

## SECTION 4: STAFF RECRUITMENT, MANAGEMENT AND DEVELOPMENT

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Supporting Documents:

1. St. Michael's House Human Resources Policies and Procedures Manual (2008-2018)
2. Employee Handbook – SMH
3. Staff Handbook – OTC
4. CPD Policy and Procedures
5. Teaching, Learning & Assessment Committee Minutes

### 4.0 Introduction

The full spectrum of Human Resources policies and procedures operated by the College, under the governance of St. Michael's House is detailed in *St. Michael's House Human Resources Policies and Procedures and the associated Employee Handbook*. While the manual is still available it is continually being reviewed and updated. However, increasingly the main source of information on HR matters for staff is the internal Intranet. Table 5 below provides a summary overview of what is currently available/applicable to staff. Appendix 6 provides a further detailed breakdown (i.e. an unpacking of No. 9 in the table below).

1. [Department Forms \(HRDF\)](#) <sup>8</sup>(7)
2. [Leave Forms \(HRLF\)](#) (11)
3. [Other Forms \(HROF\)](#) (10)
4. [Code of Conduct for Employees](#) (1)
5. [Competencies](#) (2)
6. [Dignity at work policy - Support Contact Persons](#) (2)
7. [General](#) (2)
8. [HR Policies & Procedures Manual](#) (0)
9. [Updated HR Policies 2017](#) (21)
10. [Mobile Phone Policy](#) (1)
11. [Tax Saver Scheme](#) (2)
12. [Annual Leave Calculator](#) (1)
13. [Recruitment](#) (4)
14. [Performance Management Development System](#) (0)
15. [Pensions](#) (11)
16. [Protected Disclosures](#) (3)
17. [Job Evaluation Scheme 2016](#) (2)
18. [Staff Supervision and Support forms](#) (2)
19. [Employee Health and Wellbeing](#) (5)

Table 5: List of staff policies and related information

<sup>8</sup> The number in the bracket indicates the number of documents available to staff on the folder topic. e.g. there are 7 forms in folder no 1. There are 21 updated policies and procedures in folder no.9.

The following sections detail the key areas of staff recruitment/selection, staff communication, management structure, staff development (CPD) and staff performance management. The College Policy on the use of Social Media is also included in this section.

Note: the Social Media Policy also applies to associate staff and students of the College.

## 4.1 Staff Recruitment and Selection

The College is fully committed to ensuring that sufficient, appropriately qualified staff members are employed to meet the academic, administrative and quality requirements of the College. Staff recruitment and selection is carried out in line with the St. Michael's House Recruitment and Selection Policy (Relevant policies are available, in a supplementary document, for external review purposes and available internally on the SMH intranet).

All vacancies are advertised internally and externally in national newspapers and on appropriate recruitment websites. All applicants for a post are assessed based on their abilities and experience against key criteria for the post as outlined in a job specification and personnel profile. Suitable candidates are interviewed by senior staff trained in recruitment and selection techniques. All appointments made are subject to a minimum six-month probationary period. During this probationary period job progress is closely monitored through frequent appraisal meetings between the line manager and new staff member. At least two formal probationary reports will be completed during this period.

Prior to commencing in the position, all new staff members are subject to an identity check by Human Resources. In the case of Irish nationals, new recruits are required to provide a copy of their birth certificate and all non-Irish nationals recruited are required to submit copies of their birth certificates plus passport and immigration papers.

In addition to this, the qualifications of new staff members will be validated independently by the College. In all cases candidates will be required to provide an original or notarised copy of their parchment and transcript and/or Diploma Supplement. The College will contact the examinations office of the awarding institution to validate the authenticity of the documentation. If not clearly stated on the documentation provided by the candidate the level and recognition of the qualification(s) presented will be validated by reference to the Qualifax database. In the case of candidates who present with qualifications obtained outside of Ireland they will be required to

provide evidence of their equivalence and recognition by application to NARIC, the centre for academic recognition of foreign qualifications in Ireland within QQI. All staff members are issued with a formal written contract.

The named person with direct responsibility for the design and integration of the profession-specific components of BA Social Care, the Social Care Programme Director, must have appropriate qualifications and experience. S/he must also be registered with the appropriate statutory registration board unless other arrangements are agreed.

## 4.2 Staff Communication

Staff communication begins with the recruitment, induction and probation policies outlined in this document. The reporting structure is as outlined in the accompanying organisational chart.

For tutors and associate tutors communication is ongoing in the following ways:

- Regular meetings with Programme Director
- Tutor feedback forms
- Participation in relevant programme boards and Academic Council (AC) sub-committees
- Programme development, programme review, validation and revalidation committees
- From St. Michael's House (SMH) HR Department
- On the College website and through College social media
- Regular face-to-face meetings with colleagues
- On the SMH website, Newsletter and Information days
- Internal Research Forum
- External affiliations with which staff engage (e.g. National Forum, IASCE)

For administration staff, communication is ongoing as follows:

- Regular meetings with Corporate Services Manager
- Participation in relevant programme boards and Academic Council (AC) sub-committees
- Programme development, programme review, validation and revalidation committees
- From St. Michael's House (SMH) HR Department
- On the College website and through College social media
- Regular face-to-face meetings with colleagues
- On the SMH website, Newsletter and Information days
- Internal Research Forum

For Programme Directors and management, communication occurs as follows:

- Monthly Programme Director and Management (College executive committee) meetings
- Participation in relevant programme boards and Academic Council (AC) sub-committees
- Programme development, programme review, validation and revalidation committees
- From St. Michael's House (SMH) HR Department
- On the College website and through College social media
- Regular face-to-face meetings with colleagues
- On the SMH website, Newsletter and Information days
- Internal Research Forum
- External affiliations with which staff engage (e.g. National Forum, HECA, QQI)

All staff receive HR and relevant Financial Services updates from the parent organisation (St. Michael's House). In addition, all staff are informed of relevant research and CPD opportunities (the CPD policy is outlined at section 4.3 of this document).

### 4.3 Staff Management

Staff management in the College is undertaken through the line manager structure as indicated on Figure 9 below. Direct line managers meet with their reports on a regular basis both formally and informally. The Programme Directors and Managers including the College Director and Assistant College Director (the College Executive Committee) meet monthly. This meeting forum has a standard agenda covering strategic and operational matters and formal minutes are kept. As detailed in Section 1 the College Director reports into executive management and Board in SMH through regular meetings.

