

POLICY ON POLICY DEVELOPMENT OPEN TRAINING COLLEGE

1. Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to define the process by which College policies are to be developed, approved and maintained. Through using a consistent policy development process and format it should be possible to hold policies that are:

- a) appropriately developed and regularly updated;
- b) easy to find, read and understand;
- c) consistent with the College's mission;
- d) compliant with applicable laws and regulations;
- e) reduce risk; and
- f) promote best practices across the College community.

It is acknowledged that this new policy, of which it is the first of its type within College, shall take some time following its approval and introduction to become the format that is used by all the development team. It is expected that as new policies are developed or existing policies are reviewed/amended, that they shall adhere to the provisions set out in this policy.

2. Scope

This Policy applies to all areas and staff of the College; academic, support and administrative. These are all hereinafter collectively referred to as the 'College'.

3. Policy Statement

College policies shall be:

- a) Developed according to the process set out in this policy;
- b) Presented in a standard and common format;
- c) Formally approved by an appropriate level of College management;
- d) Accessible to all parties with an interest in the policy's subject matter;
- e) Kept up to date and current within a framework of an organized system of change control;
- f) Clearly described as policies and kept separate from related documentation such as procedures, guides and other types of related documentation.

All individuals who are responsible for the drafting, updating, approval and distribution of College policies shall comply with this policy. Internal policies, where they exist and apply to the operations of College units, shall not be in conflict with this policy.

The requirements for the formulation and issuance of College policies set out in this policy ***shall not apply to those College policies in existence before this policy was approved. However, where an existing policy is reviewed or replaced in future after the date of approval of this policy***, the requirements set out in this policy shall be applied.

A) Policy development

The Policy Owner shall be responsible for the drafting of new or revised College policies, ensuring policies are up to date, consulting with interested parties and for steering the policy through the levels of College management required for approval. The Policy Owner in consultation with the Head of Quality & Academic Affairs shall also arrange for the policy's publication, when approved, on the College website.

B) Policy format

The drafting of College policies shall adhere to the format set out in the Policy Template referred to below in the section on related documentation. The format may be amended but only to the extent necessary to add clarity to a policy. Certain sections of the policy template are mandatory and shall be used when drafting a policy. Other sections of the policy template are optional and the Policy Owner is not required to apply them unless they add further clarity to the policy and they deem it appropriate to do so.

C) Policy approval

Policies that have a College wide scope must be approved by the Academic Council. In general, the responsibility for promoting compliance with a policy will rest with the Policy Owner unless as specified otherwise within the policy.

D) Accessibility

The majority of policies will be accessible and published on the College website and by any other means as deemed appropriate. Confidential policies, which are for staff use only, will be published on the College Shared Folder or in the Staff Handbook if appropriate.

E) Regular review

The Policy Owner for each policy shall be responsible for keeping the policy up to date and for ensuring that only approved versions of the policy are accessible via the College website.

Each policy shall state the date on which it was approved by Council. Except where a separate process or authority for making changes to a policy are included within the policy, the amendments to existing policies and the development of new policies shall follow the development and approval process as outlined in sections (a) and (c) above. The Head of Quality & Academic Affairs shall assist Policy Owners in implementing a process of regular review and shall provide guidance to Policy Owners in relation to complying with the requirements of this policy.

F) Separation of policies from related guidance material

Policies are to be clearly designated as a policy in their title. Other guidance material which assists in the understanding or implementation of a policy shall not be inserted as text within the policy. Such material shall be referred to in the “Related Documentation” section of the policy.

4. Definitions

College Policy

A policy is a statement of intent which can be used to guide decisions. A policy may stand on its own or can be implemented through procedures, protocols or one of the other document categories indicated in the “Related Documentation” section below.

A College policy has a broad application or impact throughout the College across both academic and support areas. They can assist in promoting compliance with applicable laws or regulations, best practice, ethical norms, pursuit of the College’s mission or in the promotion of efficiencies. They can also assist in the reduction of risk.

College wide policies are approved by the College Academic Council (AC).

Saint Michael's House (SMH) approves policies across a range of areas that are reserved functions for College and these include policies incorporating the arrangements for the recruitment and remuneration of staff and for disciplining, suspending or dismissing staff. SMH also approves policies on Leave, Working from Home, Risk, Health and Safety, Quality, Equality, Respect and Dignity, Research Ethics, Policy for Contracting the Service of Freelance Trainers, Employee Handbook, Probation Policy, Safety Statement, Grievance Policies and Procedures (Employee Handbook) and Records Retention Policy.

New policies or amendments to existing policies outside of the reserved functions of College may be brought to SMH, at the discretion of the College Director.

Once approved, compliance with a College policy is mandatory.

Procedure

A procedure is a guideline or series of interrelated steps which can assist in the implementation of a policy. Procedures establish who, what, where and when in relation to a given activity as well as establishing accountability in support of the implementation of a policy. College procedures shall:

- be written in a format that is easy to follow;
- be published separately from the policy to which they relate;
- be reviewed and updated on a regular basis to check for compatibility with the most recent versions of the related policy; and
- require formal approval by senior executive levels of the College.

Policy Owner

The Policy Owner is the appropriate person (academic or support unit) of the College whose responsibility covers the subject matter of the policy. The Policy Owner shall be responsible for the substance of policy documents and for promoting compliance with the policy unless as specified otherwise within the policy.

5. Related Documentation

1) Policy template

The policy template sets out the prescribed layout to be used when drafting College policies.

2) Guidelines on Policy Development

The guidelines on policy development set out the issues to consider when drafting College policies.

Policy Title:		Policy on Policy Development
OTC Policy No.		1801
Version		1.0
Date approved: Sept. 2018	Date policy will take effect: Sept. 2018	Date of Next Review: 3 years later
Approving Authority:		Academic Council
Document Owner/Contact:		Head of Quality & Academic Affairs
Supporting documents, procedures & forms of this policy:		<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Policy Template 2. Guidelines on Policy Development
Audience:		Public – accessible to anyone
Reference(s)		<p>Policy on Quality Assurance Guidelines – QQI, April 2016.</p> <p>Statutory Quality Assurance Guidelines developed by QQI for use by all Providers – QQI, April 2016.</p> <p>Statutory Quality Assurance Guidelines developed by QQI for Independent/Private Providers coming to QQI on a Voluntary Basis – QQI, April 2016.</p>

	<p>Topic Specific Statutory Quality Assurance Guidelines developed by QQI for Providers of Blended Learning Programmes – QQI, March 2018.</p> <p>Re-engagement with QQI Policy and Criteria for Renewed Access to QQI Validation for Voluntary Providers of Higher Education and Training – QQI, June 2014.</p>
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2.2.2 Guidelines on Policy Development

Introduction

These guidelines are intended for members of staff who are engaged in the process of developing new policies and/or amending existing policies. The guidelines originate from the 'Policy on Policy Development', which was approved by the Academic Council in September 2018. These guidelines were drafted to assist staff in all stages of policy development from the initiation of a new or amended policy through to having an approved policy published on the College's website. The guidelines were drafted by the Head of Quality & Academic Affairs (HQ&AA) and any queries or suggestions regarding the guidelines should be directed to the HQ&AA.

Definitions

Definitions of words and phrases used throughout these guidelines are shown below.

Policy Owner

The Policy Owner is the appropriate person (academic or support unit) of the College whose responsibility covers the subject matter of the policy. The unit shall be responsible for the substance of policy documents and for promoting compliance with the policy unless as stated otherwise within the policy.