SECTION 5: TEACHING AND LEARNING

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Supporting Documents:

1. Validated programme documentation

2. Student Support Policy (Section 7)

3. Annually updated Student Handbooks

4. Staff Handbook (OTC)

5. Approved programme schedules

6. Employer verification forms

7. Health and Safety Checklist

8. Safety Statement

9. Dignity at Work policy

5.1 Teaching and Learning

5.1.1 The Supported Open Learning Model

The Open Training College is committed to delivering programmes with a comprehensive support system that facilitates effective learning. Flexibility and accessibility are key characteristics of any strategy devised to provide learning opportunities for adults. The Supported Open Learning Model is always evolving to ensure that the flexibility of the model is optimised. The College recognises that managing learning can be difficult while juggling other commitments, to that end this model ensures that students are supported to effectively manage their learning through timely supports.

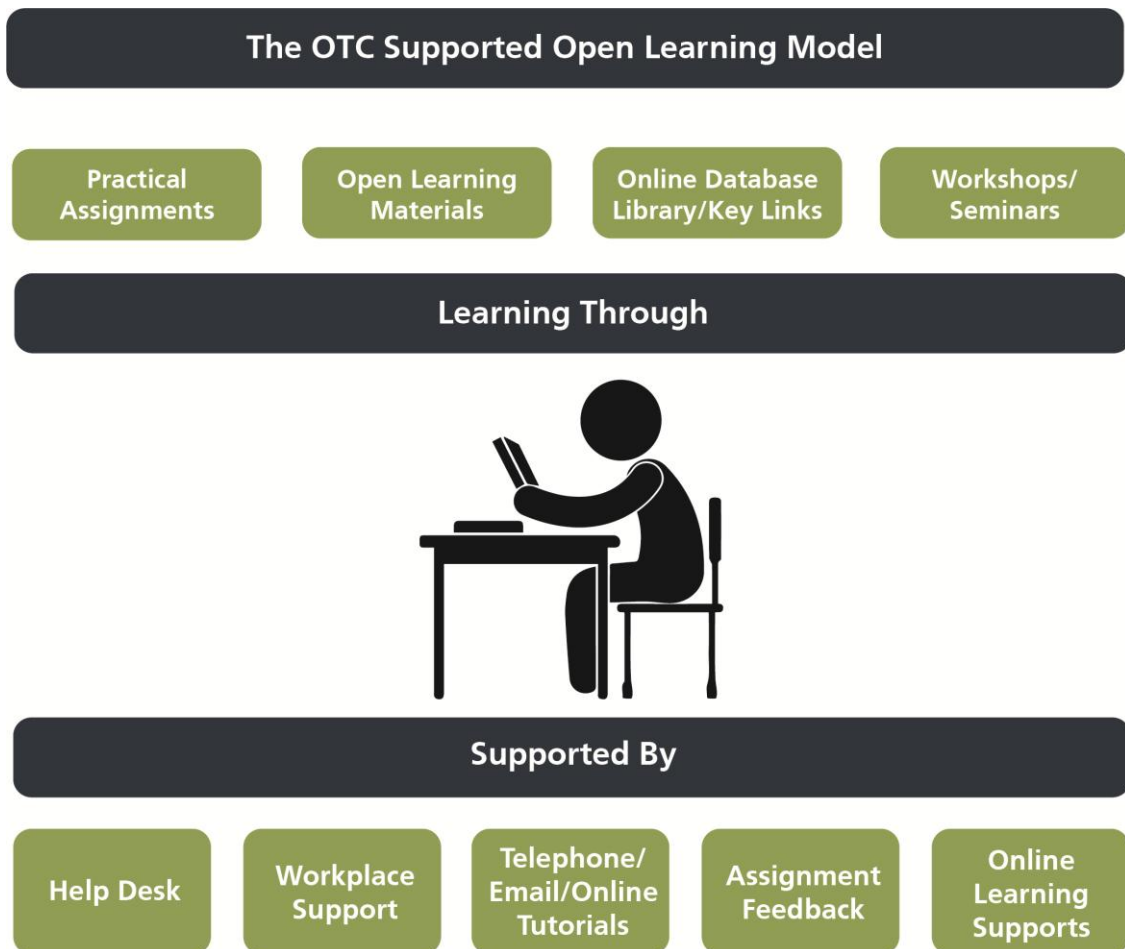The figure following outlines the Supported Open Learning Model, as employed by the Open Training College.