In addition to the line management structure a team-based approach is utilised in the committee structure, in new programme development teams and in project work. This gives staff the opportunity to work across a range of College areas, developing new knowledge and competencies and facilitating staff to contribute over a range of areas thus enriching all College activity.

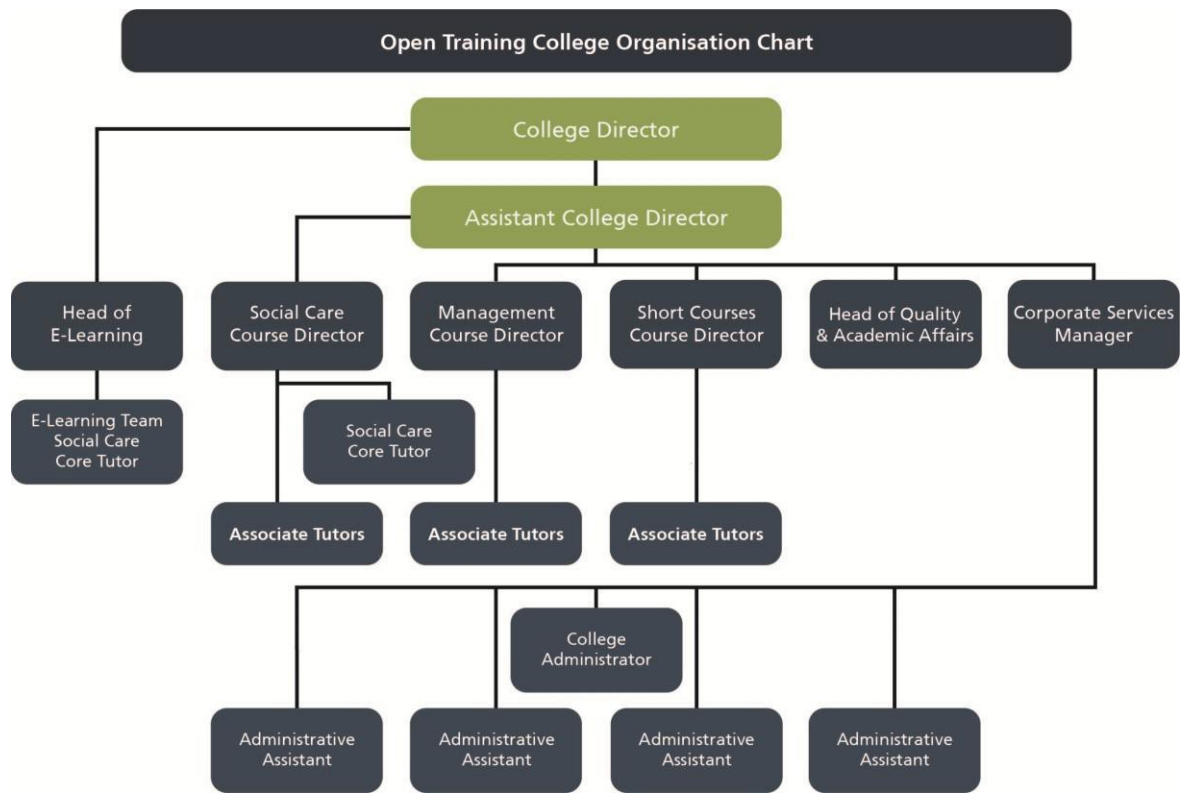


Figure 9: Open Training College Academic Governance Chart

## SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY

### OPEN TRAINING

#### 1. Introduction

The Open Training College (OTC) recognises the value of social media in supporting connectedness, providing information and assistance to our stakeholders, as a marketing tool, and as a valuable resource to learn and to contribute to learning communities. We recognise that social media have become increasingly important and influential communication channels that involve the expression of both personal and professional opinions, the sharing of links, images and other information, often without accompanying endorsements, meaning that the lines between the expression of an individual's personal or professional views and those of Open Training College as an institution can become blurred.

The fact that the content of such media is generated by users poses a unique set of legal and reputational risks to the College. In response, the OTC has developed this Social Media Policy and Guidelines to help clarify how best to use these new evolving tools to the professional benefit of the College, its staff and students.

#### 2. Purpose

The purpose of this Social Media Policy is:

to promote effective and innovative use of social media as part of the College's activities;  
to enhance and protect the College, its staff and students' personal and professional profiles and reputations in the social media space while ensuring that the image and reputation of Open Training College is not compromised in any way.

#### 3. Scope

This policy applies to all OTC staff, students and/or external parties (each of which is defined below and are, hereinafter, collectively referred to as Users and governs the use of social media sites by Users communicating with and/or on behalf of the College. This may arise in a variety of ways including:

Use of College social media sites such as:

social media sites created by the College (including repositories of material for staff and students); and

College profile pages created on third party site such as Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, YouTube, WhatsApp, Snapchat, Tik Tok etc.;

Use of personal accounts on third party social media sites using College systems and/or equipment.

For the purpose of this Social Media Policy:

Staff means all full-time and part-time employees of the College, contracted Teaching and Tutorial staff, and linked providers;

Student means all full-time and part-time students of the College;

External Parties means all College's contractors, researchers, visitors and/or any other parties who are granted access to the College's IT resources and/or College social media sites/discussion forums on third party platforms.

#### 4. What are Social Media

Social media are defined as online environments in which content is created, consumed, promoted, distributed, discovered or shared for purposes that are primarily related to communities and social activities, rather than functional, task-oriented objectives. Media in this context is an environment characterised by storage and transmission, while "social" describes the distinct way that these messages propagate in a one-to-many or many-to-many fashion.

There are many different types of social media channels, which attract specific audiences for different purposes. These include but are not limited to:

- a) forums and comment spaces on information-based websites
- b) social networking websites such as Facebook, LinkedIn
- c) video and photo sharing websites such as Flickr, Tumblr, Instagram, Pinterest and YouTube
- d) weblogs, including corporate and personal blogs
- e) micro-blogging sites such as Twitter
- f) forums and discussion boards such as Yahoo! Groups and Google Groups
- g) online wikis that allow collaborative information sharing such as Wikipedia

Some channels may be more appropriate for the College's and individual's needs than others, particularly in relation to social networking.

