore this report includes activities undertaken in response to the site visit and panel recommendations, but does not include the final approved QA of BL and panel report.

1.0 Internal QA Framework

1.1 Governance and Management of Quality

Quality Assurance involves having the necessary structures, processes, standards and oversight in place to ensure that academic standards are maintained, and that effective, enhancing education and training programmes are delivered to learners. Key elements of IICP College's QA Framework are set out in *Policy 2.1 IICP College's Quality and Governance Framework; (i) Quality Assurance* which is available at <https://www.iicp.ie/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/2.1-IICP-Colleges-Quality-and-Governance-Framework-i-Quality-Assurance-1.pdf>. These key elements are:

- IICP College Organisational structure sets out the roles through which quality assurance is governed and managed. The organisational structure is designed to assure that the quality goals of the College are met. These structures are designed to be comprehensive, efficient and responsive, utilising extensive feedback and data to shape future activities.
- IICP College Quality Assurance [QA] structure, the College's Quality and Governance Framework. As this illustrates, QA in IICP College is a community and communal activity, with all staff members engaged and involved in the development and implementation of quality assurance. The roles of stakeholders as key contributors to the College's quality structure is described throughout the QAM.
- IICP College's Quality Assurance Manual [QAM] documents Quality Assurance and Enhancement in the College. The Policy and Procedures outlined in the QAM are used in the management and operation of all elements of the College. The QAM is a 'living' document and is updated in response to both external change, such as legislative and regulatory development, and internal change including quality enhancing initiatives arising from within the College.

Governance and Management of Quality

The College's arrangements for the Governance and Management of Quality are set out in *Policy 2.2 IICP College's Quality and Governance Framework; (ii) Governance*, available at <https://www.iicp.ie/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/2.2-IICP-Colleges-Quality-and-Governance-Framework-ii-Governance-1.pdf>. The College operates under a Board of Directors, an Academic Council, and a College President. The principle decision-making body is the Board of Directors. The Board is responsible for the College's objectives, values and strategic direction, within a framework of national legislation, policy and good governance practice in

Higher Education, Counselling and Psychotherapy and Company Law. Ultimately, authority in the academic realm lies with the Academic Council. The College President is the designated officer of the College, and is a member of the Board of Directors. The President is supported in her/his role by the Advisory Board, which brings an external perspective and expertise to the planning process, as well as providing advice and guidance on Quality Assurance and Enhancement, compliance and risk management. The Academic Council may establish panels and subcommittees to provide advice and/or to operate within the power of authority delegated to them. Panels and subcommittees are established for a particular purpose, or may be established to assist with the ongoing work of the AC, as stated in their Terms of Reference.

The Academic Council [AC] is the academic authority of the College. It is chaired by an independent member and draws its membership from external experts as well as from the academic staff, students and academic support services staff. Acting under delegated authority from the Board, it has ultimate authority and responsibility in relation to Academic governance and QA, including the development, approval, monitoring and review of academic policies, procedures and other elements of the QAM. The Board is responsible for Corporate Governance, and in particular for the operation of IICP College in accordance with Company Law, and related legislation and regulation. Any delegation of authority by the Board is subject to the duties and responsibilities of the Directors.

The role of the Board is to provide leadership in corporate matters, in particular in relation to strategic direction, financial stability and legal and regulatory compliance. The remit of the Academic Council [AC], reporting to the Board, is specifically the academic governance of the College. Ultimate responsibility for decision making in respect of programmes of education and training lies with this Council. However, the AC operates within the constraints imposed by the Board, including financial restraints. These are set out in the Terms of Reference of the Board, which indicates the “Board Reserved Matters” (Policy 2.5, Section 8, Schedule 1: Board Reserved Matters, available here: <https://www.iicp.ie/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/2.5-Terms-of-Reference-of-Board-of-Directors-1.pdf>). In addition, financial decision-making is the responsibility of the Senior Management Team. Budgeting come within the remit of the Senior Management Team, who report to the Board as appropriate.

The QAM, in Policy 2.2 (<https://www.iicp.ie/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/2.2-IICP-Colleges-Quality-and-Governance-Framework-ii-Governance-1.pdf>), sets out in some detail the

principles of as they apply to IICP College, and the actual structure in place in the College. This provides a documented account of the College's rationale for its governance structure, as well as a framework for those operating within the different roles. This clarifies, both internally and externally, the range and limits of decision-making responsibility for College Boards.

This Policy sets out the roles and responsibilities of staff, including College President, Director of Registry and Operations ("Registrar"), Head of Academic Studies, Quality Assurance Manager, Programme Leaders, Programme Coordinators, Visiting Lecturers, Tutors, and Teaching Assistants.

It is important to note that the principle of subsidiarity applies. Thus, tactical decision-making - relating to the implementation of strategic decisions - and operational decision-making, including day-to-day operating decision - occurs at managerial, programme and individual staff levels. Again, clarity is achieved through documenting the roles and responsibilities involved in any process in the QAM.

Contained in its QAM is IICP College's *Strategic Plan 2018-2020* (Policy 1.1) which is available on the College's website at <https://www.iicp.ie/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/1.1-Strategic-Plan-1.pdf>. This sets out our mission and vision, and guides all of the College's activities. This is complemented by the College's *Blended Learning Strategic Plan*, Policy 11.1, also available on the College's website at <https://www.iicp.ie/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/Policy-11.1-Blended-Learning-Strategic-Plan.pdf>. During the reporting period the Strategic Plan 2018-2020 moved towards its conclusion. This Strategic Plan spans an important period in the College's development, that of its move towards statutory recognition of title of Counsellors and Psychotherapists, as well as the College's extension of scope to include Blended Learning modes of delivery.

The Strategic Plan sets out and offers a Strategic Vision and a set of institutional Values and Strategic Priorities intended to guide activities of the College as well as continued growth. Guided by consideration of the developmental trends in the European higher education landscape summarised in the ESG, they focus on making a positive impact on students, the locality and the profession.

The Strategic Plan will be fully reviewed in the next academic year as part of the development of a future Plan. This plan has a number of notable achievements, such as:

1. Re-engagement with QQI,
2. QA approval of BL QA.

The quality structures, policies and procedures in place at IICP College fully support the achievement of the strategic institutional priorities of the College, as is set out in Part 2 of the QAM, available at <https://www.iicp.ie/qam/>. Centrally, scrutiny of the development of the College occurs through the involvement of College members in Strategic Planning. The key role of the College President includes the responsibility for ensuring appropriate consultation with faculty, learners, staff and administrators in discharging the responsibilities of the office, in particular in relation to drafting and agreeing with the Board IICP College's Strategic Plan. The President is advised by the *Advisory Board* in this regard, as set out in their Terms of Reference in Policy 2.6, available at <https://www.iicp.ie/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/2.6-Terms-of-Reference-of-Advisory-Board-1.pdf>. The College President is also responsible for interacting with appropriate external bodies, including professional and academic accrediting bodies, and professional associations, to achieve the mission of the College. The President in turn communicates the Higher Education needs of the College to the Board. Thus, the Board, in carrying out its statutory responsibilities under the Companies Act to act in the best interests of the College, ensure that the Higher Education needs of the College are central to its strategic planning.

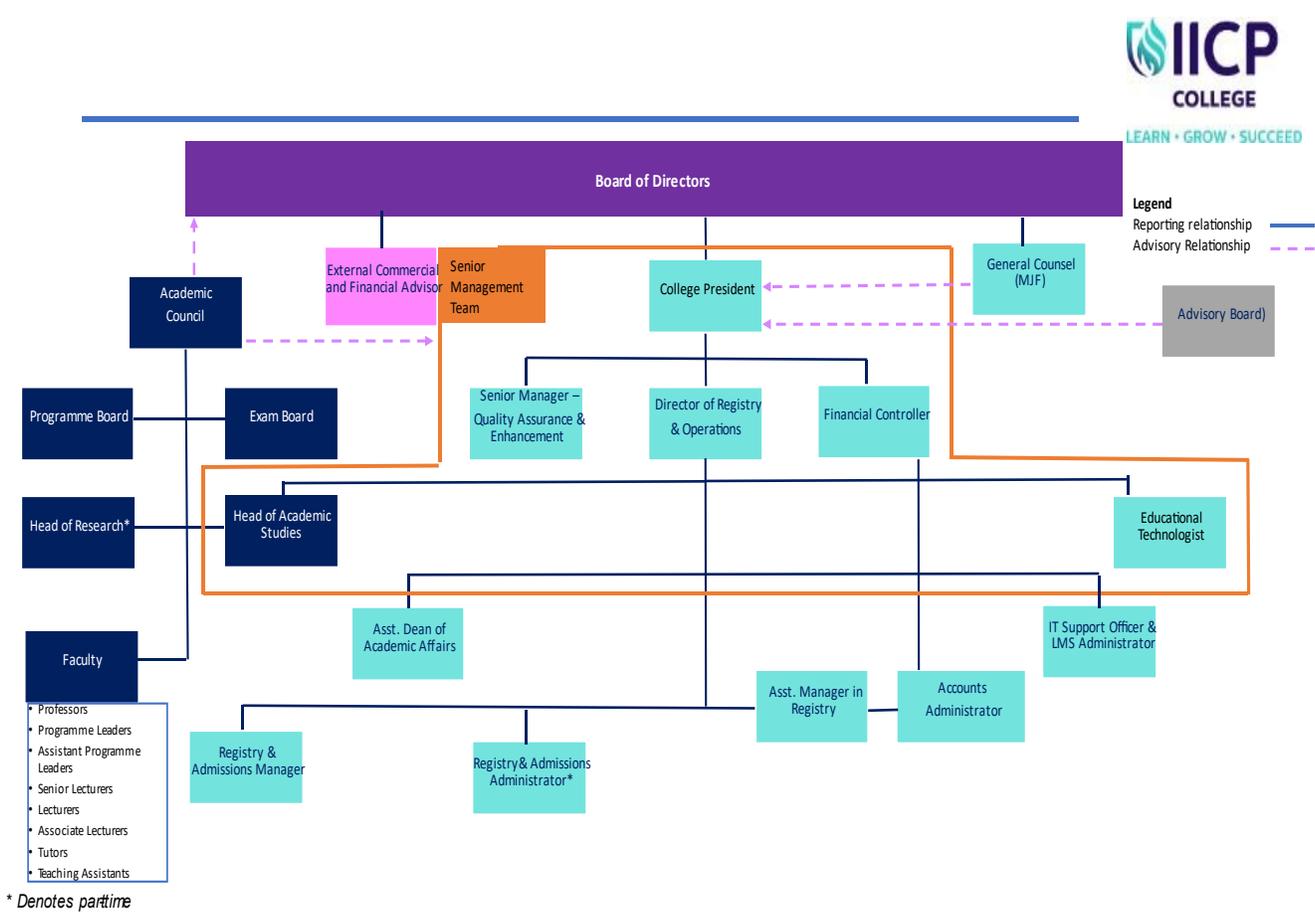
Learner Representation

This is documented in *Policy 6.12 Roles and Functions of Learner Representatives*, available at <https://www.iicp.ie/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/6.12-Roles-and-Functions-of-Learner-Representatives-Under-Consideration-1.pdf>

A learner representative sits on the Academic Council, as set out in *Policy 2.7 Terms of Reference of Academic Council*, available at <https://www.iicp.ie/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/2.7-Terms-of-Reference-of-Academic-Council-1-1.pdf>. In addition, the Class Representative system is a forum for communication between the College and the Learner body about the QA system, teaching and learning, resources, and learner care and support.

Learners are also involved in policy review. One example is QA review for the purposes of re-engagement, as set out in section 4, case study 2. Learner representatives were circulated with extracts from the draft manual, with a description of the re-engagement process and with indicative questions. They were asked to utilise whatever methods they were comfortable with in reviewing the document. They were also encouraged to view this involvement as a learning experience, because it is important from a professional perspective that they become confident and competent in reviewing policy. Each learner representative was given an opportunity to communicate with the QA manager prior to engaging with the learners they represented, so that they could carry out their representative role in a consultation process.

Figure 1. IICP College - Organisational Structure 2020-2021 Academic Year



1.2 Linked Providers, Collaborative and Transnational Provision

This section does not apply.

2.0 Programme Development and Delivery

2.1 Programme Development and Approval

IICP College's Quality Assurance Manual [QAM] in Part 9, addresses Programme Development and Approval through specific policies on:

- Programme Monitoring (*Policy 9.4 IICP College Monitoring and Evaluation Policy*, available at <https://www.iicp.ie/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/9.4-IICP-College-Monitoring-and-Evaluation-Policy-1.pdf>),
- New Programme Development (*Policy 9.3 IICP College New Programmes Policy*, available at <https://www.iicp.ie/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/9.3-IICP-College-New-Programmes-Policy-1.pdf>),
- Programme Validation and Revalidation (*Policy 9.5 IICP College Programme Review and Revalidation*, available at <https://www.iicp.ie/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/9.5-IICP-College-Programme-Review-and-Revalidation-1.pdf>).
- Reviewing the Effectiveness of Quality Assurance. (Policy 9.6 IICP College Reviewing the Effectiveness of Quality Assurance. Institutional Review, available)

IICP College's policies for monitoring and review are published on the College website.

New Programmes

The New Programme Policy sets out the process by which new programmes at IICP College, as well as substantial modifications to existing programmes, are developed and approved. The College's approach is explicitly guided by QQI's guidelines. New programmes may be proposed by any member of staff at IICP, and presented to the Academic Council. The policy accounts for stakeholder and learner consultation, has regard to QQI's Core Validation Criteria and establishes a separation between those who develop learning material (the Programme Development Team) from those who approve it (Academic Council).

The New Programme Policy requires that any programme being considered for initial validation must:

- (i) Be designed with reference to QQI Validation Policy, and QQI Awards Standards, as well as professional body requirements. It must present to the Senior Management and the Academic Council descriptions of the programme based on QQI's most recent Validation Document.

- (ii) Be presented in programme documentation that addresses the Core Validation Criteria and utilises the most recent QQI Programme Validation Manual and (if relevant) programme review manual. It is required that this documentation demonstrates compliance with QQI Core Validation Criteria.
- (iii) Include an assessment of the Proposed Programme against QQI's Core Validation Criteria, carried out on the QQI template.

This Policy provides for six stages of development prior to a decision being made to propose a new programme for validation to QQI. The six stages allow for the drafting of validation documents as well as internal and external review of the proposal and the incorporation of feedback (both internal and external) at each stage. The decision as to whether to propose a new programme to QQI is ultimately made by the Academic Council, subject to the financial decisions taken by Senior Management Team and the budget coming below that identified in the Boards Terms of reference (Board reserved matters). The cost / benefit analysis is considered as part of the New Programme proposal by the AC as an element of the validation documents and as a specific consideration for decision by the Senior Management Team.

The stages are:

- (i) Outline approval,
- (ii) Programme Development.
- (iii) Document Development.
- (iv) Internal Review.
- (v) External Expert Review.
- (vi) AC approval.

Each stage must be successfully navigated in order to produce an approved programme document that can be considered for validation.

Programme Monitoring

IICP College Programme Monitoring Policy requires that programmes be monitored annually in accordance with the requirements of QQI's Policies and Criteria for Validation of Programmes. Annual Reporting requirements for each programme, contained in IICP College's Programme Monitoring Policy, are derived from QQI's Programme Review Manual.

Programme Review and Revalidation.

Self-Evaluation occurs both annually and as part of the Programme Review cycle conducted every five years. Annual monitoring involves quality reporting from programmes to the Senior Management Team [SMT] and Academic Council [AC]. This is a reporting process based on the requirements for Programme Review data collection, analysis and reflection and is documented in *Policy 9.4 Programme Monitoring Policy and Policy 9.5 Programme Review and Revalidation Policy*.

Learner involvement in Programme Development and Review

The TOR of Programme Boards and the AC require self-evaluation based on quantitative and qualitative data, in particular learner feedback. There are arrangements in place for consultation with students, graduates, employers, practitioners and other providers during programme development and review.

Institutional Review

Institutional Review requires a self-evaluation of the effectiveness of QA process. The procedure includes both an internal and an external phase. A key task of the internal phase is the production of an Evidence-based Self-Evaluation Report, and the policy guides on review techniques can be used to support this process. The external phase includes a Site visit by an external panel, and a Panel report followed by the College's production of a Quality Improvement Plan.

2.2 Admission, Progression, Recognition & Certification

The key policies governing admissions processes and procedures; supports for students, including academic support services; access and progression routes; and the recognition of prior learning are as follows:

Access Transfer and Progression.

