POLICIES & PROCEDURES

Quality Assurance and Improvement Policy

Policy Owner: Head of Quality & Student Engagement

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Location: Gateway

CONTENTS

1.   Introduction

1.1   South West College's ("the College") vision is to be an outstanding provider of education and training programmes in Higher Education, Further Education, Work-Based Learning and post-primary schools as well as in its provision to support industry and the wider community. The College, consequently, is committed to continuous quality improvement across all aspects of its work that is informed through rigorous self-evaluation and quality improvement planning.

1.2   The College will aim for continuous improvement in the quality of all aspects of its work as part of its determination to be responsive to the needs of its client groups and to help students achieve the highest possible standards.

1.3   The policy seeks to describe and define continuous improvement and enable achievement through a process of self-evaluation and action planning.

1.4   The self-evaluation and quality improvement planning process (not including HE provision) is subject to external evaluation by the Education and Training Inspectorate ("ETI") through its quality improvement planning visits. Internally the processes are subject through review processes including monthly SMT, curriculum planning and Review.

1.5   The College will seek to comply with the quality assurance requirements of its external stakeholders including the Quality Assurance Agency (QAA), ETI, Department for the Economy (DfE) and all respective awarding organisations/bodies.

2.   Policy Aims

2.1   The purpose of this policy is to establish guidance regarding key aims and actions relating to College quality assurance procedures.

2.2   The College aims to have robust and accurate self-evaluation processes which lead to real improvement. To achieve this we must:

- Ensure that staff are both confident and competent in the self-evaluation process; there is significant "buy in" by course teams and management to the overall process and they feel empowered to plan for improvement.
- Expect all staff and members of the College, including governors and students, to contribute to the self–evaluation and to quality improvement processes;
- Follow a coherent annual quality cycle which supports the requirements of the college;
- Take due cognisance and prioritise the findings from external inspections reports from the organisations including the ETI and QAA.
- To foster across the College appropriate behaviors of openness and transparency that will embed a culture of reflective practice in order to bring about sustained improvement.
- To confirm that the College has in place robust systems to ensure that assessment practices are fit for purpose and comply fully with the requirements of the Awarding Organisations and Regulators. Robust Internal Verification Procedures will be rigorously applied across the College.

3. <u>Key Principles</u>

3.1   Curriculum managers and course teams have good access to accurate management information on learner achievement to identify potential underachievement.

3.2   The assignment of performance levels/grades is robust and systematic throughout the College. There are high levels of confidence in the ability of course teams and management to identify and report on any issues that impact adversely on the overall quality of the provision.

3.3   The College aims to be outstanding in all areas of College business. To achieve this we must:
- Provide meaningful opportunities for all staff to develop outstanding practice.
- Analyse the capabilities of our staff through observation feedback, learner and parent voice feedback and other ways and provide the appropriate professional development to ensure they have the skills necessary to deliver

outstanding practice. For academic staff this will focus on the skills to deliver inspirational teaching and learning;

- Identify staff development needs in order to form a year on year programme of meaningful Continuing Professional Development (CPD) events;

- Ensure the lesson observation cycle is accurate and is used to improve teaching and learning through action points and targeted CPD;

- Identify and share good practice across the College, in all areas of College business, through a variety of mechanisms such as the Annual Curriculum Conference;

- Establish the aspiration for outstanding teaching and learning through peer observation processes and rewarding excellence in teaching and learning;

- Challenge satisfactory and less than satisfactory performance through the Performance Review Panel Process;

- Confirm the standards of all programmes through the internal assessment panel process at the end of each academic year.

3.4   The College aims to enable outstanding success for all of our learners.

3.5   The College aims to provide accurate and formative assessment and verification. To achieve this we must:

- Have accurate formative assessments which informs learners how to successfully achieve their summative assessments.

3.6   The College aims to achieve very high satisfaction for all of our learners, parents, staff and other stakeholders. To achieve this we must:

- Learn from and act upon learners', parents', staff and other stakeholders' comments in surveys and forums to improve their experience;

- Ensure these surveys are available in alternative formats and on the College gateway as appropriate in order to maximise response rates.