## 5. Roles and responsibilities

The College Director has ultimate executive responsibility for the effective development and implementation of academic policies. The Head of Quality & Academic Affairs has overall delegated responsibility of coordinating the day-to-day operation of the policies and the development, maintenance and monitoring of supporting procedures.

The Registration and Admission Committee has designated administration rights to three named staff members who are responsible for uploading expert subject matter and other related information for release on these sites. Programme Directors and Tutors are responsible for pursuing the implementation of this policy in relation to the activities of their programmes.

The following roles and responsibilities apply in relation to this Policy:

Academic Council:

- a) To review and approve the policy on a periodic basis.

Head of Quality & Academic Affairs:

- b) To ensure the Policy is reviewed and approved by the Academic Council as appropriate.
- c) To consult as appropriate with other members of the Directorate and Management Teams.
- d) To liaise with the College Director and or Human Resources (HR) on information received in relation to potential breaches of the policy.
- e) To ensure the appropriate standards and procedures are in place to support the policy.

Registration and Admissions Committee:

- To define and implement standards and procedures which enforce the policy.
- To oversee, in conjunction with Data Owners, compliance with the policy and supporting standards and procedures.
- To inform the Head of Quality & Academic Affairs of suspected non-compliance and/or suspected breaches of the policy and supporting standards and procedures.

College Director/HR Office:

To follow relevant and agreed disciplinary procedures when HR or Academic Affairs Office is informed of a potential breach of the policy.

To manage the disciplinary process.



Staff /External Contractors/Consultants:

To adhere to policy statements in this document.

To report suspected breaches of policy to their Programme Director or the IT/Head of E- learning.

Students:

To adhere to policy statements in this document.

To report suspected breaches of policy to their Tutor and/or Programme Director.

## 6. Legal basis of the policy

Users should be conscious that all information posted to social networking sites must adhere to the legislation in force at the time. Particular attention should be paid to the following Acts:

Copyright and Related Rights Acts 2000, 2004, 2007 and 2019

Data Protection Acts 1988, 2003 and 2018

The Child Trafficking and Pornography Acts 1998 and 2004

Defamation Act 2009

Equal Status Act 2000 – 2018

Prohibition of Incitement to Hatred 1989

Please note that certain additional OTC standards and policies supplement this Policy and should be read in conjunction with this Policy. These include but are not limited to the following:

Code of Conduct for students and staff.

Intellectual Property including the use of the OTC name, logo and trademarks

Data Protection Policy

## 7. Social Media Usage

All written communication between students and college staff will be conducted via official OTC platforms only i.e. notices on College fora or official OTC email accounts. Users must at all times use social media sites in a responsible manner, having due regard to the rights and reputation of the College and of others. In particular, you are required to comply with the following rules:

- Do not post material that should reasonably be deemed threatening, harassing, illegal, obscene, defamatory or slanderous towards any individual or entity; whether the person is a group member or not.
- Do not post information which is confidential and/or proprietary to the College. This includes the sharing of any emails sent from the College to the student. Users should not post confidential or proprietary information about the OTC, its students, employees or alumni (see OTC's Data Protection Guidelines and Data Handling Guidelines). Care should be taken to use good ethical judgement and to ensure that all College

privacy and confidentiality policies are adhered to. Users who share confidential information do so at the risk of disciplinary action.

- students should not post any photos, details or information about their placement organisation
- In order to avoid and minimise the need for updating, social media platforms are not to be used to post detailed policy and procedural information, e.g., programme admission criteria. For such information users should be directed to the official OTC website, electronic resource or publication.
- Do not use pseudonyms or seek to impersonate any other person.
- Do not infringe copyright and/or intellectual property.
- When posting, be mindful of the copyright and intellectual property rights – including inventions, literary (any originally created written work of any nature) and artistic works (images, videos, audio), and symbols, names, images, and designs – of others and of the College.
- For example, photographs posted on social media sites can be easily copied by visitors. OTC corporate affairs office has a policy of securing written consent from all students, alumni and other subjects (where appropriate) limited to reporting College business and the promotion of the College online and offline. Please note this consent does not extend to any purposes outside this remit.
- The Open Training College Trademarks including name and/or logos are not to be used for endorsements. Do not use the OTC name, logo or any other College images or iconography on personal social media sites. Do not use OTC's name to promote a product, cause, petition, political party or candidate.
- Do not promote or advertise a commercial product or solicit business or membership or financial or other support in any business, group or organisation except those which are officially approved by OTC.
- Respect College time and property. College computers and time on the job are reserved for College – related business as approved by line managers/supervisors and in accordance with College policy.

## 8. Institutional Social Media sites

The College's corporate services office advises on social media planning and will maintain a register of all relevant OTC associated sites and the site owners/administrators who have responsibility for them.

## 9. Compliance with the Policy

The College does not routinely monitor content posted on social media sites but reserves the right to monitor, intercept and review, without further notice, the postings and activities of staff, students and alumni in connection with social media where there is reason to suspect that this Policy is being breached or where deemed necessary by the College for other legitimate reasons.

The College operates a notice and takedown procedure. Users are encouraged to be vigilant and to report any suspected violations of this Policy and/or potentially illegal activity immediately to the Corporate Affairs Manager, who will decide, on behalf of the College, the most appropriate programme of action under the circumstances. However, please note that frivolous or vexatious complaints will not be entertained.

## 10. Sanctions

### Breach of Policy

On receipt of notice (or where the College otherwise becomes aware) of any suspected breach of this Policy, the College reserves the right to remove, or require the removal of, any content which is deemed by the College to be in breach of this Policy. In the event that content is deemed to be potentially illegal, the College will report such content to the appropriate authorities.

Open Training College may take appropriate action against individuals when allegation of a breach has been substantiated. Any actions taken by the institution with respect to OTC staff and students will be initiated in accordance with the appropriate OTC regulations and disciplinary procedures, which may include (but are not restricted to) any of the following:

- To disable any User and block access for that User to the College's network, systems,
- communications devices or equipment.
- The initiation of steps for implementation of the Open Training College disciplinary procedures.

