



PCI College

Quality Assurance Manual

Contents

Section A	Introduction	P. 3
Section B	Mission and Values	P. 4
Section C	Quality Assurance Policies	P. 6
Section D	College Board	P. 10
Section E	College Management	P. 12
Section F	Procedures and Guidelines for the Design and Validation of New Programmes	P. 16
Section G	Procedures and Guidelines for the Ongoing Monitoring of Programmes	P. 24
Section H	Procedures and Guidelines for Programme Evaluation	P. 28
Section J	Procedures and Guidelines for the Assessment of Learners	P. 36
Section K	Re-Checks, Reviews, and Appeals Procedures	P. 44
Section L	Procedures to obtain Learner Feedback	P. 50
Section M	Procedures for External Examiners	P. 52
Section N	Learner Complaints Procedure	P. 59
Section O	Procedures for Student Care and Monitoring Student Progression	P. 63
Section P	Procedure for Appointment of Academic Staff	P. 65
Section Q	Procedures for Evaluation of Student Services	P. 69
Section R	Procedures for Evaluation of Facilities	P. 70
Appendix A	Learners' Charter	P. 72
Appendix B	End of Module Feedback Form	P. 78
Appendix C	Tutor Feedback Form	P. 79
Appendix D	Late Submission of Coursework Form	P. 80
Appendix E	Nomination Form for External Examiner	P. 81
Appendix F	Report Form of Extern Examiner	P. 84
Appendix G	Report Form of Supervisor	P. 87

Section A

Introduction

PCI College (formerly Personal Counselling Institute) was founded in 1991 to provide training in counselling and psychotherapy for mature students. The College has experienced steady growth since its inception and now has an enrolment of over four hundred students.

The College activities include:

- (a) Providing part-time third-level education in the field of Counselling and Psychotherapy, Addiction and Supervision. The programmes are offered at Higher Certificate, Ordinary Bachelor Degree and Honours Bachelor Degree levels, they are recognised by the relevant accreditation bodies..
- (b) Providing Continuing Professional Development (CPD) programmes, offering part-time Certificate and Diploma courses in counselling, psychotherapy and related areas.
- (c) Providing customised training in counselling and related fields for organisations and community groups wishing to avail of the expertise of College Staff.

PCI College is committed to a Quality Assurance culture. This Quality Assurance Manual is a manifestation of that commitment. It outlines the college's policies and quality assurance procedures for the full range of activities in which the College is engaged. The College Board and the Teaching, Learning and Assessment Committee have overall responsibility for ensuring that the policies and procedures outlined in this Manual are adhered to.

Section B

Mission and Values Statement

Mission Statement

PCI College's mission is to provide training in Counselling and Psychotherapy at Higher Certificate, Ordinary and Honours Degree level. It aims to produce competent, professional graduates, and to provide Continuous Professional Development (CPD) for graduates of the College and for those already working in the caring professions. Its courses are designed to be accessible to mature learners on a part-time basis.

PCI College is committed to the provision of third level educational programmes in a professional manner, paying particular attention to learner care and development.

PCI College aims to deliver a quality service in an environment that is characterised by a person-centred set of principles and an attitude to adult learners that is supportive and encouraging. The College's educational programmes are designed to be participative, experiential and draw on the prior lived experience of the learner.

PCI College aims to provide learners with experiences and opportunities which enable them to develop their potential in an open, honest, supportive and stimulating environment; where differences are accepted and valued; where ideas are discussed freely; and where there is a sense of sharing in a continuing process of self-discovery and self-fulfilment

Members of staff of PCI College are to be respected, empowered and participate in the decision-making processes of the College. They shall work in an atmosphere of openness and mutual support, which shall enable them to make their own best contributions to the creation of a stimulating educational environment.

Values Statement

The following values underpin the work of PCI College:

- Commitment to the principle of life-long learning; the provision of opportunities for the personal development of all learners and staff to enable them to achieve their maximum potential as individuals

- Development of a caring organisation that emphasises openness, trust and co-operation
- Protection of, and respect for, freedom of belief, and the free expression of ideas without fear or hindrance
- Commitment to equality of opportunity regardless of age, colour, ethnic origin, sexual orientation, socio-economic status or special needs
- Provision of educational opportunities for all those who are capable of taking advantage of the College's programmes and, in particular, positive consideration of those groups traditionally under-represented in higher education
- Recognition and encouragement of the diversity of cultures and traditions within the PCI College campus and in the broader community
- Development of academic programmes that are relevant to the intellectual and vocational needs of individuals
- Commitment to the promotion and development of personal and social responsibility.

Section C

Quality Assurance Policies

Introduction

PCI College's education and training programmes are subjected to a rigorous monitoring and review process. The College is committed to self-assessment and external review. The Teaching, Learning and Assessment Committee and the College Board oversee the monitoring and review of this Quality Assurance Manual and the associated Quality Assurance procedures.

The College, through its Quality Assurance Policies and Procedures, sets out to establish a coherent framework for the provision of a top quality system of education and training. It also aims to ensure that high standards, once attained, are safeguarded. The areas in which the College has developed quality assurance policies and procedures are summarised below. In later sections, detailed procedures are outlined to implement the College's Quality Assurance policies on a College-wide basis.

Transparency

It is College policy to ensure that sufficient information is accessible to all relevant stakeholders. All relevant programme information e.g. syllabi, schedules and assessment requirements is made available to learners in the Learners' Programme Handbook. In addition the College is committed to being open about the respective rights and obligations of learners as set out in a Learners' Charter (See Appendix A)

Management of Quality Assurance

The College's Quality Assurance Manual is the repository for procedures facilitating a systematic approach to quality assurance. The systems put in place to manage quality involve the relevant stakeholders.

The systems established lay out clear lines of authority, showing where responsibility for quality lies. Senior management personnel within the College have a particular responsibility to develop and maintain a quality culture. Management creates and fosters an environment conducive to participation, trust, teamwork, empowerment and pride in performance. (See Section E)

Programmes

The College endeavours to offer a range of relevant programmes of approved content and standard, together with a systematic process for the monitoring, evaluation and continuous enhancement of these programmes. This endeavour is predicated on building quality criteria into new programmes and continuously monitoring existing programmes within a five-yearly review cycle.