- *Policy 1.3 Access, Transfer and Progression Strategy and Policy.* This policy is available on the College's website at <https://www.iicp.ie/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/1.3-Access-Transfer-and-Progression-Strategy-and-Policy-1.pdf>. This deals with Strategy and Policy for Access Transfer and Progression, including entry requirements, access and transfer policies. It specifies the entry requirements for IICP College's programmes, and the related admissions policies and procedures for the programmes.

- *Policy 1.4 Recognition of Prior Learning Policy.* This policy is available on the College's website at <https://www.iicp.ie/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/1.4-Recognition-of-Prior-Learning-Policy-1.pdf>. This policy provides detailed information and procedures relating to Recognition of Prior Learning.
- *Policy 5.2 Assessment Regulations.* . This policy is available on the College's website at <https://www.iicp.ie/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/5.2-Assessment-Regulations-1-1.pdf>. This policy provides a high-level view of the College's regulations for, and approaches to, assessment, including its progression regulations.

Student Support

- *Policy 6.1 Policy Framework for Learner Care, Support and Welfare.* This policy is available at <https://www.iicp.ie/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/6.1-Policy-Framework-for-Learner-Care-Support-and-Welfare-1.pdf>. This policy summarises the College's Care, Support and Welfare policy framework, and identifies the supports provided. It places responsibility on the College to have in place a student support framework, and to monitor markers for concern such as attendance and time-keeping.
- *Policy 6.4 Policy and Procedure on Learner Welfare and Wellbeing.* This policy is available at <https://www.iicp.ie/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/6.4-Policy-and-Procedure-on-Learner-Welfare-and-Wellbeing-1-1.pdf>. This policy balances the intention of being supportive of individual learners with the requirements for maintaining academic standards and the right of all IICP College members to learn, work and live without unwarranted interference from others.
- *Policy 5.6 Learners with Learning Difficulties.* This policy is available at <https://www.iicp.ie/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/5.6-Learners-with-Learning-Difficulties-1.pdf>. This policy describes the process by which designated support and special accommodation may be provided to learners who evidence a physical or learning difficulty.
- *Policy 6.9 Physical Premises, Equipment and Learner Facilities and Services.* This policy is available at <https://www.iicp.ie/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/6.9-Physical-premises-Equipment-and-Learner-Facilities-and-Services-1.pdf>. This policy sets out the Facilities and Services available to learners. It describes how the College assures the quality of its physical premises, equipment and facilities.
- *Policy 6.3 Learners' Charter, available at <https://www.iicp.ie/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/6.3-Learners-Charter-1.pdf>. This policy outlines what is*

accepted as a suitable learning environment, and sets out guidelines for a beneficial, constructive academic and professional community.

These policies occur in the context of a wider QA framework which encompasses published quality assurance provisions for the purposes of establishing, ascertaining, maintaining and improving the quality of education, training and related services and provisions for access, transfer and progression in accordance with relevant legislation.

The College has formal arrangements in place for learners' access, transfer and progression, which ensure that entry, transfer and progression processes are clear, fair and transparent and that all learners, including those with particular learning needs, have opportunities to become involved in appropriate learning opportunities, and that clear statements of attainments required for transfer or progression are available to all learners. All reasonable attempts are made to remove obstacles to learner progression, and they are supported on their route to professional recognition, further learning and/or employment through a range of academic, professional and personal supports.

IICP College is committed to facilitating access and progression for all learners, and to providing procedures that assist learners to address barriers to progression that they may experience. IICP College's *Recognition of Prior Learning Policy (Policy 1.4)* lays out the processes and procedures in place for non-standard entry, including recognition or prior certified and uncertified learning. The Assessment Regulations, **Policy 5.2** communicates to learners regulations in place governing matters that may impact on progression, as well as recognition and certification. **Policy 5.6** sets out the policy and procedure for learners who have particular learning needs, and puts in place a flexible, learner centred response for individual learners. **Policy 6.4** *Policy and Procedure on Learner Welfare and Wellbeing* is intended to assist learners to achieve their potential, both academically and professionally, through providing individually tailored support for learners who are experiencing difficulty in satisfying the required programme or professional requirements, or in adhering to the Learner Charter. Under the management of the Head of Academic Studies, a designated Learner Care Team has responsibility for responding to the individual circumstances and issues raised by an individual learner.

2.3 Procedures for Making Awards

This section does not apply.

2.4 Teaching, Learning and Assessment

Teaching, Learning and Assessment Strategy and Policies

IICP College has in place a teaching, learning and assessment strategy that links organisational mission and strategy to the College's teaching, learning and assessment approach in all of its undergraduate and postgraduate programmes. This policy, *Policy 1.2 Teaching, Learning and Assessment Strategy*, is available at <https://www.iicp.ie/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/1.2-Teaching-Learning-and-Assessment-Strategy-1.pdf>. In accordance with its Strategic Plan, the College has taken steps to develop online teaching and learning components of all of its programmes, as well as to seek to extend its scope of provision into Blended Learning. Consequently its Teaching, Learning and Assessment Strategy is complemented and enhanced by a range of teaching and learning policies, submitted for approval in June 2020, specifically relating to Online and Blended Learning environments. The following policies attend particularly to the design and delivery of study programmes and the assessment of outcomes in online and blended environments.

- Policy 11.2 Blended Learning Policy, available at <https://www.iicp.ie/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/Policy-11.2-Blended-Learning-Policy.pdf>
- Policy 11.3 Blended Learning. Technology-Enabled Assessment Policy, available at <https://www.iicp.ie/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/Policy-11.3-Blended-Learning.-Technology-Enabled-Assessment-Policy.pdf>
- Policy 11.4 Ethics of VLE usage in Blended Learning Programmes, available at <https://www.iicp.ie/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/Policy-11.4-Ethics-of-VLE-usage-in-Blended-Learning-Programmes.pdf>
- Policy 11.5 Incorporating Digital Technology into the Curriculum, available at <https://www.iicp.ie/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/11.5-Incorporating-Digital-Technology-into-the-Curriculum.pdf>

These policies guide the design, monitoring and review of programmes, emphasising a focus on coherence of programme structure, integration of all teaching, learning and assessment components, and orientation towards the achievement by learners of its intended programme learning outcomes.

Student-centred learning and teaching

The College's Teaching, Learning and Assessment Strategy, available at <https://www.iicp.ie/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/1.2-Teaching-Learning-and-Assessment-Strategy-1.pdf>, sets as one of its objectives that its approach is learner-centred, and describes its approach to learner centredness as follows:

“Involved learning requires attention to the person of the learner, and also the construction of spaces where learners can identify and describe their own self as learner, and how it impacts on their learning. Small group size and discursive spaces contribute to this personalisation and allow the programme to adjust pace and timing accordingly. Learning is tied to the interests and readiness-for-content of the learner and adjusts to the challenges experienced by learners in practice components of the programme”.

A key feature of learner centredness is comprehensive and timely feedback to learners on their performance. IICP College has in place a policy on *Learner Information Provision and Feedback in Assessment (Policy 5.5)*, which is available at <https://www.iicp.ie/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/5.5-Learner-Information-Provision-and-Feedback-in-Assessment-1.pdf>. This policy documents the procedures for providing feedback to learners on formative and summative assessment tasks in order to ensure that feedback informs learning. This policy summarises and adds to related policies, in particular *Policy 5.2 Assessment Regulations* (available at <https://www.iicp.ie/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/5.2-Assessment-Regulations-1-1.pdf>), which requires that all assessment strategies ensure the provision of appropriate feedback to learners on their progress.

Quality assurance processes for assessment

The Quality assurance processes for assessment are set out in section 5 of the QAM. The main provisions are:

- *Policy 5.1 Policy and Procedure Examinations Board Regulations*, available at <https://www.iicp.ie/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/5.1-Policy-and-Procedure-Examinations-Board-Regulations-1.pdf>

This policy establishes the Examination Board as having the authority to make final decisions on all summative assessments. Examination Boards include a chairperson and a secretary, all assessor, external examiner, Registrar and support staff. IICP College takes a collegial and collaborative approach to Examination Boards, and consequently they provide significant opportunities for informing individual practices in assessment, and also in teaching and learning.

- *Policy 5.2 Assessment Regulations*, available at <https://www.iicp.ie/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/5.2-Assessment-Regulations-1-1.pdf>

This policy set out the principles that govern assessment, roles and responsibilities in assessment and the quality assurance of assessment.

- *Policy 5.3 External Examiner Policy*, available at <https://www.iicp.ie/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/5.3-External-Examiner-Policy-1.pdf>

This procedure details how external examiners are appointed, and the roles and responsibilities of external examiners.

- *Policy 5.4 Moderation of Assessment Material and Results*, available at <https://www.iicp.ie/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/5.4-Moderation-of-Assessment-Material-and-Results-1.pdf>

This policy sets out both internal and external moderation processes for different phases of assessment, from design to submission for certification.

- *Policy 5.5 Learner Information Provision and Feedback in Assessment*, available at <https://www.iicp.ie/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/5.5-Learner-Information-Provision-and-Feedback-in-Assessment-1.pdf>

This policy sets out the information that should be provided to students about their assessments, and the procedures for providing feedback.

- *Policy 5.6 Learners with Learning Difficulties*, available at <https://www.iicp.ie/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/5.6-Learners-with-Learning-Difficulties-1.pdf>

This policy describes the process by which special accommodation may be provided to learners who evidence a physical or learning difficulty.

- *Policy 5.7 Examination Results. Review, Recheck and Appeal*, available at <https://www.iicp.ie/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/5.7-Examination-Results.-Review-Recheck-and-Appeal-1.pdf>

This policy sets out the ways in which learners can obtain further information about their assessment results, and how students can question or challenge decisions in relation to assessments and results.

These policies work with organisational structures to assure the quality of assessments. For example, External Examiner reports are considered by Programme Boards and the Academic Council, and are summarised and analysed in Annual Programme Quality Reports produced by Programme Boards and submitted to the Academic Council. External Examiner reports are also used in programme review to inform recommendations for programme change and development.

The quality of the learning experience is monitored on an on-going basis in particular from two perspectives:

1. Learners. Learners provide feedback on their experiences of modules and of the training programme, including learner supports and facilities. Module feedback is presented to lecturers for their feedback and action plan for continuous improvement. Programme feedback is included in APQRs for consideration by the AC and the SMT.
2. Outcome measures. Learners are required to achieve professional competencies in order to practice. Learner progression and achievement, including on clinical aspects of the programme, provide a measure of the success of the programmes in producing competent professionals. This is one significant element of learning experience: whether the teaching and learning opportunities are adequate and sufficient to produce professionally competent practitioners. Learner progression rates and assessment outcomes are monitored regularly at programme and AC level for the purposes of programme development and improvement.

Quality Assurance of Workplace Learning

IICP College have in place the following policies for the assurance of workplace learning.

- Policy 7.3 Quality Assurance of Workplace Learning, available at <https://www.iicp.ie/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/7.3-Quality-Assurance-of-Workplace-Learning-1.pdf>
- Policy 7.4. Quality Assurance of Workplace Learning. Masters in Pluralistic Counselling and Psychotherapy, available at <https://www.iicp.ie/wp->

[content/uploads/2021/01/7.4.-Quality-Assurance-of-Workplace-Learning.-Masters-in-Pluralistic-Counselling-and-Psychotherapy.-1-1.pdf](#)

IICP College programmes are designed to be applied directly to the practice of counselling and psychotherapy and therefore include a practice element. These policies assure the quality of placement learning and the fair assessment of the learner. Through identifying and articulating the respective roles of workplace managers, supervisors and teaching staff, this policy ensures that the assessment of learners in work placement is conducted by, and under the assessment regulations of, IICP College.

In addition, IICP College has in place clinical practice support policies which ensure that learner care and welfare are at the centre of workplace learning. The core policy here is: *Policy 7.5 IICP College Framework for Monitoring and Maintaining Clinical Practice Requirements*, available at <https://www.iicp.ie/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/7.5-IICP-College-Framework-for-Monitoring-and-Maintaining-Clinical-Practice-Requirements-1.pdf>. Initial engagement as a counsellor and psychotherapist is governed by *Policy 7.6 Readiness to Practice Policy*, available at <https://www.iicp.ie/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/7.6-Readiness-to-Practise-1.pdf>, which outlines the procedure required of all learner prior to embarking on clinical practice. The core aim of these policies is to ensure that learners' clinical practice is safe and ethical, and that learners have support structures in place if they encounter difficulties with clinical practice placements.

Diverse needs of learners are identified and addressed usually in consultation with learners. Under policy 5.6 Learners with Learning Difficulties (available at <https://www.iicp.ie/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/5.6-Learners-with-Learning-Difficulties-1.pdf>), learners who self-identify as having a disability, and can support this with appropriate evidence, can receive special accommodation in teaching, learning and assessments. Under policy 3.7 Policy and Procedure for Mitigating Circumstances, available at <https://www.iicp.ie/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/3.7-Policy-and-Procedure-for-Mitigating-Circumstances-1.pdf>, learners who experience personal, familial or other difficulties that impact on their progression may receive special consideration in how they satisfy programme requirements. Learners who experience difficulties that they might be difficult to self-identify may be identified through College Learner Welfare and Wellbeing procedures, available at <https://www.iicp.ie/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/6.4-Policy-and-Procedure-on-Learner-Welfare-and-Wellbeing-1-1.pdf>, and offered supports. To assist learners navigate these different processes, *Policy 6.1*

Policy Framework for Learner Care, Support and Welfare available at <https://www.iicp.ie/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/6.1-Policy-Framework-for-Learner-Care-Support-and-Welfare-1.pdf> summarises learner support practices.

Academic Integrity

The main policies governing Academic Integrity are:

- *Policy 3.3 Academic Integrity Policy*, available at <https://www.iicp.ie/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/3.3-Academic-Integrity-Policy-1.pdf>. This policy articulates how the College supports good academic practice. The principle is that fostering good practice mitigates against bad practice.
- *Policy 3.4 Academic Impropriety Policy and Procedures*, available at <https://www.iicp.ie/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/3.4-Academic-Impropriety-Policy-and-Procedures-2.pdf>. This policy provides a framework for responding to allegations of Academic Misconduct, including plagiarism.

The College does not use technical applications for plagiarism detection. The principle here is that potential vulnerabilities in assessment are made known through regular assessment, student feedback, and monitoring and review of assessment processes. Following advice from the panel who considered the QA of BL, the College documented its rationale and processes in place to safeguard academic integrity in the absence of technical applications for plagiarism detection. It also undertook research to consider the range of plagiarism detection applications available, and how they might fit within the College's context. The College is committed to bringing its rationale and findings to the Academic Council for consideration over the next academic year.

3.0 Learner Resources and Support

The core policy document regulating the provision Learner Resources and Support are

- *Policy 6.9 Physical premises, Equipment and Learner Facilities and Services*, available at <https://www.iicp.ie/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/6.9-Physical-premises-Equipment-and-Learner-Facilities-and-Services-1.pdf>. This covers in particular Library Resource, Physical Premises, VLE and Educational Technology Resources.
- *Policy 6.1 Policy Framework for Learner Care, Support and Welfare*, available at <https://www.iicp.ie/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/6.1-Policy-Framework-for-Learner-Care-Support-and-Welfare-1.pdf>. This policy summarises the College's Care, Support and Welfare policy framework. It identifies the supports provided to learners, and places responsibility on the College to have in place a student support framework, and to monitor markers for concern such as attendance and time-keeping.
- *Policy 6.4 Policy and Procedure on Learner Welfare and Wellbeing* available at <https://www.iicp.ie/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/6.4-Policy-and-Procedure-on-Learner-Welfare-and-Wellbeing-1-1.pdf>. This policy balances the intention of being supportive of individual learners with the right of all IICP College members to learn, work and live without unwarranted interference from others. It provides procedures for responding to a range of Welfare and Wellbeing Concerns.
- *Policy 6.7 Dignity and Respect* available at <https://www.iicp.ie/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/6.7-Dignity-and-Respect-1.pdf>. This policy fosters diversity, inclusiveness and respect, and prohibits discrimination / harassment on specific grounds. It provides an informal procedure for responding to discrimination and harassment which aims to resolve interpersonal issue through dialogue and negotiation.

The College also provides support to Masters Students in completing the research components of programmes, in particular through the establishment of structures, processes and procedures for Ethical Review, and in codifying their rights and responsibilities in Research Supervision, in the following two policies:

- Policy 7.1 Ethics in Research. The Research Ethics Committee available at <https://www.iicp.ie/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/7.1-Ethics-in-Research.-The-Research-Ethics-Committee-1-1.pdf>
- Policy 7.2 Supervision of Masters Research available at <https://www.iicp.ie/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/7.2-Supervision-of-Masters-Research-1-1.pdf>

Reviewing the quality of learner resources and supports.

