

Quality Assurance Policies and Procedures

1. The mission of the College is to develop, promote and maintain education and training programmes to the highest international standards and quality, particularly in the fields of further and higher education.

2. The College has as its central guide a quality ethos, and shall undertake to establish its administrative structure and carry out all its activities according to this ethos.

3. The College understands that it must have in place a working system for monitoring the effectiveness of its quality assurance procedures (including provision for periodic reviews under section 28 (4) of the 1999 Education Act). The College shall carry out a general review of its policy and procedures on an annual basis, during the last week of June each year. This must be completed by 30 June. This will be done in addition to any quality review deemed necessary at other times.

4. The policy regarding communication with learners, staff and any others who have a current or potential interest in the work undertaken and policies observed by the College is contained in the document named "Communications Policy".

5. Consistent with the values and policies of DBL College in other areas, the following principles underpin the policy and process for quality assurance: quality, improvement, transparency, consistency, contextuality, provider responsibility and equality.

6. The responsibility for the quality assurance policy of the College rests with the Academic Council of the College. In certain circumstances, the Council may delegate responsibility for quality assurance to a particular individual or group of individuals, clearly identified and from an appropriate level in the organisation of the College.

7. The quality assurance procedures provide for the involvement of external experts in the review of the quality assurance policy and procedures. The essential elements in the selection of these experts are independence, transparency and professionalism. All such experts must declare any personal, professional, academic or business interests that could conflict with their responsibilities with regard to quality assurance. For information concerning the minimum criteria required by the College to be invited to become an external expert, please see also appendices 14 and 15.

8. The College shall commit to the provision of adequate resources to enable the quality assurance procedures to be implemented satisfactorily.

9. The processes and criteria of the College will be consistent with the highest standards for quality assurance in education. The College expects that these criteria and processes will continue to develop and evolve in line with best international practice.

10. In the context of accountability, quality assurance is used as a mechanism to monitor and improve performance. As such, it involves a commitment to continuous improvement employing three basic activities: setting goals and standards, evaluating practice and structures against these standards, and carrying out follow-up to improve practice and structures.

11. In terms of our quality assurance policy, the central strategic objectives of DBL College are the following:

- To determine and ensure compliance with appropriate standards of education and training.
- To promote and support continuous improvement in the quality and standards of provision of education and training, working in partnership and consultation with other education and training stakeholders.
- To manage our programmes according to quality assurance and learner assessment procedures.

- To ensure that clear and accurate information concerning the quality and standards of our programmes is obtained and made available to the appropriate course planners, teaching staff and other stakeholders.
- To apply international best standards in evaluation and reviews of education and training.

12. The College shall employ a systematic process for achieving and evaluating its objectives. The College shall review its own policies, procedures and practices, to learn whether it is achieving its objectives, and to determine how to improve its performance.

13. In order to achieve this, the College have in place appropriate quantitative and qualitative measures and indicators. This shall be undertaken in the context of the autonomy of the College, as well as the diversity of providers and award bodies with their various emphases in terms of objectives and ethos, teaching content and technique, and methods of evaluation.

14. The College shall undertake to monitor in a systematic and scheduled manner its progress towards achieving its quality goals and, in particular, further strengthening the quality of its educational provision. It understands that there are aspects of quantifiable monitoring that are amenable and others which are less so. To this end, as systematic documentation of actions taken is paramount in maintaining, improving and reviewing quality, the College shall provide evidence in the form of verifiable data concerning the quality objects being monitored.

15. The College shall use as the central elements of its system of quality control the following three activities in a transparent and clear manner:

- Self-evaluation
- External review
- Information to and from stakeholders

16. As such, the quality assurance procedures, in relation to each programme, service or other element concerned, shall focus on:

- Objectives of the programme, service or other element.
- Evidence that the programme, service or other element is meeting its objectives.
- Effectiveness of procedures for correcting deficiencies and making improvements.

17. The College shall use the findings from quality assurance procedures to improve the quality of education and training provision and meet the needs of learners.

18. The College shall take the necessary corrective action to remedy deficiencies identified by the quality assurance procedures.

19. These quality assurance procedures shall incorporate the principle, and facilitate the application and implementation, of internal and external review of the effectiveness of its quality assurance processes.