The involvement of external specialists in the design, monitoring and review of programmes is considered critical. (See Sections F, G and H)

Verifiable Data

The College will generate and collate all necessary data in order to monitor critical quality indicators e.g. entry requirements, continuous assessment results, completion rates, learner feedback, Extern Examiners' reports, Board of Assessment reports, Board of Studies reports and external periodic reviews. (See Monitoring Report, Section G)

Data gained from the above sources is examined in the most appropriate forum and appropriate action taken.

Learning Environment

The College endeavours to create an environment in which learners take responsibility for their own learning. To provide opportunities for active learning, the programme modules are delivered in a way that involves the use of group work, reflective practice, work placements, dissertation writing, and the simulation of employment situations.

Lifelong Learning

The College endeavours to offer a comprehensive continuing education programme aimed at developing and fostering lifelong learning and specialist training in the field of counselling, psychotherapy and related areas. The continuing education programmes encompass both formal tuition offered through the part-time education programmes that are provided to the public, as well as customised training that the College provides to professional bodies and community groups. The quality assurance procedures for these programmes mirror, as far as possible, the systems in place for the Degree programmes. The College continues to respond positively to requests for short term courses from the local/regional community.

Learner Assessment

Having in place fair and consistent assessment practices that satisfy external standards is a fundamental quality objective. The College is determined to have an assessment system which is fair, consistent, and effective in measuring the extent to which learners achieve stated learning outcomes. It is college policy to ensure that students are given sufficient information on assessment requirements. This information is contained in the Learners' Handbook.

PCI College promotes innovative coursework, promoting situated learning and fostering transferable skills to ensure that assessable coursework prepares learners for the world of work. (See Section J)

The College has procedures in place regarding External Examiners and values their input both in the learner assessment process and in improving the College's programmes (See Section M)

Learner Participation

The College strives to develop systematic methods for gathering learner feedback on its education programmes and support services. (See Section L)

Fair and transparent mechanisms for processing re-checks, reviews, complaints and appeals are in place. (See Sections K and N)

Learner Support

The College is committed to providing a stimulating learning experience in a supportive environment. Accessible support services for all students are in place as well as individualised support for learners with particular needs. Each student in the College has access to a designated Student Care Officer. (See Section O)

Student Admissions

The College aims to continue to attract a critical mass of suitably qualified learners to new and existing programmes. The target learner population consists of those already in the caring professions e.g. nurses, teachers, social and community workers etc, who wish to gain knowledge and expertise in counselling in order to provide a better service in their existing occupations. The other target groups are those who wish to change career, or come back in to the workforce. The College aims to provide equal opportunities for all applicants and is conscious of its social inclusion obligations. Learners with special needs are welcomed, provided they are capable of meeting the demands of the selected programme of study

Teaching Methods

PCI College is committed to supporting innovative teaching methods by recognising and promulgating best teaching practices. Academic support of the learner begins with the teaching process. The College aims to provide the necessary resources for effective teaching to take place. Learners are exposed to an appropriate mix of learning modes e.g. lectures, seminars, tutorials, workshops, skills-practice etc. Regular progress-feedback to learners together with timely and appropriate responses to completed coursework is a feature of programme delivery in the College.

Human Resources

It is college policy to employ a sufficient number of qualified and committed staff to support its education mission. Every effort is made to recruit and retain the staff required to ensure the delivery of a quality education service. A key criterion for the employment of staff is their ability to employ teaching methods appropriate to the requirements of programme delivery and learners' needs. The College maintains a comprehensive staff development programme and facilitates the training of staff to improve the quality of education and training that they provide. (See Section P) The College regularly monitors its services to students (See Section Q)

Physical Resources

The College endeavours to ensure that its premises, equipment and facilities meet the needs of a third level college community. Learners, directly or through their Class Representatives, and members of staff make their wishes and concerns known to the College Board. (See Section R)