The OTC Supported Open Learning Model

| Practical Assignments | Open Learning Materials | Online Database Library/Key Links | Workshops/ Seminars |

Learning Through

Supported By

| Help Desk | Workplace Support | Telephone/ Email/Online Tutorials | Assignment Feedback | Online Learning Supports |

Figure 11: The Supported Open Learning Model

The student **_learns through_** the following key strategies:

Open learning materials

The College provides high quality open learning materials that are regularly updated. The materials are structured to cater to the needs of adult learners, through the provision of separate sections that support each learning outcome. The materials are accompanied by a series of self-directed learning activities.

Online database library

The College provides access to a number of key information resources through the library area on My Learning Centre (Moodle platform). These resources include online journal libraries, a variety of online databases that support social care and management, and a section for resources that support study skills.

Workshops

Group workshops are offered (for each module) to provide students with the opportunity to collaborate with other students and develop their understanding and appreciation of the learning outcomes associated with the module. These opportunities for group learning also provide an excellent opportunity for students to network, make contacts, and discuss practical issues with their peers.

Practical assignments

A key component of the assessment of students' learning is their application of that learning to their place of work. This process is assessed using a variety of media, including written reflection, participation in group discussions and the completion of learning activities.

Students are *supported* in this learning through the following key support structures:

Tutorials

Students are allocated an individual tutor to support them with their studies. Tutorial supports are provided through a variety of media including, telephone, e-mail, online and face-to-face methods. Any or all of the following areas may be discussed during tutorials:

- Student's progress with the learning materials
- Assignment preparation and feedback
- Work-based support
- Revision of study topics
- Local study groups
- Additional issues that may arise relevant to the learning process

Feedback (Formative and Summative)

The College provides numerous opportunities for students to obtain feedback on their learning and understanding as they progress through each module. These opportunities include online learning activities, peer and tutor feedback through online discussion forums and tutorials. Following each module assessment the student is furnished with detailed written feedback, which clearly outlines the student's performance against the key learning outcomes of that module. Students can expect to receive this feedback via e-mail approximately 6 weeks after they have submitted their assessment.

Helpdesk Support

The College provides immediate office hour support on matters related to IT, academic or practice issues.

Workplace Support

Workplace support is usually provided by the student's line manager, or another supporting professional. S/he mainly provides practical support in organising applied assignments and supporting the student's professional development.

The Partnership Approach and Three-Way Collaboration

The College considers participation on its courses as a partnership between the student, their employing agency and the College. Through this collaborative approach the agency allows time for attendance at workshops and examinations (the number of days allowed varies between agencies), agrees the student may undertake work-based assignments as part of their regular duties, with support from a colleague or manager as appropriate, and may provide financial support to the student.

The student makes a commitment to complete course assessments, attend the workshops/seminars, undertake personal study in their own time, engage with supervision and fulfil their financial obligation to pay course fees.

The College provides open learning materials, web-based supports (MyOTC), assigns a Tutor to the student, provides workshops, and co-ordinates the assessment and certification of programmes. Figure 7 provides an overview of this collaborative approach.