20. The College shall give relevant information on institutional and programme quality to the appropriate stakeholders.

21. The College shall regard the following as its principal areas of quality assurance:

- 1. Design and approval of new programmes, subjects and modules.
- 2. Assessment of entrants, current learners and graduates, as well as examination candidates.
- 3. Ongoing monitoring of programmes.
- 4. Evaluation of each programme at regular intervals (usually every two years).
- 5. Selection, appointment, appraisal and development of staff.
- 6. Evaluating premises, equipment and facilities
- 7. Evaluating services relating to programmes of education and training.
- 8. Evaluating the effectiveness of quality assurance procedures.

22. The College recognises the need to provide evidence in the form of verifiable data and to document this evidence systematically. The College has established procedures that provide for systematic formal deliberative and decision-making and full follow-up procedures.

23. The College shall use the following methods and tools to carry out its quality assurance procedures:

Assessment of entrants, current learners and graduates:

It shall be the responsibility of the College Principal and the Registrar to ensure the following:

- The educational service offered by the College shall be of the highest quality.
- Clear and transparent communication is undertaken by the most immediate and reliable means.
- Proper assessment is carried out in the placement process.
- The existing structures and mechanisms are assessed at the close of each period.
- The rules and regulations of the College, and where applicable those of an outside awarding body, shall be strictly adhered to with regard to the conduct of entrants, current students, graduates and examination candidates.

Teaching quality:

It shall be the responsibility of the College Principal and the Registrar to ensure the following activities:

- Presentation of syllabus, course plan, materials and related information at the latest two weeks before class starts.
- Review of these by expert panel.
- At least one classroom observation per period.
- One questionnaire at end of period for students and staff.
- One meeting between director of studies, registrar/College director and staff per month.
- One meeting between director of studies, registrar/College director and class representative per month.
- One general meeting with staff at end of period of teaching.
- The rules and regulations of the College, and where applicable those of an outside awarding body, shall be strictly adhered to by all staff.

External awards quality assurance:

It shall be the responsibility of the College Principal and the Registrar to ensure the following activities:

- Identification of roles to be undertaken by College staff and the full responsibilities of each.
- Clear communication of requirements of programmes recognised by external body.
- Full compliance with these requirements and, where applicable, of the rules and regulations of the College.
- Assessment of performance of programme or examinations.
- Review of activities with a view to improving these services.

Facilities and equipment:

It shall be the responsibility of the College Principal and the Registrar to ensure the following:

- Evaluation of adequacy and performance of facilities and equipment once each period through observation, questionnaires, suggestions of external experts, and other methods.

Part 2

Quality Assurance: The Academic Council

1: Members and Responsibilities

Introduction

The operation of the College is governed by the Qualifications (Education and Training) Act, 1999. It understands clearly that these provisions outline the policy and practices that must be carried out by colleges located in Ireland, with the objective that

the learner should be able to enter and successfully participate in a programme, or series of programmes leading to an award, or series of awards, in pursuit of their learning objectives. The national framework of qualifications and associated programme provision should be structured to facilitate learner entry, and to promote transfer and progression, so that learners are encouraged to participate in the learning process to enable them to realise their ambitions to the full extent of their abilities. (NQAI, "Policies, Actions and Procedures for the Promotion and Facilitation of Access, Transfer and Progression," March 2003.)

Academic Council

The Academic Council has two main functions:

- to manage the planning, co-ordination, development and overseeing of the educational work of the college, and
- to protect, maintain and develop the academic standards of the courses and the activities of the college.

Its membership consists of the Principal, Registrar, Academic Director, Head Office Manager, Directors of Studies, IT Manager, one representative of the Administrative Staff, two representatives of the Teaching Staff and one Student Representative each from the School of English and the School of Business. When appropriate, representatives of validating bodies can attend meetings of the Academic Council as guests in an advisory, non-voting role.

The Academic Council meets once per month. Procedures and protocols for the preparation, running, and follow-up to the meetings have been agreed and include:

- formal minute-taking
- all proposed additional items for agenda to be supported by advance documentation
- formal communication of decisions taken and actions proposed, including responsibilities
- review of actions taken.

Each Academic Council meeting is provided with a progress report on actions from the previous meeting.

Under the Qualifications (Education and Training) Act 1999 the College shall "*establish procedures for the purpose of further improving and maintaining the quality of education and training which is provided, organized or procured by*" the College and shall agree these procedures with HETAC. The Academic Council will play a pivotal role in developing and maintaining the required quality assurance procedures.