Section D

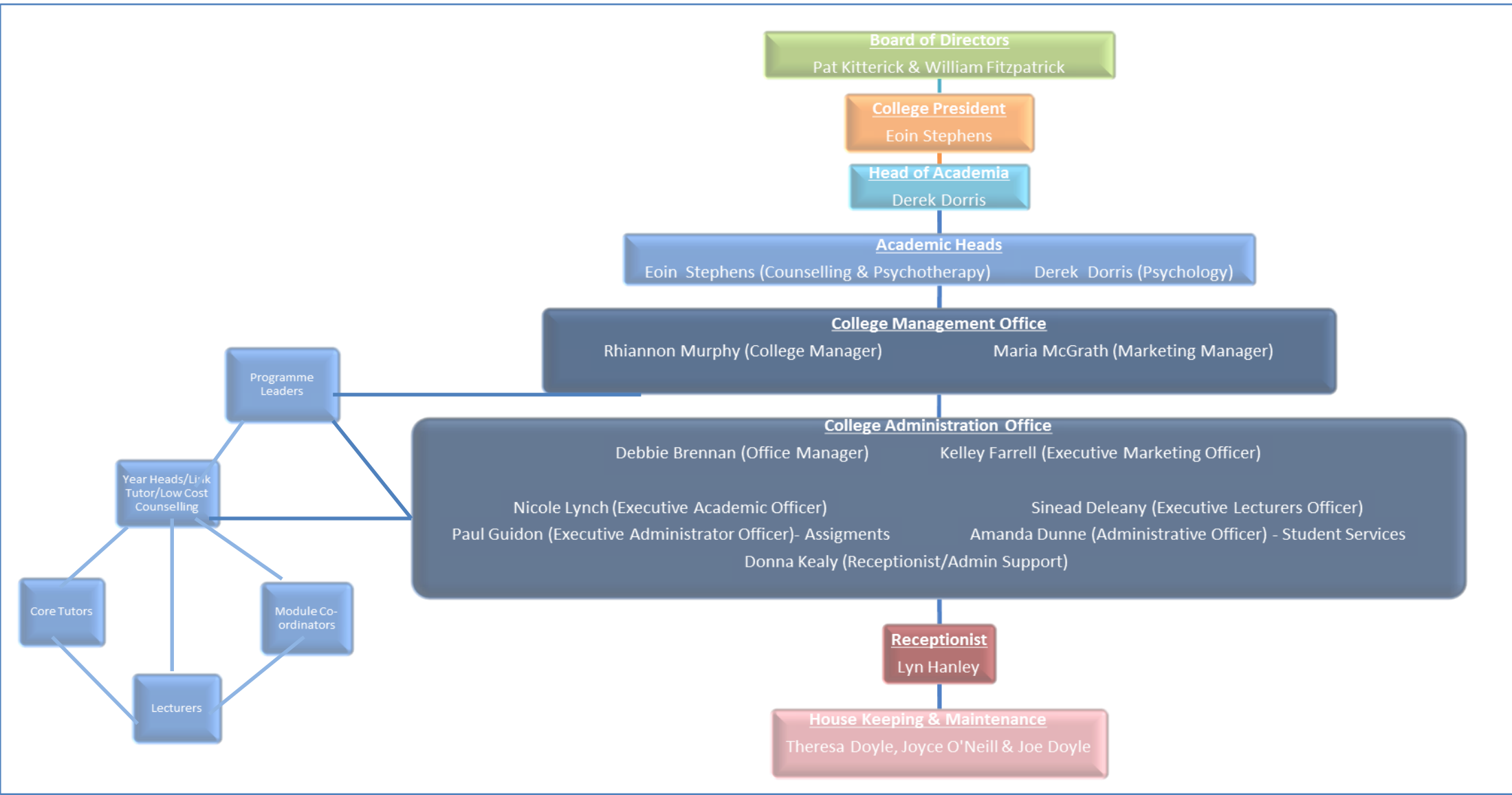
College Board

College Board

The College Board manages and controls the affairs of the College. The College provides such courses of study as the College Board considers appropriate. The College Board approves annual programmes and budgets, and determines the numbers of staff to be employed and the terms and conditions of staff. Its membership consists of:

- College President
- College Manager
- Financial Director

Figure 1 shows the College Organisation Chart (P.11).



Section E

College Management

Introduction

The management team of PCI College plays a key role in the development and maintenance of a quality assurance culture by ensuring the effective implementation of the procedures outlined in this Manual. By proactively fostering a quality assurance ethos, management endeavours to ensure that the culture becomes an integral part of all College activities

Management Board

The Management Board consists of:

- College President
- College Manager
- Head of Academia
- Financial Director
- Marketing Manager
- Academic Department Heads

The Management Board meets at least twelve times per year. Procedures for the preparation, running, and follow-up to the meetings have been agreed and include; formal minute-taking; formal communication of decisions taken and actions proposed, and review of actions taken. Each Management Board meeting is provided with a progress report on actions from the previous meeting.

College Departments and Management

College President

The College President is responsible for the overall management of the educational and training activities of the College. They are responsible for the setting and maintenance of academic standards. They also act as an ambassador for the College and are involved in the development and implementation of new educational and training courses and other initiatives.

The College President acts as the Dean of PCI College.

College Manager

The College Manager has responsibility for the effective and cost-efficient management, development and co-ordination of the college's products and services, and as a member of the senior management team works closely with the Senior Managers and the academic team. They motivate and manage the team who have particular responsibility for the development of the colleges' products and services to the public.

Head of Academia

The Head of Academia has overall responsibility for PCI College's academic standards and policies, across all Departments and Programmes. This role includes chairing the Teaching, Learning and Assessment Committee.

Financial Director

The Financial Director is a member of the Board of Directors and is responsible for the preparation of annual statutory accounts, various tax returns, and the provision of financial reports. They are responsible for cash-flow management, budget monitoring, maintenance and development of financial control procedures and the management of the payroll system of the College. They are responsible for Human Resources matters and is also responsible for the legal affairs of the College and for arranging the necessary insurances.

Marketing Manager

The Marketing Manager is responsible for the provision of information to potential students on courses, developing ideas for new courses, production of Course Brochures, advertising of College programmes, and establishing links with professional bodies and community groups.

Academic Department Heads

Academic Department Heads are responsible for the leadership, development and day to day academic management of all programmes within their department. They are also responsible for the setting and maintenance of Academic Standards within these programmes. A key aspect of the role is the development of new and complementary programmes.

Teaching, Learning and Assessment Committee

The Teaching, Learning and Assessment Committee has two main functions:

- To oversee the management and operation of existing academic and professional programmes and those which are in development
- To protect, maintain and develop the standard and quality of academic and professional courses provided by the College.

The membership of the Teaching, Learning and Assessment Committee consists of:

- Committee Chair – Head of Academia
- Programme Leaders
- Middlesex University Link Tutor
- Executive Academic Officer

The Teaching, Learning and Assessment Committee plays a pivotal role in developing and maintaining the College's quality assurance procedures. The Chair of the Teaching, Learning and Assessment Committee acts as the representative of the Committee at formal College meetings e.g. Board of Studies and Board of Assessment. He is responsible for ensuring that the Committee meets regularly (at least three times per year) and that the Committee fulfils its obligations regarding safeguarding the standards of the design, delivery and assessment of College programmes.

The Executive Academic Officer of the Teaching, Learning and Assessment Committee has the responsibility of ensuring that decisions made by the Committee are implemented. Individuals and/or sub-committees of the Committee may be directed from time to time to pursue issues specified by the Committee. Such sub-committees are disbanded when their work is completed. A New Programmes

Committee is an example of a sub-committee that is formed for a specific task and then disbanded – See Section F 3.8.

All decisions of the Committee are recorded in the Minutes of its meetings. Committee decisions are communicated to the relevant stakeholders.

Section F

Procedures and Guidelines for the Design and Validation of New Programmes

The procedures outlined below guide staff and external assessors involved in the College's system of approval and validation of new programmes. These procedures and guidelines also apply to any significant changes to existing programmes.