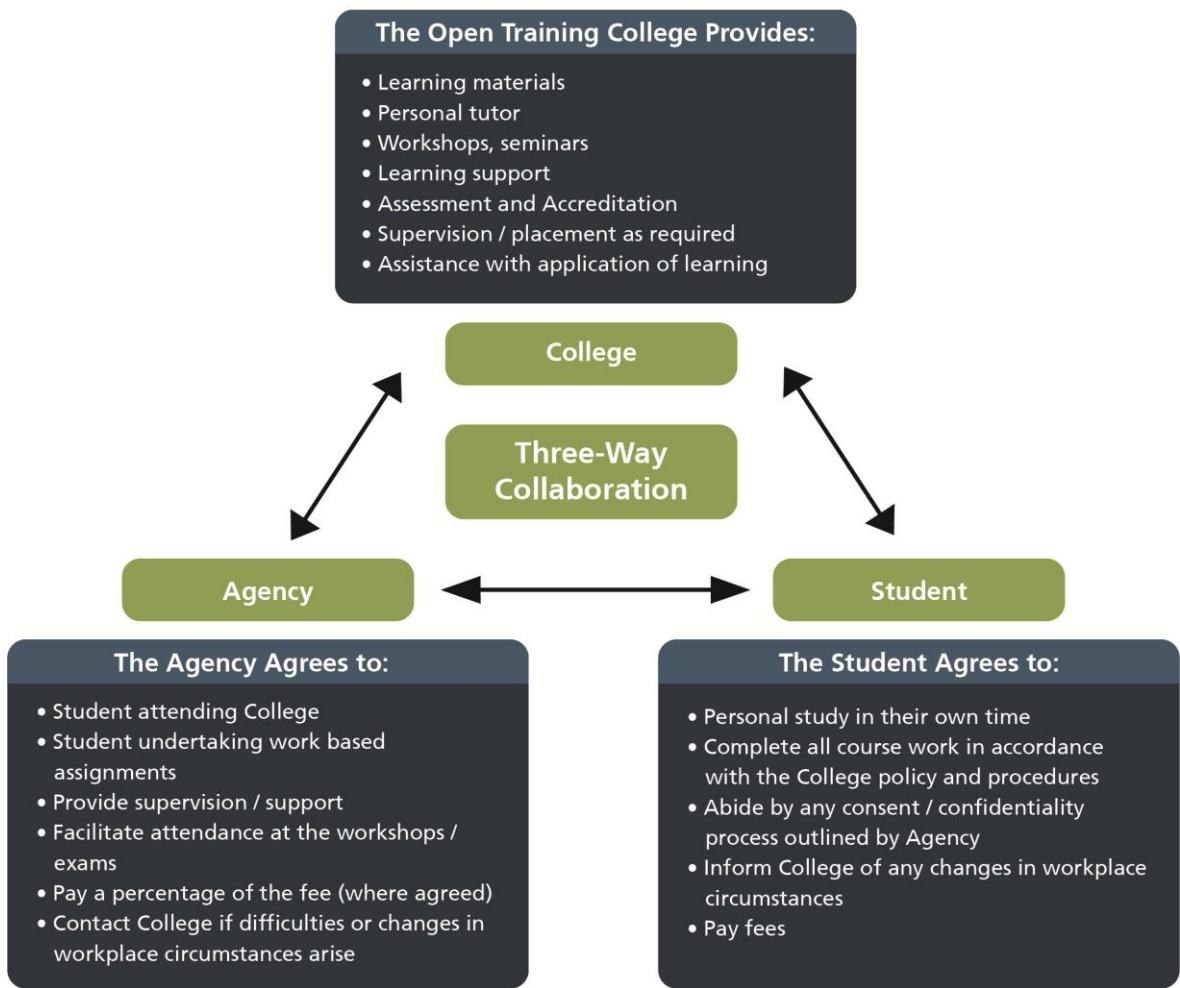## Three-Way Collaborative Approach

The Open Training College Provides:

- Learning materials
- Personal tutor
- Workshops, seminars
- Learning support
- Assessment and Accreditation
- Supervision / placement as required
- Assistance with application of learning

College

Three-Way Collaboration

Agency

Student

The Agency Agrees to:

- Student attending College
- Student undertaking work based assignments
- Provide supervision / support
- Facilitate attendance at the workshops / exams
- Pay a percentage of the fee (where agreed)
- Contact College if difficulties or changes in workplace circumstances arise

The Student Agrees to:

- Personal study in their own time
- Complete all course work in accordance with the College policy and procedures
- Abide by any consent / confidentiality process outlined by Agency
- Inform College of any changes in workplace circumstances
- Pay fees

Figure 12: The Collaborative Approach

Change in student employment circumstances

At application and re-registration stages all students of Open Training College applied programmes (Social Care and Management) are notified of the requirement for each student to be employed in an appropriate position for at least 10 hours per week in order to meet the registration and assessment requirements of these programmes. Students of these programmes are therefore required to notify their Tutor immediately of any change in their employment circumstances, e.g. break in employment for any reason, including suspension from work, extended period of leave/absence, change of employer or supervisor etc. Following such notification from a student, the Tutor will review the student's current workload and course requirements and, if necessary and appropriate (as determined by the College) generate a timetable of extended deadlines to facilitate the student to continue to meet the course requirements during the period of disruption to their employment. Following resumption of

normal employment circumstances the student will be required to provide updated information of their employment status, to be signed and stamped by their employer.

In the event that a change in an individual student's employment circumstances is disclosed to the College by a third party the Tutor will seek confirmation of their employment status directly with the student and/or employer.

Any action taken by the College in response to a change in a student's employment circumstances will be in accordance with the registration and assessment requirements of the programme only and the College will not become involved in any organisational investigations or procedures relating to the period of non-employment.