4.   **Policy Scope**

4.1   This policy and associated procedures will involve all staff working in SWC.

4.2   The management of the process will be led by the Quality & Performance Unit in

conjunction with Heads of Department and line managers who will collate and agree evidence informed self-evaluation reports and "SMART" actions.

4.3   It is founded on a process of regular self-evaluation by academic teams and Support sections who are responsible for delivering courses and other services.

4.4   It seeks the views and perceptions of learners, employers and other stakeholders for whom the services of the College exist.

4.5   Wherever appropriate, the policy promotes the identification of quality standards and performance indicators stipulated in the Annual Development Plan, against which performance can be measured, evaluated and so improved.

4.6   It supports the processes of peer review both internally and with external partners in the sector including training providers.

5.   <u>Responsibility for Implementation</u>

5.1   All employees (managers, lecturers and business support staff) are responsible for the implementation of this policy.

5.2   It is the responsibility of the Head of Quality and Student Engagement to ensure annual review of the policy.

5.3   It is the responsibility of all staff to engage positively in the review and to ensure implementation.

6. <u>Policy Statements</u>

6.1 <u>The Curriculum</u>

- To encourage continuous improvement in the quality of teaching and learning programmes, thereby making learning an enjoyable activity, and through this, increasing student retention and the achievement of individual learning goals in a timely manner.

- To develop and sustain a range of accredited and non-accredited programmes which provide opportunities for progression and will provide learners with experiences and, wherever appropriate, qualifications suited to their learning aims.

- To ensure rigorous and consistent assessment procedures, which meet the standards of external awarding bodies.

- To provide information that supports strategic planning.

6.2 <u>Support Services</u>

- To monitor and evaluate the procedure for advising, interviewing and counselling students at entry and throughout their time spent at College, both on the College site and/or in the workplace.

- To establish standards and monitor procedures for providing a supportive and accessible range of services for all learners.

- To monitor and evaluate the standard of services responsive to the needs of employers.

- To establish and monitor service standards that ensures the effective delivery of the College's business support services for both internal and external users.

6.3 <u>Staff</u>

- To review regularly the performance, training and developmental needs of all employees through the operation of the College Appraisal scheme.

- Through the College, department and staff development (Learning and Development) plans to train and develop individuals upon appointment and throughout their employment.

- To monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of such training and development against the College's strategic goals and self-evaluation processes.

7. <u>Methodology</u>

7.1   The College Student Charter will be summarised in the FE Student Handbook and HE Student Handbook which is available on the College Gateway. All students will be made aware of the quality standards within the College.

7.2   The College Employee Standards will be made available to employees through the Human Resource Department and on the College Gateway.

7.3   The process of quality performance and improvement will require curriculum and support staff teams to meet on a regular basis to review their work, set standards, monitor user and learner perceptions and achievement.

7.4   Quality control will be carried out against agreed criteria which will incorporate ETI performance descriptors.

7.5   Statistical analysis including internal benchmarking will be carried out against agreed criteria which will incorporate ETI performance descriptors.

7.6   Review will be supported by the analysis of student, employer and stakeholder views and perception gathered via questionnaires, surveys, focus groups and at review meetings.

8. <u>Outcome</u>

8.1   The outcome of these processes will provide information:
- To inform the process of self-evaluation.
- To set targets and action plans for improvement at team, departmental and College level.
- To highlight examples of good practice and areas that require improvement that needs consideration by the College through the monthly Curriculum & Quality and SMT meetings.
- To produce a Whole-College Quality Improvement Plan (QIP) to provide a clear "road map" for improvement, by demonstrating an understanding of the issues that need to be addressed to bring about improvement for the learners;

some of these actions may be over the medium to longer-term.

- To support the College curriculum and strategic planning cycle.
- To support College activity to achieve DfE agreed targets and other external and internal targets.

8.2   Feedback on actions resulting from the review process will be communicated to College employees via both team and/or Departmental meetings. The outcomes and action plans which result from the process will form the basis of the annual College Self Evaluation Report and Quality Improvement Plan which will be reported annually to the Curriculum & Quality Assurance Committee of the Governing body.