See also Appendix 2, "Membership and Terms of Office of Academic Council", and Appendix 3, "Standing Orders of Academic Council".

The responsibilities of the principal members of the Academic Council are as follows:

Principal

The Principal is the chief officer of the college. The Principal shall "*control and direct the activities of the college and control and direct the staff of the college and be responsible to the Governing Body therefore and for the efficient and proper management of the college.*" The Principal is ex-officio a member of the Academic Council of the college and, if present,

presides at all meetings of the council and is entitled to be a member of every committee established by the council.

The Principal is responsible for the planning, development, use and maintenance of the College's own physical facilities and rented premises, land and infrastructure in accordance with College policy and procedures, including implementation of the Campus Development Plan (for the Foley Street facilities).

The Principal also acts as the Assessment Manager of the College (see appendix 12).

Registrar

The Registrar has a College-wide responsibility for the management of staff and student affairs, internal verification, the financial well-being of the institute, and secretary of the principal College committees.

The major categories of responsibility for the Registrar include:

The Registry, which includes Student Admission, Registration, Examinations and Student Records (in consultation with the Academic Director)
Student Affairs
Student Discipline
Student Union
Co-ordination of Administrative Staff Development
Quality Audits of general College management
Library Services
Co-ordination of Academic Computer Services
Estates Office
Budgets and Accounts (with Head Office Manager)

Specifically in the area of Student Affairs Management, the Registrar is responsible for contributing to policy and procedures and for general management in the areas of Student Admissions, Registration, Examinations, and Student Records/Statistics (including certain Returns). S/he also manages general recruitment activities such as Open day, Company Liaison, Publication of Advertising and Brochures, etc. Management of general non-academic Student Services also fall into the remit of this post.

In addition, the Registrar is responsible for all aspects of human resource management in the College including the development, implementation and co-ordination of policies and programmes relating to the recruitment and appointment of staff, employee relations, equality, staff training and development, superannuation, staff welfare, personnel administration, compliance with Employment Legislation and industrial relations.

The Registrar also acts as the chief Internal Verifier (see appendix 12).

Academic Director

The Academic Director has a College-wide responsibility for academic affairs through the statutory Academic Council. S/he also has a College-wide responsibility for services supportive of the academic programme. S/he works directly with the Directors of Studies and staff members in promoting the quality, relevance and development of the College's programme of courses. Within his/her purview is the more long-term planning of courses and the work of the Academic Council.

Broad categories of responsibility for the post of Registrar include:

Academic Council
College's Programme of Courses and Academic Planning
Promotion of Academic Research and Scholarships
Liaison with Accreditation Bodies
Quality Audits of teaching methods, materials and procedures
Co-ordination of Teaching Staff Development
Joint Courses with other Colleges, Colleges, Articulation and Student Transfer/Exchange
Performance Indicators
Library Services
Co-ordination of Academic Computer Services

In terms of Industrial Liaison Management, the Academic Director (supported by the Registrar) reports to the Principal in the establishment, promotion and delivery of a range of services, in accordance with College policy and procedures, to industrial, commercial, and other organisations, aimed at supporting the maintenance and development of enterprises and employment, and for the commercial use of College resources. S/he assists in the promotion and co-ordination of research and development (R&D), technology transfer and other industry interactions.

The Academic Director is the Examinations Secretary of the College (see appendix 12).

Head Office Manager

The Head Office Manager reports directly to the Registrar and the Principal. His/her duties include responsibility for financial planning, budgetary allocation and control, the human resource function and administrative affairs of the College. S/he is also responsible for the legal affairs of the College together with its insurance and health and safety obligations. The Head Office Manager Controller is secretary to the Governing Body of the College.

Reporting to the Registrar and Principal, the Head Office Manager is responsible for the preparation of annual statutory accounts, monthly management accounts, various tax returns, various returns to the Department of Education and Science, and the provision of financial reports to other funding bodies. The post holder is responsible for cash flow management, budget monitoring, maintenance and development of financial internal control procedures and the management of the finance and payroll systems of the College. In addition, the post holder has responsibility for the implementation of and compliance with legislation affecting the operations of the College's finance function, liaison with other College management and management of other Colleges of higher Education, and liaison with external bodies (e.g. Auditor, Banks, etc).