Teaching and Learning Systems

The Open Training College is committed to delivering programmes with a comprehensive support system that facilitates effective learning. Flexibility and accessibility are key characteristics of any strategy devised to provide learning opportunities for adults. All programmes are delivered using the Supported Open Learning Model which combines a variety of flexible and innovative course delivery strategies with a menu of supports that students can utilise in an individualised manner to meet their own learning and support needs.

Central to the Supported Open Learning Model is the allocation of a named tutor to all individual students. The tutor is the student's key contact person for all matters relating to their successful participation on the programme, and will assist students in identifying their learning and support needs and develop strategies to address these needs.

The College operates a rigorous approach to the fair and consistent assessment of all students which is detailed in Section 6 of this document.

The College Student Support Policy is detailed in Section 7 of this document.

The Tutorial Function

The role of the Tutor and the tutorial function is key to the successful delivery of all Open Training College programmes. The following sections of this document will detail the role, function and parameters of the Open Training College tutor/associate tutor as well as the monitoring procedures in operation in relation to ensuring the effectiveness of the tutorial function. Job

Descriptions for the tutor/associate tutor and formal written associate tutor contracts are in operation.

The course tutor/associate tutor role includes some or all of the following tasks for the relevant programme*:

- supporting/tutoring participants through the learning process
- implementing the agreed course schedule
- day-to-day administration of the course/programme in conjunction with the administration team
- organising workshops, training events and/or lectures
- developing and delivering workshops and/or lectures
- supporting students using the College's online My Learning Centre
- developing the forum, supports and learning materials on My learning Centre (online)
- supporting participants with personal issues which may arise which impacts on their study
- developing assessment mechanism(s)/ tools as required
- correcting assignments
- providing written/ online feedback to students on assignments
- setting examination papers and agreeing them with External Examiners
- invigilating examinations
- marking examination papers
- meeting with external examiners and sitting on examinations board(s)
- reviewing course assignments and materials/developing new assignments and/or materials if required
- on occasion site-visits to participants in their agencies
- up-dating the Course Director, Project Manager or College Director on issues as they arise
- liaising with accreditation bodies if required
- cross-marking assessments relating to other courses
- attendance at conferences and seminars as required
- contributing to conferences/seminars as required
- undertaking aspects of College consultancy work as required
- attendance at and contributing to team meetings and team events
- contributing to all aspects of the Colleges work including marketing and recruitment
- undertaking all work in compliance with the College's Quality Assurance procedures
- carrying out any other reasonable task as requested by the Course/ College Director

Reporting Relationship

The course tutor/associate tutor reports to the Course Director.

Monitoring the effectiveness of the Tutorial Function

The tutorial function, as described above, is supported at a quality assurance level by the Academic Council, and by several of its sub-committees:

The **Programme Boards** are responsible for producing and implementing the Assessment Strategies for each programme, module and stage. These strategies provide guidance to the course delivery team in designing the assessment activities and rubric for the modules. The effectiveness of assessment strategies is discussed at programme boards, with reference to student feedback and to assessment results, and recommendations for improvement are made as a result.

The **Disciplinary Committee** oversees the application of the College policies and procedures regarding Plagiarism and Academic Misconduct in the assessment process.

The **Examination Boards** review the outcomes of external examiner moderation of programme(s) under consideration, conduct QA monitoring of assessment techniques, consistency of assessment and comparison of standards of programme(s) under consideration with national norms and best practice, agree assessment results for all learners of programme(s) under consideration, consider learner appeals in relation to assessment results and procedures of programme(s) under consideration, and make recommendations to Academic Council, review penalties applied to assessment activities of programme(s) under consideration and review/monitor statistics/trends regarding assessment results of programme(s) under consideration.

Finally the **Academic Council** makes final decisions on appeals made by students in relation to their assessment outcomes.

Supervision forms a key element of the Three-Way Collaborative approach and follows the Supervision Policy and guidelines outlined below:

1. Introduction

At OTC, all our undergraduates are either employed or volunteering in services for people with support needs. The provision of a work based supervisor gives students the opportunity to transfer the theoretical elements relevant to their course, to their work or volunteering practice while being supervised by a relevant professional in the workplace. (See Supervision Guidelines which describe the respective roles of the supervisor and the College tutor, and to summarise the expected learning outcomes of supervision.)