Policy Title:		Social Media Policy
OTC Policy No		1803
Version		2.0
Date approved: October 2021	Date policy will take effect: October 2021	Date of Next Review: 3 years from date
Approving Authority:		Academic Council
Document Owner/Contact:		Registration and Admissions Committee
Supporting documents, procedures & forms of this policy:		a) Code of Conduct for Staff and Students b) St. Michael's House Computer and Network User Policy c) GDPR Policy
Audience:		Public access
Reference(s)		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Data Protection Acts 1988, 2003, 2018</li> <li>▪ Copyright and Related Rights Act 2000, 2004 2007 and 2019</li> <li>▪ The Child Trafficking and Pornography Acts 1998 and 2004</li> <li>▪ Defamation Act 2009</li> <li>▪ Equal Status Act 2000</li> <li>▪ Prohibition of Incitement to Hatred Act 1989</li> </ul>

## ACCEPTABLE USAGE OF ELEARNING ENVIRONMENT POLICY OPN TRAINING COLLEGE

### 1. Introduction

The Open Training College's eLearning environment is made up of a variety of online resources. These elements include a Moodle virtual learning platform (MyOTC), Google educational products (Gmail, Google docs, Google drive, Google calendar) and Turnitin (plagiarism testing software). Through these online resources, the College provides an area for teaching and learning.

During online learning, various interactions can occur, namely student-student, student-tutor and tutor -student. These interactions can occur synchronously (through Google Hangouts) or asynchronously (through email, online discussion groups).

It is only through adherence to the *Acceptable Usage Policy* that we can ensure that our e-learning environment remains an enjoyable and comfortable learning space, like any of the College's workshops, tutorials etc.

### 2. Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to ensure users are aware of 'acceptable use' of the e-learning environment as outlined by College and that opinions expressed on discussion boards, chat rooms and emails etc. are respectful to all participants and the agencies and service users they work with; and are the views of the individuals and not of the Open Training College or representing other people including employer/agency without their permission.

### 3. Scope

This Policy applies to all students of the College. This Policy covers documentation of policy, procedures, and standards relating to: e-learning environment.

### 4. Policy Statement

Student users must accept responsibility for all actions and content which they post within the Open Training College e-learning environment, noting that the following is unacceptable:

1. The posting or inclusion into assignment work of copyright/trademarked materials. (Work submitted for assessment will be verified for plagiarised material).

2. The disclosure of an individual's password for another student's use. (Students are responsible for all communications originating from their account).
3. The use of the name of an agency, a staff member from an agency, a service users name or any other person from an agency. Anonymity must be adhered to at all times.
4. Use of another student's account.
5. Use of inappropriate language i.e. language that is obscene, defamatory, threatening or offensive.
6. Posting of material that may encourage criminal conduct.
7. Anonymous postings to the discussion boards.
8. Transferring computer viruses or other codes that interfere with other users' use of the e-learning environment or their personal computers.
9. Emailing tutors / College with material that is not related to the programme e.g., jokes, circulars etc.
10. The use of the College's e-learning environment to carry out any illegal/criminal activities.

*Students are requested to:*

- Install virus-checking software onto their computer before they start their programme and undertake to keep this up to date.
- Notify the College immediately if they identify a security problem on the system.
- Ensure that they put in place on their own personal PCs, adequate measures for backing-up their work
- Regard any email as a written formal letter or any online posting as a formal academic response. Any defamatory or careless remarks can have very serious consequences. The use of indecent, obscene, sexist, racist or other inappropriate remarks whether in written form, cartoon/gif/pictorial form or otherwise, is strictly prohibited
- Back up every assignment onto their hard drive and onto a removable disc for their own records
- Inform the College immediately by emailing the E learning Team at [elearning@opentrainingcollege.com](mailto:elearning@opentrainingcollege.com) on receiving any offensive, unpleasant, harassing or intimidating message while studying within MyOTC.

Use the OTC e-learning environment only for lawful purposes. Without limiting that general statement, you may not use our network:

- In any way that breaches any applicable local, national or international law or regulation;
- In any way that is unlawful or fraudulent, or has any unlawful or fraudulent purpose or effect;
- For the purpose of gaming or online gambling websites;
- For the purpose of harming or attempting to harm minors in any way;
- To transmit, or procure the sending of, any unsolicited or unauthorised advertising or promotional material or any other form of similar solicitation (spam);
- To knowingly transmit any data, send or upload any material that contains viruses, Trojan horses, worms, time-bombs, keystroke loggers, spyware, adware or any other harmful programs or similar computer code designed to adversely affect the operation of any computer software or hardware;
- To communicate hate speech, bullying or harassment against any person, whether or not they form a part of the broader OTC community.

#### Responsibilities and Guarantees of the Open Training College:

1. The Open Training College in consultation with their eLearning suppliers will endeavour to ensure that there is minimum downtime on MyOTC.
2. Loss of data due to interruptions in the Internet service is not the responsibility of the Open Training College but that of the user's Internet service provider.
3. The Open Training College will not be responsible for the loss of data caused by a computer or electronic virus. It is the responsibility of the student to implement procedures for the backing up of data and virus checking.
4. The Open Training College reserves the right to monitor user activity, for quality assurance, learning improvement, learner analytics and security reasons.
5. The Open Training College reserves the right to review, move or delete materials at its own discretion, including postings to discussion boards, bulletin boards and chat rooms, which it considers to be in breach of the Acceptable Usage Policy.
6. The College reserves the right to monitor all online activity rigorously and will take action, including legal action, for any serious breach of this policy.
7. The Open Training College will not be responsible for links posted by users in its system.
8. No member of the Open Training College will knowingly give out a user's personal contact details without their permission.

## Online Content

These content standards apply to any and all material which you contribute to the OTC E-learning environment (“contributions”), and to any interactive services associated with it.

Users must comply with the spirit of the following standards as well as the letter. The standards apply to each part of any contribution as well as to its whole.

### Contributions must:

1. Be accurate (where they state facts);
2. Be genuinely held (where they state opinions); and
3. Comply with applicable law in Ireland and in any country from which they are posted.

