



**The Open Training College**  
**Student Handbook 2017-18**  
**Version 2.0 September 2018**

**For students of the following courses:**

- Level 7 Certificate in Supported Employment - Special Purpose Award  
**7S20644**
- Level 7 Certificate in Managing for a Positive Behavioural Culture -  
Special Purpose Award  
**7S20643**
- Level 6 Certificate in Facilitated Learning - Minor Award  
**6H20645**





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## FOREWORD

This Student Handbook has been prepared for students of the Open Training College who are undertaking the following programmes accredited by Quality and Qualifications Ireland (QQI) at levels 6 and 7:

- Level 7 Certificate in Supported Employment - Special Purpose Award - 7S20644
- Level 7 Certificate in Managing for a Positive Behavioural Culture - Special Purpose Award - 7S20643
- Level 6 Certificate in Facilitated Learning - Minor Award - 6H20645

This Student Handbook introduces the College and describes its administrative arrangements and how these will affect you as a student. It also outlines in detail College regulations and procedures that you need to follow.

This Handbook is intended to be used by you as a reference manual during the course of your studies. It is amended and updated at the beginning of each academic year to include relevant changes to College policy and practice. It is therefore essential that you read and familiarise yourself with the contents of the Handbook at the start of your programme/module. If you do not understand any of the information presented in any part of this handbook you are required to contact your tutor immediately for clarification.

The College wishes to emphasise that, while every effort is made to ensure accuracy, the material in this handbook is subject to alteration or amendment in the light of changes to regulations or in policy or of financial or other necessity.

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## 1. GENERAL INFORMATION

### 1.1 Welcome from the College Director

Dear Student

Welcome to the Open Training College. If you are a returning student to the Open Training College we wish you a successful and enjoyable academic learning experience. If you are a new student we extend a warm welcome and wish you a smooth transition to your new course of study.

Since our foundation in 1992, the Open Training College has developed an excellent reputation in the area of disability, and more recently the wider non-profit/voluntary sectors. As a college we are committed to adult education and to making high quality educational opportunities available to adults working, or aspiring to work in human services. You can be assured that you have chosen to study with a college of repute. In 2010 the College received an Aontas Star Award for its contribution to adult learning opportunities in Ireland. We are very aware that a large part of our success is due to the commitment of our students, a responsive and dedicated staff team and the agencies who have supported the College since its inception.

As a college we remain committed to the pursuit of excellence, and a high standard of customer care. If, at any stage of your time with us, you feel we could improve any aspect of what we do, please do make your views known. Our wish for you is that your time with us will prove to be a challenging, rewarding and enjoyable experience. Please remember that we are committed to you and your learning and that your course tutor is there as your main support.

This handbook contains valuable information about the College, its services and regulations. Please read it carefully now and retain it where you may access it should need arise.

Best wishes for a successful, enjoyable and productive time with the College. Thank you for choosing to study with us and we look forward to working with you.



**Dr. Karen Finnerty**

**College Director**

## 1.2 College Background and Mission

The Open Training College was established in 1992 as part of [St. Michael's House](#), to provide learning opportunities for staff in the disability sector. We now offer a range of programmes for those working in disability, voluntary and not-for-profit services, from three-day specific skills programmes to accredited degrees in Management and Applied Social Studies.

We also offer in-service training and consultancy services to agencies, contribute to trans-national project work, professional seminars and conferences, and programmes within other third level institutions.

We are a self-funded, not-for-profit entity. Our income is generated by student fees, project work and consultancy work.

The programmes offered by the College provide students with recognised qualifications that are accredited by Quality and Qualifications Ireland (QQI). QQI was created by an amalgamation of four bodies that have both awarding and quality assurance responsibilities: the Further Education and Training Awards Council (FETAC), the Higher Education and Training Awards Council (HETAC), the National Qualifications Authority of Ireland (NQAI) and the Irish Universities Quality Board (IUQB).

All programmes are designed using best practice informed by a thorough understanding of the adult learning process. They provide and stimulate diverse learning experiences that build on students' existing skills and knowledge. Each of our programme modules contain clearly articulated learning outcomes, around which assessment procedures are structured. This ensures transparency and consistency in the assessment process.

The College utilises the *Supported Open Learning Model* for programme delivery, which combines open learning materials with practical assignments, workshops and a comprehensive online and tutorial support system. This allows students to continue in their current employment while availing of supported study in their own time.

We view our students as colleagues committed to the common cause of enhancing the lives of service users of disability, not-for-profit and voluntary services. The College values the experience students bring to their studies and so offers a strongly applied bias in the application of learning

through programme assessment methods. The input of all stakeholders is sought and welcomed in relation to all College matters.

All College staff are professionals who have prior experience in human services and education. They bring together the appropriate knowledge and skills to facilitate learning and to advise and assist our students. Together with our guiding principles, this creates a learning environment where students feel valued and respected.

The College's programmes and other activities are evaluated using Quality Assurance policies and procedures that are informed by a wide variety of stakeholders, including the staff team and students, graduates and employing agencies.

### 1.3 Programmes Offered by the College

**Please note:** The College will make every effort to ensure programmes are run as advertised, however all programmes are subject to an adequate number of participants, and the College reserves the right to make changes to advertised programmes or commencement dates as required.

The College offers the following programmes:

#### **BA (Ordinary) in Professional Social Care (Disability): NFQ Level 7**

The BA (Ordinary) in Professional Social Care (Disability) has been designed and developed to provide cutting edge thinking that will assist people to provide excellent person-centred services to those living with a disability. On completion of this programme students will hold a primary qualification, which is unsurpassed in the excellence of its materials, approach and philosophy. This qualification will enable students to apply for posts carrying the Social Care Professional salary scale, as it is one of the approved programmes arising from the report of the Joint Committee on Social Care Professionals (2002). Students will also have a progression route to studies at Level 8: Bachelor of Arts (Honours).

#### **BA (Honours) in Professional Social Care (Disability): NFQ Level 8**

The BA (Honours) in Professional Social Care (Disability) has been designed and written to facilitate learners to develop the skills, knowledge and competencies to become highly skilled and informed workers/managers contributing to the future development of quality and rights-driven services for people with a disability. Staff members who achieve this qualification will prove invaluable to agencies in meeting the challenges arising from the changes in the sector including the move to

statutory quality standards (HIQA), professionalisation of the social care role (CORU), effective service planning and implementing real person-centred services.

### **Certificate in Applied Management: NFQ Level 6 (Minor)**

The Certificate in Applied Management offers managers and deputy managers working in not-for-profit and voluntary sector services the opportunity to develop the knowledge, skills and competencies needed to carry out the first-line management role effectively. Employment in Human/Non-profit services is not a pre-requisite for entry to this programme. However, due to the applied nature of the programme, employment status will be considered in support of all applications.

### **Higher Certificate in Arts in Applied Management: NFQ Level 6**

The Higher Certificate in Arts in Applied Management offers managers and deputy managers working in the not-for-profit/ human services sector an opportunity to further develop key management skills and explore in-depth management issues from the perspective of the not-for-profit/human services sector. The programme is designed specifically as an add-on programme for the holders of the Certificate in Applied Management. However, all relevant applications will be considered.

### **BA (Ordinary) in Applied Management: NFQ Level 7**

The BA in Applied Management provides managers, deputy managers and supervisors working in the not-for-profit /human services sector an opportunity to further enhance the higher management and academic skills of critical analysis, research and effective thinking in order to become influencers of developments and initiators of change leading to improved, quality service provision. This Bachelor of Arts in Applied Management programme has been designed specifically for managers, deputy managers and supervisory staff working in the non-profit/human services sector (for example, disability, youth, community development etc.) who wish to develop their skills in planning, designing, implementing and leading within modern, person-centred services.

### **Certificate in Supported Employment**

This certificate comprises two modules leading to a Special Purpose QQI award at Level 7 of the NFQ. The programme provides the student with a comprehensive introduction to Supported Employment, and an overview of how policy and legislation developments have influenced thinking and disability service provision in Ireland and how this relates to the evolution of Supported Employment. Participants on this programme will develop the essential employment facilitator skills needed to place people in meaningful employment.

### **Certificate in Facilitated Learning**

This certificate is a single module leading to a QQI Minor award at Level 6 of the NFQ. The objective of this programme is for the student to design, develop and implement an individual training plan to teach a service user a meaningful skill or task. Programme participants will be proficient in the use of Task Analysis and the instructional strategy of 'Systematic Instruction'.

### **Certificate in Managing for a Positive Behavioural Culture**

This certificate is a two-module programme leading to a Special Purpose QQI award at Level 7 of the NFQ. The first module aims to provide the participant with the knowledge, skills and capacity to generate a multi-element behaviour support plan for an individual who has been labelled as challenging. The programme also addresses the managerial skills and capacities required to implement a positive behavioural support plan that will produce clear quality of life outcomes for an individual. This requirement demands that the participant will be able, with the support of a periodic service review, to identify standards, monitor staff performance in pursuit of those standards and provide effective feedback for a staff team on their performance with regard to the standards.

