

AREA: | **Quality**

TOPIC: | **Assurance and Enhancement**

STRATEGY

HCT is committed to providing the highest quality education and training to our local, regional and national communities of learners and employers. It is our intent that all of our learners will be given the opportunity to realise their full potential, enabling them to achieve the highest standards in their programmes of learning. Inherent in this achievement is a community of learners that: are safe and feel safe; are treated equally and fairly; are ambitious; and, who gain the skills and attitudes they need to be effective employees and good citizens. Key to fulfilling this is our commitment to a continuous improvement approach to quality assurance and enhancement.

The College is committed to:

- the continued development of a College culture which is self-critical, transparent and responsive
- establishing and maintaining quality systems and procedures which enable us to rigorously evaluate our strengths and weaknesses and respond to improvement needs effectively
- being responsive and accountable to our stakeholders, including learners, employers, partners and the bodies which fund, validate or in other ways collaborate in the work of the College
- continually improving the quality of the service for employers and the learner experience by monitoring, reviewing, developing and enhancing standards of learning, teaching and assessment
- providing a variety of mechanisms for our learners, employers and other stakeholders to express their views on our services, have their feedback taken into account, and to be involved in decision making
- developing and setting standards and targets for all areas of activity and all College teams, benchmarked against other providers where possible
- encouraging the involvement of all members of the College community in the review of performance, the maintenance of high standards and the setting and achieving of quality improvement targets

- achieving recognition for our performance standards through accreditation and commitment to national quality standards, including IIP¹ and MATRIX²
- operating within the context of a coherent and transparent planning and quality assurance cycle, and
- ensuring that staff in all areas of College activity which impact on the employer and learner experience aspire to excellence and have the awareness and skills necessary to respond effectively to the challenges of self-assessment, action planning and continuous improvement.

Strategy Context

Our Mission, Vision and Values are set out in the College Strategic Plan³. Other policies and procedures relevant to the implementation of the Quality Strategy are:

- Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy
- Course Development and Approval Procedure
- Courses with Serious Concerns Procedure
- Employer Responsiveness Strategy
- Equality and Diversity Policy
- Internal Verification Policy
- Learner Involvement Strategy
- Learning, Teaching and Assessment Strategy
- Mentoring Policy
- New and Deleted Course Approvals Process
- Observation of Teaching, Learning and Assessment Procedure

Quality Practice

The College's quality strategy is firmly centred on the needs of learners and employers. Our learners' and employers' views and opinions on the standard of service experienced are used by College teams to identify areas of strength and areas for development, inform action planning and target setting, and measure and evaluate improvements in the quality of our service.

The College has developed a systematic approach to Quality Assurance and Improvement based on rigorous procedures to monitor, evaluate and review performance. The key features of our approach are that it is:

- learner and employer centred, and
- team based.

The system has been designed to evaluate and evidence the quality of service experienced by learners and employers and to provide the structure and mechanisms by which improvements can be identified and achieved.

¹ Investors in People

² Quality standard for information advice and guidance services

³ HCT: A Strategy for Success

The key elements of the system are:

- development and implementation of quality standards for all areas of the College's activities which impact on the employer and learner experience
- comprehensive annual review of the curriculum portfolio by the Deputy Principal and senior managers to identify areas of strength and areas for development and ensure the maintenance of a relevant, dynamic and viable curriculum
- rigorous scrutiny and internal approval of all proposals for new or significantly revised courses
- course review: every course team carries out a process of reviewing and evaluating the course for which it is responsible, resulting in termly written reports and updated action plans
- the production of annual reports and action plans at Section and Subject Sector Area level which forms the basis for the College annual self-assessment
- the production of an annual self-assessment report at College level which underpins the strategic and operational planning process
- all self-assessment reports include a quality improvement plan which identifies clearly what actions will be taken in order to sustain high quality performance and to address areas where improvement is needed. Quality improvement plans are monitored at regular intervals to ensure that agreed actions are taking place and to determine whether actions are having the intended impact. Formal monitoring reports are reviewed by the College Management Team and by the Quality and Standards Committee of the governing body.
- the performance of individual courses is considered through the Courses with Serious Concerns Procedure, led by the Deputy Principal, which identifies underperforming courses and leads to a dialogue between the Deputy Principal, Team Leaders and staff responsible for these courses about the actions required to secure improvement.
- a consistent process of internal verification/moderation for all course provision in accordance with the College Internal Verification Procedure
- eliciting learner and employer feedback, including complaints, through comprehensive and systematic procedures and the incorporation of this feedback into evaluation of course performance and College's performance and actions for improvement
- encouraging the evaluation and enhancement of approaches to learning, teaching and assessment through the Observation of Teaching, Learning and Assessment and Mentoring processes, sharing good practice and other team and College development activities
- continuous evaluation and development of the range and effectiveness of the College's quality assurance and improvement systems and tools.

Justification

Internally, the Quality Strategy is designed to provide the framework within which the quality of the learner and employer experience is evaluated to assure standards of performance and inform planning for improvement.

Externally, there is a requirement or expectation by the College's partners, funding and awarding bodies that robust and effective mechanisms for quality assurance and improvement are embedded throughout the organisation.