### Contributions must not in the opinion of the OTC:

1. Contain any material which is defamatory of any person;
2. Contain any material which is obscene, offensive, hateful or inflammatory;
3. Promote sexually explicit material;
4. Promote violence;
5. Promote the harm or abuse of children;
6. Promote discrimination based on race, gender, religion, nationality, disability, membership of the traveller community, sexual orientation or age;
7. Infringe any copyright, database right, trademark or other intellectual property of any other person;
8. Be likely to deceive any person;
9. Be made in breach of any legal duty owed to a third party, such as a contractual duty or a duty of confidence;
10. Promote any illegal activity;
11. Be threatening, abuse or invade another’s privacy, or cause annoyance, inconvenience or needless anxiety;
12. Be likely to harass, upset, embarrass, alarm or annoy any other person;
13. Be used to impersonate any person, or to misrepresent your identity or affiliation with any person;
14. Give the impression that they emanate from the OTC, if this is not the case; and
15. Advocate, promote or assist any unlawful act such as (by way of example only) copyright infringement or computer misuse.



## **5. Roles and Responsibilities**

### eLearning Team

The OTC eLearning Team is responsible for:

- Monitoring use of College IT Resources to ensure this Policy is not breached;
- Acting on breaches to this Policy and bringing any breaches to the attention of Head of eLearning.

### Users

Each User is responsible for:

- Complying with this Policy and all other relevant policies and procedures;
- Ensuring all passwords assigned to them are kept confidential;
- Reporting all breaches of this Policy to College

## **6. Sanctions**

Violation of the Acceptable Usage Policy may result in the termination of the student's right to access and use of the e-learning environment. Furthermore, other disciplinary actions may follow.

## **7. Related Documentation**

Please note that certain additional standards and policies may supplement this Policy in particular circumstances and therefore they should be read in conjunction with this Policy and all Users should ensure they are compliant with them.

1. Risk Management Policy
2. GDPR Policy
3. Social Media policy

Policy Title:		Acceptable Usage Policy
OTC Policy No		1708
Version		3.0
Date approved: June 2021	Date policy will take effect: June 2021	Date of Next Review: 2023
Approving Authority:		Academic Council
Document Owner/Contact:		Head of eLearning
Supporting documents, procedures & forms of this policy:		Social Media Policy Risk Management Policy GDPR Policy
Audience:		Public
Reference(s)		<p>Criminal Damage Act, 1991 (particularly Section 5)  <a href="http://www.irishstatutebook.ie/eli/1991/act/31/enacted/en/print#sec5">http://www.irishstatutebook.ie/eli/1991/act/31/enacted/en/print#sec5</a> ;</p> <p>Data Protection Act,  2018 <a href="http://www.irishstatutebook.ie/eli/2018/act/7/enacted/en/print.html">http://www.irishstatutebook.ie/eli/2018/act/7/enacted/en/print.html</a>;</p> <p>Child Trafficking and Pornography Act, 1998  <a href="http://www.irishstatutebook.ie/pdf/2000/en.act.2000.0028.pdf">http://www.irishstatutebook.ie/pdf/2000/en.act.2000.0028.pdf</a> ;</p> <p>Copyright and Related Rights Act, 2000  <a href="http://www.irishstatutebook.ie/pdf/2000/en.act.2000.0028.pdf">http://www.irishstatutebook.ie/pdf/2000/en.act.2000.0028.pdf</a> ;</p> <p>Health and Safety Act (2005)  <a href="https://www.hsa.ie/eng/Legislation/Acts/Safety_Health_and_Welfare_at_Work/SI_No_10_of_2005.pdf">https://www.hsa.ie/eng/Legislation/Acts/Safety_Health_and_Welfare_at_Work/SI_No_10_of_2005.pdf</a> ;</p> <p>Intellectual Property Miscellaneous Provisions Act (1998)  <a href="http://www.irishstatutebook.ie/1998/en/act/pub/0028/index.html">http://www.irishstatutebook.ie/1998/en/act/pub/0028/index.html</a></p>

## 4.4 Staff Development

### 4.4.1 Staff Induction

Induction training for new staff is completed during their six-month probationary period, during which the staff member will be appropriately briefed on:

- College background, aims, ethos and values, structure and organisation;
- Roles and responsibilities of College staff;
- Academic and administrative procedures and regulations, including introductory training on College information systems;
- Specific roles, responsibilities and requirements of the role;
- General terms and conditions of employment;
- HR and staff development policies, procedures and regulations.

### 4.4.2 Staff Training

The Open Training College has an internal policy of supporting staff with a variety of training, educational and development opportunities. Staff development is any measure undertaken by individuals, teams or organisations to improve their skills, knowledge and abilities, particularly as they relate to the workplace and from which added value can be ascertained. These include:

- Pursuing formal qualifications using taught and/or research models;
- Attendance and participation in conferences and seminars both national and international;
- Participation in short programmes relevant to their subject area/discipline or area of responsibility in the College;
- In-service training opportunities within the main organisation;
- Representing the College on relevant special interest and working groups;
- Regular staff monitoring.

A full record of staff training and development is maintained by the relevant Programme Directors, who in conjunction with the College Director approve all staff training and development activities in advance and ensure such activity does not interfere with the core duties of any staff member or does not conflict with the core business of the College.

The Teaching, Learning & Assessment Committee of the College, chaired by the Assistant College Director, works to identify ongoing staff training and development needs and opportunities at the level of the staff team, and is the forum at which learning from staff training and development activities is shared and disseminated among the wider staff team, and implemented into practice.

**CPD POLICY**  
**OPEN TRAINING COLLEGE**

## **1. Definitions**

College defines Continuing Professional Development (CPD) as:

*'CPD is an ongoing process of learning and development that continues for the duration of a person's working life. The activities which lead to professional development may be formal or informal and a range of learning methods should be available to account for the different types of knowledge required and to enhance learning in different ways'.*

## **2. Purpose**

The purpose of this policy is to outline the Open Training College's approach to supporting the continuing professional development of the staff team.

## **3. Scope**

The scope of this policy includes the identification of CPD requirements and the provision of training for the staff team as a whole in response to programme developments /projects in response to strategic objectives of College and the provision of support to individuals to pursue self-defined CPD goals. This policy is not currently associated with any staff appraisal procedures, and should not be used as a tool for staff appraisal in the absence of an agreed procedure.