The adequacy of programme resources is considered in different fora, including:

- Programme Boards.
- Academic Council (on the basis of Annual Quality Reports).
- Senior Management Team.
- Board of Directors.

The principle arena of decision-making regarding the adequacy of premises, facilities and resources for current education and training programmes when working within the budget allocated by the Board is the Senior Management Team. The TOR of the Senior Management Team, available at <https://www.iicp.ie/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/2.8-Terms-of-Reference-of-Senior-Management-Team-1.pdf>, identifies its responsible for the general management, subject to College policy, of the College's resources, physical facilities and equipment, including the allocation of rooms and other space.

The adequacy of resources and facilities are also considered:

1. At Programme Board level, when preparing the Annual Quality Report.
2. At Academic Council level, when considering Annual Quality Reports; and
3. At Board level, when considering Board Reserved matters.

The adequacy and enhancement of learning resources is addressed in each programme board's Annual Programme Quality Report [APQR], as is documented in the IICP College Programme Monitoring Policy, available at <https://www.iicp.ie/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/9.4-IICP-College-Monitoring-and-Evaluation-Policy-1.pdf>. The Academic Council consider and approve each programme's APQR. They advise and make recommendations to the Senior Management Team on suitable resources for the effective delivery of learning and teaching and student supports. This is documented in the Terms of Reference of the Academic Council, available at <https://www.iicp.ie/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/2.7-Terms-of-Reference-of-Academic-Council-1-1.pdf>.

The adequacy of resources and facilities is managed by the Senior Management Team. According to its terms of reference the Senior Management Team is responsible for managing the resources of the College and preparing a budget for the College.

Oversight is provided by the Board of Directors. Under its Terms of Reference, available at <https://www.iicp.ie/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/2.5-Terms-of-Reference-of-Board-of-Directors-1.pdf> the Board is responsible for the management of organisational risk, and for Board Reserved Matters.

This structure ensures that there is considerable monitoring of resources through the Programme Boards, and the Academic Council. This includes different perspectives on the adequacy of resources, which are summarised in an Annual Programme Quality Report [APQR], described in Policy 9.4 IICP College Monitoring and Evaluation Policy available at <https://www.iicp.ie/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/9.4-IICP-College-Monitoring-and-Evaluation-Policy-1.pdf>, in prepared by the Programme Boards and submitted to the Academic Council. The Academic Council, taking into account reports from all programmes, deliberate on the adequacy of resources and facilities for the College's programmes as a whole. Resource implications are considered by the Senior Management Team, who has overall responsibility for the management of programme and the implementation of the College's academic policy.

4.0 QA of Research Activities and Programmes

This section does not apply.

5.0 Staff Recruitment, Development and Support

IICP College has in place:

- Policies for the recruitment, selection induction and probation of Core Staff, which ensure that new staff have the necessary experience, qualifications and expertise. The principal policies here are:
 - Policy 8.1 Quality Assurance of Teaching Staff, available at <https://www.iicp.ie/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/8.1-Quality-Assurance-of-Teaching-Staff-1.pdf>.
 - Policy 8.2 Recruitment and Selection of Core Teaching and Teaching Support Staff, available at <https://www.iicp.ie/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/8.2-Recruitment-and-Selection-of-Core-Teaching-and-Teaching-Support-Staff-1.pdf>.
 - Policy 8.3 Core Teaching and Teaching Support Staff Induction and Probation Policy, available at <https://www.iicp.ie/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/8.3-Core-Teaching-and-Teaching-Support-Staff-Induction-and-Probation-Policy-1.pdf>.
- Policies for staff development, and for periodic “developmental dialogues”, which provide staff with the opportunity to reflect on their teaching practice, and to discuss job performance and career development opportunities. The principal policies here are:
 - Policy 8.4 Staff Communication Policy, available at <https://www.iicp.ie/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/8.4-Staff-Communication-Policy-2.pdf>.
 - Policy 8.5 Staff Development Policy, available at <https://www.iicp.ie/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/8.5-Staff-Development-Policy-1-1.pdf>.
 - Policy 8.6 Core Staff Development Dialogues, available at <https://www.iicp.ie/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/8.6-Core-Staff-Development-Dialogues.pdf>.

Recruitment, selection induction and probation of Core Staff

In Policy 8.2, recruitment begins with the identification of a human resource need for a core teaching or teaching support position. This need is developed into a position description, which clearly articulates responsibilities and qualifications requirement of the identified post. This position description is used to develop interview questions, interview evaluations and reference check questions, which forms the basis of selection.

All staff undergo induction and probation, in accordance with *policy 8.3*. These processes are aimed at enabling new Core Staff to settle into the College; to become familiar with their role; to acquaint themselves with IICP College's policies, procedures and practices; as well as to self-assess and be assessed against the requirements of their role.

Staff development.

Staff developmental needs are identified through induction, developmental dialogues, programme monitoring procedures and programme board meetings, as well as less formal channels. Training provision is prioritised by the College according to identified needs and its contribution to the College's strategic objectives. *Policy 8.5* provides Teaching and Teaching Support staff with the opportunity to develop their knowledge, skills and abilities through a blend of learning methods including on the job learning, mentoring, supervision, line management, in-house training, and external courses, conferences and seminars. Needs are addressed both through individually focused activities such as on-the-job training, mentoring, written instructions, line management and supervision; and through training arranged by the College or financial assistance provided by the College to support further studies. Staff also have one-to-one review sessions of their practice as part of programme monitoring, which includes both reviewing learner feedback and key performance indicators, and also commenting on programme quality and enhancement opportunities.

As set out in *policy 8.6*, staff also have the opportunity to take part in Developmental Dialogues, which provide an opportunity to reflect on their teaching practice.

All teaching staff are employed. Involvement of part-time staff in programme development and professional development is required by their roles and responsibilities. However, IICP College policies distinguish between core staff and non-core staff, and different levels of support are available for the different categories of staff. All non-permanent staff contracts are negotiated at the beginning of each academic year, as a part of the planning process. These contracts require that staff commit to both specific teaching hours and to engagement with necessary QA tasks, such as attendance at programme boards, examination boards and meetings.

Programme issues are brought to the attention of all staff both formally and informally. It is usual that staff are informed through communication means such as Moodle or email. This is

formalised in *Policy 8.4 Staff Communication Policy*. It is also important to note that staff will usually have been consulted regarding any issue or change that impacts them.

Staff developmental issues for core and non-core staff are addressed in *Policy 8.5 Staff Development Policy*. While the levels of support differ, the principle of identifying needs and providing appropriate learning opportunities applies to all staff.

Staff are facilitated and encourage to engage with a community of practice in their field(s) of learning. This is evident in the *Teaching, Learning and Assessment Strategy*, available at <https://www.iicp.ie/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/1.2-Teaching-Learning-and-Assessment-Strategy-1.pdf>, and in the *TOR of Programme Boards*, available at <https://www.iicp.ie/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/2.9-Terms-of-Reference-of-Programme-Boards-1.pdf>. Engagement with communities of practice occur through staff meetings and professional development opportunities, as well as arising from their membership of and involvement in professional bodies where Continuous Professional Development is a requirement of registration renewal.

Staff meetings include Programme Boards and Faculty Fora. These are primary sites of engagement with teaching and education practices, from both an academic and professional perspective. Professional development opportunities allow staff to pursue their individual interests. Involvement in professional bodies, which is a usual requirement for teaching practice in the College, provides a primary site of engagement with professional communities of practice.

6.0 Information and Data Management

IICP College's *Information Systems Policy*, available at <https://www.iicp.ie/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/9.2-IICP-College-Information-Systems-Policy-1.pdf>, details the information gathering required for QA and monitoring purposes. The College's *Programme Monitoring and Evaluation Policy*, available at <https://www.iicp.ie/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/9.4-IICP-College-Monitoring-and-Evaluation-Policy-1.pdf>, and the TORs of Boards, contained in Part 2 of the QAM available at <https://www.iicp.ie/qam/>, indicate who has access to what data. The Data Protection suite of policies, available in section 10 of the QAM, available at <https://www.iicp.ie/qam/>, detail the security of information, and how access requests are managed. Responsibility for management of information systems is set out in the College's *Information Systems policy* available at <https://www.iicp.ie/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/9.2-IICP-College-Information-Systems-Policy-1.pdf>. The principle is that IICP College gathers and retains adequate and sufficient, but not excessive, information to support its monitoring and assessment practices. This information is recorded on standardised reporting forms, principally the APQR, which are made available to relevant Boards and Committees. Terms of Reference of College Boards indicate the requirement to report and the requirements to consider and act upon reports.

The key policies governing Information and Data Management are contained in Part 9 of the College's QAM. This Part of the QAM addresses the principles, processes and procedures for data use as well as the collection, analyses and use of relevant information for monitoring and review of programmes and other activities.

The principles, processes and procedures for data use are governed by the following policies:

- *Policy 9.1 IICP College Public Information Policy*, available at <https://www.iicp.ie/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/9.1-IICP-College-Public-Information-Policy-1-1.pdf>
- *Policy 9.2 IICP College Information Systems Policy*, available at <https://www.iicp.ie/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/9.2-IICP-College-Information-Systems-Policy-1.pdf>

The collection, analyses and use of relevant information for monitoring and review of programmes and other activities are governed by the following policies:

- *Policy 9.3 IICP College New Programmes Policy*, available at <https://www.iicp.ie/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/9.3-IICP-College-New-Programmes-Policy-1.pdf>,
- *Policy 9.4 IICP College Monitoring and Evaluation Policy*, available at <https://www.iicp.ie/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/9.4-IICP-College-Monitoring-and-Evaluation-Policy-1.pdf>,
- *Policy 9.5 IICP College Programme Review and Revalidation*, available at <https://www.iicp.ie/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/9.5-IICP-College-Programme-Review-and-Revalidation-1.pdf>,
- *Policy 9.6 IICP College Reviewing the Effectiveness of Quality Assurance. Institutional Review*, available at <https://www.iicp.ie/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/9.6-IICP-College-Reviewing-the-Effectiveness-of-Quality-Assurance.-Institutional-Review-1.pdf>.

The key policies governing data protection are:

- *Policy 10.1 Data Protection Policy* available at <https://www.iicp.ie/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/10.1-Data-Protection-Policy-1.pdf>.
- *Policy 10.2 Data Protection Processing Principles* available at <https://www.iicp.ie/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/10.2-Data-Protection-Processing-Principles-1.pdf>.
- *Policy 10.3 Data Management and Retention Policy and Data Retention Schedule* available at <https://www.iicp.ie/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/10.3-Data-Management-and-Retention-Policy-and-Data-Retention-Schedule-1.pdf>.
- *Policy 10.4 Data Protection. Subject Access Request (SAR) Policy* available at <https://www.iicp.ie/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/10.4-Data-Protection.-Subject-Access-Request-SAR-Policy-1.pdf>.
- *Policy 10.5 Data Breach Policy* available at <https://www.iicp.ie/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/10.5-Data-Breach-Policy-1.pdf>.
- *Policy 10.6 Webpage Privacy and Cookie Notice* available at <https://www.iicp.ie/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/10.6-Webpage-Privacy-and-Cookie-Notice-Version-2.pdf>.
- *Policy 10.7 Your Right of Access to Personal Information held by IICP College* available at <https://www.iicp.ie/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/10.7-Your-Right-of-Access-to-Personal-Information-held-by-IICP-College-1.pdf>.

The key policies regarding the use of relevant information for the effective management of programmes and other activities are:

- *Policy 2.2 IICP College's Quality and Governance Framework; (ii) Governance* available at <https://www.iicp.ie/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/2.1-IICP-Colleges-Quality-and-Governance-Framework-i-Quality-Assurance-1.pdf>.
- *Policy 2.4 IICP College's Quality and Governance Framework; (iv) Business Continuity, Resilience & Risk Management* available at <https://www.iicp.ie/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/2.4-IICP-Colleges-Quality-and-Governance-Framework-iv-Business-Continuity-Resilience-Risk-Management-1.pdf>.
- *Policy 2.5 Terms of Reference of Board of Directors* available at <https://www.iicp.ie/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/2.5-Terms-of-Reference-of-Board-of-Directors-1.pdf>.
- *Policy 2.6 Terms of Reference of Advisory Board* available at <https://www.iicp.ie/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/2.6-Terms-of-Reference-of-Advisory-Board-1.pdf>.
- *Policy 2.7 Terms of Reference of Academic Council* available at <https://www.iicp.ie/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/2.7-Terms-of-Reference-of-Academic-Council-1-1.pdf>.
- *Policy 2.8 Terms of Reference of Senior Management Team* available at <https://www.iicp.ie/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/2.8-Terms-of-Reference-of-Senior-Management-Team-1.pdf>
- *Policy 2.9 Terms of Reference of Programme Boards* available at <https://www.iicp.ie/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/2.9-Terms-of-Reference-of-Programme-Boards-1.pdf>.
- *Policy 9.4 IICP College Monitoring and Evaluation Policy* available at <https://www.iicp.ie/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/9.4-IICP-College-Monitoring-and-Evaluation-Policy-1.pdf>.

From a governance perspective, a set of key performance data and summary statements on developments in the areas of academic provision and supports, engagement activities administration and staffing are collated by the Programme Board and published in its Annual Programme Quality Report, which is considered by the Academic Council. Financial information, including audited accounts, are considered by the SMT, and submitted to the Board for their approval.

In general, the Annual Programme Quality Reports, set out in Policy 9.4, provide the information required for Programme Monitoring and Review on an annual basis. These reports also provide the annual data required for 5-yearly Programme Review and revalidation.

Under the College's Information Systems Policy, information management is the specific responsibility of the Registrar. The Senior Management Team has responsibility for the overall management of Information Systems in relation to the College.

Data Protection

IICP College's Data Protection suite of policies attend to the safety, security, and appropriateness of information systems, and the systematic and secure maintenance and destruction of records. Part 9: Data Protection details the data protection requirements in place in the College. These have been reviewed and rewritten in order to ensure compliance with GDPR.

The College also has in place a policy to assist learners to comply with their Data Protection responsibilities when processing personal data for their assessments: *Policy 3.8 Data Protection in Assessments*, available at <https://www.iicp.ie/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/3.8-Data-Protection-in-Assessments-1.pdf>.

7.0 Public Information and Communication

The core policies governing what is published about validated programmes are as follows:

- *Policy 1.3 IICP College's Access, Transfer and Progression Policy and Strategy* states the required information provision by the College in order to comply with QQI's Policy re-statement on Access, Transfer and Progression. This policy is available at <https://www.iicp.ie/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/1.3-Access-Transfer-and-Progression-Strategy-and-Policy-1.pdf>.
- *Policy 9.1 IICP College's Public Information Policy* details the information published for public, for learners prior to enrolment on programmes, and for learners enrolled on programmes. This policy is available at <https://www.iicp.ie/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/9.1-IICP-College-Public-Information-Policy-1-1.pdf>.

These policies place responsibility on the College to provide information to the public, applicants and learners regarding the College's activities, including programmes and their selection criteria, the intended learning outcomes of these programmes, the qualifications they award, the teaching, learning and assessment procedures used, and the teaching and learning opportunities.

Policy 9.1 sets out the standards for the provision of public information and the manner in which it quality assures that provision. The standards that IICP College sets for its public information is that it is factual, honest, transparent, and addresses the needs of multiple stakeholders.

This policy describes the manner in which IICP College assures the accuracy of its information. Each item must have a designated author and reviewer. All information must comply with QQI and Professional body requirements. All out of date information must be removed.

IICP College provides a wide range of public information on its website, which is the primary information source for stakeholders (<https://www.iicp.ie>). This information includes a Course Description section, allowing prospective students to obtain the current approved specifications for programmes.

IICP College makes available a range of policies related to the governance, management and quality assurance activities of the College, including academic regulations and policies. The QAM is published on the College website at <https://www.iicp.ie/qam/>. This means that it is readily available to internal and external stakeholders, as well as the public, including prospective learners, other training institutes, and professional bodies. At the level of governance and management, information is easily accessible on legal status and decision-making structures in Part 2 of the QAM. The College's Strategic Plan is published and available Part 1 of the QAM.

The commitment to publish QA procedures is clearly stated in the QAM, in *Policy 2.3. IICP College's Quality and Governance Framework; (iii) Documented approach to Quality Assurance*, available at <https://www.iicp.ie/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/2.3-IICP-Colleges-Quality-and-Governance-Framework-iii-Documented-approach-to-Quality-Assurance-1.pdf>.

The presentation of policies is also governed by this Policy. This requires that policies are accessible and clearly written. Each policy contains separate sections, which tend to be of different value and interest to different audiences. Procedures are kept separate, and provide specific steps to utilising the specific procedure.