The College also offers the following programmes:

<b>No.</b>	<b>Course Title</b>	<b>Level of Award - + Type</b>
1	Bachelor of Arts in Professional Social Care (Disability)	Level 7 - Major
2	Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Professional Social Care (Disability)	Level 8 - Major
3	Certificate in Applied Management (Human Services)	6 - Minor
4	Higher Certificate in Arts in Applied Management (Human Services)	6 - Major
5	Bachelor of Arts in Applied Management (Human Services)	7 - Major
6	Certificate in Managing for a Positive Behavioural Culture	7 - SP
7	Certificate in Supported Employment	7 - SP
8	Certificate in Facilitated Learning	6 – Minor (HE)
9	Certificate in Training and Development	6 – SP (FE)
10	Certificate in Community Development and Leadership	6 – Major (FE)
11	Certificate in Community Development Practice	5 – Major (FE)
12	Certificate in Intellectual Disability Practice	5 – Major (FE)
13	Certificate in Health Service Skills	5 – Major (FE)
14	Certificate in Exploring Disability	Level 6 - Minor
15	Certificate in Focus on the Individual	Level 6 - Minor
16	Certificate in Communication and Interpersonal Skills in Social Care	Level 6 - Minor
17	Certificate in Empowerment and Advocacy	Level 6 - Minor
18	Certificate in Social Care Practice and Ethics	Level 6 - Minor
19	Certificate in Active Inclusion	Level 7 - Minor
20	Certificate in Current Issues in Social Care: Mental Health, Elder Care and Children	Level 8 - Minor
21	Certificate in Supporting Individualised Living and Alternative Services	Level 8 - Minor
22	Certificate in Quality and Risk in Service Delivery	Level 6- SP
23	Certificate in Supporting and Working with Families	Level 7- SP
24	Certificate in Autism, Wellbeing and Positive Behaviour Supports	Level 7- SP
25	Certificate in Essential Employment Law	Level 6 - Minor
26	Certificate in Key Management Skills	Level 6 - Minor
27	Certificate in Managing Service Quality and Safeguarding	Level 6 - Minor
28	Certificate in Managing for Regulation and Inspection	Level 6 - Minor
29	Certificate in Human Resource Management and Supervision	Level 6 - Minor
30	Certificate in Leadership and the Learning Organisation	Level 7 - Minor
31	Certificate in the Manager as Coach and Mentor	Level 7 - Minor

## 1.4 Entry Requirements

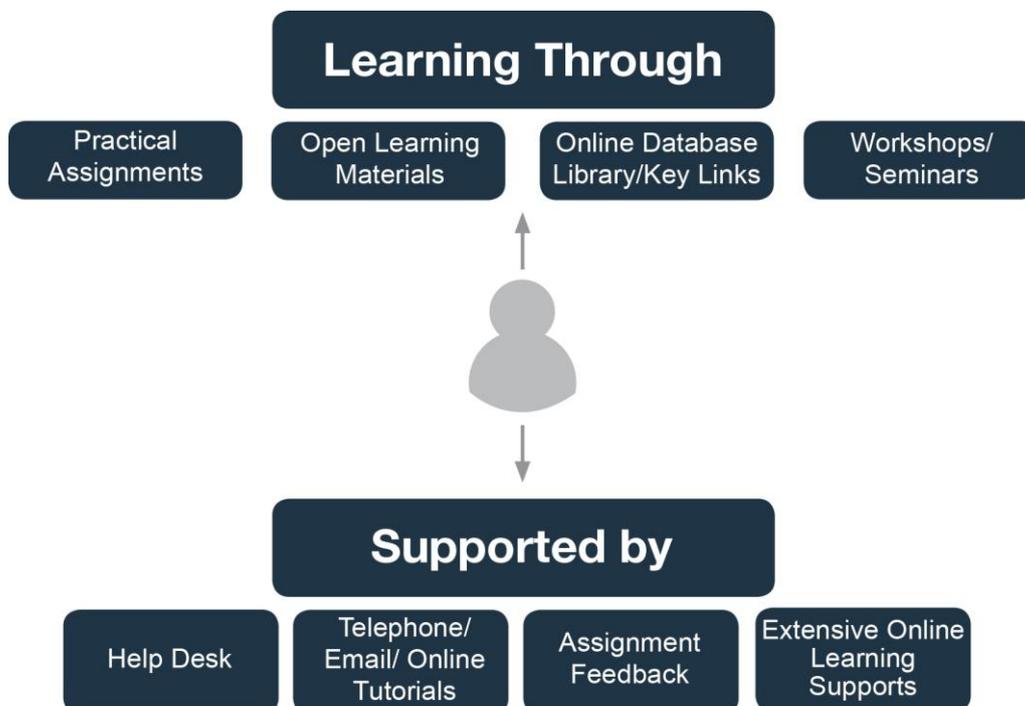
All entry requirements are programme specific and are detailed in the programme brochure and marketing materials.

All of the Open Training College courses are delivered through English. Students are advised that proficiency in both written and spoken English is a prerequisite for all courses.

## 1.5 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 following diagram outlines the Supported Open Learning Model, as employed by the Open Training College.



*The OTC 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/key links***

The College provides access to a number of key information resources through its Moodle platform: MyOTC. These resources include an online database of key readings and access to online journal libraries (Emerald Library and EBSCO).

### ***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.

### ***Workshops***

Group workshops are offered (for each module) to provide students with the opportunity to collaborate with other students and develop their knowledge, skills and competencies according to 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.

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

### ***Tutorials***

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 may be discussed during tutorials:

- a 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

Students are allocated an individual tutor to support them with their studies. The named tutor may change during the academic year at the discretion of the College. In such an event the Course Director will ensure changes are communicated to the student(s) in a clear and timely fashion, and will ensure supports are maintained during any period of change.

Please note that associate tutors work with the College on a contract and part-time basis. Contact should only be made with associate tutors according to their personal guidelines. In matters of urgency or emergency, contact should be made directly with the College.

### ***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 following the assessment submission date.

### ***Helpdesk Support***

The College provides immediate office hour support on matters related to IT, academic or practice issues. To avail of this support students should call the College number (01 2988544) between the hours of 9am and 5pm Monday to Friday.

### **E-learning Support and Library Services**

The College provides E-learning support to students on any of the following:

- Logging on to MyOTC
- Submitting assignments
- Accessing module material
- Completion of online activities
- Use of the library and library databases

The E-learning team can be contacted at [elearning@opentrainingcollege.com](mailto:elearning@opentrainingcollege.com)

The team consists of:

- Raymond Watson: Head of E-learning and Library Services
- Niav McEvoy: E-learning support

## 1.6 Quality Assurance

*In common usage the term 'quality assurance' (QA) means 'the maintenance of a desired level of quality in a service or product, especially by means of attention to every stage of the process of delivery or production.'*<sup>1</sup>

Quality and Qualifications Ireland (QQI)

Legislation specifies that quality assurance processes must form an integral part of the work of Irish Higher Education organisations ([Qualifications and Quality Assurance \(Education and Training\) Act 2012](#)). The Open Training College works with Quality and Qualifications Ireland (QQI), which is responsible for awards.

See: <http://www.QQI.ie>

The Open Training College's Quality Assurance Model for programmes reflects the requirements of the 2012 Act.

The Quality Assurance policies and procedures have been designed to ensure that every activity carried out by the Open Training College is completed to a quality standard within the context of the College's ethos, mission, guiding principles and andragogical practice. The College has a designated person whose role it is to oversee the implementation of the policies and procedures outlined in the College's Quality Assurance Document (QuAD).

### Quality Assurance Reports

Quality Assurance procedures produce a significant amount of information each year pertaining to the success and development of programmes, assessment results and completion rates. This information is collated for each programme at the end of each academic year, and is made available to students (via My OTC).

<sup>1</sup><http://www.qqi.ie/Publications/QA%20Guidelines%20and%20Criteria%20for%20Provider%20Access%20to%20Initial%20Validation%20of%20Programmes%20Leading%20to%20QQI%20Awards%20-%20HET.pdf> – Accessed 20-08-2015

## 1.7 Code of Professional Conduct

Apart from ensuring that students successfully achieve an academic qualification, the Open Training College is also firmly committed to contributing to and informing best practice in respect to the developing roles of social care professionals and managers working within services.

The Open Training College offers students the opportunity to acquire knowledge and skills to support their professional practice and to have these formally acknowledged by the accreditation of qualifications. The College's Aims, Ethos and Values underpin the delivery, design and implementation of all its programmes and practice. As developing professionals, students are expected to reflect these in their general attitudes and behaviour, and behave in a manner which is civil and professional.