## **4. Policy Statement**

The Open Training College is a "learning community" where all are involved in a continuous process of improvement and enrichment. The College is committed to fostering a positive climate for continuing learning. CPD is the means by which the College is able to motivate and develop its community. It does so at a variety of levels - individual, team, whole College and through wider networks with an emphasis on collaborative learning.

The College believes that effective staff should take ownership and give a high priority to professional development. We believe that a coherent and progressive opportunity to develop professionally and

personally both improves standards and raises morale through personal and professional fulfilment, and also aids recruitment and retention.

All those involved in the College community shall have an entitlement to equality of access to high-quality induction and continuing support and development.

The central features of the CPD policy comprise effective auditing and identification of need and aspiration, in line with College strategic objectives; ensuring appropriate match of provision to learning needs of the individual, the team and the College as a whole; reliable and explicit evaluation of the impact of provision; effective dissemination of good and successful practice to ensure that such practice is embedded and reinforced.

The College's CPD provision will allow staff to develop skills and competencies progressively allowing them to build on and reinforce skills and expertise dealt with earlier, particularly across the key areas identified in College's Strategic Objectives. The College will encourage professional recognition including accreditation of the CPD undertaken.

The College recognises and supports the CPD for all registered Social Care Workers. To this end, specific CPD opportunities for all personnel involved in the development, design, delivery and assessment of the BA in Social Care are provided. The focus of this is on communicating and fostering an understanding of the practice of the Social Care profession among professional and non-profession staff involved with the programme. All relevant staff must complete the CPD outlined by the Programme Director and update their records accordingly. The programme director reports on all CPD activity to the Teaching, Learning and Assessment committee.

## **5. Roles and Responsibilities**

The College's Teaching, Learning & Assessment Committee is responsible for the maintenance, review and implementation of this policy and will oversee the coordination of all CPD activities. The Teaching, Learning & Assessment Committee will be supported and assisted by the Programme Boards in all relevant aspects of this policy. The CPD policy will be reviewed periodically by the Teaching, Learning & Assessment Committee which is chaired by the Assistant College Director.

Policy Title:		Continuing Professional Development
OTC Policy No		1705
Version		4.0
Date approved: April 2022	Date policy will take effect: May 2022	Date of Next Review: 04/2024
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"> <li>1. Identifying CPD Need and Provision of CPD to Staff</li> <li>2. Individual Staff CPD Record Form and CPD Guidelines</li> <li>3. Report on the Provision and Impact of CPD</li> </ol>
Audience:		Public access
Reference(s)		National Forum: Professional Development Framework (PDF)

#### 4.4.4 Procedures for Identifying CPD Needs and provision of CPD to Staff

##### Identifying needs at the level of the individual

Currently individual staff members are responsible for their own continuing professional development and identifying their needs in this area. The needs of individuals are informed by College strategic objectives, CPD Policy, and also by the individual's own interests and needs relating to their specific area(s) of responsibility in the College

Individual staff members are welcome and are encouraged to discuss their CPD needs with their Line Manager in the first instance, and may approach the Teaching, Learning & Assessment Committee or Programme Boards to highlight their interest in pursuing CPD in an area of need identified by these committees. Where appropriate an individual may be approached by their Line Manager to pursue individual CPD activities to fulfil a requirement identified by the Teaching, Learning & Assessment Committee or Programme Board.

##### Identifying needs at the level of the team and College

The Teaching, Learning & Assessment Committee, supported by Programme Boards, informed by the strategic objectives of the College, are responsible for identifying CPD requirements at the level of the staff team and the College. Such needs will be identified largely through existing mechanisms including but not limited to: Ongoing evaluations with staff, students and relevant third parties; National and local sectoral priorities and policy developments; other internal and external monitoring and feedback evidence, and through informal and formal discussions with individuals and teams. Information gathered through these channels will be considered at meetings of the Teaching, Learning & Assessment Committee and Programme Boards and will inform decisions to pursue CPD activities.

Recommendations for CPD activities identified by the Teaching, Learning & Assessment Committee and Programme Boards will be brought to meetings of the Programme Directors and Managers (College executive committee) and Academic Council for further discussion and ratification where appropriate. The Chairperson of the Teaching, Learning & Assessment Committee will attend appropriate Academic Council and Programme Directors and Managers meetings and, at least annually, present a report on the provision and impact of CPD.



The Teaching, Learning & Assessment Committee, supported by the Programme Boards, will be responsible annually for discussing with the College Director the main CPD priorities and the likely budgetary implications of addressing these needs.

#### CPD Provision

##### CPD Provision at the level of the staff team and the College

The Teaching, Learning & Assessment Committee, supported by Programme Boards, shall provide and update details of the range of opportunities available and be responsible for communicating relevant opportunities to appropriate staff. The information will be kept updated and made accessible and available to the College community.

The Teaching, Learning & Assessment Committee, supported by the Programme Boards, shall be responsible for ensuring that appropriate opportunities are provided for the following groups of the College community:

- Staff new to the College or role
- Staff specialising in teaching/supporting particular groups of learners
- Middle and senior managers
- Staff with special responsibilities i.e. social media, learning disabilities, open learning etc.
- Secretarial and administrative staff

The Teaching, Learning & Assessment Committee, supported by the Programme Boards, will be responsible for ensuring that external providers are of sufficient quality.

The College will have systems and opportunities for teams and the whole College to discuss and feedback to the Teaching, Learning & Assessment Committee details of priorities and methods including the use of the College training days.