Public Information on Professional Accreditation is available for each programme on the public website, and for many potential applicants this is a decisive factor in programme choice. Where Continuing Education courses lead to a professional qualification given either in addition to the academic award, or, in some cases, as the only certification, the awarding body and certification offered are clearly indicated, as are any relevant application mechanisms and subsequent professional requirements.

The College's information provision practices, in particular its use of social media, is described in Part B, section 2.0 of this report.

8.0 Monitoring and Periodic Review

The principal policies governing Monitoring and Periodic Review are contained in Part 9 of the QAM. These policies are:

- Policy 9.4 IICP College Monitoring and Evaluation Policy, available at <https://www.iicp.ie/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/9.4-IICP-College-Monitoring-and-Evaluation-Policy-1.pdf>.
- Policy 9.5 IICP College Programme Review and Revalidation, available at <https://www.iicp.ie/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/9.5-IICP-College-Programme-Review-and-Revalidation-1.pdf>.
- Policy 9.6 IICP College Reviewing the Effectiveness of Quality Assurance. Institutional Review, available at <https://www.iicp.ie/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/9.6-IICP-College-Reviewing-the-Effectiveness-of-Quality-Assurance.-Institutional-Review-1.pdf>.

The processes described in these policies are intertwined. Data, reflections and action plans at monitoring level feed into Programme Review and Institutional Reviews. Monitoring process in turn are shaped by Programme and Institutional Review, in order that they are better equipped to capture and analyse high quality, relevant information.

The Programme Monitoring Policy sets out purposes, responsibilities, processes, outcomes and oversight of monitoring. The Role descriptions, contained in Policy 2.2 and TOR of Boards, expand on specific responsibilities in this regard. Monitoring processes incorporate feedback into quality enhancement actions or activities. Programme Boards and Roles have the responsibility and authority to act upon monitoring results within their area of responsibility, and to report this as appropriate. The Registrar, acting in consultation with the SMT where appropriate, reviews and acts upon reports from other bodies, as well as overseeing the appropriateness and effectiveness of implantation of change processes within programmes.

Self-Evaluation occurs both annually and as part of the Programme Review cycle conducted every five years. Annual monitoring involves quality reporting from programmes to the Senior Management Team and the Academic Council. This is a reporting process based on the requirements for Programmatic Review data collection, analysis and reflection.

Programme Review and Revalidation draw heavily on QQI Core Validation Guidelines and current Programme Review Manual. The programme review process, with inputs from experts and stakeholders (internal and external), involves the production of a self-evaluation report (SER). The self-evaluation comprises a critical evaluation of all aspects of each programme

being reviewed - its strategy, learning outcomes, modules, assessment, resources etc. Review of the SER by external peers results in a Programmatic Review Report which includes a set of conditions and recommendations. The College then provides a response to this report.

Institutional Review provides an opportunity to evaluate the quality of provision of education, training and research, and the effectiveness of its ongoing monitoring and review activities, to ensure they are fit for purpose. The procedure involves a self-evaluation of the effectiveness of QA process, an external team providing reflection and feedback on the effectiveness of the procedures, as well as advice on enhancement.

The procedures set out clear objectives for programme reviews and have regard to QQI's validation procedures. Its institutional/provider review procedure include a self-evaluation approach that is suitable for its provision that can be applied consistently in reviews.

The TOR of Programme Boards and the Academic Council require self-evaluation based on quantitative and qualitative data, in particular learner feedback.

9.0 Details of Arrangements with Third Parties

9.1 Arrangements with PRSBs, Awarding Bodies, QA Bodies

Table 1 Arrangements with PRSBs, Awarding Bodies, QA Bodies

Type of arrangement	Total Number
PRSBs	1
Awarding bodies	0
QA bodies	0

1. Type of arrangement (PRSB/awarding body/QA body)	Irish Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy.[IACP]
Name of body:	Level 8 (Hons) Degree in Integrative Counselling and Psychotherapy MA in Pluralistic Counselling & Psychotherapy https://iacp.ie/register-of-accredited-courses
Programme titles and links to publications	
Date of accreditation or last review	
Date of next review	

9.2 Collaborative Provision

This section does not apply.

9.3 Articulation Agreements

This section does not apply.

[Higher Education Institution]

2021

Annual Quality Report (Institution)
PART B: INTERNAL QUALITY ASSURANCE
ENHANCEMENT & IMPACT
Reporting Period 2019-2020

PART B: INTERNAL QA SYSTEM

1.0 Quality Implementation and Developments

1.1 Strategic QA Updates

1. IICP College's Mission and Strategic Plan

IICP College's Mission Statement articulates the College's identity, and captures the key elements of the College's past and present. Its mission statement is as follows:

IICP College aims to provide training and education to the wider community of professionals and volunteers working in the caring professions. This is achieved through offering opportunities to learners, both formally and informally, that enhance personal, professional, academic and intellectual development through comprehensive training and education within the context of mental health. To achieve this aim, IICP College offers comprehensive programmes for those who wish to pursue professional and academic accreditation in the mental health services. This encompasses a multicultural and pluralistic approach with a core philosophical framework reflecting the principles and practices of an integrated method of therapy.

The College's Strategic Plan establishes key priorities to contribute to achieving our mission during the term of the Plan. The Strategic Objectives in place in IICP College as recorded in our Strategic Plan, (available at <https://www.iicp.ie/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/1.1-Strategic-Plan-1.pdf>) are:

Strategic Area No. 1. Accreditation and Recognition.

To enhance the standing of the College as a leading Higher Education Institution for teaching and learning, research, and innovation in the field of Counselling and Psychotherapy

Strategic Area No. 2. Access and Progression.

To enhance undergraduate and postgraduate learning through a commitment to student access and achievement and the development of knowledgeable, competent skilled, and engaged graduates prepared for a working environment in Counselling and Psychotherapy and related professions in a continually changing social context.

Strategic Area No. 3: Civic Engagement

To expand on our community and civic engagement activities, through strengthening the incentives and resources for Counselling and Psychotherapy educational growth and development in the local community.

Strategic Area No. 4: Teaching and Learning

To provide a comprehensive service to support student engagement and learning, and assist with progression to professional registration, work and employment.

This plan guides all College activities, including quality, engagement, learning & teaching and the programmes being developed, validated and delivered. The development of the College's QA framework over the reporting period occurred in this context.

1. Re-engagement

1.1. Re-engagement Process and Outcome

Quality Assurance and Enhancement during the reporting period was focused on the Re-engagement process with QQI. Preparation for Re-engagement had occurred over the previous 18 months. On 31st July 2019 IICP College submitted its reengagement documents to QQI. An independent review Panel conducted a comprehensive review of IICP's Quality Assurance Manual (QAM), and associated documentation supporting its application. On 8th of October 2019 the Panel visited IICP College on behalf of QQI to undertake the site visit as part of the re-engagement process. The panel conducted a full day site visit to IICP, during which the panel engaged in discussions with staff working in leadership, academic, administrative and student support roles.

The panel noted a number of areas of outstanding practice at IICP arising from this process. Firstly, the panel commends IICP for its openness to discourse with the panel and demonstrated commitment to the process of reengagement. It noted that IICP submitted comprehensive QA documentation in its application for reengagement that was reflective of this commitment. The panel noted and appreciated the collegiality and responsiveness of IICP representatives to the panel, both leading up to and throughout the site visit. The panel commended IICP in relation to its ability to self-evaluate, identify gaps and engage constructively in addressing these, and to utilize the panel's external contribution as supportive peers in this process. The panel offered multiple further commendations to IICP in relation to its provision for learners. In particular it noted that IICP has an exceptionally favourable learner

- staff ratio, and an extensive and well-integrated learner support programme. It noted in particular that learners were engaged in the development and maintenance of QA at IICP through an in depth and exemplary process of consultation. The panel also noted that Programme delivery at IICP benefits from the College's commitment to research and empirically informed practice, and the wide engagement of IICP in the field. Finally, the panel commended IICP for its adoption of a strategic approach to future proofing its programme delivery, in particular through its commitment to and resourcing of blended learning delivery modes in the discipline, and the introduction of a new learner management system. It was also noted that the Colleges approach to these innovations reflected due caution, with associated risks mitigated by phased implementation plans.

While acknowledging the evident strengths of IICP and its widely valued contribution to the sector, the panel held that the QAM required greater clarity in relation to reporting versus advisory relationships, and specificity in the accountability of named decision-makers in relation to roles and responsibilities. As these issues were considered discrete, and in the view of the panel could be addressed quickly by the provider, the College was granted 6 weeks in which to submit evidence to the panel that the issues identified had been satisfactorily addressed. Following that 6 week period, the panel reconvened to review IICP College's updated submission. It was the view of the panel that the concerns raised had been comprehensively addressed by IICP, and the panel was unanimous in its decision to recommend approval of IICP's draft QA procedures. The panel reconvened on the 12th of December to evaluate the evidence submitted by IICP that it had implemented the required changes. The panel was satisfied at that time that IICP had adequately addressed the issues set out in Sections 6.1 and 6.2 of this report. The final panel report was issued issuing on 17th December 2019. IICP College's QA procedures were agreed at the QQI PAEC meeting of 6th February 2020.

1.2. Preparation for Re-engagement.

In preparation for the site visit, the College had completed an extensive self-evaluation against the QQI Core Quality Assurance Guidelines. The self-evaluation process drew on input from a broad range of stakeholders and utilised a variety of information sources to evidence the findings. The development of the QAM was a whole-College activity, involving feedback and re-iterations of feedback over a 9-month period. Its process was guided by the IICP College's Quality and Governance Framework; (i) Quality Assurance (Policy 2.1) in particular Section

5.5. (Methodology for QA review), and also acted as a pilot for that procedure. The process is considered in section 4.

The College developed a Quality Improvement Plan, based upon the findings of the self-evaluation. This plan, and the developments of the College towards achieving that plan, are set out in Part B section 2.

Following the site visit by the review panel a report was issued which included specific advice from the panel to assist IICP College in its future development. In particular, at the request of the College, the panel focused on advice to support the College's intentions to extend its scope of provision to Blended Learning programmes. The panel commended the College on this adoption of a strategic approach to future proofing its programme delivery in the discipline.

1.3. Approval of procedures for blended learning

IICP College submitted an application for Approval of its QA of Blended Learning procedures in July 2020. This strategic project had been underway within the College for the previous 2 years, and aimed to develop capacity and understanding of online and blended delivery. Consequently the College sought approval of procedures for blended learning post the overall reengagement process. The College's application to extend its scope of provision to include blended learning was accompanied by an institutional strategy for blended learning and a policy and procedure suite specific to blended learning. A bespoke process was put in place by QQI and an independent review panel appointed. The virtual site visit for this evaluation took place on 5th of August 2020.

This application and the College's preparation took place during the COVID-19 pandemic, when the College had activated contingency plans to allow the provision of its programme through online means. The College was very aware that the activation of contingency procedures and transition to fully online provision during the pandemic was distinct to a planned approach to Blended Learning, such as was envisaged by the submitted QA procedures under evaluation by the panel. However, the College was also aware of the importance of taking on board the lessons learned from this exceptional period of online delivery, and in particular the feedback received from learners, teachers, administrative and managerial staff, in the design and delivery of Blended Learning programmes. Consequently the College's blended learning team gathered and reviewed learner and lecturer feedback on the experience of online teaching

and learning during the pandemic, and presented a thematic analysis of this feedback. Based on this analysis the College presented its insights into the particularities of technology enabled learning in the domains of counselling and psychotherapy, alongside the application documentation.

The panel provided a number of commendations to IICP College. In particular:

- The panel commended the systematic and planned approach taken to capacity building for the introduction of blended learning, reflected in the detailed documentation submitted and in the dialogue between the panel and the provider's representatives during the virtual site visit.
- The panel expressed the view that IICP leadership had given careful consideration to the College's stage of development and readiness in making the application, and this was clearly reflected in the documented use of the EMBED framework for self-assessment.
- The panel offers a further commendation to IICP in relation to its commitment of appropriate resourcing and investment in the necessary infrastructure and staff development to implement blended learning effectively.
- The panel noted that IICP College had demonstrated a strong commitment to a pedagogy first approach, notably through a commitment to engage additional expertise in learning design and develop capacity throughout the organisation in this area of practice.
- The panel also commended IICP on its carefully considered articulation of approaches to teaching and learning in blended and online modes, and their specific relevance in the domains of counselling and psychotherapy.
- Finally, the panel also commended the open and constructive tone of the dialogue with IICP's representatives throughout the evaluation.

At the conclusion of the virtual site visit, the panel established one Condition of Approval. The College was required to develop and document online standards for learning materials and resources, and the process for ensuring these are subject to informed peer review. The panel reconvened to review evidence of implementation of the singular Condition of Approval on the 28th of August 2020. The panel was of the view that IICP had appropriately addressed this in the online standards and peer review process developed.

In September, the Panel recommended to QQI approval of their QA procedures for Blended Learning, Subsequent approval occurred in September 2021.

1.4. Contribution to the Strategic Objectives of the College

These quality assurance developments relate to and are aligned with the institution's strategic objectives in the following manner.

Strategic Area No. 1. Accreditation and Recognition.

To enhance the standing of the College as a leading Higher Education Institution for teaching and learning, research, and innovation in the field of Counselling and Psychotherapy

Re-engagement allowed for the development of policies relating to teaching, learning and assessment, and Research. The approval of BL QA procedures recognised the importance of the College engaging in professional innovations, particularly the use of technology in health care, therapeutic practice and professional education. Perhaps most importantly, re-engagement and approval of BL QA procedures provided the space for the College community to engage with experts in professional and education fields, to account for our developments and to receive feedback on our practices. The recognition provided by these panels, recorded in the panel reports, together with the decisions of PAEC, provide community recognition of College achievements, increasing the reliability its underlying quality assurance and enhancement systems and the standing of the College in its professional community.

Strategic Area No. 2. Access and Progression.

To enhance undergraduate and postgraduate learning through a commitment to student access and achievement and the development of knowledgeable, competent skilled, and engaged graduates prepared for a working environment in Counselling and Psychotherapy and related professions in a continually changing social context.

Monitoring and reviewing the College's access, transfer, and progression policies and considering new or alternative methods for facilitating students' access onto programmes was a particular focus of the College's preparation for re-engagement. Most significantly, the re-engagement panel provided a critical analysis of these policies in particular, together with advice for their improvement which was incorporated into the revised QAM.

Strategic Area No. 3: Civic Engagement

Our Strategic Priority is: To expanding on our community and civic engagement activities, through strengthening the incentives and resources for Counselling and Psychotherapy educational growth and development in the local community.

This strategic goal benefited least from the re-engagement process. A key action identified was to circulate widely throughout the community information and advice about the programmes provided by IICP College, in particular through face to face events such as open days. The restrictions introduced due to COVID-19 rendered these activities impossible, and instead open events moved online. While such online events provided easy access to information about the College, the local impact was inevitably reduced.

Strategic Area No. 4: Teaching and Learning

Our Strategic Priority is: To provide a comprehensive service to support student engagement and learning, and assist with progression to professional registration, work and employment.

In preparation for re-engagement the College introduced a range of new website services, including comprehensive, accessible programme information; a portal for student services; and a dedicated quality assurance section. With the encouragement of the re-engagement panel the College moved forward with its introduction of a dedicated Student Management System, which supported the College's application for approval of its BL QA. The re-engagement process provided an opportunity for the College to engage critically and reflexively with its student support structures and processes. This resulted in the production of a descriptive policy on the College's framework for student care (*Policy 6.1 Policy Framework for Learner Care, Support and Welfare*, available at <https://www.iicp.ie/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/6.1-Policy-Framework-for-Learner-Care-Support-and-Welfare-1.pdf>) which provided an overall map of this area. Simultaneously the College enhanced its provision of its dedicated enhanced learning programme, called By-Your Side, which provides for a range of teaching and learning opportunities that are both generic, covering areas such as academic writing and technology, and discipline specific.

1.5. Conclusion

The College's journey through Re-engagement has shaped its thinking about central aspects of its identity, including its teaching and learning, its programmes, and its student engagement. It has had a positive impact on programme review and development, encouraging us to think more deeply, critically and creatively about the programmes we offer. This is particularly evident within the College in the review of its Level 8 programme which will be presented for revalidation in the next reporting period. We hope to have evidence from this panel in our next annual review to identify the effectiveness of our approach to reviews and the impact of reengagement on this central area of operation.