1. PURPOSE

The purpose of these procedures and guidelines is to ensure that any proposed programme:

- Is consistent with the College's Mission and Values Statement and contributes to achieving the College's aims and objectives
- Offers a valuable educational experience to learners
- Complies with Higher Education Teaching Awards Council (HETAC) standards and is in line with HETAC's policies and procedures on quality assurance
- Where necessary, takes account of the criteria of the relevant accreditation bodies in the field of Counselling and Psychotherapy

2. SCOPE

This document refers to all stages in the development of new programme Proposals, from initial stage through to validation by the College, where the College has the power to make its own awards, and validation by HETAC

The process of design, approval and validation of new courses involves some or all of the following:

- A proposer, individual or group
- A developer, individual or group, that may or may not be the proposer
- Programme Leader
- Tutor Team to deliver the course
- Teaching, Learning and Assessment Committee
- College Board
- Management Board
- HETAC

- Professional Accreditation Bodies e.g. Irish Association for Counselling and psychotherapy (IACP), National Association for Pastoral Counselling and Psychotherapy

3. PROPOSALS FOR NEW PROGRAMMES

- 3.1 Proposals for new programmes can emanate from many sources. These include proposals for new courses, proposals for changing existing courses and proposals for discontinuing existing courses.
- 3.2 Proposals are considered both on their own merit and within the framework of the overall policy of the College.
- 3.3 The most frequent sources for proposals on course developments/new programmes are likely to be academic staff of the College, the Directors/Managers of the College, and requests from professional bodies and community groups.
- 3.4 The College requires the proposer of a new programme to submit an outline of the programme for approval prior to the development of a full submission. The outline proposal should include evidence of the following:
- Demand from certain professions and/or groups in society
 - Demand from prospective students
 - Admission criteria
 - Aims and learning outcomes - general details
 - Course design – a broad outline of proposed modules, learning outcomes, teaching and assessment methodologies
 - Course schedule - contact hours and level of award
 - Resources – accommodation, staffing, administration
 - Where the course fits in to the menu of courses already offered by the College
- 3.5 The outline proposal is submitted to the College President in the first instance. He will bring the proposal to the Management Board, College Board and Teaching, Learning and Assessment Committee for consideration.

- 3.6 The College Board examines the outline proposal in terms of the College's plans for the future, taking in to account current resources. The College Board compiles a short report which is forwarded, together with the outline proposal, to the Teaching, Learning and Assessment Committee.
- 3.7 The Management Board examines the outline of the proposed course in terms of its implications for the Student Services and for Professional Development. A short report is forwarded to the Teaching, Learning and Assessment Committee.
- 3.8 The Teaching, Learning and Assessment Committee, having considered the outline of the proposed course and taking cognisance of the reports from the College Board and from the Management Board may reject the proposal, seek further clarification from the proposer or proceed to establish a sub-committee of the Committee to advance the proposal through the next stages of the validation process. This sub-committee is known as the New Programmes Committee. It consists of the College President (or his deputy), the Proposer of the new programme, and a number of senior tutors appointed by the Teaching, Learning and Assessment Committee. The tutors appointed will have experience/expertise in the area of study outlined in the proposed new programme.
- 3.9 The College Board and the Teaching, Learning and Assessment Committee are kept informed by the College President on the progress of proposal through each further stage in the process.

4. STAGES IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE PROPOSAL FOR VALIDATION

Internal Validation

- 4.1 The arrangements for the preparation of the submission for course approval will be determined through a consultation process involving the Head of Academia, the Proposer and relevant senior members of teaching staff who are members of the New Programmes Committee.
- 4.2 While the research, preparatory work and drafting may be shared, one member of the committee normally assumes a co-ordinating role.

5. PROPOSED PROGRAMME CONTENT

5.1 The procedures and guidelines for the design and approval of new programmes must be rigorous and effective in order to develop coherent new programmes of study. Effective procedures and guidelines smooth the internal approval and validation processes and bring about programmes that are amenable to effective monitoring and review.

5.2 The following points are to be addressed in the design of new programmes:

- Compatibility with the PCI College's Mission and Values Statement
- Impact on programmes currently offered by the College
- The intended aims and learning outcomes of the programme
- Whether the programme is consistent with the requirements of the relevant validating bodies
- Demand for graduates of this programme, the opportunities that graduation offers learners, and the demand for the programme from a sufficient cohort of appropriately qualified learners
- The level of the programme, the degree to which the programme challenges the learner, and where the programme sits within the College's framework as well as that of the National Framework of Qualifications
- Mode of delivery of the programme and the time to completion of the programme
- The development of the curriculum as the learners progress through the programme
- Resources necessary and available to run the programmes – accommodation available and required, staff available and required, administrative staff available and required, equipment available and required, library and information technology resources available and required, staff development required for delivery of the proposed programme
- An award title at a level in keeping with the intended learning outcomes and duration of the programme

- Sufficient emphasis on promoting the intended learning outcomes; details showing how learners will demonstrate the achievement of these learning outcomes together with the means of assessing these outcomes
- An appropriate balance in regard to the breadth and depth of the curriculum and the academic and practical requirements of the programme
- The personal development of the learner is central to PCI College programmes and balanced carefully with the intended academic outcomes of the programme
 - The appropriateness of the total contact hours and the breakdown of these hours into lectures, practical, placements etc.
- The workload of the learner in terms of assessment requirements, reading, research, study, client work, supervision, personal therapy etc.

The design process begins with specifying course Aims and Learning Outcomes.

5.3 Aims

The course aims are normally general in nature and reflect the overall purpose of the course. The aims indicate the flavour and direction of the course. The formulation of the course aims is fundamental to the development of the more specific module aims. It is important that what is outlined in the course aims is carried forward into the module aims. Module aims are often written in language such as:

- To give an understanding of...
- To give an appreciation of ...
- To develop skills in ...
- To gain experience of ...

Because of the general nature of aims it can be difficult to confirm that the course and subject aims have been met. Aims on their own are not sufficient to convey to the tutors or the learners what the intended learning is.

5.4 Learning Outcomes

The Learning Outcomes for each module reflect the cognitive content and skills content to be attained. Learning Outcomes are written in terms of what the learner will be able to do on completion of the module. It is important in writing Learning Outcomes that cognisance is taken not only of what a successful learner will be able to do but also care must be taken that this behaviour is measurable where possible e.g.

On completion of this module the learner will be able to:

- Give examples of ...
- Define in his/her own words ...
- Distinguish between ...
- Demonstrate the following skills ...

The number of learning outcomes will be determined by the course aims.

5.5 Assessment

Learning outcomes drive the assessment procedures; assessment procedures are designed to assess the learning outcomes in as realistic a way as possible. Assessment criteria are developed that take into consideration the learning outcomes, course and module content, together with the level of the programme. The assessment of new programmes will be in line with the procedures and guidelines for the assessment of learners as outlined in Section J of this manual.