Directors of Studies

Directors of Studies report directly to the Academic Director and Principal, and have responsibility for the overall management of their Schools including:

The director of studies has the following responsibilities and duties:

1. Help ensure – with the director, registrar and staff of the College – the general academic well-being of the programmes of Business

2. The performance and conduct of teachers:
 - i. The director of studies shall act as the person immediately responsible for the academic well-being of teaching staff and, as such, will be the teacher's first point of contact in such situations before they contact the registrar

As such, he or she shall:

- ii. Ensure that teachers understand fully the rules and regulations pertaining to their teaching functions
- iii. Visit each classroom on at least one occasion per period to observe the quality of courses, giving the teacher notice at the latest one day in advance, and, if necessary, making recommendations to the registrar
- iv. Ensure the design and presentation of syllabus, course plans and materials by teaching staff at the latest two weeks before classes start
- v. Ensure that these are revised (by the director of studies him or herself) to guarantee that they cover the programme fully, in a presentation that achieves the highest quality possible
- vi. Ensure that the teachers explain this plan to students on the first day of classes and carry it out

- vii. Ensure that the teachers follow the calendar of activities that the director of studies has designed, particularly with regard to specific days for partial and final exams
- viii. Ensure clear and full communication with teaching staff (through e-mail and staff meetings)
- ix. Ensure full compliance with the requirements of external bodies
- x. Ensure that the results of partial exams and of final exams be handed in by teachers within three working days of the examination date
- xi. Ensure that the resources (in terms of materials, books, videos, publications, equipment, etc) of the college are sufficient for the needs of the students and staff
- xii. Conduct a staff meeting at least once a month
- xiii. Ensure the safe storing of academic results
- xiv. Ensure that the registrar and director are kept up to date on student well-being
- xv. Take part in overall College management as a member of the Academic Council
- xvi. Manage the academic staff, technical support staff and administrative staff within the School
- xvii. Manage the overall School budget
- xviii. Manage a staff development programme to ensure all staff have the appropriate skills

3. The performance and conduct of students:

- i. The director of studies shall act as the person immediately responsible for the academic well-being of students and, as such, will be the teacher's first point of contact in such situations before they contact the registrar

As such, he or she shall:

- ii. Ensure that students obtain the best education possible while attending classes at this institution
- iii. Ensure that they enter the correct group according to their academic level
- iv. Ensure that they have access to and understand the rules they will follow while studying at this college
- v. Ensure that they behave and carry out their studies in accordance with these rules
- vi. Be aware of, and help to ensure full compliance with, the requirements of the quality assurance policy of this institution
- vii. Be aware of, and help to ensure full compliance with, the requirements of external awarding bodies
- viii. Ensure that the registrar and director are kept up to date on the academic well-being of students

4. In addition he or she shall:

- **Manage examinations**
 - Calendar
 - Costs
 - Confirm with Awarding Bodies
 - Supervise the Invigilation
- **Quality control activities**
 - Conduct questionnaires
 - Liaise with teaching staff
- **Manage Website**
- **Follow-up with accreditation bodies**
- **Liaise with companies, head-hunters, etc.**

- **Liase with embassies**

- **Social and activities manager**

- **Create and manage Alumni Data Base**

- **Liaison**
 Meet and liase with Directors of Studies/Heads of School from other Colleges of Higher Education to assist with the national coordination of academic matters.

 Play a role within appropriate national bodies.

- **Others**

2: Academic Council – Annual Meeting in June

The following lists the responsibilities of the members of the Academic Council at the annual general meeting in June.

1. PRINCIPAL'S REPORT

The Principal's report to the September (first) meeting of the Academic Council will deal with:

- General Strategic Plan
- Governing Body
- NQAI
- Industrial Relations
- National and regional matters
- Meeting reports
- Estates
- Other related matters

The Principal will advise the Academic Council of developments in these areas throughout the year and provide a report update to the January meeting of the Academic Council.

2. REGISTRAR'S REPORT

The Registrar's report to the October (second) meeting of the Academic Council will deal with:

- Quality Assurance (with Academic Director)
- Admissions
- Appeals and Complaints
- Access
- Careers
- Sports
- Health and Safety
- Medical Services
- Computer Services
- Student Complaints
- Administrative Staff Development
- Other related matters

The Registrar will advise the Academic Council of developments in these areas throughout the year and provide a report update to the January meeting of the Academic Council. In

particular, the Academic Council will examine the Registrar's internal verification report on Quality Assurance at its November meeting and the report update in April. The Registrar will report on recruitment activities (open day, school visits, marketing activities, etc.) and the preliminary applications data at the December and March meetings respectively.