The Teaching, Learning & Assessment Committee, supported by the Programme Boards, will be responsible for ensuring the efficient organising of opportunities, e.g. booking, confirmation and for providing appropriate support such as organising relevant resources, setting up appropriate meetings and organising membership of, and subscriptions to, appropriate bodies such as sector specific associations

The opportunities available will fully reflect the Open Training College Staff Code of Practice in that they will only be offered if they:

- meet identified needs
- are based on good practice - in development activity and in teaching and learning
- help raise standards of learners' achievements
- respect cultural diversity
- are provided by those with the necessary experience, expertise and skills
- are planned systematically and follow the agreed programme except when dealing with emerging issues
- are based, where appropriate, on relevant standards
- are based on current research and inspection evidence
- make effective use of resources, particularly ICT
- are provided in accommodation which is fit for purpose with appropriate equipment
- represent value for money
- have effective monitoring and evaluation systems including seeking out and acting on user feedback to inform the quality of provision

The College will support a wide portfolio of CPD approaches identified according to “Best Value” principles and which reflect the learning effectiveness of the participants. These include:

- in-College training using the expertise available within the College and collaborative activity (e.g. collaborative teaching, planning and assessment, work with a learning team, workshop observation, existing expertise, peer-based training, collaborative enquiry and problem-solving, modelling)
- coaching and mentoring and engaging in a learning conversation
- job enrichment/enlargement (e.g. a higher level of responsibility, job sharing, acting roles, job rotation, shadowing, leading meetings)
- producing documentation or resources such as curriculum/programme development, teaching materials, assessment, ICT or video programme
- accessing an external consultant/adviser or relevant expert as required
- master classes, model and demonstration lessons
- role play, simulations
- collecting and collating learner feedback, data and outcomes
- College visits to observe or participate in good and successful practice
- postgraduate professional development and other qualifications from higher educational institutions and other forms of professional recognition and qualifications
- research opportunities

- open learning (e.g. relevant resources such as educational journals and publications, training videos, reflection, simulations)
- practical experience (e.g. opportunities to present a paper, contribute to a training programme, co-ordinating or supporting a learning forum or network, involvement in local and national networks, involvement with a subject or specialist association)
- external partnerships (e.g. with a colleague, group, subject, phase, activity or College-based team meetings and activities such as joint planning, observation or standardisation, special project working group, involvement in a formal or informal partnership such as a Network Learning Community)

All those engaged with CPD will be encouraged to reflect on their CPD learning experience and seek professional recognition, including accreditation for the work undertaken. The Teaching, Learning & Assessment Committee will provide directly or organise guidance to staff on how such recognition can be achieved.

#### CPD Provision at the level of the individual

The provision of, and support for CPD activities for individual members of staff will be subject to the same rigorous considerations regarding quality, relevance and best value as described above.

Requests from individuals to access CPD should be addressed to their Line Manager and/or College Director who will decide on the most effective means. Individual staff members will take responsibility for making their own arrangements for booking and attending at approved CPD activities.

#### Evaluating Impact and Disseminating Good Practice

Upon completion of any relevant CPD activity at the level of the College, team or individual, the participant(s) will discuss with their Line Manager the opportunities to disseminate learning to other staff. Relevant feedback about the provision and the ideas should be provided to their team at Programme Board or team meeting, and communicated to the Teaching, Learning & Assessment Committee as appropriate. Where it is agreed that there would be benefit in a wider circulation or follow up, the Teaching, Learning & Assessment Committee, supported by Programme Boards, will be responsible for making appropriate arrangements, e.g. circulating relevant resources, a session at a staff or subject meeting, introducing a teaching or learning strategy, inclusion on the College websites. The Teaching, Learning & Assessment Committee will be responsible for ensuring whether any follow up is needed to the provider, e.g. feedback, issues of access.

The Teaching, Learning & Assessment Committee shall be responsible for assessing the value for money aspect of CPD through seeking to monitor and evaluate impact.

The Teaching, Learning & Assessment Committee shall be committed to ensuring that CPD systems and procedures conform to current research findings. This will be undertaken at a variety of levels including:

- immediate/short term evaluation by participants
- longer term follow-up for a sample of CPD undertaken usually at a period no less than 6 months following the provision
- informal discussion with colleagues about improved practice

Appropriate documentation (CPD Staff record forms) will be maintained of all CPD activities of College staff in order to inform reviews and evaluations of CPD activity. The Teaching, Learning & Assessment Committee shall provide an annual report to the College Director on the benefits of the CPD undertaken and future needs.

## 4.5 Performance Management

For many years no agreed formal approach to Performance Management existed in the HSE and therefore in bodies operating under the auspices of the HSE. In the absence of an organisational approach the College utilised a system called Periodic Service Review (PSR) where goals and actions agreed at previous meetings were reviewed and corrective action/additional action taken where necessary. The focus was ensuring continuous meeting of goals and targets.

In recent years some progress has been made with regard to the implementation of a formal Performance Management Development System (PMDS) in SMH. This was introduced following extensive consultation and discussion and by agreement of relevant unions. It is intended to address regulatory requirements, Public Service Agreement 2010-2014, the Haddington Road Agreement, the Lansdowne Road Public Service Stability Agreement 2013-2018 and National Agreements such as Dignity at Work and Trust-In-Care. The current system is approved for use with Grades VIII and above. The only relevant grades in the College are College Director and the Assistance College Director. However, since late 2017 Grade VII (Programme Director and Manager level) can opt to have the system applied to them.

The purpose of the PMDS system is to provide a formal forum where staff and their managers can discuss, clarify, agree roles, and key objectives and priorities annually. It is structured on four meetings per year taking place with each meeting comprising of four stages as detailed below.