5.6 The New Programmes Committee is charged with the task of progressing the approved outline proposal into a full programme. The New programmes Committee may consult an external specialist(s) in the process of developing the proposal into a full programme. The external specialist examines the proposed programme under the following headings:

- Aims
- Learning Outcomes
- Syllabus
- Teaching/Learning Methodologies
- Assessment Methodologies
- Time Allocation
- Resources
- Curriculum Vitae of Staff
- Draft Course Schedule
- Level of Programme
- Balance of Academic and Practical
- Personal Development of the Learner
- Programme Title and award Title
- Compliance with HETAC Standards
- Access, Transfer and Progression

- 5.7 The College President provides an update on new programme proposals to each meeting of the Teaching, Learning and Assessment Committee and also to each meeting of the College Board.
- 5.8 When the New Programmes Committee and the external specialist(s) are satisfied that the new course proposal document meets the requirements of the College and HETAC, the College President presents the document to the Teaching, Learning and Assessment Committee and College Board for approval.

6. EXTERNAL VALIDATION

- 6.1 When the new programme has been approved by the Teaching, Learning and Assessment Committee and by the College Board, the College President asks HETAC to convene a Panel of Assessors to examine the programme with a view to having it validated by that body.
- 6.2 The Teaching, Learning and Assessment Committee, through the College President, facilitates the Panel's consideration of the proposed programme. The Panel of Assessors examines the proposed programme in terms of HETAC requirements and those of professional bodies e.g. IACP.
- 6.3 The secretary to the Panel of Assessors compiles an agreed Interim Report and presents it to the College President. The Head of Academia presents the Interim Report to the Academic Committee, the New Programmes Committee and the College Board.
- 6.4 The College Board considers any recommendations from the Panel that have College wide implications. The New Programmes Committee considers all other recommendations from the Panel. The Head of Academia ensures that responses to the Panel's Interim Report are brought before the Teaching, Learning and Assessment Committee.
- 6.5 The College President liaises with the Chairperson of the Panel of Assessors, on behalf of the Teaching, Learning and Assessment Committee, to ensure that the issues raised by the Panel have been addressed. The Teaching, Learning and Assessment Committee, through the College President, forwards the College's responses to the Chairperson of the Panel of Assessors for consideration.
- 6.6 The secretary to the Panel completes an agreed Final Report of the Panel of Assessors. The Teaching, Learning and Assessment Committee considers this Final Report and may request additional changes.
- 6.7 When the Teaching, Learning and Assessment Committee accepts the

Final Report of the Panel of Assessors, the College President completes a Certificate of Programme Validation for a period of five years and places it on the agenda of the next meeting of the College Board where resources implications can be finalised.

- 6.8 The Teaching, Learning and Assessment Committee monitors adherence to the conditions of course approval up to the completion of the new programme by the first cohort of learners.

7 BUDGETS

The Financial Director, in conjunction with the College Board and the Management Board, prepares budgets to cover the cost of running existing courses, introduction of new courses as well as any significant amendments to existing courses.

8 PROSPECTUS

Preparation of the College Prospectus is a matter for the Marketing Manager in consultation with the College Board and the Management Board of the College. Management ensures that the prospectus:

- Does not include a course which has not been properly and fully approved
- Gives an accurate description of each course on offer taking into account that it represents the offer part of a potential contract
- Contains entry conditions as determined by the College authorities

Section G

Procedures and Guidelines for the Ongoing Monitoring of Programmes

The procedures and guidelines outlined below are a guide to all staff and learners involved in the ongoing monitoring of programmes. This monitoring process relates to the programme as a whole and not to the progress of individual learners on these programmes.

1. PURPOSE

The purpose of these procedures and guidelines is:

- To ensure that processes exist for the gathering and consideration of information that can be used to improve the delivery of programmes
- To ensure that programmes remain current and continue to meet their stated aims
- To monitor the degree to which learners meet the intended learning outcomes of the programmes and the extent to which the assessment mechanisms are appropriate
- To contribute to the development of a quality culture in which all participants are aware of their respective roles and that actions are taken to address any observed weaknesses in the programmes
- To position the monitoring of programmes within a framework of systematic periodic reviews.

2. SCOPE

This document refers to the ongoing monitoring of programmes validated by the College and by HETAC.

3. NATURE OF MONITORING

- 3.1 Monitoring programmes involves the ongoing examination of the delivery and assessment of programmes.
- 3.2 The experience gained from delivering the programmes is to be evaluated in the context of the programmes' aims.
- 3.3 This examination of the programmes is to focus on the delivery and assessment of modules and the needs of learners.
- 3.4 The Programme Leader has overall responsibility for the completion of the Annual Monitoring Report for each programme and for the organisation of whatever changes that are to be introduced in the next delivery of the programme. No significant changes may be made to a programme without the consent of the relevant validation and accreditation bodies.
- 3.5 The Programme Leader finalises the Annual Monitoring Report for the previous academic year in time for consideration by the Teaching, Learning and Assessment Committee at its winter meeting.

4. STUDENT REPRESENTATIVES

- 4.1 Each Class elects a Student Representative each year. His/her function is two fold – to bring issues of concern in the group to the attention of the College, and to be a conduit through which the College can bring information directly to the student groups. The Student Rep. also represents his/her class at the Board of Studies Meeting twice a year. (See Board of Studies, Section L)
- 4.2 The College responds to issues raised by Students' Representatives at the Board of Studies meetings, has them addressed in the Annual Monitoring Report where actions taken, and actions planned to be undertaken, are identified.

5. SURVEY OF STUDENTS

- 5.1 It is a College requirement that learners are given the opportunity to appraise each module anonymously.

At the end of each module, students are invited to complete an End of Module Report Form. Completed Student Feedback Forms are put into a sealed envelope by the Student Rep. and returned to the College. The Feedback Forms are copied; the original is filed and a copy is sent to the module tutor. A summary of the students' feedback is presented to the Teaching, Learning and Assessment Committee and is also included in the Monitoring Report.