1.2 Update on Planned QA Objectives identified in Previous AQR

This is IICP College's first AQR. The planned QA objectives of the College for this reporting year were established in two processes: (i) IICP College's Re-engagement and (ii) IICP College's Application for Approval of QA of Blended Learning. In both processes the panels' conditions and advice set out planned QA objectives, which were recorded, along with implementation strategies, in the College's Implementation Plans. These implementation plans are contained in the combined QA Approval Report in QQI Reviews library (<https://www.qqi.ie/sites/docs/ProviderDocumentsLibrary/PL03052/PRID-3052-ApprovalReport-20200206.pdf>). The objectives, together with an update on their status, are set out for the Re-engagement panel in section 1, and the approval of Blended Learning QA procedures in section 2.

1. Re-engagement.

While formal confirmation of QQI's approval of quality assurance arrangements at re-engagement was issued in February 2020, the College commenced addressing the panel advice and the QA objectives following the panel visit in October 2019. This section provides a progress update on College developments to address the panel's advice and the College's objectives. The QQI Re-Engagement Panel made 5 'Mandatory Changes' and 8 pieces of 'Specific Advice'.

This section presents, first, the objectives and their status, summarised in Table 2, and second, the actions the College has taken to address these objectives.

1.1. Objectives and their status arising from re-engagement.

Table 2: Summary of re-engagement objectives and status

No	Planned objectives (Previous AQR) Note: Include reference to the relevant section of the preceding AQR, where applicable	Update on Status Provide brief update on status, whether completed or in progress. If an action was planned in the previous AQR, but not completed, provide reasons/short reflections for the delay/non-completion.
MANDATORY CHANGES		

1	<p><u>Mandatory Change 1: Inconsistencies and Reporting Relationships</u></p> <p>The current QAM needs to be amended to address inconsistencies and clearly distinguish between reporting relationships (which entail accountability) and advisory relationships (which entail provision of information only). Greater precision is needed in the language used in the QAM to facilitate clarity for all stakeholders (6.1.1, Panel Report, 2019*)</p>	<p>Completed during the reporting period.</p>
2	<p><u>Mandatory Change 2: Appointment of the Chair of the AC</u></p> <p>It is within the remit of the Board of Directors to establish the Terms of Reference for, and appoint the chair of, the Academic Council. The current Terms of Reference should be amended to reflect this, and future chairs should be appointed by the Board of Directors.</p> <p>There must be no overlap of membership between the Board of Directors and the Academic Council to ensure academic autonomy of the latter (6.1.2, Panel Report, 2019*).</p>	<p>Not completed during the reporting period.</p> <p>The policies were revised accordingly and accepted by the PAEC in February 2020.</p> <p>Subsequent to the panel visit, IICP College progressed its intention to appoint an independent Chair of the Academic Council. The matter was considered at a meeting of the Board of Directors on 9th November 2019, and a resolution made.</p> <p>The College planned to bring these policies into force following the spring break. However, this timeline was disrupted by the restrictions imposed as a result of</p>

		COVID-19. . In deciding on a revised timeline, the College continues to monitor the ongoing COVID-19 situation.
3	<p><u>Mandatory Change 3: Academic Council Subcommittees</u></p> <p>The Terms of Reference for the subcommittees of the Academic Council must be expanded to more clearly outline their role in decision-making, accountabilities and responsibilities and to explicitly refer to the policies and procedures relevant to their function (6.1.3, Panel Report, 2019*).</p>	Completed during the reporting period.
4	<p><u>Mandatory Change 4: Review the QAM for Inconsistencies</u></p> <p>Clearly delineate tasks, roles and responsibilities of named decision-makers. Cross reference between interrelated or intersecting policies and procedures. Edit for accuracy of title and consistent use of terminology (6.1.4, Panel Report, 2019*).</p>	Completed during the reporting period.
5	<p><u>Mandatory Change 5: RPL</u></p> <p>Review policies and procedures related to RPL to ensure their consistency with QQL's requirements (6.1.5, Panel Report, 2019*).</p>	Completed during the reporting period.
SPECIFIC ADVICE		
1	<p><u>Specific Advice 1:</u></p> <p><u>External chair to the Academic Council</u></p> <p>The panel encourages IICP to consider appointing an appropriately qualified external chair to the Academic Council (6.2.1, Panel Report, 2019*).</p>	<p>Not completed during the reporting period.</p> <p>The Terms of Reference of the Board of Directors and the Terms of Reference of the Academic Council were revised accordingly</p>

		<p>and approved by PAEC in February 2020.</p> <p>Subsequent to the panel visit, IICP College progressed its intention to appoint an independent Chair of the Academic Council. The matter was considered at a meeting of the Board of Directors on 9th November 2019, and a resolution made.</p> <p>The College planned to bring these policies into force following the spring break. However, this timeline was disrupted by the restrictions imposed as a result of COVID-19. In deciding on a revised timeline, the College continues to monitor the ongoing COVID-19 situation.</p>
2	<p><u>Specific Advice 2: Terms of Reference for AC</u></p> <p>The emphasis on decision-making by consensus in the Terms of Reference for the Academic Council should be amended to more clearly reflect that this is an aspiration, not a requirement (6.2.2, Panel Report, 2019*).</p>	<p>Completed during the reporting period.</p>
3	<p><u>Specific Advice 3: Right to Appeal</u></p> <p>Specify within the QAM that learners have the right to appeal decisions to a higher authority within the college, and that where an appeal is made that the original decision maker is not</p>	<p>Completed during the reporting period.</p>

	involved in adjudication of the appeal (6.2.3, Panel Report, 2019*).	
4	<p><u>Specific Advice 4: Case-by-Case Decisions</u></p> <p>Where evaluations are made or decisions taken on a case-by-case basis (for example in relation to RPEL applications or in determining fitness to practice) a consistency of approach needs to be more transparently articulated in the QAM.</p> <p>Examples of how to do this might include stating any objective criteria that are used as part of the decision-making process in the QAM, or establishing committees tasked with evaluating routine processes such as RPL applications. This should include auditing and tracking of cases, including outcomes (6.2.4, Panel Report, 2019).</p>	Completed during the reporting period.
5	<p>While not specific advice, the following recommendation was contained in the body of the report.</p> <p>“This discussion encompassed student withdrawal or deferral in cases including non-payment of fees ... While it was again evident in discussion that IICP’s operations reflect good practice, the panel again held concerns that full transparency and accountability of these processes was not always present in the College’s documentation.”</p>	Not completed during the reporting period.

*The Re-engagement Panel Report is available at

<https://www.qqi.ie/sites/docs/ProviderDocumentsLibrary/PL03052/PRID-3052-ApprovalReport-20200206.pdf>

The Panel’s contribution was welcomed by the College, in particular as it focused our thinking on how principles such as transparency and fairness play out across the QA framework as well as in individual policies. As can be seen from the description below, implementing the Panel’s

contributions had a significant impact on the QAM, producing a more learner-centred and equitable framework.

The approval of QA procedures following re-engagement occurred one month before COVID-19 restrictions came into force in March, and indeed the College began to prepare for restrictions some two weeks prior to this. Therefore implementation of these changes was scheduled to take place during the COVID-19 restrictions. The College's Academic Council, considering in particular the requirement for information provision to the College Community prior to implementing policy change, decided that implementation of these changes should not occur in the final term of an academic year that was already disrupted and stressful for most students. In addition, it was recognised that the inclusion of additional external expertise from the academic and professional community would be difficult to arrange while focus was on continued service provision during a pandemic. Therefore it was decided that while changes to policies should be made, their implementation should not occur until the following academic year. Consequently policy change occurred during the reporting period, but policy implementation did not occur until the subsequent reporting period.

1.2. Actions Taken by the College in response to Reengagement objectives.

This section sets out how the College addressed its Reengagement objectives.

1. Mandatory Change 1: Inconsistencies and Reporting Relationships

The College addressed this in two ways.

First, a new section clearly distinguish between reporting relationships and advisory relationships was included in the QAM in Policy 2.2 IICP College's Quality and Governance Framework; (ii)

Governance

Second, the clarity in this distinction was brought through into all policies, in particular to address specifically the directionality and intent of relationships. This provided greater precision in articulating the distinction between reporting and advisory relationships throughout the QAM.

2. Mandatory Change 2: Appointment of the Chair of the AC

The TOR of the Board of Directors was revised in order to place within its remit appointing the Chair of the Academic Council and establishing its terms of reference. The TOR of Academic Council was changed to identify that the Approval Body is the Board of Directors, who also appoint the Chair. In addition, taking into account the specific advice on the Panel, Policy 2.7 Terms of Reference of Academic Council was revised to state that the Chair is an independent external person with higher education expertise, and is appointed by the Board of Directors.

The following policies were revised in order to ensure that there is no overlap of membership between the Board of Directors and the Academic Council. These policies are available online at <https://www.iicp.ie/qam/>

- i. Policy 2.2 2.2 IICP College's Quality and Governance Framework; (ii) Governance*
- ii. Policy 2.7 Terms of Reference of Academic Council.*
- iii. Policy 2.5 Terms of Reference of Board of Directors,*
- iv. Policy 2.7 Terms of Reference of Academic Council,*

These changes were accepted by QQI PAEC in February 2020. As stated above, the College planned to bring these policies into force following the spring break. However, this timeline was disrupted by the restrictions imposed as a result of COVID-19. In deciding on a revised timeline, the College continues to monitor the ongoing COVID-19 situation.

3. Mandatory Change 3: Academic Council Subcommittees

The expansion of Terms of Reference for the subcommittees of the AC was carried out in *Policy 2.10 Terms of Reference of Academic Council Boards, Subcommittees and Panels*. In this policy the subcommittees were mapped to their corresponding policies and procedures, and each panel and committee's role in decision making, accountability and responsibility was clarified.

4. Mandatory Change 4: Review the QAM for Inconsistencies

Each policy in the QAM was edited for accuracy of title and consistent use of terminology. At the start of every policy, a new section was included in the heading table, to explicitly state the additional policies that any given policy intersects with or is related to.

5. Mandatory Change 5: RPL

A full review of *Policy 1.4 Recognition of Prior Learning Policy* was carried out, and modifications made, in order to ensure its consistency with QQI's requirements. In addition, *Policy 9.4 IICP College Monitoring and Evaluation Policy* was amended to include a requirement that tracking and monitoring data on RPL processes and outcomes was submitted to Programme Boards as part of the College's monitoring processes.

1. Specific Advice 1: External chair to the Academic Council

Policy 2.7 Terms of Reference of Academic Council was revised to state that the Chair is an independent external person with higher education expertise, and is appointed by the Board of Directors.

As stated above, the College planned to bring these policies into force following the spring break. However, this timeline was disrupted by the restrictions imposed as a result of COVID-19. In deciding on a revised timeline, the College continues to monitor the ongoing COVID-19 situation.

2. Specific Advice 2: Terms of Reference for AC

Policy 2.7 Terms of Reference of Academic Council was amended to ensure that the emphasis on decision-making by consensus is an aspirational one, and when consensus is not possible, a decision will be made by majority vote.

3. Specific Advice 3: Right to Appeal

The following policies, available online at <https://www.iicp.ie/qam/>, were amended to ensure a right to appeal and an explicit statement that no original decision maker will be involved in the adjudication of an appeal.

1. *Policy 1.3. Access, Transfer and Progression Strategy and Policy.*
2. *Policy 2.10 Terms of Reference of Academic Council Boards, Subcommittees and Panels.*
3. *Policy 2.11 Procedures for Hearings and Appeals.*
4. *Policy 3.4 Academic Impropriety Policy and Procedures.*
5. *Policy 5.2 Assessment Regulations.*
6. *Policy 5.7 Examination Results: Review, Recheck & Appeal.*
7. *Policy 7.6 Readiness to Practise.*

8. *Policy 7.7 Continuing with Clinical Placement Policy.*
9. *Policy 1.4 Recognition of Prior Learning Policy.*

Specific Advice 4: Case-by-Case Decisions

The following policies available online at <https://www.iicp.ie/qam/>, were revised in order to establish committees tasked with evaluating routine processes:

1. *Policy 1.4 Recognition of Prior Learning Policy.*
2. *Policy 7.6 Readiness to Practise*
3. *Policy 7.7 Continuing with Clinical Placement Policy*

The following policies were revised in order to state objective criteria that are used:

1. *Policy 1.4 Recognition of Prior Learning Policy.*
2. *Policy 1.3. Access, Transfer and Progression Strategy and Policy*

In addition Policy 9.4 was amended to ensure that tracking and monitoring data on RPL processes and outcomes is provided to programme boards.

Further advice from the Panel

While not specific advice, the following recommendation was contained in the body of the panel report:

“This discussion encompassed student withdrawal or deferral in cases including non-payment of fees ... While it was again evident in discussion that IICP’s operations reflect good practice, the panel again held concerns that full transparency and accountability of these processes was not always present in the College’s documentation.” In response, the College specified the objective criteria that are used when deciding on refund or deferral of fees in order to ensure transparency and a consistency of approach.

The College was strongly influenced by the emphasis of the panel on the necessity for transparency and accountability in all decisions, while also recognising the importance of listening and responding to individual student’s circumstances. The difficulties in balancing these sometimes competing principles became evident over the semester, as COVID-19 resulted in significant disruption to some student’s lives. Consequently the College monitored its own decision making over the remainder of the academic year in order to feed into a review of the operation of this policy. The results of this review will be available in the subsequent reporting period.

2. Application for Approval of QA Procedures for Blended Learning

This section presents the objectives and their status arising from the College's Application for Approval of QA Procedures for Blended Learning, summarised in Table 3, and the actions the College has taken to address these objectives.

While formal confirmation of QCI's approval of quality assurance arrangements for Blended Learning was issued in September 2020, outside of this reporting period, the College commenced addressing the panel advice and the QA objectives following the panel visit in August 2020. This section provides a progress update on College developments to address both the panel's advice and the College's objectives during the reporting period. The QA of BL made one condition of approval and 4 pieces of specific advice.

Table 3: Summary of Assessment of QA Procedures for Blended Learning objectives and status

No.	Planned objectives (Previous AQR) Note: Include reference to the relevant section of the preceding AQR, where applicable	Update on Status Provide brief update on status, whether completed or in progress. If an action was planned in the previous AQR, but not completed, provide reasons/short reflections for the delay/non-completion.
1	Condition of Approval: Develop and document online standards for learning materials and resources, and the process for ensuring these are subject to informed peer review*.	Completed during the reporting period
2	Specific Advice 1: IICP are encouraged to look for opportunities for the integration of Blended Learning suite of QA policies and procedures to the overall organisational QA*.	This specific advice from the panel will guide the development of the College's QA over the next reporting period.

3	<p>Specific Advice 2: Document the rationale and processes in place to safeguard academic integrity, specifically, how this is ensured in the absence of technical applications for plagiarism detection*.</p>	Completed during the reporting period
4	<p>Specific Advice 3: Rename the IT department to more appropriately reflect its function within the organisation, for example, as the Academic Technology Team*.</p>	Completed during the reporting period
5	<p>Specific Advice 4: Reconsider the language used within the Blended Learning Strategy, given that accessibility has a specific connotation in the online learning environment.</p>	Completed during the reporting period

*The Panel Report is available at

<https://www.qqi.ie/sites/docs/ProviderDocumentsLibrary/PL03052/PRID-3052-ApprovalReport-20200206.pdf>

2.1.Actions taken by the College in response to Objectives identified in Application for Approval of QA for Blended Learning.

Condition of Approval: Develop and document online standards for learning materials and resources, and the process for ensuring these are subject to informed peer review.

The College developed, documented and included within its QA procedures online standards for learning materials and resources in Section policy 11.2. including a checklist and guidelines pertaining to accessibility. The College has revised its QA procedures to ensure that resources, materials and delivery mechanisms are subject to informed peer review. This will be supported by Accessibility Guidance for programme lecturers, tutors and designers, which will be produced and rolled out in the forthcoming reporting period.

Specific Advice 1: IICP are encouraged to look for opportunities for the integration of Blended Learning suite of QA policies and procedures to the overall organisational QA.

IICP College welcomed this advice, which will guide the development of the College's QA over the next reporting period. The College noted that the application for approval of QA procedures occurred subsequent to re-engagement, and this required separate policies. However, this integration suggested by the panel will foster the College's strategic aim of making use of technological advances to contribute to the development of flexible, high quality programmes in counselling and psychotherapy.

Specific Advice 2: Document the rationale and processes in place to safeguard academic integrity, specifically, how this is ensured in the absence of technical applications for plagiarism detection.

During the reporting period the College documented its rationale and processes in place to safeguard academic integrity in the absence of technical applications for plagiarism detection .It also undertook research to consider the range of plagiarism detection applications available, documented GDPR considerations in relation to each application, and explored how they might fit with the College's context. The College intends to bring its rationale and findings to the Academic Council for consideration over the next academic year.