Students of the Open Training College are required to:

- ✓ Actively participate in all planned workshops and adhere to the code of etiquette for workshop attendance and participation
- ✓ Comply with all assessment requirements and regulations
- ✓ Submit assignments by dates identified on their programme calendar
- ✓ Clearly reference work that is not their own in assignments
- ✓ Complete a statement of anonymity and consent and declaration of authorship for all assignments
- ✓ Be present for all examinations
- ✓ Adhere to normal examination procedures during examinations
- ✓ Phone their tutor at the prescribed time for tutorials and keep in regular contact with their tutor via email
- ✓ Keep their fees account up-to-date
- ✓ Comply with the acceptable usage policy for the open training college e-learning environment
- ✓ Actively participate in the e-learning environment
- ✓ In all dealings with the college, treat the college, its staff and other students with courtesy and respect at all times
- ✓ In return students can expect to be treated at all times by the College and its staff in a manner that is respectful, courteous, fair and equitable in accordance with the College Aims, Ethos and Values

Any student who fails to comply with any aspect(s) of this Code of Professional Conduct will be subject to the appropriate sanction or consequences, which are outlined in the relevant sections throughout this Handbook and in communications with students at workshops and during tutorials.

### **1.7.1 Learner Contracts**

If a student has failed to achieve assignment deadlines or maintain contact with the College or utilise the supports appropriately, the College will implement a Learner Contract with the student.

The Learner Contract will outline conditions for the student which may include any new assignment deadlines, reiterate the importance of using supports and create learning milestones for the student. The Learner Contract will include the consequences of the breach of any of the stated conditions which could include temporary withdrawal to the next academic year.

The Learner Contract must be signed by both the student and the Course Director.

## **1.8 Complaints Procedure**

The Open Training College prides itself on the quality and standards of the programmes and services it delivers, and on its relationship with each individual student. As part of Quality Assurance procedures students are regularly asked for their feedback on all aspects of programme and service delivery, which informs the Programme Boards, and subsequently amendments and improvements to programmes and services. The allocation of a personal tutor to all students also provides a safe environment in which students can air any grievances they may have and discuss alternative supports that will work towards resolving their situation at a local level.

However, it is recognised that not all such complaints will be resolved satisfactorily at this level, thus the following procedure is presented to provide students with the opportunity to take any unresolved complaints to the management of the College for further consideration. It is the policy of the College to take all valid complaints seriously and to strive for a speedy, equitable, timely and courteous solution.

In making a complaint the complainant can expect:

- Listening: We will listen in a courteous and professional manner
- Responsiveness: We will respond in a timely and sensitive way

- Feedback: We will keep the complainant informed of how the complaint is being processed
- Learning: We will use the information generated to help us improve our service

All complaints that highlight gaps in the College policy and procedures will be reviewed and utilised to develop policy and procedure for introduction in the following academic year. Policy and procedures relating to all College regulations are communicated to students annually through the Student Handbook and on the College website.

### ***How to make an informal complaint***

All students are encouraged to air their grievances in the first instance with their tutor and/or Course Director. To make an informal complaint students can raise an issue with their tutor through the tutorial process using telephone or e-mail communication, or face-to-face with a tutor at a workshop. The tutor will discuss the situation with the student and attempt to generate positive solutions in order to resolve the issue. In the event that a resolution cannot be satisfactorily met the formal complaints procedure, outlined below is available to all students.

### ***What constitutes a formal complaint?***

A formal complaint is any expression of dissatisfaction with service or treatment received while participating in any Open Training College programme, which impacts negatively on the success or wellbeing of the student in question, and which requires the involvement of College management to resolve. Formal complaints relate to matters that cannot be addressed through another procedure, e.g. the appeals procedure in relation to assessment or plagiarism.

### ***Who can make a complaint?***

Any student on any programme of the College can make a formal complaint, in the event that the issue being raised cannot be resolved satisfactorily at a local level.

### ***How to make a formal complaint***

A formal complaint must be made in writing to the Course Director. This can be sent via letter, e-mail or fax. The Course Director will acknowledge receipt of the complaint within 5 days.

### ***How will formal complaints be handled?***

The nature of the complaint will determine how it is dealt with. The nature of the complaint and appropriate action(s) will be determined by the Course Director.

In the case that a complaint represents a situation involving (against) an OTC staff member and involves HR issues then the relevant HR policy and procedure will apply.

In the event that a complaint involves an academic matter (other than assessment) then the complaint may be reviewed by the appropriate sub-committee of the Academic Council (e.g., Registration and Admissions Committee, Assessment Committee).

In the event that the complaint refers to another aspect of College business the Course Director will review all relevant information, policy and procedures and make a decision.

The Course Director will communicate with the complainant regarding the avenue and action(s) being taken to address his/her complaint.

### ***Appeals Process***

If the student is dissatisfied with the response to the complaint or its handling s/he can appeal the decision to the Academic Council. The Director will review all relevant information and documentation, may meet with the complainant and/or other parties and seek external advice (if required and respecting any matters of confidentiality). The decision of the Academic Council will be communicated to the complainant in writing and is final.

The College recognises rights under the Freedom of Information Act.

## 2. ADMINISTRATION

### 2.1 Administration Staff

Your administration team, which will support you during the year, comprises:

- **Conor Murray:** [cmurray@opentrainingcollege.com](mailto:cmurray@opentrainingcollege.com)  
Corporate Services Manager - oversees all administration support
- **Judy Kavanagh:** [judy.kavanagh@opentrainingcollege.com](mailto:judy.kavanagh@opentrainingcollege.com)  
College Administrator - key contact for fees and registration
- **Louise Littlefield:** [louise.littlefield@opentrainingcollege.com](mailto:louise.littlefield@opentrainingcollege.com)  
Administrator - key contact for short courses
- **Monica Lyons:** [monica.lyons@opentrainingcollege.com](mailto:monica.lyons@opentrainingcollege.com)  
Administrator - key contact for My Learning Centre, student surveys and Turnitin queries
- **Viv Menzies:** [vmenzies@opentrainingcollege.com](mailto:vmenzies@opentrainingcollege.com)  
Administrator - key contact for website, and course module distribution
- **Ciara Nealon:** [assessments@opentrainingcollege.com](mailto:assessments@opentrainingcollege.com)  
Administrator – key contact for assignments (receipt and feedback)

The administration team can be contacted on (01)2988544, 9am-5pm, Monday-Friday.

### 2.2 Student Registration Procedures

**Continuing Registration** is the process by which the College tracks an individual student's progression and continued participation on programmes. Therefore, all students who wish to continue with their programme of study must complete a continuing registration form for each academic year. This also applies to students who wish to return to the College to complete outstanding modules, from which they had withdrawn or are required to repeat.

Continuing Registration on a programme is limited to the timeframe in which College programmes must be completed. All 3-year programmes must be completed within a timeframe of 5 years, 2-year programmes in 4 years and 1-year programmes in 3 years. Any student who does not successfully complete their programme of study within the required timeframe will be required to re-apply for the course, and will be subject to the full application procedures and related fees. Each student will be contacted in writing by the College Administrator with details of their re-registration requirements/limitations for each year. ***\*Please note that student places on a programme are not guaranteed if the re-registration process is not completed within the***

***timeframe outlined by the College Administrator each year. Late returns of the re-registration forms will also incur an administration cost.***

### **2.3 Data Protection**

The Open Training College fully respects students' right to privacy, and will not collect any personal information about students without their permission. Any personal information volunteered to the Open Training College will be treated with the highest standards of security and confidentiality, strictly in accordance with the Data Protection Acts, 1998, 2003 and 2018. Any information provided in this way is not made available to any third parties (*except in the case of Protection of Enrolled Learner (PEL) arrangements where Open Training College (OTC) may have learner protection arrangements in place with respect to enrolled learners on all QQI validated courses in accordance with the Qualifications and Quality Assurance (Education and Training) Act 2012*), and is used by the Open Training College only in line with the purpose for which it was provided. Details and relevant results will, in any case, be shared with QQI for the purpose of student certification.

All data protection and management from 2018 will comply with the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR). The current policy is at Appendix 1.

### **2.4 Data Management**

#### **Academic Information:**

All marks achieved by students in assessments are recorded and maintained in secure electronic files, which are updated on completion of each module.

Prior to the meeting of the Examination Board, the agreed marks are transferred to QQI broadsheets and it is these which are finalised, ratified and signed on conclusion of the Examination Board meeting. Electronic copies of the broadsheets are maintained on computer file indefinitely, to facilitate the provision of transcripts and reprints of Diploma Supplements.