Core Tutors, in their regular meetings with students, gather information regarding the progress of students and their interactions with the tutors and the course. This information is fed back to the Year Heads and he/she, in turn, presents it to the relevant stakeholders

- 5.3 The appraisal of programmes by learners is a central part in the ongoing monitoring of programmes. The Annual Monitoring Report reflects the learners' appraisal of the programme. The Report details any revisions to be undertaken to overcome any observed weaknesses in the programmes offered by the College.
- 5.3 Having examined the completed End of Module Feedback Forms, the reports from Student Representatives and the reports of the Core Tutors, the Programme Leader and the Year Heads consider what action to take to remedy any consistent deficiencies that have emerged from the those reports. If there is a pattern of dissatisfaction emerging about the delivery of a particular module, the Programme Leader takes up that issue with the relevant tutor. If a pattern of dissatisfaction emerges concerning an aspect of student services, that issue is brought to the attention of the Manager of Student Services to be rectified. If there is a difficulty in the Student Care area, it is referred back for the attention of the relevant Core Tutor. In all cases a report of the actions taken to deal with the identified difficulties is given to the relevant stakeholder(s).

6. EXTERN EXAMINER'S REPORT

- 6.1 An Extern Examiner is appointed by the College in consultation with the relevant validating body.
- 6.2 The Extern Examiner is required to submit a report after the December and May meetings of the Board of Studies and Board of Assessment, summarising the learners' academic progress to date and commenting on the College's efforts to meet its stated objectives
- 6.3 The Extern Examiner's report provides important information for consideration at Teaching, Learning and Assessment Committee level and also by the College Board. (See Section M for a more detailed account of the procedures for the

appointment of an External Examiner and the criteria for making such an appointment. Appendix G gives a template for the External Examiner's report.)

7. LECTURING STAFF FEEDBACK

- 7.1 At least once in each term a meeting of all Lecturing Staff is held to review the programmes being taught and to identify strengths and weaknesses. Management and organisation at College level, as well as the resources and services in place to support the education programmes provided, are open to scrutiny at these meetings.
- 7.2 The Programme Leader takes whatever steps are necessary to implement the changes agreed with the Lecturing Staff.
- 7.3 The feedback given by Lecturing Staff is very important in the ongoing monitoring of programmes. The Monitoring Report will reflect the staff's responses. This section of the report details the revisions to be undertaken to overcome any identified weaknesses in the programme.

Section H

Procedures and Guidelines for Programme Evaluation

The procedures and guidelines outlined below guide all staff, learner representatives and external specialists involved in the evaluation of programmes every five years.

1. PURPOSE

The purpose of these procedures and guidelines is to ensure that each Programme Evaluation:

- Improves the quality of the programmes
- Ensures programmes remain current and continue to offer a valuable educational experience to the learner
- Ensures that both the academic and labour- market needs of the learner are satisfied
- Takes cognisance of the National Framework of Qualifications
- Complies with all the requirements of the relevant external validating bodies
- Contributes to the development of a quality culture in which all participants are aware of their respective roles and that actions are taken to address observed weaknesses in programmes

2. REGULAR PERIODIC EVALUATION

2.1 Each programme will be the subject of regular evaluation, once every five years or as required by relevant validating bodies.

2.2 There are two distinct elements to Programme Evaluation (PE); an internal element and an external element. The internal element of a PE comprises a self-evaluation of the programme(s), a plan for the subsequent five years and a revised programme document. The external element of a PE entails external

experts considering the evidence of the self-evaluation and conducting their own evaluation of the revised programme documents and plans.

- 2.3 In evaluating a programme the focus is on the effectiveness of the programme in meeting its stated aims, and also on the success of the learners in reaching the intended learning outcomes. The accumulation of the data from the Annual Monitoring process, detailed in Section G, is fundamental to the self-evaluation. Feedback from learners is a pivotal component.
- 2.4 The College's procedures for the assessment of learners, outlined in Section J, is important for both the self-evaluation stage and also in the development of a revised programme document

3. AIMS

- 3.1 Programme Evaluation (PE) is a review of the continuing validity of a programme's aims and the associated learning outcomes.
- 3.2 PE is undertaken in two stages – an internal phase and an external phase – to evaluate the effectiveness of the curriculum and assessment in relation to the intended learning outcomes.
- 3.3 PE centres on a review of the development of courses over the previous five years, with particular regard to the achievement and improvement of educational quality.
- 3.4 Through PE a revised programme document is developed, detailing revised aims and learning outcomes, revised course schedules revised syllabi and a revised assessment plan.
- 3.5 Any proposed new courses will be evaluated separately in accordance with the College's internal procedures and guidelines for the design and validation of new programmes as outlined in Section F of this document.

4. OBJECTIVES

- To analyse the effectiveness of each of the courses approved.
- To review the development of the suite of courses being provided, having regard to the views of education interests, professional bodies, public demand etc.

- To evaluate the physical facilities provided by the College for the provision of the courses.
- To evaluate the College's flexibility in responding to market requirements and educational developments.
- To evaluate the formal links the College has established with professions, state and semi-state organisations, and the wider community in order to maintain the relevance of its courses.
- To evaluate the College's projections and plans for the succeeding five years in specific areas.
- To detail how identified deficiencies in the programme will be addressed in the future delivery of the course.
- To develop a revised programme document that takes cognisance of the views of the relevant stakeholders.

5. SUBJECT MATTER FOR A PROGRAMME EVALUATION (PE)

The result of the internal evaluation of programmes is contained in a Report on the Internal Evaluation of Programmes (RIEP). It provides information under the following headings in respect of the approved programmes being reviewed.

5.1 Internal College Academic Processes

This section sets out the mechanisms whereby changes in proposed programmes are processed through the internal College's academic structure including Teaching, Learning and Assessment Committee. The process by which the self-evaluation was conducted and the programme revisions arrived at must be detailed in the documentation.

5.2 Learner Throughput

Enrolment and assessment statistics for the previous three years will be provided per course. These statistics will deal, in particular, with student withdrawals, retention and assessment performance in appropriate detail

5.3 Review of Course Design

A brief description of the development of each course, highlighting any changes implemented or proposed, is provided. In addition this section includes the

course schedule in operation at the time of the previous review together with course schedules being proposed as part of the current PE.