2. Purpose

This policy has been developed to provide support, quality assurance, accountability and development mechanism for OTC social care students employed or volunteering in public health services. Professional social care education aims to teach theories of practice and to develop both practice skills and a reflective capacity. These aims require the incorporation of both theoretical and practice strands on professional courses. Supervision forms an integral part of the social care student's experience in college and all students must engage with work based supervision to progress through the professional programme. As such, the role of the supervisor is a highly valued one.

2.1 Aims and Objectives of the Student Supervision Policy

The Policy aims to:

a) set a framework of clear and transparent processes for the agency and management of Supervision;

b) set out the roles and responsibilities of those involved in Supervision;

c) identify the relevant procedures underpinning this Policy.

2.2 Insurance and Legal Requirements

The Policy is intended to have regard to OTC's legal obligations in the context of Supervision including the common law duty of care, Safety Health & Welfare at Work Act 2005, Equal Status Act 2000 - 2008 and the National Vetting Bureau (Children and Vulnerable Persons) Acts 2012 to 2016.

2.3 Training for staff of OTC

Relevant and appropriate briefing sessions will be provided to those staff of OTC involved in the management of supervision to enable them to comply with the Policy. Each Course Director will be required to identify the people who need training and ensure they attend the relevant training sessions.

3. Scope

This Policy applies to all OTC Students undertaking Supervision.

4. Policy Statement

Supervision is a professional development and workforce strategy that can contribute to higher quality service outcomes for service users, improve student / employee practitioner skills and inform and consolidate training and development.

A positive student supervision experience will serve the health and social care profession well as it will identify compliance with statutory and professional ethical guidelines, ensure students work within their scope of practice and meet regulatory requirements. This experience will prepare the students for supervision within future employment and contribute to their understanding of how supervision will contribute to CPD. It is envisaged that the student's engagement with the supervision process will ensure clarity of roles and responsibilities and create structured opportunities to discuss work, review practice and progress and plan for future development as the student continues to relate theory to practice throughout the programme.

The supervision engagement also contributes to student/employee wellbeing and reduces stress.

5. Roles and Responsibilities

This Policy sets out the responsibilities of staff of OTC in relation to the agency and the management of supervision. Clear identification of roles and responsibilities will ensure the OTC's successful running of supervision and demonstrate that they are embedded in the culture of the College.

5.1 Academic Affairs Manager

The Academic Affairs Manager responsibilities include:
a) ensuring that this Policy is reviewed, updated as appropriate;
b) ensuring that appropriate procedures are in place to support this Policy;

c) liaising with OTC Course Directors to ensure implementation of the Policy as appropriate;

d) ensuring that any breaches of the Policy are properly dealt with in accordance with the College statutes and rules.

5.2 Course Directors

The Course Directors are responsible for ensuring the Policy is implemented: The principal duties of the Course Directors are to:

a) maintain a list of nominated contact persons within their programme with responsibility for organising and managing supervision matters within their own areas;

b) ensure their OTC staff attend targeted training and briefing sessions as required;

c) have regular reviews of the college's adherence to the Student Supervision Policy and procedures and ensure documentation is updated as appropriate.

5.4 Students

The Student is responsible for:

a) attending mandatory briefing sessions provided by OTC;

b) attending mandatory induction sessions provided by the supervising agency;

c) advising OTC of any issues that may affect their ability to engage in supervision;

d) adhering to the supervising agency policies and procedures;

e) contacting their nominated OTC tutor at the agreed intervals.

Compliance with these responsibilities is mandatory for the Student.

5.5 Supervising Agencies

The supervision agency, in association with the College, is responsible for providing the student with appropriate student supervision activities to enable them to achieve their intended learning outcomes within their current work environment.

6. Student Supervision Management

The key to success in student Supervision lies in the management of the relationships. There are three key relationships involved in Supervision:

a. College and Student;

b. College and Supervision Agency;

c. Student and Supervision Agency.

Each participant has an obligation to nurture and develop these relationships to ensure each student supervision process is a success.

6.1 Monitoring and Communication during the Student Supervision

During the student supervision process, there will be ongoing communication between the OTC contact person (e.g. the Course Director/ tutor), the supervision agency and the student. The student supervision process will be monitored by the OTC Course Director to ensure the student is achieving their learning objectives and to address any concerns or issues.

6.2 Feedback and Debrief Post-Supervision

After completion of the student supervision, students will be required to provide feedback to the OTC tutor/Course Director on their supervision experience. In light of the feedback, a review of the supervision process and experience will be carried out. The review will be documented.