For each year of her/his studies with the College, each student is assigned a student box, which is maintained by their Tutor and in which the following are stored:

For programmes where assignment work is submitted in hard copy form:

- All work submitted by the student for assessment;
- Completed rubric for each assessment;

- Copy of written feedback given to student on assignments;
- Copies of appropriate documentation regarding assessment supports and/or accommodations implemented;
- Records of assessment appeals and outcomes.

For programmes where assignment work is submitted electronically:

- All exam work completed by the student for assessment;
- Copies of appropriate documentation regarding assessment supports and/or accommodations implemented;
- Records of assessment appeals and outcomes.

In addition to hardcopy records, all assignments (excluding appendices) submitted through Turnitin.com are maintained indefinitely as electronic files, and rubrics, with feedback to students, are filed and maintained indefinitely on the College's secure IT system.

On conclusion of the Appeals Process timeframe hardcopies of all ratified assessment scripts and related materials will be destroyed (using a certified document destruction contractor) within 4 weeks. Students are advised to keep a copy of all work, which they submit to the College for assessment, as this cannot be returned.

Where a student has withdrawn from their studies, the following system applies to the storage of students work:

- Students' work that has been assessed and ratified by the Examination Board will be destroyed within 4 weeks of the Examination Board meeting, as the corresponding credits will have been awarded to the student by this time.
- Assignments and examinations, which have been completed but not ratified by the Examination Board, will be considered invalid after a two-year period.
- The work of any student, who wishes to return to the Open Training College more than two years following withdrawal, will be reviewed individually by the Course Director, and the student may be required to attend a viva voce and/or resubmit work. This is to ensure that the students' knowledge and skills are sufficiently current and relevant for them to continue with their studies.

## **Tutorial Information**

The tutorial support function generates significant records regarding an individual student's progress. The College is committed to ensuring that sufficient data is gathered and stored to ensure the ongoing provision of a high standard of service and support to students, while respecting individual student needs for confidentiality.

The following records are maintained for the period of student registration on a programme to ensure continuity in the provision of tutorial supports, to facilitate any transition in tutors and to ensure consistency in the application of College policy and procedures:

- Individual student tutorial records
- Assignment extension applications
- Medical certificates
- Records of all online activity of students, including assessment activities completed online

Tutorial information which may be called upon after student graduation is maintained by the College indefinitely. This information may be relevant to students who progress to further education or who appeal assessment results to the accrediting bodies, for example. The following records are maintained indefinitely by the College:

- All formal written correspondence between tutors and students
- All original documentation relating to additional supports or assessment accommodations implemented (e.g. for reasons of disability/medical condition/specific learning difficulty)
- Records of assessment appeals and outcomes
- Records of disciplinary procedures and outcomes (including any investigation regarding plagiarism)

### 3. MONEY MATTERS

#### 3.1 Fees

The Administration Team is responsible for communicating with students regarding the payment of fees. Course Directors and Tutors are not in a position to answer any questions from students regarding fees.

Programme Fees cover:

- ✓ Open Learning Materials
- ✓ Online Materials
- ✓ Library access
- ✓ Tutorials and email support
- ✓ Workshops (please note that accommodation fees for overnight stays are not included)
- ✓ Registration and accreditation
- ✓ Personalised access to the College E-learning environment and supports
- ✓ IT training and support
- ✓ Assessment process, including detailed written feedback on assignments
- ✓ Helpdesk support

#### ***Student Fees Policy***

As part of the application/re-registration process at the beginning of each academic year, students are asked to complete an application/re-registration form in which they commit to paying their fees for the full academic year. The signature on that form commits the student to paying fees on time.

The signature on the form commits a student to pay the total amount of fees for that year, even if they decide to withdraw from the programme without completing all the modules.

Where an agency is making a contribution towards annual student fees, students are still responsible for the payment of all fees.

#### ***Fees are non-refundable***

In the case of students who withdraw from their course of study, fees that have been paid in advance will be fully credited to the student's account if the student returns within 12 months of

the withdrawal date. 50% credit will apply to students returning within 24 months of the withdrawal date. Students returning after 24 months are liable for full fees applicable at that time.

### ***Fees instalments Option***

Students have a choice of paying fees all at once at the start of the academic year or through instalments during the academic year. Instalment deadline dates are as follows:

- December 1st
- February 1st
- April 1st

Fees must be paid directly to the College through the online IMS (Information Management System).

If, for an unusual reason, payment cannot be made in this way, it is possible they may be paid by cheque, postal order, bank draft or by credit card (this method will incur an additional administration fee). In those cases, all payments should be made out to the Open Training College (send fees for the attention of Judy Kavanagh, Open Training College, Prospect Hall, Willowfield Park, Goatstown, Dublin 14). Do not send cash to the College. It is advisable to make use of Registered Post when sending fees or assignments to the College.

Where an agency is making a contribution towards annual student fees, students are still responsible for the payment of all fees. Students are instructed to pay all personal instalments prior to any payments expected from their agency. Students should contact the Administration Team if they are unclear about any aspect of fees instalments.

### ***Late Fees***

If a student is paying by instalments and has missed a deadline by more than 2 weeks, it will be necessary for the Open Training College to withdraw all student supports.

This means that student supports such as access to My Learning Centre, and distribution of assessment feedback, will not be available to the student as long as there are outstanding fees. The College will email a message (1st reminder) to each student confirming that supports have been withdrawn until payment is received and total fees are up-to-date. The message will include a revised deadline date by which full payment of outstanding fees is expected.

If a student is still in arrears for a period of 2 weeks after the revised deadline date, the College will email a letter (2nd reminder) containing a withdrawal form and will request the immediate return of a completed withdrawal form from the student, along with payment of any outstanding fees.

If the College does not receive payment or the completed withdrawal form after a further 2 weeks from the reminder date, the College will post a letter (3rd & final reminder) to the student explaining that the College must accept that the student has withdrawn from the programme and they will not be put forward for registration with QQI. A student who has already withdrawn is prohibited from returning to study with the Open Training College if there are any outstanding fees.

The student can appeal in writing to the Course Director within 2 weeks of receiving the 3rd and final reminder. The College will offer short-term support to any student who is the victim of extenuating circumstances and who can evidence documents to support their unusual and extreme situation. The student and College must agree on repayment terms submitted in writing by the student to the College. Student supports will remain withdrawn until all the relevant documents have been reviewed fully and a decision has been made by the Course Director. The student will be notified of the decision immediately. Any further appeal from this stage will go through the normal College appeal/complaint channels, to the relevant sub-committee of the Academic Council (i.e., the Registration and Admissions committee), in the first instance, with the Academic Council itself being the next and ultimate level of appeal.

All outstanding fees owed, due to extenuating circumstances during the academic year, must be paid by June 15th.

The College continues to offer the greatest of flexibility to all students regarding payment of fees. The various instalment plans relative to each course are explained each year to all learners attending Applicants' Day. If student circumstances change after this, it is the responsibility of the student to communicate with the Administration department.

### ***Agency Support***

A portion of the programme fees may be paid by the participant's agency. Individual fee arrangements are agreed between the applicant and their agency prior to the commencement of the programme. Therefore, invoices are issued to the student. Negotiation with agencies in relation to fees will not be undertaken by the College in any circumstances. Where there is a

delay/issue in the College receiving agency fees, students are still expected to pay their contributions on the required dates on the instalment plan, which will be prior to the instalment date for agency fees. Students are then expected to liaise with their agency to expedite the payment of said fees.

### 3.2 Miscellaneous Costs

Miscellaneous costs that may be incurred during the programme of your studies include:

**Hardcopies of Learning Materials** €125.00 (Year 3 - €150) – Single Module - €25

The Open Training College retains the copyright in all programme materials. Students receive access to all materials online as part of the programme fee. Students are not permitted to copy materials or pass them to third parties without the express written consent of the College.

#### **Purchasing Hardcopies**

Each module will be mailed to the student's residence as the module is released online. Please contact the Administration department if you wish to purchase hardcopy learning materials. The deadline for ordering your complete set of hardcopy modules occurs in September each year.

**Bridging Fee** €295.00

A fee is charged for applicants who participate in the Bridging process.

**Re-registration Fee** €150.00

Students who withdraw will be required to pay a re-registration fee on returning to their studies. Students who are spreading completion of their programme over additional academic periods (only by prior agreement made at application stage) will not incur a re-registration fee during the already agreed additional period.

**Late Re-Registration Fee** €100.00

Students who fail to complete the re-registration process within the specified timeframe will incur a late re-registration fee. Failure to submit a complete re-registration form will warrant the return of the form to the student, which may delay the process and result in a late fee being charged due to a missed deadline.

**Repeat Exams €150.00**

Students who avail of a re-sit examination for whatever reason will be required to pay an administration fee.

