SECTION 9: PUBLIC INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION
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Supporting Documents:

1. Validation reports (IER – Independent Evaluation Report)

2. External review reports

3. College Website and Brochures

9.1 Public Information

Procedures for the Publication of Reports and Results of Reviews

The College Quality Assurance Document and Re-validation Reports are published on the website:

http://www.opentrainingcollege.com.

Quality Assurance reports are produced annually for each programme of the College, upon completion of each academic year. All other reports can be produced on a periodical basis and or, relevant to the review cycle of the particular programme or activity, or once-off reports may be produced relevant to a particular project or activity.

Annual Programme Quality Assurance Reports

These reports detail the activities of the programme in the preceding academic year, this includes details relating to the delivery of the programme; staff and student feedback on all aspects of the programme; student recruitment and retention statistics; student assessment results; External Examiner feedback; Programme Board meetings and Quality Improvement recommendations.

From the academic year 2019/20, a summary Annual Quality Report will be provided to QQI, covering the reporting period of the previous academic year.

Graduate Destinations Survey Reports

All graduates of the Open Training College are invited to participate in a survey at intervals of one, three and five years following their graduation. The purpose of these surveys is:

1. To maintain communication with the graduate population of the College;
2. To evaluate the medium to long term impact of OTC programmes on graduates' careers;
3. To remain up to date with developments in the sectors and challenges being faced by staff;
4. To identify additional training and education needs and goals of graduates;
5. To ensure continued relevance of OTC programmes in the workplace;

6. To monitor progression routes of graduates, with regard to career and educational progression; to inform graduates of opportunities arising within the College for further study;

7. To inform Quality Assurance review processes within the College including Institutional Review, Re-validation and Strategic Review and Planning.

All findings from these surveys are collated and presented in report format and made available on request.

College End of Year Evaluation Report

Upon completion of each academic year all current students of the College are invited to give their feedback on all aspects of programmes and services, as experienced by them. This feedback is categorised into eight areas, which are: Overall College Experience, Open Learning Materials, Student Supports and Tutorials, Online Learning and Activities, Assessment & Feedback, Professional Development, College Administration and Progression. All findings from these surveys are collated and presented in report format and available to all students through MyOTC.

Re-validation Review Reports

The Self-Evaluation Report, Peer Review Panel Report and Programme Improvement Plan arising from the completion of Re-validation will be published in full on the College Website.

Institutional Review Reports

The Self-Evaluation Report, Peer Review Panel Report and Quality Improvement Plan arising from the completion of Institutional Review will be published in full on the College Website.

Project Evaluation Reports

The College will produce reports as appropriate and relevant regarding ad hoc projects and pilot programmes when completed.

9.2 Learner Information

Procedures for the Provision of Information to Learners

All information which is published, on programmes offered by the OTC include:

- Programme and Award Title
- Accrediting Body
- Level of the award on NFQ, and associated credits
- Programme content
- Student profile
- Application process and Entry requirements

- Teaching, learning and assessment procedures used

- Student Support structures

- Access, transfer and progression arrangements

- Information on the Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL)

- All relevant fees

Enrolled learners will be notified in writing in accordance with section 67 of the Qualifications and Quality Assurance Education and Training Act (2012) of any changes to information within 14 days of the College becoming aware of any change.

All information and any changes to information will be made available to students, and other interested stakeholders in the following ways:

College Website

The Open Training College website (www.opentrainingcollege.com) is the primary vehicle for the provision of information about the programmes and services of the College to potential students and other interested stakeholders. The website presents detailed information about the background to the College, its staff, mission, aims and values. Any visitor to the website may view details of the programmes and services offered by the College, and be guided through the steps to apply to a programme, with appropriate direction to support and guidance from College staff as necessary.

Social Networking Sites

The College has the facilities to disseminate information and updates through relevant and appropriate social networking sites Facebook (www.facebook.com) and Twitter (www.twitter.com).

College Newsletter

A quarterly newsletter is e-mailed to all College contacts available through the database, this includes current and past students and staff, contacts in employer agencies and relevant professional bodies and associations. The purpose of this newsletter is to maintain contact with all stakeholders and provide updates on College activities and achievements and developments in relation to programmes and services.

College Brochure and Marketing Materials

An Annual College Brochure is produced by the Promotions Committee, containing all marketing materials relevant to the recruitment of new students into programmes. This brochure contains details of the teaching, learning and assessment strategies of the College, information leaflets on all programmes and relevant application documentation. This brochure is emailed or posted to all College contacts available through the database.

College Open Days and Information Sessions

The College will facilitate open days and information sessions as relevant and feasible, in which potential students and other interested parties can meet with College staff, receive information about the programmes and services available and query relevant opportunities available through the College. These information sessions will be facilitated in accessible venues around the country.

Participation in Conferences, and Educational Recruitment Fairs

The College will participate in relevant conferences and educational recruitment fairs, as appropriate and feasible, to provide information to potential students and other interested parties about the programmes and services available, and to promote the College among relevant groups.

9.3 Publication of Quality Assurance Evaluation Reports

Publication of Evaluation & Review Results
The publication of evaluation and review results is done in a three-step process as follows:

Step 1: Sharing evaluation results on MyOTC

Each of the online evaluations remains open for a period of at least two weeks during which time respondents can participate in the survey and amend their feedback as they wish. Immediately following closure of the survey the results are reviewed by the Quality Assurance department for appropriate usage. Previously these were shared on the MyOTC platform; best practice is being reviewed for compliance with GDPR.