5.4 Assessment

The procedures in place for the assessment of learners are documented. The assessment of learners is examined in terms of whether they:

- Are fair and consistent and comply with standards determined by the college, and HETAC
- Are in keeping with the National Framework of Qualifications
- Are effective in measuring the learners' attainment of the intended learning outcomes
- Contribute to the total learning experience, and
- Encourage creativity and originality in demonstrating achievement of the intended learning outcomes

5.5 Transfers

PCI College facilitates, where possible, the transfer of learners from other colleges whose programmes are sufficiently similar to those offered by PCI College.

5.6 Review of Facilities

A description of the most significant developments is provided. This indicates any facilities that have been phased out and any new facilities that have been installed in terms of physical space and equipment since the previous PE. Any projected enhancement of facilities over the succeeding five years is outlined.

5.7 Deployment and Development of Academic Staff

Details of staff appointments over the previous three years, of projections for the succeeding five years and of staff deployment within the College are provided. Curricula vitae of staff appointed since the previous review is provided in addition to any developments in existing staff curricula vitae.

5.8 Links with the Wider Community

The purpose of this section is to establish the extent to which the College is actively engaged in monitoring developments in the world of work and the

wider community in order to maintain a high degree of relevance in its courses. The College also examines its programmes against the relevant offerings of other higher education institutions.

5.9 Course Delivery Methodologies

Information in relation to teaching strategies and methodologies as well as the use of technology is provided.

5.10 Development Plan

A plan for the College's programme for the succeeding five years is included.

5.11 Programme Document

The revised aims and general learning outcomes, revised course schedule, revised syllabi, and a revised assessment plan is presented for each programme.

5.12 Revised Programme Titles and Award Titles

Any revised award title is to be consistent with the named awards determined by the College, and by HETAC. The programme title should be clear, accurate, and succinct and fit for the purpose of informing prospective learners and other stakeholders.

5.13 Access, Transfer and Progression

Revised programmes incorporate the procedures for access, transfer and progression. Consistent with the policy of the College, and accepting HETAC guidelines, a number of access and entry points are accommodated.

6. REPORT ON THE INTERNAL EVALUATION OF PROGRAMMES (RIEP)

6.1 In the second semester of the third year of a five year cycle the Programme Leader puts on the agenda of a meeting of the Teaching, Learning and Assessment Committee the need to conduct a rigorous self-evaluation. The Teaching, Learning and Assessment Committee draws up a plan outlining the process to be followed in conducting this self-evaluation, who is to do the various parts of the review and to lay down a timescale for the completion of the work. The self-evaluation, beginning at the start of year four, will include the following:

- A review of the Monitoring Reports of the three previous years to identify areas of on-going concern
- A report from the Students' Representatives of each class
- A report from Module Co-ordinators, containing feedback from their teams of tutors
- A report from the Year Head, containing feedback from the team of Core Tutors.
- A report from the Library Co-ordinator
- A report from the Manager of Student Services
- A report from the Manager of Professional Development
- A report from the Placement Co-ordinator
- A report from the Supervision Co-ordinator

6.2 Each of the above reports is to contain:

- Aspects of the work that have been successful
- Changes that have occurred that were either positive or negative.
- Aspects that have not been successful and that need to be changed
- Proposals for change/improvements in the new cycle.

6.3 The Teaching, Learning and Assessment Committee establishes an Evaluation Committee consisting of a number of members of the Committee and a number of senior tutors, to review the reports listed above.

6.4 Having reviewed the reports listed above the members of the Evaluation Committee arrange meetings with the authors of the reports to clarify, elucidate, challenge the contents of the reports with their authors. The Evaluation Committee examines all aspects of College provision:

- Entry requirements
- Interview criteria
- Fees
- Orientation of learners
- Content of modules
- Delivery of modules
- Assessment of modules
- Accommodation
- Library
- Student Services
- Student Care
- Progression
- Placements
- Supervision
- Therapy
- Client work

- HETAC requirements

- 6.5 The Evaluation Committee provides a report to each meeting of the Teaching, Learning and Assessment Committee on the progress being made.
- 6.6 The Evaluation Committee draws up a draft of the Report on the Internal Evaluation of Programmes (RIEP) and presents it to the Teaching, Learning and Assessment Committee and to the College Board in October of year five of the cycle.
- 6.7 The College Board examines the draft RIEP with a particular focus on whatever implications the report has for planning resources for the following five years. The Board compiles a response to the draft RIEP and the Programme Leader presents this response to the next meeting of the Teaching, Learning and Assessment Committee.
- 6.8 The Teaching, Learning and Assessment Committee considers the draft RIEP and also the response of the College Board to the draft report. When the Teaching, Learning and Assessment Committee, the Evaluation Committee and the College Board are satisfied that the draft report meets the College's requirements and also HETAC requirements, the report is then adopted by the Teaching, Learning and Assessment Committee as the final Report on the Internal Evaluation of Programmes. The completion of a RIEP is the culmination of the self-evaluation process. The Teaching, Learning and Assessment Committee then proceed to appoint an External Evaluator(s) to examine the RIEP

7. THE EXTERNAL PHASE OF PROGRAMME EVALUATION

- 7.1 The Programme Leader facilitates visits by the External Evaluators' to the College and their consideration of the RIEP. The External Evaluators examine the RIEP in terms of College policies and procedures, HETAC requirements and in particular procedures in relation to access, transfer and progression.
- 7.2 The subject matter for a PE, outlined in paragraph 5 above, provides the criteria against which the External Evaluators measure the RIEP and carry out their own investigations.
- 7.3 The External Evaluators present an interim report to the Programme Leader. The recommendations are split into matters for consideration at course level and matters for consideration at College level.
- 7.4 The Programme Leader brings the report of the External Evaluators to the

attention of the Teaching, Learning and Assessment Committee and the College Board.