Specific Advice 3: Rename the IT department to more appropriately reflect its function within the organisation, for example, as the Academic Technology Team.

The IT department is now renamed "Academic Technology Department."

Specific Advice 4: Reconsider the language used within the Blended Learning Strategy, given that accessibility has a specific connotation in the online learning environment.

The College amended its Blended Learning Strategy to describe its goal to provide flexible rather than accessible learning opportunities.

1.3 Governance and Management

1.3.1 QA Governance Meetings Schedule

Body	Meeting dates
Board of Directors	9 th November 2019 8 th May 2020
Academic Council	21st September 2019 30th January 2020 21st March 2020 21st April 2020 28 th July 2020
Programme Boards	21 September 2019 27 November 2019 30 January 2020 21 April 2020 6 October 2020
Senior Management Team	11 September 2019 12 December 2019 8 January 2020 13 February 2020 6 March 2020 26 March 2020 7 April 2020 29 April 2020 10 June 2020 7 July 2020 29 July 2020 27 August 2020
Examination Boards	11 September 2019 30 January 2020 3 July 2020

1.3.2 QA Leadership and Management Structural Developments

This role was created to support academic staff in the development of blended learning programmes and the implementation of blended and online learning. This role will also streamline academic technology support structures across the College.

Assistant Dean of Academic Affairs

This role was created to work between the Registry Department and the academic department. This role provides additional oversight and coordination of all College programmes and activities, and supports student recruitment, education and retention in the College.

Independent Chair of the Academic Council.

This position was established by the Board of Directors during the reporting period. The appointment of an independent chair has been delayed by the restrictions and additional workload imposed as a result of COVID-19. The intention is to fill this post following the easing of restrictions.

1.4 Internal Monitoring and Review

1. 1.4.1 Overview of Periodic Reviews

Table 4: Overview of Periodic Reviews

Unit of review for which report has been published during reporting period	Date of completion/reason for conducting review (if not planned) or non-completion (if planned but not conducted)	Links to relevant publications
Evaluation of Programme Delivery during COVID-19 transition to Online Learning	Sent to QQI on 22 nd June 2020	
Programme Review and Revalidation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Master of Arts in Pluralistic Counselling and Psychotherapy • Postgraduate Diploma in Arts in Pluralistic Counselling and Psychotherapy • Certificate in Cognitive Behavioural Therapy 	12 th Sep 2019 12 th Sep 2019 12 th Sep 2019	https://www.qqi.ie/sites/docs/PanelReportsLibrary/ProgID-41153_Panel_Reports_PG24148.pdf https://www.qqi.ie/sites/docs/PanelReportsLibrary/ProgID-41154_Panel_Reports_PG24149.pdf https://qsearch.qqi.ie/WebPart/ValidationReportDetails?programmeCode=PG24150

<p>5 yearly Programme Review:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • BA (Hons) in Integrative Counselling & Psychotherapy • BA in Integrative Counselling & Psychotherapy • Higher Certificate in Counselling & Psychotherapeutic Studies • Certificate in Counselling & Psychotherapeutic Studies 	<p>Review of programmes will be sent to Revalidation Panel in December 2020</p>	<p>To be published in next reporting period</p>
<p>Annual Monitoring Report for the following programmes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Integrative Counselling and Psychotherapy • Bachelor of Arts in Integrative Counselling and Psychotherapy • Certificate in Counselling and 	<p>November 2019</p>	<p>Published Internally</p>

<p>Psychotherapeutic Studies</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Higher Certificate in Arts in Counselling and Psychotherapeutic Studies• Master of Arts in Integrative Child and Adolescent Psychotherapy• Master of Arts in Pluralistic Counselling and Psychotherapy• Postgraduate Diploma in Arts in Integrative Child and Adolescent Psychotherapy• Postgraduate Diploma in Arts in Pluralistic Counselling and Psychotherapy		
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1.4.2 Expert Review Teams/Panels² involved in IQA**(i) Expert Review Team/Panel Size and Related Processes**

Guide

Details in respect of review/evaluation processes that concluded during the reporting period should be set out below.

Please use whole numbers rather than percentages.

	Total	Academic Schools/ Department	Professional Services/Support Unit	Approval/Review of Linked Provider	Programme Approval	Programme Review	Other
Number of review/ evaluation processes	5					3	2
of those:							
On-site processes	4					3	1
Desk reviews							
Virtual processes	1						1
Average panel size for each process type*	5					6	4

* excluding secretary if not a full panel member

² QQI acknowledges that the terminology used to describe the groups of individuals that conduct peer review/evaluation varies from institution to institution.

(ii) Composition of Expert Review Teams/Panels involved in IQA

Type of Expert/ Role on Panel	Total	Gender			Internal	National	International			Institution Type	
		Male	Female	Other, or unspecified			UK, incl . NI	Other European	Outside of Europe	Similar	Different
Chair	5	4	1			5				5	0
Secretary	5	3	2			5				3	2
Academic/Discipline Specific	7	1	6			7				7	0
Student Representative	4	4	0			4				4	0
QA	2	0	2			2				1	1
Teaching & Learning											
External Industry /Third Mission	3	0	3			3				0	3

2.0 IQA System – Enhancement and Impacts

IICP College went through two significant processes during the reporting period: Re-engagement and Application for approval of its Quality Assurance of Blended Learning [QA BL]. The conditions and advice of both panels, and the College's responses, are set out in full in section 3.1. This section presents reflections and observations on the impact of these processes on the development of the QAM, together with some descriptions of enhancement measures that were evaluated over the review period.

1. Governance and Management of Quality

Prior to the re-engagement site visit, the College had carried out a review of its governance structures against QQI's Quality Assurance Guidelines, and had restructured accordingly. The results were published in the College's QA manual [QAM], which is published on its website at <https://www.iicp.ie/qam/>. The QAM set out in some detail the principles of governance (Policy 2.2, section 1.2: <https://www.iicp.ie/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/2.2-IICP-Colleges-Quality-and-Governance-Framework-ii-Governance-1.pdf>) as they apply to IICP College, and the actual structure in place in the College. This provided a documented account of the College's rationale for its governance structure, as well as a framework for those operating within the different roles. In particular it clarified, both internally and externally the range and limits of decision-making responsibility for College Boards.

Building on prior structures, the QAM set out the governance of the College under a Board of Directors, an Academic Council, and a College President. The Academic Council [AC] is established as the academic authority of the College with membership drawn its membership principally from the academic staff, students and academic support services staff. Acting under delegated authority from the Board, it has ultimate authority and responsibility in relation to academic governance and QA, including the development, approval, monitoring and review of academic policies, procedures and other elements of the QAM. The Terms of Reference of the Academic Council is made available in the College's QAM (at <https://www.iicp.ie/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/2.7-Terms-of-Reference-of-Academic-Council-1-1.pdf>). The Board of Director's responsibility

for Corporate Governance, and in particular for the operation of IICP College in accordance with Company Law and related legislation and regulation, is clearly stated, and the Terms of Reference of the Board made available in the College's published QAM (at <https://www.iicp.ie/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/2.5-Terms-of-Reference-of-Board-of-Directors-1.pdf>). The President, as set out in Policy 2.2 (IICP College's Quality and Governance Framework; (ii) Governance available at <https://www.iicp.ie/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/2.2-IICP-Colleges-Quality-and-Governance-Framework-ii-Governance-1.pdf>), is identified as the designated officer of the College, and a member of the Board of Directors. The President's role in leadership and communication is highlighted in this policy.

Other key structures include:

- The Advisory Board, which is composed of external Higher Education and Professional experts as well as key internal staff. Its role is to advise and guide the College on:
 - The review, development and implementation of the Strategic Plan;
 - The College's approach to internal control and risk management;
 - The College's approach to quality assurance and enhancement and reviewing the effectiveness of such policies and procedures;
 - The effectiveness of the College in achieving its objectives.

The Terms of Reference of this Board are set out in Policy 2.6 (<https://www.iicp.ie/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/2.6-Terms-of-Reference-of-Advisory-Board-1.pdf>)

- The Senior Management Team, which reports to the Board of Directors. It has responsibility for advising the Board on strategy, implementing strategy, and monitoring the College's performance. Its terms of reference are set out in policy 2.8 (<https://www.iicp.ie/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/2.8-Terms-of-Reference-of-Senior-Management-Team-1.pdf>)
- Programme Boards, which are established by the Academic Council [AC] for each Programme of study at IICP College leading to an award.

- Academic Council Boards, Subcommittees and Panels, which include:
 - Academic (Conduct in Assessment) Disciplinary Committee;
 - Academic (Conduct in Assessment) Disciplinary Appeals Committee;
 - Academic (Results in Assessment) Appeals Panel;
 - Disciplinary Committee;
 - Disciplinary Appeals Committee;
 - Complaints Appeal Panel;
 - Clinical Placement Appeals Panel;
 - Continuing with Clinical Placement Panel and Appeals Panel, to be established following implementation of the Continuing with Clinical Placement Policy.

The Terms of Reference of the bodies are set out in policy 2.10 (<https://www.iicp.ie/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/2.10-Terms-of-Reference-of-Academic-Council-Boards-Subcommittees-and-Panels-1-1.pdf>)

This structure had been reviewed as part of the development of the QAM, and feedback obtained from all levels of the College's operations. It was considered by the Re-engagement panel, who noted that the QAM required greater clarity in relation to reporting versus advisory relationships, and specificity in the accountability of named decision-makers in relation to roles and responsibilities. In particular the panel required revision of the QAM to address specifically how the directionality and intent of relationships was expressed. In addition, the panel noted that the Board of Directors should be clearly identified as the body establishing the Terms of Reference for, and appointment of the chair of, the Academic Council.

These changes were carried out to the QAM and the revisions included in the current version of the QAM. This is detailed in the College's response to the reengagement panel's report published at <https://www.qqi.ie/Downloads/IICP%20Education%20and%20Training%20Limited%20Re%20Engagement%20Report%20and%20Resposne.pdf>

The College moved to establish its Advisory Board and to carry out the appointment of an independent chair to its Academic Council in late February 2020, following approval of its QA by the PAEC panel. However, this process was overtaken by the restrictions on face to face activity resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic. In early March a subcommittee of the Academic Council was appointed to manage the academic governance of the College under these restrictions. Given the extra workload that arose for all HEI's, and the difficulties the restrictions presented to the staff of IICP College, it was decided that changes to governance structures that required the inclusion of external members of Boards would be postponed until the restrictions ended. In August, when restrictions were eased, the College again moved to the appointment of external members to its Advisory Board and as Chair of the Academic Council. However, further restrictions imposed in September again required postponement. In deciding on a revised timeline, the College continues to monitor the ongoing COVID-19 situation.

2. Programmes of Education and Training, their Monitoring and Review

The QAM requires that the development of new programmes (Policy 9.3 IICP College New Programmes Policy, available at <https://www.iicp.ie/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/9.3-IICP-College-New-Programmes-Policy-1.pdf>) and the review of validated programmes (Policy 9.5 IICP College Programme Review and Revalidation, available at <https://www.iicp.ie/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/9.5-IICP-College-Programme-Review-and-Revalidation-1.pdf>) are conducted systematically, are inclusive of multiple stakeholders, utilise data effectively and efficiently, and allow time for reflection, analysis and change. An important source of data for programme review is the annual programme monitoring report, the APQR, which is produced by each Programme Board and contains the results of internal monitoring (see Policy 9.4 IICP College Monitoring and Evaluation Policy, available at <https://www.iicp.ie/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/9.4-IICP-College-Monitoring-and-Evaluation-Policy-1.pdf>).

The APQR contains data categories and methods of evaluation drawn from QQI's

Programme Review and Validation Procedures and is presented to the AC for approval.

The College identified during its preparation for reengagement that an area needing attention is how programme indicators are benchmarked against similar programmes, and programme outcomes are compared with others in the field. One example of this is in benchmarking grading practices against similar institutions. A QQI insights document, *Report on QQI Award Classification Distributions for QQI Higher Education and Training Awards (2012-2017)* provided important information on grading practices across the HE sector. The College had begun internal dialogues regarding marking practices in its Programme Board meetings, but this document provided benchmarking data for these reflections. Subsequently the College included in the monitoring of modules a place for teachers to reflect on individual marking practices compared with other HEI's marking practices contained in this report (Policy 8.4, section 6.1). Subsequent analysis of the trend in grade classifications showed that the College's marking practices were moving toward the norm. This is illustrated below in relation to programme stages in the BA (Hons) and its component programmes.

Figure 2: Grade Classification over 4 year period, Stage 1:

	Distinction / 1.1	Merit Grade 1/ 2.1	Merit Grade 2 /2.2	Pass
2016 Intake	34%	63%	3%	0%
2017 Intake	11%	70%	19%	0%
2018 Intake	10%	70%	15%	5%
2019 Intake	10%	69%	13%	3%
Average	16%	68%	13%	2%

Figure 3: Grade Classification over 3 year period, Stage 2:

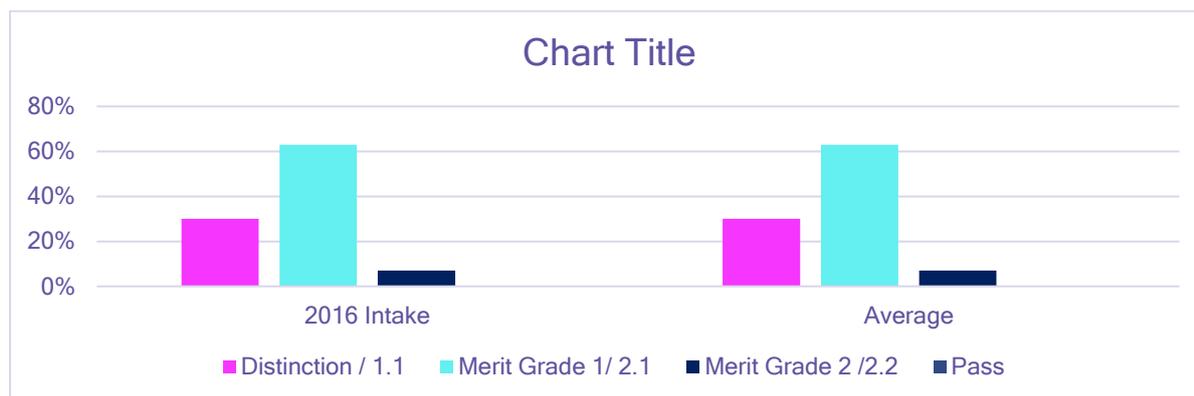
	Distinction / 1.1	Merit Grade 1/ 2.1	Merit Grade 2 /2.2	Pass
2016 Intake	29%	68%	3%	0%
2017 Intake	18%	78%	4%	4%
2018 Intake	5%	78%	12%	5%
Average	17%	75%	6%	3%

Figure 4: Grade Classification over 4 year period, Stage 3

	Distinction / 1.1	Merit Grade 1/ 2.1	Merit Grade 2 /2.2	Pass
2016 Intake	29%	71%	0%	0%
2017 Intake	19%	74%	7%	0%
Average	24%	73%	4%	0%

	Distinction / 1.1	Merit Grade 1/ 2.1	Merit Grade 2 /2.2	Pass
2016 Intake	30%	63%	7%	0%
Average	30%	63%	7%	0%

Figure 5: Grade Classification over 2 year period, stage 4



It appears that the extensive consultation and training that faculty have engaged in regarding assessment practice has produced greater alignment between IICP and other colleges. This reinforces the need to continue our training and consultations practices with staff regarding assessment and marking practice.

Another area of improvement identified by the College in its implementation plan was the need to monitor Recognition of Prior Learning [RPL] for consistency. Policy 9.4 IICP College Monitoring and Evaluation Policy (available at <https://www.iicp.ie/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/9.4-IICP-College-Monitoring-and-Evaluation-Policy-1.pdf>) was amended to ensure that a specified role is responsible for providing tracking and monitoring data on RPL processes and outcomes to Programme Boards, and to clarify the Programme Board's responsibility for monitoring learner performance and progression relating to recognition of prior learning applications and trends and anomalies in results. Data from this process will be available in future reporting periods.