**Repeat Module Fee** (pro rata based upon programme fees)

Where students are required to repeat a module due to failure of that module in the previous academic period a repeat module fee will apply per module. Repeat module fees cover the student's attendance at the workshop, learning materials, MyOTC access, tutorial support, formative and summative assessment.

**Formal Appeals €25.00**

The College charges a fee in relation to appeals. A refund will be issued in the case of a successful appeal.

**Exemptions**

Students who are granted an exemption from a module or modules, pay their fees for the year on a pro-rata basis based on the number of modules they must complete in full.

*All fees are communicated to students on the commencement of each academic year.*

*Increase in Fees: All fees are reviewed annually and may be subject to an increase.*

## 4. LEARNER SUPPORT

### 4.1 Supports for Students

The College is committed to delivering programmes with a comprehensive support system that facilitates effective learning. This is done through the **Supported Open Learning Model**, as illustrated in section 1.5 of this handbook. College experience over a long number of years indicates that students who utilise the supports regularly and appropriately fare better in assignments/examinations and tend to achieve higher grades in their overall award.

*\*Please note that these supports are available equally to all students of the College. It is the responsibility of individual students to familiarise themselves with the supports and to make regular and effective use of supports relevant to the requirements of their programme.*

### 4.2 Supports for Students with a Disability/Specific Learning Difficulty

The Open Training College operates the principle of inclusive access to learning materials and opportunities for all students. This is achieved through the *Supported Open Learning Model* and the College's Virtual Learning environment *MyOTC* (see section 1.7 of this Handbook), which facilitates the presentation of learning materials in a variety of formats and provides multiple opportunities for students to dialogue with staff and collaborate with other students.

However, it is recognised that some students who present to the college with specific learning support requirements (e.g. medical condition, specific learning difficulty, physical disability, mental health issue etc.) may require additional individual consideration and accommodations to provide them with equal opportunity to succeed on their chosen programme.

The following procedure outlines the process, which will be undertaken by the College to identify and implement appropriate and reasonable supports for such students.

## Procedure For Verifying and Designing Individualised Learner Supports

### **1. Learning/medical support requirement is disclosed/discovered**

- Initial discussion with tutor/member of academic course team (interview, in the case of applicants)

### **2. Verification of support requirement by nominated educational/health professional**

- Existing report conducted with regard to Third Level academic study
- OR*
- OTC verification form completed by appropriate health professional

### **3. Learner supports agreed and implemented**

- Learner Support meeting
- Learner Support Plan
- Regular review of supports

#### 1. Disclosure/discovery of a learning or medical support requirement

At application stage all applicants are requested to disclose details of any learning or medical support requirements they have and wish to make the College aware of, in their initial application form.

The application form states that any student who discloses any requirement at this stage will receive advice and guidance from a member of the academic course team. The applicant is also directed to information on the College website regarding available learner supports.

Students will also have the opportunity to disclose a support requirement at any stage of their studies with the College through the tutorial process, which facilitates ongoing individual communication between tutor and student. Any student who discloses in this manner will be directed to the following procedure. This also applies to any student who develops/discovers a support requirement which they did not have or were not aware of at the time of application.

All information relating to a medical/disability diagnosis provided by applicants/students will be treated sensitively and as confidential information.

#### 2. Verification of support requirement

Following disclosure/discovery by the student, verification of the indicated support requirement will need to be provided by an appropriate professional. This verification can be done through the

provision of an existing evaluation report conducted with regard to Third Level academic study. Where an appropriate evaluation has not been carried out to date the student will be required to supply a completed report by an appropriate nominated professional from the list below.

Indicator	Accepted medical consultant/specialist report
<b>Visual Impairment/Blindness</b>	Ophthalmologist OR Ophthalmic surgeon
<b>Hearing Impairment/Deafness</b>	Professionally qualified Audiologist
<b>Physical Disability</b>	Orthopaedic OR other relevant Consultant such as a Rheumatologist or Paediatrician
<b>Neurological Condition (incl. Brain injury, speech &amp; language disabilities)</b>	Neurological Condition: Neurologist OR other relevant consultant  Speech & language disabilities: Speech and Language Therapist
<b>General learning disability</b>	Appropriately qualified Psychiatrist, Psychologist, OR Neurologist
<b>Specific learning difficulty:</b> Dyslexia Dyscalculia Dyspraxia ADD/ADHD Asperger's Syndrome/Autism	Appropriately qualified Psychiatrist, Psychologist, OR Neurologist AND Occupational Therapist (in the case of Dyspraxia) who is a member of their respective professional or regulatory body
<b>Mental Illness:</b> Anxiety Disorders Mood Disorders Eating Disorders Impulse Control & Addiction Disorders Personality Disorders	Psychiatrist
<b>Significant Ongoing Illness</b>	<b>Epilepsy:</b> Neurologist <b>Diabetes Type 1:</b> Endocrinologist <b>Cystic Fibrosis:</b> Consultant Respiratory Physician <b>Gastroenterology Conditions:</b> Gastroenterologist <b>Others:</b> Relevant consultant in area of condition or consultant registrar/Registrar

### 3. Support meeting

Following satisfactory verification of a support requirement, (and offer and acceptance of a place on the course in the case of applicants) a support meeting will be arranged between the student and a member of the College academic team. The purpose of this meeting is to discuss the

learner's requirements in detail and to ensure the College can provide adequate supports to the learner to allow them equal opportunity to succeed on their programme of study. General supports available for learners are outlined in this policy and are communicated to learners on the College website and in the Student Handbook; these supports will be individually tailored and matched to the learners' needs as reasonable and appropriate. At this stage, and where available, the applicant/student will be asked to supply an academic reference from their most recent school or college placement, outlining supports they have previously received and their impact.

Following this meeting a *Learner Support Plan* will be devised for the individual. This plan constitutes the formal agreement between the College and learner and will have specified review dates (at least following first module, mid-year and end of year) attached to the plan to ensure the continued relevancy and appropriateness of the supports being provided. This plan will also be reviewed and adapted (as needed) in consultation with the student as part of the process of continuing registration.

Some of the supports that have been provided to learners to date include:

1. Supports for Students with a Physical/Sensory Disability:

- Venue checks to ensure accessibility and appropriate facilities
- Physical modifications to the training and examination environment e.g. seating arrangements, sound amplification etc.
- Learning materials provided in accessible, modifiable electronic formats
- Learning materials developed using multimedia, including [ScreenR](#) and [Articulate](#)
- Additional time allocated to complete assessments
- Alternative assessment formats, e.g. [Viva Voce](#)
- Support of a scribe to complete examinations
- Access to open source assistive technology software, e.g. [Screen Reader](#), [Browse Aloud](#)

2. Supports for Students with a Specific Learning Difficulty, e.g [Dyslexia](#), [Dyscalculia](#), [Dysgraphia](#)

- Alternative assessment formats, e.g. [Viva Voce](#)
- Support of a scribe to complete examinations
- Additional time allocated to complete assessments
- Spelling and/or grammar waiver for assessments
- Extended individual tutorial support
- Provision of lecture materials in advance of lectures/workshops

*\*Please note that these accommodations are provided to individual students to support and facilitate their successful participation on their programme. The College remains cognisant of providing a fair and equitable service to all students. Therefore, these accommodations will not be available to any student without professional, written confirmation of disability/learning difficulty.*

### **4.3 Supports for Students Experiencing Difficult Personal Circumstances**

The College recognises that the majority of the student body is comprised of adults in full-time work and with significant family and social commitments. To this end efforts will be made to support students who experience difficult personal circumstances during the course of their studies.

If a personal or professional situation affects your ability to complete your studies or to meet an assignment deadline it is imperative that you contact your tutor as soon as possible to explain the situation. Your case will then be discussed with the Course Director and additional supports provided if deemed necessary. The confidential nature of any information disclosed will be respected at all times by the staff of the College.

*\*Please note that additional supports will only be provided in extenuating circumstances and are at the discretion of the Course Director. Independent confirmation of circumstances may be sought at the discretion of the Course Director.*

## 5. ASSESSMENT

### 5.1 Introduction

The assessment of students' work is undertaken in the first instance by a tutor of the Open Training College. It is then subject to the *Internal Verification* and *External Authentication* processes before finally being ratified by the *Examination Board* (each of these processes refers to a Quality Assurance process which has been approved and is monitored by QQI). Each component is assessed separately. This system enables students to hold credits in the event of having to interrupt their course of study. This means that where a student has to take leave from their studies for a period of time due to ill health, family or personal matters the student retains the credits gained for those modules, which have been successfully completed, assessed and ratified.

Students with additional support needs in relation to assessment are required to notify their tutor immediately upon starting their course so that appropriate measures can be implemented.