8.3   The Curriculum & Quality Team will be aware of the procedures undertaken, including key performance indicators and targets, and will receive regular reports which summarise the results and indicate action plans for improvement. Curriculum areas indicating low performance will be identified and discussed at the Performance Review Panel meetings and at other college committees.

9.   <u>Quality Improvement Procedures</u>

9.1   The statement of this Policy will be supported by a clear set of processes outlined in detail in the Higher Education Quality Handbook and in the Quality & Performance Self Evaluation Process.

9.2   The Higher Education Quality Handbook will be available on the College Gateway and also in hard copy from the Quality & Performance Unit or each Campus Learning Resource Centre.

9.3   Detailed Quality Procedures updated annually, underpin the quality and improvement process.

9.4   On completion the Whole College QIP will be presented to the Education Committee for approval.

9.5   The Education committee will receive regular updates on QIP progess.

9.6   Head of Quality and Student Engagement will continue to report to the CE and DCE as appropriate. To ensure strategic goals are met through responsive and proactive leadership, management and delegation, the Quality & Performance Officers will be deployed as follows: Lynda Wilson – Health Life and Personal Sciences; Helen McCausland – Engineering, IT and Creative Industries and Higher Education, IT & Creative Industries; Valerie Gillis – Sustainability, Construction and Transport; Patricia Anne Murray – Commercial & Business Services.

10.   **Access to Policy**

10.1   This policy is available from the Quality & Performance Unit, and on Gateway.

11.   **Mechanisms for Feedback**

11.1   Constructive feedback on the continued improvement of this Policy and suggestions for improvement to the Quality Assurance & Improvement processes are welcomed and should be forwarded to the Head of Quality and Student Engagement for consideration.

12.   **Review**

12.1   The College will ensure that adequate resources are made available to promote this policy effectively.

12.2   Monitoring and review of the Quality Assurance and Improvement Policy will be undertaken biennially by the Head of Quality and Student Engagement with amendments recommended for approval to the Governing Body of the College.

Signed Principal and Chief Executive: _____
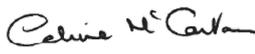
Date: _____04.02.26_____

Signed Chair of the Governing Body: _____

Date: _____04/02/2026_____

Related Documentation

Title	Location	Owner
Annual Quality Cycle	Staff Hub	
Whole College Quality Improvement Plan.	Teams	
SEAP Self Evaluation Process	Staff Hub	
SEAP follow up meetings with Heads of Department.		

Change Log

Location	Change from deletion/addition	Change to
Page 4	Monitor all assessment changes introduced by awarding organisations and disseminate as necessary to ensure compliance with both awarding organisation assessment and Regulator (CCEA/OFQUAL) guidance during the COVID recovery period.	Removed
Page 4	collate and agree self-evaluation reports and action plans.	collate and agree evidence informed self-evaluation reports and "SMART" actions.
Page 7	FE Student Diary	FE Student Handbook
Page 9	Helen McCausland – Engineering Vacant – Higher Education across all Departments.	Helen McCausland – Engineering, IT and Creative Industries and Higher Education

Communication

Who needs to know (for action)	All Staff
Who needs to be aware	All Staff

Communication Plan

Action	By Whom	By When
Upload to Gateway	N Nugent	On approval
Circulation to key staff	B McIlduff	On approval

Document Development

Details of staff who were involved in the development of this policy:

Name	Role
Brian McIlduff	Head of Quality and Student Engagement

Details of staff, external groups or external organisations who were consulted in the development of this policy:

Name	Organisation	Date

Approval Dates

Approved by	Date
Governing Body	4 February 2026

Document History

Issue no. under review	Date of review:	Persons involved in review	Changes made after review? Yes/No If Yes refer to change log	New Issue No.	If changes made was consultation required?	If changes made was Equality Screening required?
V8.0	October 2020	Elizabeth Shackels	Yes	V9.0	No	No
V9.0	October 2022	Brian McIlduff	Yes (minor)	V9.1	No	No
V9.1	October 2022	Brian McIlduff	Yes (minor)	V9.2	No	No
V9.2	December 2025	Brian McIlduff	Yes	V10.0	No	No