6.3 Documentation / Recording

Documentation and recording of information must be completed throughout the entire Student Supervision Process. This includes but is not limited to:

1. agreement with the supervision agency(s);
2. key programme LOs signed off by supervisor;
3. any communications during the student supervision;
4. post-supervision review.

Data protection legislation will be considered and complied with during the whole Student Supervision Process.

7. Supporting Procedures

This policy is to read in conjunction with the following procedures that inform and support the step-by-step process of implementing the Student Supervision Policy:

- Online Presentation on Supervision Process, Supervisors Role and Supervision Procedures
- Monitoring and Communication during Student Supervision;
- Supervisor Guidelines on how to deal with issues that may arise in supervision

This Policy supports the provision of a structure to assist in the College's discharge of its insurance and legal obligations where OTC Students are in receipt of Student Supervision.

Policy Title:			Supervision Policy		
OTC Policy No			1712		
Version			1		
Date approved:	June 2018	Date policy will take effect:	September 2018	Date of Next Review:	3 years
Approving Authority:			**Academic Council**		
Document Owner/Contact:			**Academic Affairs Manager**		
Supporting documents, procedures & forms of this policy:			- Online Presentation on Supervision Process, Supervisors Role and Supervision Procedures - Monitoring and Communication during Student Supervision; - Supervisor Guidelines on how to deal with issues that may arise in supervision - Student Handbook		
Audience:			Public – accessible to anyone		
Reference(s)			1. CORU 2. HIQA 3. HSE Guidelines for Supervision for Social Care Workers 4. data protection policy https://www.OTC.ie/en/ocla/comp/data/dataprotection/ ; 5. record management policy http://www.OTC.ie/en/ocla/policy/ ; 6. social media policy http://www.OTC.ie/en/it-policies/policies/ ; 7. student code of conduct http://www.OTC.ie/en/students/policies/; Safety Health & Welfare at Work Act 2005, Equal Status Act 2000 - 2008 and the National Vetting Bureau (Children and Vulnerable Persons) Acts 2012 to 2016.		

5.1.3 Guidelines for Supervision 2018

The role of the supervisor is a highly valued one. While acknowledging the potential difficulties encountered when acting in a supervising role with a work colleague, it is important to remember Supervision forms an integral part of the social care student's experience in college and all students must engage with work based Supervision to progress through the professional programme.

The role of the agency supervisor

The agency work based supervisor's role involves the following:

1. Establishment of mutually agreed learning goals towards which the student will work during Supervision.
2. Helping students to enhance or develop observation, communication and relationship skills as essential requirements for effective social care practice.
3. The development of an open, trusting and confidential relationship with the student, where opportunities for learning and professional development are maximised.
4. The involvement of the student in the work that may expand on their current role as possible/appropriate, depending on the experience level of the student.
5. Setting aside a regular time for formal supervision with the student to explore issues arising from practice, essential learning points, and to give feedback on her/his progress.
6. The completion of the Supervision Forms. Students should be involved in this process and should be aware of the contents of the form before it is returned to the college tutor.

Appointing an agency supervisor

Since the aim of social care training is to supply the sector with first rate practitioners it is desirable that supervisors be qualified and experienced practitioners. The supervisor should ideally be a qualified social care worker and/or in a position to work daily with the student in order to arrive at a valid and comprehensive assessment/evaluation of the student's abilities.

While it is hoped that the supervisor will be in a position to supervise the student for the entire duration of the supervision period, should unforeseen absences occur, it is essential that alternative supervision arrangements be put in place and indicated to the student, and agreed with the college tutor.

Support for Supervisors

To aid the supervisors in their important work the college offers training for supervisors. The college provides an online presentation and related materials on the Student Supervision Process, Supervisors Role and Supervision Procedures to agency supervisors.

Agency supervisors and students can contact the Course Director at any point during the academic year to discuss any issues which are impacting on the supervision process.

The role of the college tutor

Through regular tutorials the course tutor will assist students to integrate the different elements of the college programme both across the various theoretical courses and the learning objectives of the practice supervisions.