### 5.2 Purpose of Assessment

1. To ascertain that students meet the standards agreed with QQI in order to qualify for the award for their programme/component.
2. To provide a mechanism through which to give students feedback on their learning.
3. For tutors and the College to evaluate the efficacy of the Supported Open Learning Model in delivering knowledge and in facilitating the development of skills and professional attitudes.

### 5.3 Anonymity and Consent

For legal and ethical reasons it is important that information concerning an agency and the people who live and work there, be used respectfully and with care, within the context of assignments.

To ensure anonymity, students are required to change the names of their organisations and the names of the service users in their assignments so that identification of the same is not possible. You will be advised on individual requirements for assignments at the workshop.

Students are encouraged to seek advice from supervisors, and/or tutors concerning permission with regard to the use of information about service-users in their assignments.

## 5.4 Assessment Procedures

It is the responsibility of the student to familiarise themselves with all information relating to assessment.

### 5.4.1 *Submission of Assessments*

Students are required to submit assessments according to the guidelines provided in the Assessment Brief, which is supplied at the workshop. All assessments should be presented typed, on white A4 size paper, stapled together once in the top left hand corner, without any folders or binders. Assessments should be double-space, in Times New Roman font size 12. All students are advised to keep a copy of their work, as work submitted to the College cannot be returned.

Students will be given a posting date for assignments at the workshops. Students are required to email and post a complete copy of their assignments to the College on or before this date. Students are advised to send their assignment by registered post and to request a receipt of posting from the post office. Submission details are provided in the assessment guidelines provided at the start of the programme/component. Students are advised to keep a copy of all assignments submitted to the College as the original cannot be returned.

### 5.4.2 *Assessment Process*

The Open Training College implements carefully designed assessment procedures for the assessment of modules. This process is governed by the QQI higher education and training agreed policy and procedures. Each student's work is considered on its own merit, and is marked to the same standard and at the appropriate level agreed with the accrediting body. Marks are awarded for learning that has a balance, appropriate to the module, between theory and practical application.

Students' work is assessed against specific criteria from a standardised marking scheme, which has been designed in accordance with the learning outcomes of the associated module. These are clearly stated in the learning materials for each module. This approach ensures that although different tutors mark assessments, each is marked in exactly the same way. To ensure that this process is undertaken in accordance with the scheme, a sample of assessments from each module are cross-marked by an additional tutor. In exceptional circumstances (for example where a

discrepancy exists between a first and a second marking) a third marking may be carried out by the Course Director.

To further verify the assessment process, and to ensure that the assessment procedures meet the standard required by the accrediting body, each student assessment is subject to the Internal Verification and External Examination processes.

#### **5.4.3 Feedback on Assessments**

Detailed written feedback will be posted to students within 8 weeks of the assessment submission.

#### **5.4.4 Security and Storage of Assessment related materials**

For the duration of their studies with the College work submitted by learners for assessment is stored securely by the Programme Manager. On conclusion of the Examination Board meeting, hardcopies of all assessments and related materials, which have been ratified by the panel, will be destroyed (using a certified document destruction contractor) within 4 weeks. Materials pertaining to any learner results which have been appealed will be retained until the completion of the College and QQI appeals process timeframes. Records of all components successfully completed by learners, and grades awarded are maintained indefinitely by the College in secure electronic files.

### **5.5 Late Submission of Assessment**

In adverse personal circumstances, or where a student experiences a period of ill health, students may apply for a two-week extension for submission of an assessment.

The procedures for the late submission of an assessment are as follows:

- 1) In the first instance the request must be discussed with your tutor. Pending agreement with your tutor, an assessment late submission form must be completed in full by the student and forwarded to the College. Students are supplied with a copy of the Late Submission Form in their workshop pack. Where the student is applying for a late submission due to ill-health, a medical certificate is required and must be attached to the late submission form.
- 2) If a student needs to further extend the period of time for submission of an assessment the same procedures apply.

## 5.6 Grading Scheme for Assessments

The grading scheme used by the College in relation to Level 6 and 7 (HET) Major programmes is as follows:

70% and over	Distinction
60% - 69%	Merit (Grade 1)
50% - 59%	Merit (Grade 2)
40% - 49%	Pass
35% - 39%	Pass by Compensation
0% - 35%	Fail

***Please note for non-Major awards (e.g. Minor/Special Purpose): Results for certification with QQI will be Pass/Fail only.***

## 5.7 Resubmission of Assessments

If an unsuccessful grade is awarded, the student will be facilitated to resubmit this assessment.

Students who need to resubmit an assessment will be notified by the College and will be provided with supports to assist them to complete the resubmission. Such supports will include detailed feedback on their original submission and additional telephone tutorials.

Please note that resubmitted assessments may be subject to a delay in ratification by the Examination Board.

## 5.8 Assessment Appeals Procedure

Following assessment grades and feedback being issued to students, tutors will be available to discuss same with students who wish to query their assessment outcome or who require assistance with understanding their assessment outcome.

Where a student is dissatisfied with the application of the assessment process in relation to the assessment of their assignment or examination, the following appeals procedure applies. Students may appeal to the College for their work to be re-checked and/or reviewed.

**RE-CHECK** means the administrative operation of checking the recording and the calculation of marks (this is not considered a formal appeal).

**REVIEW** means the re-consideration in detail of all or part of the existing assignment and/or examination material where feasible by the internal and/or external examiner(s).

Any request for a formal Review must be made in writing to the appropriate Course Director and signed by the student.

The written submission for an appeal must identify the elements of the assignment or examination for which the review is being sought. It must also specify the grounds on which the review is sought and must contain all the information that the student requires to have taken into account in the review.

The grounds for re-checking and reviewing must be specified under the following three headings:

1. The assessment/examination procedures of the College have not been properly implemented.
2. The procedures do not adequately cover the student's individual requirements
3. Compassionate circumstances related to the candidate's examination situation were made known to the College by the candidate prior to or during the programme of the examination concerned of which the Board of Examiners were unaware.

The ***appeals process*** is as follows:

1. Having specified the details outlined above, the student may appeal in writing to his/her tutor within three weeks of receiving the grade/feedback and additional feedback will be given.
2. If, following discussion with his/her tutor, the issue has not been resolved to the student's satisfaction, he/she may request in writing to the Course Director that their work be further cross-marked by the Course Director and feedback will be given.
3. If, following steps one and two, the student wishes to make a further appeal, he/she may request in writing to the College Director (within a period of three weeks following feedback from the Course Director) that his/her work be reviewed by the External Examiners and the Assessment Committee and a recommendation made to the Academic Council. The Council will review the appeal and determine the final grade to be awarded.

### **Changes to a grade made at Examination Board**

Any student in an award year whose overall grade changes as a result of a decision made at the Exam Board meeting will be notified of this change, by phone, by the Course Director or tutor. In such instances the student may appeal this decision, in writing, to the College Director, within 5 days of being notified of the change. This appeal will be considered by the Academic Council.

The decision of the Academic Council is final and the result will be forwarded to QQI. Students are advised that, as a result of any of the above appeal procedures their grades may go up or down.

The College charges an administration fee in relation to student appeals, which is refundable in the case of a successful review.

## 5.9 Plagiarism

It is the policy of the Open Training College to provide students with a clear definition of what plagiarism is; give guidelines as to how it can be avoided; inform students about the steps that will be taken should they be suspected of, or found to have plagiarised material in their assessments; and the resulting sanctions and penalties that may be applied.

We believe that the procedures relating to suspected acts of plagiarism must be clearly understood by all stakeholders and must be applied consistently, taking into account the responsibility to be fair and equitable to all learners. Consistent with best academic practice, plagiarism is viewed seriously by the Open Training College and can, following a rigorous investigation process, result in expulsion of the student concerned. All investigations into suspected plagiarism, including initial discussions, are recorded and maintained on a student's permanent file. Students are informed that under Freedom of Information a student has the right to request access to all documentation and reports arising from investigation into suspected plagiarism in their work.

Plagiarism is the act of submitting another person's work as one's own. Plagiarism comes in many shapes and forms ranging from the copying, without acknowledging the source, of whole sections of published works, to the un-acknowledged use of text, diagrams, illustrations or formulae taken from unpublished works e.g. other students' work. Plagiarism may also arise from cheating in exam situations, fabrication of evidence, collusion or collaboration.

When a student submits any piece of work for academic assessment, that act makes the implicit statement that the work is his or her own and that it is being presented specifically and uniquely for the purpose of credit towards their final result. When a student submits work as their own, without adequately acknowledging its source, they are in breach of professional and academic good practice and ethics.

Key steps in the prevention of plagiarism in Higher Education include providing students with a clear definition of what plagiarism entails, giving guidelines as to how it can be avoided and informing students about the penalties that will be applied should they be found to have plagiarised material in their assignments. Information on how to avoid plagiarism and how to reference correctly in assignments is covered with students during tutorials, in MyOTC learning materials and as a virtual tutorial in the online Study Skills module.