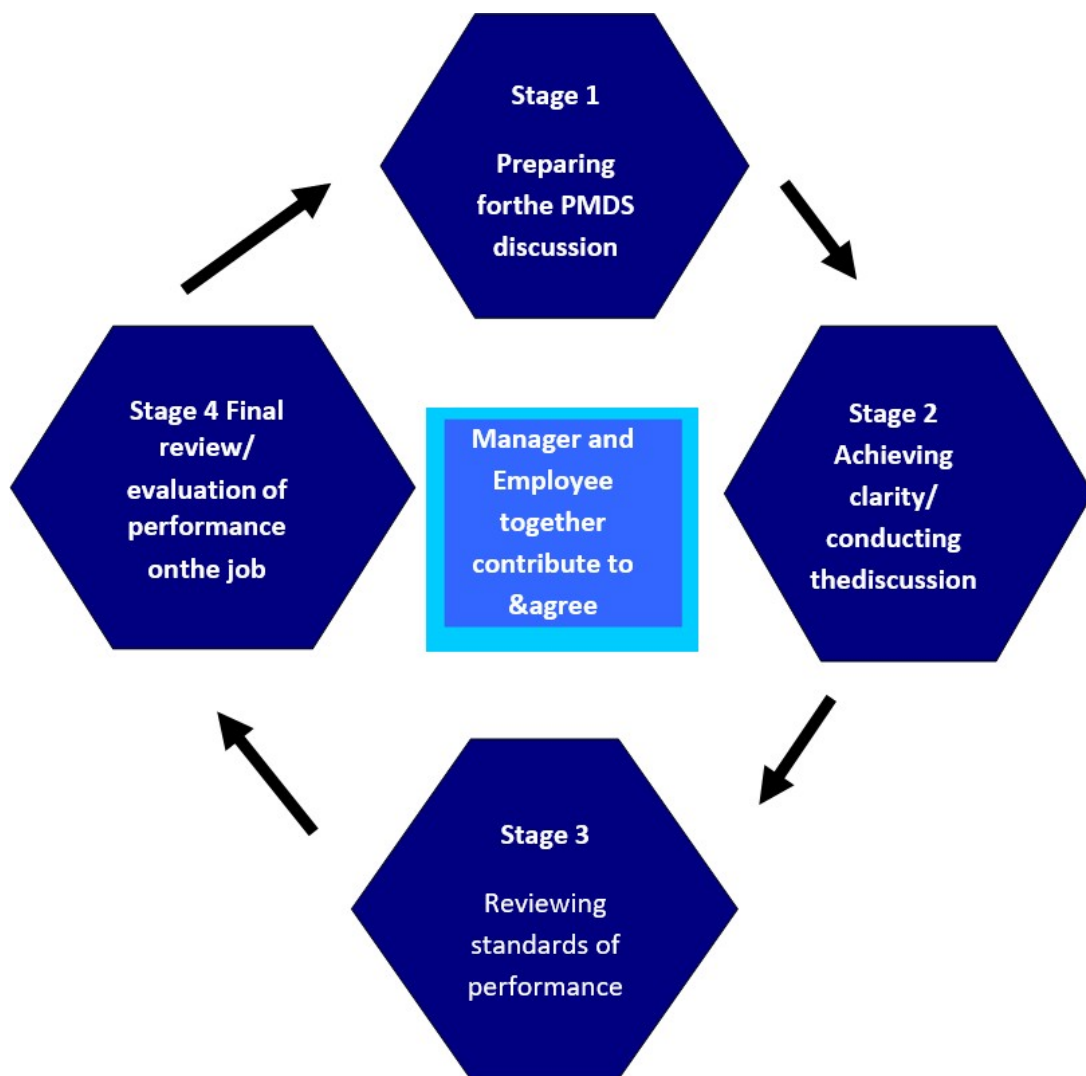


Figure 10: The SMH PMDS Process

#### 4.5.1 Supports for Poorly Performing Staff

Staff members who are not performing to the expected or required standards of their role will be notified of shortcomings through the application of the SMH Disciplinary Policy and

Procedures. Initially the staff member's immediate supervisor/manager will deal with deficiencies on an informal basis through discussion, counselling and appropriate assistance. The PMDS system detailed above offers one mechanism by which staff can be supported toward improvement. For personal matters impacting on performance, role mentoring is offered internally, staff support persons (external to the line management structure) are available, dignity at work supports are also available and there is an employee assistance programmes (via VHI) in place. A range of family friendly practices operate as does a comprehensive sick leave and unpaid leave approach.

If, following the informal stage and supports being put in place, the staff member continues to fail to meet the required standards then the formal disciplinary procedure is invoked. The purpose of the disciplinary procedure is to help the staff member achieve the necessary improvements and prevent any recurrence. The Disciplinary Policy is included in Appendix 7.

#### 4.5.2 Removal of Poorly Performing Staff

Following application of the progressive stages of the Disciplinary Policy and procedures staff who consistently fail to meet the required standards of their role may be subject to dismissal at stage 4 of the application of the procedures (SMH-HR Policies and Procedures).

### 4.6 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:**

- Relevance of Blended and Online Learning (BL/OL) expertise in staff recruitment and selection
- Acceptable usage of E-learning environment policy
- Staff induction and training
- CPD policies and procedures
- Performance management
- Evaluating impact and disseminating good practice

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. The strategies and processes for the appointment, induction, training, professional development and appraisal arrangements for teaching and support staff are appropriate and specific to blended and online learning.
- ii. Staff engaged to support online learners can either demonstrate previous experience of online provision or are provided with appropriate induction and training.
- iii. There is a planned approach to the appointment of (or access to) specialist staff to support the provider’s blended learning strategy.
- iv. There is planned close collaboration between the academic and other support personnel and specialist staff, such as teams involved in designing learning technologies and other methodologies supporting online learning.
- v. also include appropriate competencies required, for example, in designing a programme, understanding the pedagogical differences within a curriculum of supporting learners in a blended learning environment, such as virtual learning environment.
- vi. Planned and controlled opportunities for staff to test new or evolving technologies not currently supported by the existing policy or provider platform.
- vii. Staff qualifications and experience in online learning.
- viii. Arrangements for the induction and continuing professional development (CPD) of staff involved in a) the development and support of online resources; b) online teaching, where such experience is lacking; c) support services for learners.
- ix. Staff induction processes for staff employed to support or assess learners are in place. Staff are appropriately inducted and trained for their role in online learning.
- x. Arrangements that provide assurance that all those involved in teaching and learning or supporting learning are appropriately qualified, supported and developed to provide effective online learning. This will include the protocols for communication and facilitation of online discussions and other challenges of teaching with technology.

Online Learning: Indicators, for mapping and monitoring:

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

INDICATORS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Teaching staff involved in designing/developing/evaluating programmes are familiar with the advantages/disadvantages of using e-learning in particular course contexts.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The institution has defined the structure, profile, and role of the teaching staff that is aligned with the pedagogical model.</li> </ul>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The institution uses appropriate instruments to guarantee that the profile of the teaching staff corresponds to their duties.</li></ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The teaching staff is trained and proficient in the use of learning technologies and e-assessment methods. There are particular training activities for new staff.</li></ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The institution has developed procedures to identify the support requirements of the teaching staff.</li></ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Technological and pedagogical support services for teachers are adequate, accessible, and timely.</li></ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The teaching staff-student ratio avoids excessive workload for teachers and tutors.</li></ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The institution has implemented appropriate procedures for recruiting and hiring teaching staff.</li></ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The teaching staff is coordinated effectively.</li></ul>