The role of the Student

Supervision is designed to encourage the development of standards of proficiency where a social care practitioner is:

a) reliable, responsible and observant. CORU (Professional Development)

b) able to use both initiative and an awareness of the needs and rights of various client groups. CORU (Professional Autonomy and Accountability)

c) skilled in forming relationships and communicating with clients. CORU (Communications Collaborative Practice and teamwork)

d) able to work constructively with colleagues. CORU (Communications Collaborative Practice and teamwork)

e) able to maintain confidentiality which reflects a sound ethical practice base. CORU (Professional Autonomy and Accountability)

f) able to keep records and use case files. CORU (Professional Development)

g) able to use critical reflection to gain the necessary understanding for effective social care practice. CORU (Professional Knowledge and Skills)

h) Be able to prioritise and maintain the safety of both service users and those involved in their care .CORU (Safety and Quality))

Reflective Practice

Reflection techniques are taught throughout the course and students are expected to demonstrate self-awareness and practice analysis in the development of new understanding in

their supervision. Students demonstrate their understanding of the integration of theory and practice in their module assessments which are completed during the course supervision period.

Students illustrate ability to implement appropriate intervention/approach programmes with clients paying particular attention to effectiveness and an ability to apply theoretical frameworks to practice. Students demonstrate evidence of a reflective capacity which is assessed on an on-going basis through each of the three years of the course.

While students are enrolled with College responsibility for the direct work based supervision rests with the agency or employer, which ever so pertains.

If difficulties arise

Throughout the course of the academic year it is possible that issues may arise for some students and/or supervisors which could impact on the supervision process. Such issues could include:

- Student taking maternity leave
- Student goes on extended sick leave
- Student takes up a new role with same/different employer
- Employment-related disciplinary processes in relation to the student
- Supervisor leaving their current role
- Supervisor going on maternity leave or other extended leave (parental leave/sick leave etc.) and is no longer in a position to supervise the student
- Supervisor unhappy with the student's practice performance or participation in supervision
- Student unhappy with the supervisor's supervision

In any of these instances the supervisor and/or the student should contact the Course Director to discuss the issue and agree a plan of action to resolve the issue.

5.2 A Provider Ethos That Promotes Learning

5.2.1 College Mission Statement

As evidenced by the College mission statement the primary focus of the College is the provision of learning opportunities:

"The Open Training College is committed to offering staff in the

disability, health-related, non-profit, community and voluntary sectors, learning opportunities

that are accredited, accessible and embody best practice".

5.2.2 College Objectives

A number of the objectives of the College pertain to teaching and learning:

- contribute to the development and delivery of quality services within the disability, health-related, non-profit, community and voluntary sectors through the provision of accredited education and training grounded in best practice and the most current thinking in relation to the provision of services;
- attend particularly to the education and training needs of staff working in disability, health-related, non-profit, community and voluntary services with no formal third-level qualifications or seeking to improve qualification/CPD profile;
- maintain a strong applied bias for learning in the context of a clear theoretical framework;
- ensure academic rigour in all work with students;
- ensure access, transfer and progression opportunities in line with national best practice and legal requirements;
- provide high quality, effective and cost-effective education and training to students and agencies;
- provide students with a high quality learning experience grounded in academic rigour, but also encompassing an applied practical approach;
- continue to develop and embrace new technologies for learning and for programme delivery and assessment;

In addition, as outlined in Section 1, all aspects of the College relate to teaching and learning.

Distinctive Profile and Purpose

The Open Training College is a medium-sized, specialised college responding to the education and training needs of staff who work in the disability, health-related, non-profit, community and voluntary sectors nationally.

National and Specialised Focus

The Open Training College is an institution solely focused on educating and upskilling staff the disability, health-related, non-profit, community and voluntary sectors. The College make its courses available nationally by using a blended learning approach, called the Supported Open Learning Model.

All College Students are Mature Students

The College is fully committed to adult learners; all students are adult learners, the majority of whom are in employment and seeking to progress in their areas of work/careers.

All Open Training College Programmes are Applied

All programmes run by the College are designed to be applied directly to the relevant workplace of the students, at both local and organisational level. Assessment also includes a strong focus on workplace application of learning. Part of the College's mission is to promote best practice in service therefore there is a robust focus on the transfer and application of learning to the everyday work of the student.

5.3 National and International Effective Practice

The College offers HET and FET programmes in line with the National Framework of Qualifications (NFQ). Through QQI's membership of ENQA (European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education), international effective practice is also assured. Furthermore, in relation to HET programmes, this document has embedded the quality assurance principles as laid out by the European Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance[9] and the Irish Higher Education Quality Network (IHEQN) and with which QQI have agreed and adopted such principles, as most recently expressed through QQI's 2016-18 Policies and Guidelines. In relation to FET programmes reference is made to IQAVET, as the Irish national reference point for EQAVET (European Quality

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[9] Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area. (2015) ENQA

Assurance in Vocational Education and Training). Therefore, from a policy and framework perspective all programmes offered by the College aim to maintain and develop national and international guidance to encourage the development of new approaches and enhance the status of the College.