The increased inclusion of E-learning methodologies by the College and the consequential result of students using the Internet as a learning resource encourage students to access textual material in electronic format. This widens the potential for the plagiarism of electronic materials. 'Turnitin' is an online plagiarism detection resource utilised by both students and Colleges as a plagiarism prevention and detection resource. In order to highlight any unoriginal work, the software compares uploaded documents (i.e. student assessments) to:

1. A database of journals/books
2. A database of assignments submitted by other students
3. Articles published directly on the Internet

All Open Training College students are required to submit their assessments through the Turnitin website.

### **Procedures to be taken by the College if a student's work is suspected of plagiarism**

The following diagram and explanatory notes illustrate the steps that the College will take if a student is suspected of plagiarism. It is anticipated that, where possible, the process be completed as quickly as possible and within the timeframe of eight weeks. Please note that incidents of plagiarism will be maintained on a student's permanent record, and that the process described below will apply for the full period of their registration, regardless of progression within a course or onto a new course.

<b>Level</b>	<b>Process</b>	<b>Documentation</b>
<b>Level 1 (Pre Plagiarism)</b>	<b>Tutor identifies lack of referencing skills</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Student notified</li> <li>- Initial exploratory discussion with student by telephone</li> <li>- Information Gathering</li> </ul>	<b>Note</b> made on tutorial form and/ or rubric  Student directed to appropriate Study Supports
	<b>Tutor identifies possible case of plagiarism</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Classify Offence</li> <li>- Refer to Course Director</li> </ul>	<b>Letter to student</b> informing them of progression to level 2 investigation  <b>Report A</b>
	<b>Tutor concludes there is no case of plagiarism to be answered at this level</b>	<b>Letter to student</b> informing them of finding of no case of plagiarism to be answered

<b>Level 2</b>	<b>Student case referred to Course Director</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Reviews Report A</li> <li>- Meets with investigating Tutor</li> <li>- Meets with student</li> </ul>	<b>Report B</b>
	<b>Course Director decision</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Classify Offence</li> <li>- Determine sanction/penalty <i>or</i></li> <li>- Refer back to Tutor <i>or</i></li> <li>- Refer to College Director</li> </ul>	<b>Letter to student</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Student accepts <i>or</i></li> <li>- Appeals to Disciplinary Committee</li> </ul>
<b>Level 3</b>	<b>Student case referred to College Director</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Reviews all documentation</li> <li>- Meets with Course Director and investigating Tutor</li> <li>- Forms Panel of Enquiry</li> </ul>	<b>Report C</b>
	<b>College Director decision</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Classify Offence</li> <li>- Determine sanction/penalty and meet with the student <i>or</i></li> <li>- Refer back to Course Director</li> <li>- Form Panel of Enquiry</li> </ul>	<b>Letter to student</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Student accepts <i>or</i></li> <li>- Appeals to Disciplinary Committee</li> </ul>
<b>Appeal</b>	<b>Student appeal received by Disciplinary Committee</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Reviews all documentation</li> <li>- Meets Tutor/Course Director/College Director as appropriate</li> </ul>	<b>Disciplinary Committee report</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Appeal to Academic Council (AC)</li> </ul>
	<b>Disciplinary Committee decision</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Classify Offence</li> <li>- Determine sanction/penalty</li> </ul>	<b>Letter to student</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- AC decision is final</li> <li>- No appeal</li> </ul>

## 6. WORKSHOPS

### 6.1 Purpose of Workshops

Each workshop provides a unique opportunity for students to:

- ✓ Learn from the presentations
- ✓ Network with other students
- ✓ Establish and maintain local study groups
- ✓ Meet with their tutors, face-to-face
- ✓ Contribute their own experiences of learning and practice to the student group
- ✓ Learn from other students' experiences of learning and practice
- ✓ Extend their learning from the programme materials
- ✓ Widen their reference base for their assignments
- ✓ Where relevant, listen to and learn from professional practitioners
- ✓ Enhance their overall learning experience

### 6.2 Attendance at Workshops

Workshops provide a key learning environment in which the college facilitates students to further their learning by listening to lectures and specialist speakers, completing work in groups and taking part in discussions with tutors and other students. Students are required to attend each module workshop for the full duration. Failure to meet the required workshop attendance will lead to the application of a 10% penalty being applied to the total assignment mark of the module workshop missed. Students will still be required to complete all assessment requirements. The Course Director can request to meet with any student to review their ongoing participation in the programme.

In exceptional circumstances, students may not be subject to a penalty. Students are required to inform the Course Director in advance, where possible of their reasons for their absence. This must be followed up with a written explanation within three days and supported by relevant documentation. The College will accept the following reasons for non-attendance:

- Own illness or injury (confirmed by medical documentation)
- Illness or injury of students' child (confirmed by medical documentation)
- Family bereavement
- Birth of a child
- Adoption
- Marriage/ Civil Partnership (own or immediate family)

- Court appearances/Jury duty
- Unforeseen event of a serious nature (the College reserves the right to determine the 'seriousness' of the event)

### 6.3 Workshop Etiquette

Students are encouraged to articulate and discuss professional experiences that relate to the workshop content. Workshops provide opportunities for students to explore alternative viewpoints and this may involve challenging their own and their employers' perspectives and practices. It is therefore essential that students, tutors and speakers mutually create a learning environment in which all participants feel comfortable and respected, and behave in a manner, which is professional and civil. Issues such as confidentiality, peer support and strategies for effective group work will be discussed at the first workshop of each academic year. It is expected that all those participating in the workshop will comply with the fundamental principles of the Open Training College as outlined in College Aims, Ethos and Values and the Code of Professional Conduct.

The following behaviour is not acceptable during a workshop:

- ✗ Mobile phones being left on and ringing
- ✗ Mobile phones being used to either make or receive calls or text messages
- ✗ Recording a workshop using a mobile device (unless sanctioned by the College)
- ✗ Students disturbing the rest of the student group by talking amongst themselves
- ✗ Students interrupting the speaker or other students
- ✗ Disruptions caused by students joining/leaving the workshop at any stage other than designated break times
- ✗ Sleeping during a workshop
- ✗ Students under the influence of alcohol or narcotic substances

\*Please note that this list is not exhaustive.

A student who behaves in any of the ways listed above or in any other way, which is deemed to breach the College Aims, Ethos and Values and/or the Code of Professional Conduct, will be subject to the following process. Please note that acts of incivility will be maintained on a student's record for the duration of their studies with the College and that this process will apply for the duration of a student's studies with the College, for example an act of incivility in a student's first year will incur the appropriate penalty, any subsequent breaches of civility will incur more severe penalties regardless of the student having moved into a new stage of their programme.

The stage at which this process is entered and the severity of the penalty applied will be determined by the frequency, duration and impact upon the environment of the student's behaviour.

Stage 1:

At the first occurrence of a behaviour which breaches College regulations the student will be alerted to the issue(s) raised and asked to discuss the impact of their behaviour, at a time deemed appropriate by the tutor.

Stage 2:

At the second occurrence of a behaviour which breaches College regulations the student will be issued with a verbal warning. This will be followed up by confirmation of the warning in writing from the Course Director, which will detail the behaviour(s) in question and the possible further penalties that may be applied.

Stage 3:

Any further occurrence of a behaviour which breaches College regulations will require the student to meet with the Course Director to discuss their continued participation on the programme. The student will be required to sign a learner contract to commit to the College regulations regarding behaviour towards tutors and other students for the remaining duration of their studies with the College. The Course Director may decide to refer the issue to the Disciplinary Committee. The maximum penalty applicable is compulsory withdrawal from the programme.

In line with College policy in other areas, a student may take an appeal from any decision of an Academic Council sub-committee (here, the Disciplinary Committee) to the Academic Council, for final decision and written notification to the student.

## **6.4 Workshop Venues**

The College uses a variety of external venues for the workshops, including regional educational institutions and hotels with appropriate training facilities.

The College works closely with all venues to ensure the safety and well-being of its students. Although every effort is made to ensure that arrangements run smoothly and efficiently, students are asked to be aware that Open Training College tutors cannot be held responsible for the quality of the food or beverages in the venue.

Open Training College students are asked to be aware that we share the facilities with other students and guests and it is expected that they will act in a considerate and responsible manner while on the premises.

Currently, the majority of workshops connected to your programme, are held at:

Marino Institute of Education, Griffith Avenue, Dublin 9
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<a href="http://www.mie.ie/">http://www.mie.ie/</a>
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## 7. MYOTC LEARNING CENTRE

### 7.1 Acceptable Usage Policy

E-Learning and 'My OTC' are essential tools of the Open Training College. Through these media the College hopes to continue to increase and enhance supports for students.