3. Staff Recruitment, Management and Development

IICP College staff recruitment, management and development, set out in Part 8 of its QAM (<https://www.iicp.ie/gam/>), attends comprehensively and systematically to the quality of staff and for providing them with a supportive environment. Requirements for staff are identified and addressed based on programme needs; induction and probation ensure that those appointed are competent both in the area of their teaching and in the practice of teaching; and communication with and between staff, both formal

and informal, ensures that the training community act in accordance with IICP College policies, as well as providing opportunities for innovation and enhancement. New staff members at IICP are provided with a comprehensive induction to the college ethos, the Teaching, Learning and Assessment strategy and IICP QA system. All new staff members are mentored, including those with experience, and a programme of peer observation of the teaching of skills modules at IICP assists in the consistency of approach. IICP staff can access a lecturer hub on the provider's Moodle, which contains information on teaching, learning & assessment as well as Moodle technical support.

This network of supports and training for staff proved particularly useful during the COVID-19 restrictions, when they were adapted to address the immediate needs identified by staff, in particular information and assistance on academic technology and troubleshooting technological difficulties. This is discussed further in the second case study below.

One particular contribution to the College's achievements in this area is the professional community to which the College belongs. The College's education and training programmes are in the main in counselling and psychotherapy. This is a professionally regulated area of practice, and ongoing membership of a professional body requires that teachers demonstrate professional competencies, and act to maintain the currency and relevance of their own knowledge and skills. The College therefore acts to foster the self-evaluation and professional development to which its teachers are already committed and which they have already demonstrate to professional body standards.

In considering these policies, the reengagement panel found that QQI's Core Statutory Quality Assurance Guidelines in relation to this dimension of QA had been addressed by IICP.

4. Teaching, Learning and Assessment

As part of preparation for reengagement the College had developed a range of mechanisms to support systematically the administration, delivery, and continuous development of its programmes, and to provide a suitable and quality assured teaching and learning environment within the scope of its provision. Its Teaching and Learning Strategy was developed in conjunction with stakeholders, and the reengagement panel found this to be a highly consultative and student centred process. They also found that the College used varied pedagogic strategies selected as appropriate to the learning outcomes of the programmes and modules taught.

During the COVID-19 restrictions, the flexibility of the College's approach to Teaching, Learning and Assessment to online environments was tested. The College gathered and reviewed learner and lecturer feedback on the experience of online teaching and learning during the pandemic, as is further described in Case Study 2. At its application for approval of its BL QA, presented a thematic analysis of this feedback, and associated insights into the particularities of technology enabled learning in the domains of counselling and psychotherapy. activation of contingency. In this review the College was careful to distinguish between procedures and pivot to fully online provision IICP experienced during the pandemic is distinct and the planned approach to blended learning and associated procedures contained in the BL QA. However, the effectiveness of the transition, as identified by stakeholders, was likely to be due at least in part to the previous years spent developing capacity and capability in blended learning provision and the use of educational technology.

5. Supports and resources for learners

Learners at IICP College are offered a comprehensive induction, commencing with an email welcome and a welcome pack containing information and assessment details relating to each module. The 'by your side' learner support programme runs at IICP alongside other modules, and lecturers are aware of this support for their learners. Support is provided to learners in areas including understanding rubrics and comprehending academic language. Learner support is very closely linked to progression milestones to facilitate learner success, and may focus on skills, writing

or performance competencies as required. Additional resources for self-directed learning are available and learners are sign-posted to these within modules. The intended outcome of the learner support programme is to ensure that there is a consistent and continuing process of learner support

The reengagement panel found that QQI's Core Statutory Quality Assurance Guidelines in relation to this dimension of QA had been comprehensively addressed. It noted in particular that former students at IICP are sometimes engaged to assist in delivering aspects of the learner support programme, which has been well-received by current learners.

Student support effectiveness, flexibility and appropriateness to an online environment were reviewed during the COVID-19 restrictions. As described in Case Study 2, these were overwhelmingly found to be effective in both a critical event and an online environment.

6. Information and Data Management

IICP College developed its Information and Data Management suite of policies, contained in part 9 of the QAM, as part of its QA development for reengagement. Policy 9.2 IICP College Information Systems Policy, available at <https://www.iicp.ie/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/9.2-IICP-College-Information-Systems-Policy-1.pdf>, sets out its procedures for maintaining records of students' registration, progress and completion. The College's response to its data protection obligations as part of its good practice in corporate governance is provided in Part 10 of the QAM. These procedures clearly set out the bases upon which data will be collected and for what purpose. The IT Manager and Registrar have responsibility for securely storing and providing access to online documents. A Data Protection Contact also features throughout the procedures and has defined responsibilities in this area.

The College presented to the reengagement panel their plans for phasing in of a new purpose build student information system. This system, which has been tested during this reporting period, is aimed at enhancing the efficiency of data management systems, in particular it is intended to provide a single system for data, information and relationship management. Such a system will be of considerable value in assisting the College to attend to its monitoring and auditing responsibilities effectively and efficiently.

This transition to the new system includes a risk mitigation strategy, whereby old systems are maintained alongside the implementation for an extended period. .

7. Public Information

IICP College QAM, particularly policy 9.2 IICP College Information Systems Policy (<https://www.iicp.ie/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/9.2-IICP-College-Information-Systems-Policy-1.pdf>) provides details of the standards it applies to its public information, how it quality assures its information, and the manner in which it provides comprehensive information for learners regarding its programmes in a range of formats i.e., web, learner handbook and programme information booklets. It also undertakes to publish quality assurance evaluation reports and revalidation reports as they become available. Learner information is also provided within a learner handbook, and in programme specific welcome packs. Details of PEL arrangements are outlined on the website. The reengagement panel found that the College provided comprehensive programme information, outlining entry routes and information regarding awards the programmes lead to. The panel reported that is was satisfied that QQI's Core Statutory Quality Assurance Guidelines in relation to this dimension of QA had been addressed by IICP.

Public Information Activities over the reporting period:

1. *Fireside Chats.* As an education provider with a mental health focus, the College was cognisant of the World Health Organization's identification of the psychological impact of the Covid-19 pandemic, in particular elevated levels of anxiety and stress, as well as the disruption of usual rituals used for managing experiences such as grief.

Drawing on the generosity and good will of the faculty team, the College devised a series of open access online mental health seminars for students and for the public. The themes of the seminars were drawn from public discourses about the consequences of the pandemic, as well as from dialogue within the College. In total, 18 hours of open access support was offered online, and 264 people participated in the seminars. Details of these seminars are as follows:

1. **“Choosing Happiness through Behaviour and Connection”** with Pam Patchell, MA, BA (Hons) MIACP - 36 people participated in these inputs which took place over four consecutive weeks. *This workshop was designed to equip participants with the knowledge and coping skills to support them through the challenges arising from COVID-19. The idea being - there are many things we cannot control in this challenging time, so let us focus on what we can control.*
2. **“Keeping your relationship together in these tough times”** with Dermot O’Neill BA, BD, LPh - 27 people participated in these inputs which took place over four consecutive weeks. *This psychoeducational programme was designed to give participants tips and skills for navigating the relationship stresses they may be facing as we struggled with lockdown, home schooling and constant close quarters with our loved ones.*
3. **“Grief in a Time of Crisis”** with best-selling authors Christy Kenneally and Dr. Linda Finnegan - 48 people participated in these inputs, which were held over two dates. *During this period of self-isolation and quarantine, the effects of grief and how we mourn has been massively changed, with many added complications. We cannot support each other in the normal rituals of mourning. With that in mind this talk was created to offer support and comfort to our community.*
4. **“Fireside Chats”** with best-selling authors Christy Kenneally and Dr. Linda Finnegan - 59 people participated in these talks which were held on two separate occasions, with follow-up chats for each separate group two weeks after. *These talks were held in a relaxed atmosphere in an open and*

compassionate manner by means of chatting and sharing about coping with grief and loss during these challenging times, also within this exploring how we can harness the power of our resilience.

5. **Empathic Listening in a Time of Crisis - 94 registered in total over four separate one-hour talks** *“Those working on the front line are encountering greater levels of fear, trauma and grief. This one-hour live lecture was created to cover an introduction to Empathic Listening skills for anyone who feels it would be of benefit.”*

2. *Social Media Presence: Best Practice Guide.* During the second half of the reporting period, following its transition to online teaching and learning as a result of the COVID-19 restrictions, the College examined its use of social media in providing public information. Seeing Social Media is an evolving internet phenomenon that provides an electronic way of conducting person-to-person networking³, the College had developed its social media presence over the reporting period. IICP College has hosted social media pages on Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and Linked-In to build a community of interested persons across three key demographics: Professional groups within the helping professions, IICP students and alumni, and with groups interested on both Counselling and Psychotherapy and Mental Health. In addition, the content of Social Media posts has been expanded to include:

- Inspirational quotes are used to promote positivity, fun, emotional support, and personal responsibility, across our social media platforms. Course promotions are also offered on each of our social media pages.
- Course promotions, which can include competitions, and free attendance at our Tasters.

³ Lacho, K. J. & Marinello, C. (2010). How small business owners can use social networking to promote their business. *The Entrepreneurial Executive*; Arden 15, pgs. 127-133.

The College tailors its posts to particular platforms, as some platforms have the potential for deeper engagement than others. Messaging is possible across our Social Media visibility; however, it is most popular on our Facebook page. Irrespective of the mode people use to connect with the College, feedback and queries are addressed in a timely manner. On Instagram the College tend to like the posts of others, and follow a diverse range of students, local pages of interest, and professional bodies such as IACP. Twitter and Linked-In are also spaces where the College follows and is followed by people from within our three primary groups. The College uses Twitter as a space to stay connected with HEQA and QQI, as well as IACP, the pluralistic and integrative community, relevant media or government reports, and interesting content related to mental health, such as links to peer-reviewed research, book publications, and short videos. While these are typically targeted to supporting our graduate and postgraduate students, they can also be of interest to the general public.

The College is aware that social media can be used to improve and enhance its public information provision. However, we are also aware that these platforms present many challenges. Therefore, drawing on scholarly literature in the area, the College developed best practice statement to guide its social media practices. This statement is as follows:

In developing its social media practice, IICP College takes account of the power of social media, in particular that “the effect of supplier social media usage on customer social media usage is moderated by brand reputation,”⁴. Additionally, the College draws on the psychology of ‘emotional contagion’, where it is possible for human beings to synchronize their own emotions with the emotions expressed by those around them, whether consciously or unconsciously⁵. Therefore, our approach to the use of Social Media platforms is guided by the following principles:

⁴ Rapp, A., Skinner Beitelspacher, L., Grewal D. & Hughes, D.E. (2013). Understanding social media effects across seller, retailer, and consumer interactions. *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science*, 41, pgs.547-566. DOI 10.1007/s11747-013-0326-9. P. 547.

⁵ Prochazkova, E. & Kretab, M.E. (2017). Connecting minds and sharing emotions through mimicry: A neurocognitive model of emotional contagion. *Neuroscience & Biobehavioral Reviews* 80, pgs. 99-114.

- Social media use is conducted in line with our core values of integrity, excellence, striving for achievement, and building the sense of being 'by the side' of our followers as they engage with College content and promotions.
- Being conscious of wanting to avoid 'flooding' or overwhelming our followers, we take care not to over-promote on these platforms. Instead, we schedule posts, and keep it simple⁶ (Clarke, 2021). On occasion, we may offer two posts, but never more than that.

The College is committed to tracking engagement with and followings of its social media platforms over the next reporting period, in order to evaluate its effectiveness.

⁶ Clarke, M. (2021). How Top Marketers Avoid Social Media Overwhelm (and Get More Done). Retrieved from: <https://www.postplanner.com/blog/how-top-marketers-avoid-social-media-overwhelm/>.

2.1 Initiatives within the Institution related to Academic Integrity

In preparation for re-engagement the College had developed two new policies specifically related to Academic Integrity: an Academic and Professional Integrity Policy and an Academic and Professional Impropriety Policy and Procedures. Following a useful discussion on these policies at the panel visit, the panel noted one item of specific advice to IICP, which pertained to addressing issues of academic integrity/impropriety separately to issues of professional misconduct within the QA. The College welcomed this advice, and in response, removed all references to Professional conduct and codes.

The outcome of these revisions was two policies, *Policy 3.3 Academic Integrity Policy* (<https://www.iicp.ie/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/3.3-Academic-Integrity-Policy-1.pdf>) and *Policy 3.4 Academic Impropriety Policy and Procedures* (<https://www.iicp.ie/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/3.4-Academic-Impropriety-Policy-and-Procedures-2.pdf>). The first described and emphasised good academic practice and fostering academic integrity, an approach complemented by the Learner Code of Conduct (Policy 6.2 Learner's Code of Conduct, <https://www.iicp.ie/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/6.2-Learners-Code-of-Conduct-1-1.pdf>). This was built on understanding of the role of lack of knowledge and awareness of good academic practices, rather than solely intentionality, in academic misconduct. This approach was supported by the introduction of a tailored Learner Support programme, "By-Your-Side' Student care and Development Programme". While learner supports had been available on an informal basis for many years, this structured programme provide integrated and programme-specific academic, personal and professional supports for all learners, including on academic writing, research, referencing and good academic practice.

Alongside fostering good practice, the College introduced its revised *Academic Impropriety policy and procedures*. This policy made clear that the College monitors and applies sanctions in response to violations of normative practices in scholarship.

Following the transition to online delivery following COVID-19 restrictions there was no change to assessment tasks, which meant that there was no specific risk of impact on academic integrity by assessment modifications. However enhanced emphasis was placed on good academic practice, fostering academic integrity and avoiding academic impropriety. Students were sent individual emails drawing attention to the College's policies, and to the importance of academic integrity. Additional support sessions were provided for students on referencing, academic integrity and academic writing through the online "By-Your-Side" programme.

3.0 QA Improvement and Enhancement Plans for Upcoming Reporting Period

3.1 QA and QE supporting the Achievement of Strategic Objectives

The forthcoming period, September 2020 to August 2021, will build on the quality assurance and enhancement activities of the current reporting period.

While all conditions of approval of Panels were completed during the reporting period, specific advice tended to have a more long-term focus. This advice contributes significantly to the enhancement of quality in the College, and is therefore included in the College's QA and QE activities for the upcoming reporting period. In addition, the College's Implementation Plan presented at re-engagement outlined some long-term objectives that contribute to the College's mission and strategic objectives. These are also included here. Finally, in an academic year impacted by COVID-19 restrictions, the College took the opportunity to review its practice (i) during significant unforeseen threats to its business continuity and (ii) in virtual settings. These reviews identified some quality enhancement opportunities for the College.

Given the long-term focus of some of these objectives it is not envisaged that they will all be completed during the next review period.

Table 5: QA and QE activities for the upcoming reporting period

No.	<p>Relevant objectives</p> <p>Note: Include reference to the relevant section of the preceding AQR, where applicable</p>	<p>Planned actions and indicators</p> <p>Note: Include details of unit responsible, and how planned action will address the relevant strategic priority and/or reengagement advice/CINNTE recommendation.</p> <p>If the institution is preparing for cyclical review, include how the planned actions will address the relevant review objective(s).</p>
<p>1</p> <p>2</p>	<p>College-wide consultation on the integration of the College's Blended Learning Strategy and Policies into to the core QA Document. Specific Advice in Panel Report; Assessment of QA Procedures for Blended Learning. Available at https://www.qqi.ie/sites/docs/ProviderDocumentsLibrary/PL03052/PRID-3052-ApprovalReport-20200206.pdf</p> <p>This will be followed by the development and publishing of a specific policy on quality enhancement.</p>	<p>This will be carried out both at institutional level and at Programme level.</p> <p>The stages are:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Application for re-validation of the BA as a BL programme. 2. Bringing forward of Re-validation Panel any recommendations and learning to programme boards. 3. Publish integrated document for College-wide consultation. 4. Approval by AC. 5. IICP College will develop a specific policy on quality enhancement.

3	Review student progression policies	This will be carried out by a committee established for this purpose, to include representation from academic, financial and senior management roles.
5	IICP College will revise APQRs to reflect changes in QQI's reporting requirements.	This will be carried out following submission of the College's first AQR in March 2021.

Re-engagement and QA Approval advice included long-term perspectives on quality enhancement. Therefore It is envisaged that some actions will be carried through to the subsequent review period in order to fully address the relevant reengagement advice. In addition, due to additional workloads for all HE institutions and counselling bodies during the COVID-19 restrictions it is envisaged that external appointments will not be made until these restrictions ease.

Table 6: QA and QE activities for the subsequent reporting period

1	The enhancement of the College's QA website to include learner friendly diagrams of the different policies, and how they interrelate	This will be carried out over the subsequent reporting period. It is envisaged that the changes to the website will be presented to the AC in the Academic Year 2022/2023.
2	Appointment of an external Chair of the AC	It is envisaged that this will be carried out by the Board of Directors following easing of COVID-19 restrictions.
3	Establish induction processes and procedures for the Advisory Board.	This will be carried out by the President's office. In deciding on a revised timeline, the College continues to monitor the ongoing COVID-19 situation.
4	Review the rationale and processes in place to safeguard academic integrity.	This will be carried out by the Academic Council over the Academic Year 2022/2023.