Step 2: Review of evaluation results

As described above the feedback received through evaluation surveys is reviewed and discussed at the appropriate board or committee meeting. Recommendations for improvements are agreed at this stage, and plans made for their implementation and evaluation. Each of these boards and committees has guidelines in place for the recording of deliberations and decisions made, and the ratification of decisions through the Academic Council.

Step 3: The Quality Assurance Report

Upon completion of each academic year and the associated Quality Assurance cycle a Quality Assurance report is produced for each programme area under the following headings:

- Programme Overview
- Quality Assurance Policies and Procedures
- Student retention and assessment results
- Results of the QA evaluation procedures
- Report on recommendations implemented
- Recommendations to be implemented

External Monitoring and Evaluation

External monitoring of all accredited providers is carried out by QQI through the 'Lifecycle of Engagements' framework. This monitoring addresses the following areas:

- Programme quality and attainment of awards standards through validation and re-validation processes
- Follow-up on internal and/or external quality procedures, e.g. Re-validation
- Institutional Review
- Specified quality indicators, e.g. completion rates

To facilitate baseline monitoring by QQI the College will supply the following information to QQI as and when required:

1. Findings (as agreed with QQI) arising from the application by a provider of its Quality Assurance Procedures.
2. Follow-up reports as required.
3. External examiner details and their reports.
4. Crisis notification (e.g. financial issues and capacity deficits, major impending media disclosures relating to academic quality).
5. Annual completion rates report.
6. Annual First Destination Survey Data.
7. Arrangements for the protection of learners where appropriate.
8. Other information/data as required or becomes necessary.

From the academic year 2019/20, a summary Annual Institutional Quality Report (AIQR) will be provided to QQI, covering the reporting period of the previous academic year.

9.4 Integration with Blended Learning and Online Learning Strategy

The most pertinent elements relating to Blended Learning (BL) and Online Learning (OL) in this section are:

- Publication of Reports (incl. IERs-Independent Evaluation Reports) and Reviews
- External reviews
- College website and information to learners
- Annual QA reports
- Surveys
- AIQR

Blended Learning: This section meets "*Topic Specific Statutory Quality Assurance Guidelines for Providers of Blended Learning Programmes*" (QQI, 2018), in relation to the following:

i. That a strategic approach to the use of blended learning is explicit and is shared with staff, learners and other stakeholders. A strategic plan includes appropriate investment in infrastructure and contingency arrangements to support all options for blended learning in an online context. Accountable key roles have been identified.

ii. Arrangements for assuring compliance with any legal or regulatory obligations are appropriate to the blended learning and online learning context.

iii. The provider has approved and published expectations for the overall quality of the blended learning provision, including expectations on the effectiveness and accessibility of learning resources and other learning materials to support online provision. The provider also has approved and published expectations for the effective delivery of teaching and learning and assessment in a blended learning context, which are available to stakeholders.

iv. Make available benchmark or specification documents for learning resources and information specific to monitoring and evaluation of the effectiveness of learning resources and the learning environment. These are all considered as part of a programme validation and review process.

v. The availability of appropriate information that adequately explains the online sections of the programme and assesses the suitability of a programme. This is available in advance of the programme commencing.

vi. Clear terms and conditions: Prior to enrolment on a particular programme, the prospective learner is made aware of all terms and conditions relevant to that programme, either in the prospectus or similar material, by correspondence, or in discussion with the provider.

vii. Requirements for access, bandwidth and any prescribed hardware or software are appropriate and viable, are communicated well in advance to the learners and all requirements are published.

viii. There is clarity in the information provided to learners and staff about communication channels and the availability of advice and support, for example, communication must manage learner expectations of communication and availability of staff in the provider. What learners may reasonably expect is specified, for example, expectations of staff and learners on developing any meta skills as part of engaging with the online aspects of the blended learning programme.

ix. Learners have access to:

• Descriptions of the online components of the blended learning programme, or aspect of study, to show the intended learning outcomes and teaching, learning and assessment methods of the unit or module.
• A clear schedule for the delivery of their online learning study materials, learner support (local and/or remote) and for the submission and assessment of their work. This will include learner responsibilities in this regard.
• Information on the ways in which their achievements will be judged, and the relative weighting of online and other remote parts of the programme in respect of assessment overall.

Online Learning: Indicators, for mapping and monitoring:

(Adapted from: *ENQA - Considerations for quality assurance of e-learning provision*, 2018)

INDICATORS
• Students are clearly informed about the e-assessment.
• The institution gives advice on appropriate online behaviour (netiquette rules).
• The institution has a policy and procedure in place for recognition of prior learning.
• The institution publishes reliable, complete, and up-to-date information on study programmes (i.e. recognition of qualifications, learning objectives, credits, requirements, assessment methods, timelines, dates relevant for the programme).
• The institution publishes reliable, complete, and up-to-date information on institutional technical support.
• Technical requirements to enable the full and effective use of the system are clearly identified and published.
• The institution publishes information on completion rates, pass rates, and dropout rates.
• Specific e-learning criteria for external quality assurance procedures (institutional or programme evaluation) are publicly available.