3. ACADEMIC DIRECTOR'S REPORT

The Academic Director will report to the September (first) meeting of the Academic Council on:

- Academic Council
- HETAC, FETAC, etc.
- Examinations
- Consultancy Services
- Research and Development
- Industry Advice
- Strategic Development in Academic Activities
- Continuing Education Programme
- International Office
- Library
- Teaching Staff Development
- Publications
- Other related matters

The Academic Director will advise the Academic Council of developments in these areas throughout the year and provide a report update to the January meeting of the Academic Council.

4. HEAD OFFICE MANAGER

The Head Office Manager will prepare a report for the September (first) meeting of the Academic Council on:

- Finance
- Admin. affairs
- Human Resources
- Other related matters

The Academic Council will be kept informed of developments in these areas and a report update will be made available for the January meeting of the Academic Council.

5. DIRECTOR OF STUDIES' REPORTS

Each Director of Studies, in conjunction with the relevant colleague(s), will report to the October (second) meeting of the Academic Council regarding:

- Current and New Courses
- Learner feedback
- Admissions
- Examinations
- Extern Examiners' Reports
- Programmes
- Students services
- Employer links
- Education partners
- HETAC, FETAC
- Research, consultancy and development
- Physical resources and equipment

The Director of Studies will advise the Academic Council of developments in these areas throughout the year and provide a report update to the February meeting of the Academic Council.

3: The Academic Council as the College's Course Board and Q A Panel

A central responsibility of the Academic Council is its work as course board. Its activities in this area include the following:

- a) Monitor the on-going operation of programmes.
- b) Carry out a yearly review of each programme.
- c) Introduce improvements in programmes arising out of the monitoring and review process.
- d) Ensure the implementation of recommendations from the External Expert Group.
- e) Ensure adherence to the approved course schedule and the College's grading system and standards.
- f) Ensure adherence to any conditions of course approval.
- g) Maintain the Course Information Pack.
- h) Review examination and continuous assessment results.
- i) Ensure an appropriate mix of learning modes and associated assessment methods.
- j) Consider student attendance issues and set attendance guidelines for the programme.
- k) Examine the effectiveness of support services such as administrative services, computer services and library services.
- l) Make recommendations on the use of existing resources and the need for new resources.
- m) Ensure adherence in the operation of the College's assessment regulations.
- n) Keep the content of courses continuously under review in the light of developments in the different fields of study and the requirements of the marketplace.
- o) Produce an Annual Monitoring Report.
- p) Perform these activities with the guidance and evaluation of an External Expert.

The monitoring and review of courses by the Academic Council is guided by the following policies:

1. Composition of Design Team and New Course Evaluation Panel
2. Assessors' Guide for New Course Evaluation
3. New Course Evaluation Report
4. Composition of External Expert Group (for periodic programme evaluation, etc.)
5. Access, Transfer and Progression Policy
6. Relevant Curriculum and Assessment Procedures
7. Any Course Board Annual Monitoring Report
8. The College's Student Questionnaire
9. The College's Staff Questionnaire and Staff Questionnaire (Quality Assurance and Improvements)
10. The College's Client Questionnaire
11. Graduate Destination Survey Form
12. Matrix of Responsibilities for Internal and External Examinations
13. Procedures for Assessment of Learners
14. External Examiners' Duties
15. Criteria for the Nomination and Appointment of External Examiners
16. Relevant Project Assessment Criteria
17. Receipt of Assignment (School) / Receipt of Assignment (Class)
18. Report Form for External Examiners
19. Relevant Procedures for Self-Evaluation
20. Student Survey Questionnaire

The Course Information Pack includes:

1. Approved Course Calendar of Activities.
2. Syllabi.
3. Attendance Guidelines.
4. Assessment Schedule and Methodology.
5. Related information.

The Student Handbook that each student receives at registration includes:

1. Rules and Regulations for Students (see Appendix 1).
2. Academic Appeals Procedure (see Appendices 1, 4 and 6).
3. Complaints Procedures (see Appendices 1 and 7).
4. Relevant academic, legal and medical advice.
5. Full information concerning benefits (for being students of DBL or candidates of an Awarding Body).