As with any of the College services, the College aspires to deliver the best service we can but we can only do this in partnership with students. One of our objectives through e-learning is to provide students and staff with a means to develop their I.T. skills and to enhance their learning experiences. It is only through adherence to the following Acceptable Usage Policy that we can ensure that our e-learning environments will be enjoyable and comfortable learning arenas, like any of the College's workshops, tutorials etc.

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. Use of another student's account.
4. Use of inappropriate language i.e. language that is obscene, defamatory, threatening or offensive.
5. Posting of material that may encourage criminal conduct.
6. Anonymous postings to the discussion boards.
7. Transferring computer viruses or other codes that interfere with other users' use of the e-learning environment or their personal computers.
8. Emailing tutors/College with material that is not related to the programme e.g. jokes, circulars etc.

Students are requested to:

- ✓ Install virus-checking software onto their computer before they start their programme and undertake to keep this up to date. Free virus-checking software can be downloaded from the following site: <http://free.grisoft.com>
- ✓ 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
- ✓ Back up every assignment onto their hard drive and onto a removable disc for their own records

Student users must be aware that opinions expressed on discussion boards and in chat rooms are those of the individuals and not of the Open Training College. (Remember: you should be very careful that any postings on discussion boards etc. are your own – do not try to represent others, including your employing agency, without permission).

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.

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

1. The Open Training College is not responsible for unexpected downtime of the e-learning environment.
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 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.

**Privacy Policy**

Personal identifying information includes names, addresses, contact details, date of birth, job details etc. Any such information volunteered by you through the process of using the OTC website will be treated as confidential by the Open Training College. It is not the OTC's policy to share this information with any third party. However, users must be aware that any personal identifying information voluntarily posted to public areas of this website may then be accessible for use by others. The Open Training College cannot prevent this.

Under the Qualifications and Quality (Education and Training) Act 2012, all Colleges offering QQI awards of three months or longer must make arrangements for the Protection of Enrolled Learners (PEL), in the event of a programme ceasing to be offered by the College. In light of this, information relating to the PEL arrangements for your particular programme can be found on the Open Training College website ([www.opentrainingcollege.com](http://www.opentrainingcollege.com)) page for your course.

**APPENDIX 1 – GDPR Policy****GENERAL DATA PROTECTION REGULATION (GDPR) POLICY  
OPEN TRAINING COLLEGE****1. INTRODUCTION**

The EU General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR), effective May 2018 confers rights on individuals as well as responsibilities on organisations processing personal data. Personal data, both automated and manual are data relating to a living individual who is or can be identified, either from the data or from the data in conjunction with other information.

**2. PURPOSE**

To outline how the OTC complies with its legal obligations in respect of data protection.

**3. SCOPE**

This policy applies to all students, prospective students, staff, stakeholders and suppliers of the Open Training College (OTC) whose data is stored on College systems or in handwritten or hard-copy filed formats.

**4. POLICY STATEMENT**

OTC has existing arrangements in place with respect to data protection, under the Data Protection Acts of 1988 and 2003. These arrangements are hereby supplemented with regard to the Data Protection Act, 2018 and the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR- Regulation (EU) 2016/679).

OTC will ensure that the following core principles of the GDPR are adhered to:

1. Lawfulness, Fairness, Transparency
2. Purpose limitation
3. Data minimisation
4. Accuracy
5. Storage limitation
6. Integrity and confidentiality
7. Accountability

Specifically, OTC will strengthen its response to data protection responsibilities by:

- (1) Revising all forms and methods of data collection to ensure that data subjects are informed in advance of all possible and specific uses of information, so that the subject may chose to opt-in or not.
- (2) Ensuring that data subjects are informed of an opt-out option at any time, having opted in, and that a clear route to activation of this option is provided to all subjects.
- (3) Minimising data storage, so that unwarranted storage is deleted, within the following parameters:

Area	Maximum Storage Time
Student Results	Indefinite – the College is required to retain data relating to student results, so that such information is available to students at any given future date, in order that they may verify their results, particularly in relation to progressing to other programmes.
Financial Records	7 years – to comply with Revenue and SMH (St. Michael’s House) policies.
Student Assessments and Feedback	5 weeks from ratification of results by the relevant Examination Board. This allows for the appeal window to have closed.
Other data: Communication with and information stored relating to any of the data subjects outlined in (3.) Scope, above. For example, emails, written notes and letters to/from the data subject.	According to the current OTC GDPR Action Plan and in any case, no more than 7 years.
Student e-mail accounts	6 months after graduation.

- (4) Keeping all stored data safe and secure, with appropriate back-up arrangements.

(5) Using all data only for the purposes which are agreed by the informed consent of the data subject. Written consent to such usage is also to be stored securely and in the case of students seeking QQI awards, specific consent will be stored on the pro forma consent forms supplied.

(6) Adding additional security for “Special Categories of Data”. These will be stored with additional password protection, with access only to nominated staff members, such as the Programme Director or relevant Programme Administrator.

(7) Complying with any and all Subjects Access Requests (SARs) within the statutory timeframe allowed.

(8) Notifying the designated organisational Data Protection Officer (DPO) and Data Protection Commissioner of any personal data security breaches within 72 hours of such a breach occurring.

## 5. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The College Director has ultimate executive responsibility for the effective development and implementation of academic policies. The Academic Affairs Manager has overall delegated responsibility for coordinating the day to day operation of the policies and the development, maintenance and monitoring of supporting procedures. All staff members are responsible for pursuing the implementation of these policies in relation to data storage activities with which they are involved as part of their daily duties.

Further specific responsibilities are outlined in the Procedures attached to this policy.

## 6. DEFINITIONS

**Data** means automated and manual data. Automated data means any information on computer, or information recorded with the intention that it be processed by computer. Manual data means information that is recorded as part of a relevant filing system or with the intention that the data form part of a system.

**Data Controller** means a body that, either alone or with others, controls the contents and use of personal data.

**Data Processor** means a person who processes personal data on behalf of a data controller but does not include an employee of a data controller who processes such data in the course of his employment.

**Data Subject** means an individual who is the subject of personal data.

**Data Protection Officer (DPO)** means the individual who is identified and designated by the organisation as having ultimate responsibility for data protection within the organisation; including the duty to report any data breach to the Data Protection Commissioner.

**Personal Data** means data relating to a living individual who is or can be identified either from the data or from the data in conjunction with other information that is in, or is likely to come into, the possession of the data controller.

**Processing** means performing any operation or set of operations on the information or data, whether or not by automatic means, including:

- Obtaining, recording or keeping the information, or
- Collecting, recording organising, storing, altering or adapting the information or data,
- Retrieving, consulting or using the information or data
- Disclosing the information or data by transmitting, disseminating or otherwise making them available, or
- Aligning, combining, blocking, erasing or destroying the information or data.

**Relevant Filing System** means any set of information relating to individuals to the extent that, while not computerised, is structured, either by reference to individuals or by reference to criteria relating to individuals, in such a way that specific information relating to a particular individual is readily accessible.

**Special Categories of Data (formerly Sensitive Personal Data)** means personal data which relate to specific categories defined as:

- The racial or ethnic origin, the political opinions or the religious or philosophical beliefs of the data subject
- Trade union membership
- The physical or mental health or sexual life of the data subject
- The commission or alleged commission of any offence by the data subject or
- Any proceedings for an offence committed or alleged to have been committed by the data subject, the disposal of such proceedings or the sentence of any court in such proceedings.

**Subject Access Request (SAR)** means a request, made by an identified data subject, for provision of data held by an organisation on that data subject. All data requested must be supplied to the data subject within 30 calendar days and there cannot be a charge for fulfilling this obligation on the first such request from a data subject. Second and subsequent requests may attract a charge.

## 7. RELATED DOCUMENTATION

This policy should be read in conjunction with *GDPR policy Procedures*.

## 8. CONTACTS

The Academic Affairs Manager/Corporate Services Manager.

<b>Policy Title:</b>		<b>General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR)</b>
<b>OTC Policy No</b>		<b>1808</b>
<b>Version</b>		<b>1.1</b>
<b>Date approved:</b> September 2018	<b>Date policy will take effect:</b> September 2018	<b>Date of Next Review:</b> Annual
<b>Approving Authority:</b>		Academic Council
<b>Document Owner/Contact:</b>		Academic Affairs Manager Corporate Services Manager
<b>Supporting documents, procedures &amp; forms of this policy:</b>		- Procedure for Data Protection: Open Training College - GDPR Audit -QQI student consent form -OTC GDPR Action Plan
<b>Audience:</b>		Public – accessible to anyone
<b>Reference(s)</b>		- EU General Data Protection Regulation, 2018 ( <u>Regulation (EU) 2016/679</u> ) - Data Protection Act, 1988 - Data Protection (Amendment) Act, 2003 - Data Protection Act, 2018