4	Implement fully the learner management system.	This is the responsibility of the Senior Management Team, with significant input from all staff. The College has in place a risk management procedure which requires steps taken to be dependent on the achievement of prior established goals. It is envisaged that this process will be completed in the Academic Year 2022/2023.
5	Follow through on action plan for implementation of any policy that has not been implemented. This relates in particular to the Continuing to Practise Policy.	<p>This action is awaiting further information from CORU. The then Minister for Health, Simon Harris TD, confirmed in 2019 the establishment of and appointment of members to the Counsellors and Psychotherapists Registration Board, to regulate the professions of Counsellors and Psychotherapists. As part of its statutory responsibility, the Registration Board establishes the Code of Professional Conduct and Ethics and standards of performance and an associated Fitness to Practise process.</p> <p>The College is awaiting further information from CORU before proceeding with implementing its Continuing to Practise Policy. It is envisaged that this will occur in the Academic year 2022/2023.</p>

3.2 Reviews planned for Upcoming Reporting Periods

Table 7. Reviews planned for Upcoming Reporting Periods

Unit to be reviewed	Date of planned review	Date of last review
<p>Periodic Review and Revalidation of the following programmes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • BA (Hons) in Integrative Counselling & Psychotherapy • BSc in Integrative Counselling & Psychotherapy • Higher Certificate in Science in Counselling & Psychotherapeutic Studies • Certificate in Counselling & Psychotherapeutic Studies 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agree Terms of Reference with QQI: September 2020 • Submission of documents to the panel: November 2020 • Site visit: January 2021 	<p>April 2016</p>
<p>As per our internal review cycle, the following programmes will undergo annual review:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Integrative Counselling and Psychotherapy • Bachelor of Arts in Integrative Counselling and Psychotherapy • Certificate in Counselling and Psychotherapeutic Studies • Higher Certificate in Arts in Counselling and Psychotherapeutic Studies • Master of Arts in Integrative Child and Adolescent Psychotherapy • Master of Arts in Pluralistic Counselling and Psychotherapy • Postgraduate Diploma in Arts in Integrative Child and Adolescent Psychotherapy • Postgraduate Diploma in Arts in Pluralistic Counselling and Psychotherapy 	<p>November 2020</p>	<p>November 2019</p>
<p>Service Delivery</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student Management System 	<p>Q3 2022</p>	

3.2.1 Reviews planned for Next Reporting Period

Table 8. Reviews planned for Next Reporting Period

Unit to be reviewed	Date of planned review	Date of last review
<p>As per our internal review cycle, the following programmes will undergo annual review:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Integrative Counselling and Psychotherapy • Bachelor of Arts in Integrative Counselling and Psychotherapy • Certificate in Counselling and Psychotherapeutic Studies • Higher Certificate in Arts in Counselling and Psychotherapeutic Studies • Master of Arts in Integrative Child and Adolescent Psychotherapy • Master of Arts in Pluralistic Counselling and Psychotherapy • Postgraduate Diploma in Arts in Integrative Child and Adolescent Psychotherapy • Postgraduate Diploma in Arts in Pluralistic Counselling and Psychotherapy 	November 2021	November 2020
<p>Student Supports IICP College's QA website</p>	Q3 2022	2019

3.2.2 Reviews planned beyond Next Reporting Period

Provide a link to the published review schedule for any reviews beyond the upcoming reporting period.

Table 9. Reviews planned beyond Next Reporting Period

<p>Periodic Review and Revalidation of the Master of Arts in Integrative Child and Adolescent Psychotherapy</p>	<p>Q4 2022</p>	<p>April 2018</p>
<p>Periodic Review and Revalidation of the Postgraduate Diploma in Arts in Integrative Child and Adolescent Psychotherapy</p>	<p>Q4 2022</p>	<p>April 2018</p>
<p>Annual Programme Reviews</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Integrative Counselling and Psychotherapy • Bachelor of Arts in Integrative Counselling and Psychotherapy • Certificate in Counselling and Psychotherapeutic Studies • Higher Certificate in Arts in Counselling and Psychotherapeutic Studies • Master of Arts in Integrative Child and Adolescent Psychotherapy • Master of Arts in Pluralistic Counselling and Psychotherapy • Postgraduate Diploma in Arts in Integrative Child and Adolescent Psychotherapy • Postgraduate Diploma in Arts in Pluralistic Counselling and Psychotherapy 	<p>November 2022</p>	<p>November 2021</p>

4.0 Additional Themes and Case Studies

This was an unusual year for the College. The first half was focused on re-engagement, which involved the review and reformulation of its Quality Assurance Framework and documentation. The end product, the IICP College Quality Assurance Manual [QAM], consisted of 79 separate policies, available on the College website at <https://www.iicp.ie/qam/>. The second half of the year was dominated by COVID-19 and the transition to online learning. This required not only managing learning online, but also managing the impact of COVID-19 on the College community. These two major events form the specific topics for case studies.

Re-engagement was not only an opportunity for the College to change its documentation, but also an opportunity to reflect on its identity, its priorities, its values and its practices. One particular question that carried through the whole process was how to involve the learner community in such a wide-ranging and document based change. Policy development of necessity occurs within an external regulatory context, and is approved and implemented at higher governance levels. However the direction of change can be shaped and moulded by the community itself, and needs to be if the community is to take ownership of a policy framework. The re-engagement case study examines how the learner community was involved in and impacted upon policy change, highlights some practices that worked well, and examines some difficulties that arose.

The COVID-19 restrictions required the whole community to engage with rapid change while dealing with an uncertain external context. The case study examines the usefulness and shortcomings of the policy that had been developed to assist with disruptions to training, and highlights the role of community knowledge, expertise and dedication in responding to unforeseen events.

Case Study 1. A Community Approach to QA Review.

The development of the College's Quality Assurance Policies and Procedures for reengagement was a whole-College activity, involving feedback and re-iterations of feedback over a 9-month period. Its process was guided by the IICP College's Quality and Governance Framework; (i) Quality Assurance (Policy 2.1 IICP College's Quality and Governance Framework; (i) Quality Assurance, available at <https://www.iicp.ie/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/2.1-IICP-Colleges-Quality-and-Governance-Framework-i-Quality-Assurance-1.pdf>) in particular Section 5.5. (Methodology for QA review), and also acted as a

pilot for that procedure. The re-engagement panel was provided with an account of this consultation process, and some examples of correspondence with learners that occurred as a part of this process. In its report the panel noted that “Learners are engaged in the development and maintenance of QA at IICP through an in depth and exemplary process of consultation” (<https://www.qqi.ie/Downloads/IICP%20Education%20and%20Training%20Limited%20Re%20Engagement%20Report%20and%20Resposne.pdf> p. 3).

The first stage of drafting involved senior management and key operational staff. Drawing on the previous quality assurance manual, each individual policy was drafted and revised. Usually there was a significant number of revisions carried out before a completed first draft of each policy was agreed. The policies were then combined to form a Quality Assurance Manual [QAM], with consistency in structure, format and presentation of policies. This first draft was reviewed by the Academic Council Subcommittee constituted for that purpose. Further revisions resulted in a final draft of the QAM which could be presented to internal stakeholders.

Consultation with learners occurred both through the learner representative system and through communication with individual learners. A consultation copy of the manual was made available to all learners, who were also circulated with a description of the re-engagement process and with indicative questions. They were asked to consider any policy in which they had an interest, rather than the whole QAM. Learner representatives were given a written description of, and opportunities to speak with key staff about, management of the consultation process. They were asked to speak to their class groups regarding their impressions of each policy, and to utilise whatever methods they were comfortable with in feeding back on the document. They were also encouraged to view this involvement as a learning experience, because of the important from a professional perspective that they become confident and competent in reviewing policy. Each learner representative was given an opportunity to communicate with the QA manager prior to engaging with the learners they represented, so that they could carry out their representative role effectively.

Learners provided useful feedback on both the QAM and on the consultation process. It was evident from the feedback that learners, in particular at postgraduate level, had considerable expertise in policy review. The most common feedback suggested a need for ongoing involvement with learners in any policy review. This was used to strengthen *Policy 2.2. IICP College's Quality and Governance Framework; (ii) Governance* (available at

<https://www.iicp.ie/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/2.2-IICP-Colleges-Quality-and-Governance-Framework-ii-Governance-1.pdf>).

While learners found the process to be onerous, each policy was reviewed by some learners. Most feedback attended to difficulties that would be experienced by learners in operating the policy, and resulted in immediate change, such as removing the requirement for reflective papers in dissertations to be made publicly available by the College (3.9 Policy and Procedure on Dissertation Publication and Dissemination, available at <https://www.iicp.ie/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/3.9-Policy-and-Procedure-on-Dissertation-Publication-and-Dissemination-1.pdf>). One particular example is the “Continuance with Clinical Placement” policy (Policy <https://www.iicp.ie/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/7.7-Continuing-with-Clinical-Placement-Policy.-Not-yet-implemented-1.pdf>). This was considered both difficult to understand and problematic by learners. This is hardly surprising, given that questions of Fitness to Practise are generally difficult to manage ethically, professionally and legally. This was taken to mean that this policy required more thought and consideration throughout the College, and consequently the Implementation Plan presented to the Academic Council advised that this policy not be implemented. The Academic Council accepted this advice. Learners also indicated that a formal election process involving all students should be used to identify the Academic Council representative. This was agreed and included in the QAM.

Another particularly important observation by some learner cohorts was the need to take care with bringing these policies into force. In particular, learners wanted to ensure that any policy change occurred at a time that was least disruptive to their studies, and preferably should occur during breaktimes rather than during the academic year. This was reflected in the consideration given by the Academic Council and the Senior Management Team to implementation, and a requirement in the revised QAM that policies are approved along with an implementation plan that sets out communication to students about the policy.

When their feedback was incorporated into the QAM, each learner was given an individual response to their written submission, describing how and why their feedback had, or had not, been incorporated.

In general, the learners found the process to be useful and respectful of them, although there were some difficulties. The QAM was too big and wide ranging to review within the time allocated - or indeed at all. It was difficult to focus on just one policy, because of the

interrelationship between policies, in particular between policies and governance structures. The policy review and decision-making processes were difficult to grasp. Some students wanted involvement at an earlier stage, so that they could shape the policy development, while others wanted involvement at a later stage when the policies were finalised. The College has learned from this experience that it is more effective to review individual policies or related policies with learners than large numbers of policies all at once. We could have, but did not, stagger the reviews.

Despite these difficulties, the process confirmed our belief in the importance of involving learners in policy review. Communication with learners and learner representatives about each point raised was demanding, but contributed substantially to the effectiveness of the QA framework. Most importantly, it developed the skills of the community in policy review and development. An explicit aim at the outset of this process was the development of policy literacy: in particular because the professions of Counselling and Psychotherapy are moving towards statutory regulation, and the professional community needs to be able to engage in debate regarding the policies that will regulate practice. The engagement of learners in this process confirmed their potential for engagement with and enhancement of the policy context for practice.

Case Study 2: Continuity Planning during COVID-19: The policy-practice Gap.

As part of re-engagement IICP College had developed a Business Continuity policy, Policy 2.4 IICP College's Quality and Governance Framework; (iv) Business Continuity, Resilience & Risk Management (available at <https://www.iicp.ie/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/2.4-IICP-Colleges-Quality-and-Governance-Framework-iv-Business-Continuity-Resilience-Risk-Management-1.pdf>). This policy emphasised simultaneously identifying risks and developing resilience in order that the College's education provision could continue following adverse events. It proved both useful and not so useful in the face of COVID-19. Its usefulness was that it required the identification, recording and tracking of risks in a risk register - early on the College established a specific section of its risk register to record COVID-19 related risks, including academic integrity, class disruption, and threats to the health of staff and students. It was not so useful in that it envisaged adverse events as discrete and time-limited rather than long-lasting and pervasive. Its focus was on decision-making by higher governance bodies to manage risks, and communication of these decisions to the College community. It had little to say about consultation and feedback. While this is appropriate in a discrete event such as adverse weather, decision-making and communication was necessary but not sufficient in the COVID-19 context; feedback was needed to assess and modify decisions made.

The practices put in place following the restrictions to in-person training in March 2020 were both guided by and went beyond the policy. The College developed tailored teaching and learning strategies, student and faculty supports, monitoring and review systems, and governance structures, to assist with the sudden transition. First, a subcommittee of the Academic Council (the Academic Council Covid-19 Contingency Planning Subcommittee) was established by special resolution of IICP College's Academic Council to provide timely responses to a rapidly evolving situation. Second, the College built on its developing expertise in online and blended learning to provide advice and assistance to students and faculty on technology, including the safe and secure use of technology in Counselling and Psychotherapy programmes. Third, the College introduced additional support mechanisms, provided both by faculty and by student support, to assist students to continue their studies during this national and international crisis. Forth, the College introduced a monitoring and review system that built upon existing monitoring and review practices, and also extended and refined these to fit with the emerging uncertain context.

One overarching response was to increase communication pathways in the College. Faculty and staff had additional meetings made available, providing a sounding board where innovations and fears could be discussed as well as providing support for online transition. Communication between lecturers and students, and lecturers and class groups, were also increased, with some faculty providing additional online meetings before classes, and corresponding individually with students regarding their concerns. The Registrar provided a weekly update to all groups, setting out a summary of lesson plans. In addition students were informed through class representatives, individual emails and web-based contingency planning updates of College projected activity, programme and assessment modifications and safeguarding actions. Feedback was encouraged in multiple forms, and was examined in terms of what it told us about our blind spots, our inefficiencies and our useful practices. Responses to feedback was implemented, where possible, in a timely fashion. This included circulating staff with a “snag list” of technological issues that could arise, along with their solutions; providing IT assistance for some staff at the sign-in stage of a training session; circulating data protection, privacy, digital wellbeing and health and safety notices to students and staff, and producing videos of common technological procedures. Externally, the College communicated extensively, both formally and informally, with its accrediting bodies, QQI and IACP, to ensure that any adaptations were fitting to the evolving regulatory context. This included submitting regular contingency plans to QQI, and holding remote meetings with IACP regarding, in particular, practice-based course requirements. The College benefited considerably from the responsiveness of both bodies, which allowed it to respond flexibly to the complex context in which its education provision was occurring. This was particularly important, for example, in relation to the scheduling and content of classes.

Initial feedback identified that students felt overwhelmed with the extent of the workload during a time when they had sudden additional commitments, family pressures and personal upheaval. QQI’s Assessment Guidance provided flexibility with assessments that allowed the comparability between the planned curriculum and the online curriculum to be applied flexibly. The minor modifications to the curriculum that resulted eased the pressure on students and staff.

The College also communicated within its networks, principally HECA, who assisted with the development of good practice during this uncertain time. HECA provided both organisational guidance and a communication route with QQI, while its Quality Assurance arm HAQEF provided guidance on matters such as technology and academic integrity.

This phase of immediate response to transition to online learning carried on to Easter, at which stage the College had developed its knowledge base on responding to this crisis. Further phases - including the summer term and final assessments, summer planning periods, and the beginning of the subsequent academic year, provided their own challenges and their own learning. However this first phase was unique in that the College had to adapt to an unknown event, and carry out its business in a changed context for programme delivery. While feedback supported the usefulness and effectiveness of the responses of the College, the experience also provided the opportunity to reflect on the effectiveness of our policies in unusual times.

Central to our policy considerations was our Risk Management policy. The policy was written with a narrow range of adverse events in mind, whereas these events, we discovered, can be beyond our imagining. On reflection, this policy needs to be written with less certainty, and with more guidance to the overarching principles that came to the fore during the COVID-19 pandemic. Centrally, flexible governance structures are required that allow decisions to be made in a timely manner, and context-appropriate feedback mechanisms are required to ensure that data is available to inform decision-making.

Our reflections also suggests that this policy needs to be less directive. Space needs to be given to the development of flexible and innovative approaches on the ground. The wisdom of the College community provided opportunities to respond in-situ to this crisis, and this responsiveness was noted by students as particularly useful, in particular the inclusion of additional support structures for individual learners by lecturers who had knowledge of what was needed.

The COVID-19 context provides a window of opportunity for reflection on policies in a time of crisis. Our reflective engagements continue; but as we emerge from this we will look at reformulating this policy. We will do so with more experience of adversity, and therefore with less certainty about steps to be taken. We have greater knowledge of what works, and less confidence in the usefulness of identifying what should be done. Our focus will be on recognising the wisdom of the community in responding on the ground, as well as in creating flexible structures which support community activity.