The **Externality Principle** embedded throughout the College's quality assurance systems makes appropriate use of external persons to ensure national and international comparisons are made. In terms of Programme Reviews and applications for Validation, independent expert panels are an integral part of the process and will often include international and national subject matter experts. This ensures an impartial judgement on the continued maintenance of the overall standard of a course and on its acceptability for the award in question, when compared with similar courses elsewhere in Ireland and / or internationally. Benchmarking in relation to reports carried out for these processes is carried out against institutions offering similar programmes both nationally and internationally. External reviews of the College's systems have been completed by international consultants, such as for OTC's online provision to students, to ensure that national and international best practice is reflected in the recommendations for enhancement.

Through the SMH internal research forum, CPD opportunities, conference attendance and continuing study of staff members (primarily at level 9 and 10 on the NFQ), the College offers numerous and ongoing opportunities for staff members to be kept up-to-date on national and international developments in the areas of education in general and also with a particular focus of the subject areas offered by the College. Insights gained through these modes then feed back into the College population as a whole through the academic governance systems, such as via programme boards, through Course Directors and Tutors, ensuring ultimate best practice delivery to students both at workshops and online, as part of the blended learning model.

Students where English is not their first language are admitted to College programmes with specification related to the CEFRL (Common European Framework of Reference for Languages) in terms of language proficiency. The Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) in relation to international qualifications is referenced against the NARIC service offered by QQI and other QQI publications which demonstrate international systems equivalency in relation to the NFQ.

Nationally, the College has strong links to and active affiliated membership and representation, where appropriate, with the following groups, in particular:

- Services offered by St. Michael's House (an extensive breadth and depth as detailed in Section 1);

- National Human Service Agencies (200+) who have links with the College (see Section 10 in this document and Appendix 5);

- National Federation of Voluntary Bodies (NFVB);

- Social Care Ireland and IASCE (Irish Association of Social Care Educators);

- DFI (Disability Federation of Ireland);

- National Forum for the Enhancement of Teaching and Learning in Higher Education (NFETL – HE);

- HECA (Higher Education Colleges Association) Board and Sub-committees.

Given the nature of programmes offered by the College, continual reference with regard to programme and systems updates is made to publications from the HSE, DoH, CORU (Regulating Health and Social Care Professionals), HIQA (Health Information and Quality Authority), other relevant regulators (e.g. the Charities Regulator, Data Protection Commissioners, Health and Safety Authority) as well as to QQI policy and guideline updates.

5.4 Learning Environments

Students' learning environments are aligned to the Supported Open Learning (SOL) Model as outlined in Section 5.1, above, and subject to the inclusion of work-based learning environments as specified in Figure 11 (at 5.1.1).

Physical Venues

Primarily the Open Training College utilises Marino Institution of Education or the Training Room in our administration building in Goatstown in the delivery of its programmes. These are long-term arrangements which have been in place since 1992 and 2000 respectively. In addition, the College has access to the SMH conference facilities in the headquarters building, Ballymun Road, D9.

On occasion, depending on student/customer agency need and the programme concerned, the College utilises venues such as centres for nurse education or conference facilities. In using such external venues the College has strict quality criteria, which the venue must meet. (A quality assurance checklist for external venues is in use and is revised and updated regularly).

In the provision of training venues College objectives are to:

- Only use venues, which are accessible to people with a disability;
- Use training facilities and examination venues suitable to the ethos and values of adult education;
- Facilitate students with a location that is accessible to them;
- Use venues outside the Dublin region when appropriate and practicable;
- Ensure access to good quality, reasonably priced accommodation if necessary;
- Provide venues that are comfortable, quiet, clean, safe and well serviced;
- Ensure students have access to high quality food and beverages;
- Listen to and act on feedback provided by students on training venues used;
- Use venues which can provide training equipment if needed such as TV and Video, etc.;
- Secure value for money on behalf of students.

All training venues are subject to QA and health and safety checks as outlined in Appendix 4.

In addition to the delivery of workshops/face-to-face workshops in the venues detailed above, as detailed in Section 5, the SOL also comprises the following learning supports/components:

- *Open learning materials*
- *Online database library*
- *Tutorials with an assigned tutor*
- *Feedback (Formative and Summative)*
- *Helpdesk Support*
- *Online learning environments support*