- 7.5 The Teaching, Learning and Assessment Committee addresses the External Evaluators' recommendations on course issues. The College Board considers any recommendations that have College-wide implications. The Board's response to the interim report of the External Evaluator is brought to the attention of the Teaching, Learning and Assessment Committee.
- 7.6 The Programme Leader, on behalf of the Teaching, Learning and Assessment Committee and College Board, brings the responses of the College Board and the Teaching, Learning and Assessment Committee to the attention of the External Evaluators for consideration.
- 7.7 If the External Evaluators need to meet again with College staff, the Programme Leader facilitates the required meeting(s).
- 7.8 The External Evaluators complete an agreed Final Report. The Academic Committee considers this final report and may request additional changes to the submission document.
- 7.8 Where the Teaching, Learning and Assessment Committee recommends approval, the Programme Leader completes Certificates of Programme Validation, typically for another five year period.
- 7.10 The Certificates of Programme Validation are placed on the agenda of the College Board. The Programme Leader, following consultation with senior staff members brings any resource issues that result from the programme revisions to the attention of the College Board.
- 7.11 The Teaching, Learning and Assessment Committee reviews adherence to conditions of approval until the first cohort of learners has completed the amended programmes.

Section J

Procedures and Guidelines for the Assessment of Learners

The procedures outlined below guide all staff with responsibilities for learner assessment. The document is also relevant to all staff and external assessors involved in the approval/validation of new programmes and the periodic evaluation of programmes.

1. PURPOSE

The purpose of these procedures and guidelines is to ensure that the College operates assessment methods that:

- Are fair and consistent and comply with standards determined by the College, HETAC and professional accreditation bodies
- Comply with the validating body's standards in respect of the National Framework of Qualifications
- Are effective in measuring the learner's attainment of the intended learning outcomes
- Provide feedback to the learner, enabling the learner to improve his/her performance
- Contribute positively to the total learning experience and in particular to achieving the intended learning outcomes
- Encourage creativity and originality in demonstrating achievement of the intended learning outcomes.

2. SCOPE

This document refers to part-time courses offered by PCI COLLEGE where the College has responsibility for curriculum development and delivery, and the assessment of learners.

3. INTRODUCTION

3.1 The impact of assessment on student learning cannot be over emphasised. It is well recognised that how students learn and what students learn is very significantly influenced by the assessment mechanisms employed.

3.2 The procedures and guidelines outlined here focus, for the most part, on developing and maintaining an assessment plan. The relevant content of this plan is reflected in the student Information Pack.

The assessment plan addresses the following:

- Purpose of assessment
- Provision of appropriate feedback, including how the learner can improve his/her work
- Assessment schedule outlining the weighting and timing of assessments
- Details of how and when assessment judgements will be made known
- Criteria for assessment, including descriptors of expected standards of attainment for particular marking bands
- Grading and marking conventions to be employed
- Consequences of assessment for both progression and final award.

4. THE LANGUAGE OF ASSESSMENT

4.1 It is important to distinguish between formative and sumative assessment. Formative assessment is designed to have benefits for both learning and teaching but does not contribute to an overall mark. Sumative assessment is often viewed as assessment to meet society's need for certification. In sumative assessment the learner's performance is measured against the prescribed learning outcomes. In reality most assessment instruments have both a formative and sumative element.

4.2 Desirable characteristics of an assessment instrument are the power to discriminate, objectivity in scoring, validity and reliability.

Discriminate

It is important that assessment recognises the different levels of achievement of the learners. A test or assignment that is too easy will not reflect the greater achievement of the excellent learner relative to the weak learner.

Objectivity

An objective assessment instrument yields the same result irrespective of who marks the work

Validity

In assessment terms validity means the extent to which the assessment instrument measures what it is supposed to measure.

Reliability

Reliability in assessment means the degree to which the assessment instrument consistently measures what it is supposed to measure

5. PURPOSE OF ASSESSMENT AND LEARNER FEEDBACK

- 5.1 Assessment instruments are designed with learner feedback in mind. It should be evident to the learners why they obtained the mark they did. It should also be clear to the learner how his/her grade could be improved upon. The feedback identifies the learner's strengths and weaknesses without damaging his/her self esteem. (See Essay Comment Sheet, Appendix C)
- 5.2 The learner is made aware of both how and when the assessment judgement will be made known.
- 5.3 It is a College requirement that, in designing new programmes and in the review of existing programmes, the rationale for the various assessment methods is examined and the provision of assessment feedback is adequately planned for.

6. SCHEDULE OF ASSESSMENT

- 6.1 A schedule of assessment is an outline of the assessment requirements for the programme. The assessment schedule states the module title, the percentage of marks for the work, the date when the assessment will be handed out (usually the last day of module delivery) together with the date for handing in completed work – between four and six weeks from the date the module ends.

- 6.5 Assignments are issued so that there is no overlap in the timing of assessment work for the different modules.

7. ASSESSMENT TECHNIQUES

The following assessment methods are used in the college to ascertain if the learner has achieved a satisfactory mastery of the learning objectives - written assignments, skills demonstrations, learner records/case studies, personal journals, presentations to class, art work.

8. ASSESSMENT CRITERIA

- 8.1 Assessment criteria define the knowledge, understanding, skills, and other outcomes that a learner is required to achieve for particular grade bands. This information is contained in the Essay Handwriting Handbook which all learners receive.
- 8.2 Assessment criteria are to be closely aligned to the knowledge and skills that are the primary focus of a particular module.
- 8.3 The assessment criteria are to be clear to both learners and tutors.
- 8.4 Assessment criteria are developed locally at course/module level, to take account of variations in subject content and the level of award.
- 8.5 Learners retain a copy of submitted work.
- 8.6 A formal mechanism for considering requests for extensions to deadlines for assessments is in place. Consistency in the application of this process is achieved by the Programme Leader (or his/her nominee) processing requests relating to a particular programme in consultation with the relevant tutors(s) - See Appendix D.

9. BREACHES OF ASSESSMENT REGULATIONS

- 9.1 Definitions are presented for plagiarism and cheating in the Assessment Regulations. The regulations also identify the procedures for dealing with incidents of alleged cheating. Procedures are in place for informing students about the College's regulations.
- 9.2 An important preventative practice in dealing with plagiarism and cheating is the signing by the student of the Cover Page of their assignment stating that this work is the learner's own effort.

9.3 A policy on academic referencing and citation is included in the learner's Essay Writing Handbook. The College has adopted the Harvard method for references.

10 ASSESSMENT REGULATIONS

10.1 Learners are expected to familiarise themselves with the following documents:

- a) Essay Writing Handbook
- b) The regulations and procedures set out here
- c) The relevant parts of the Student Handbook
- d) Rechecks, Reviews and Appeals Procedures

10.2 In particular, candidates must be familiar with any relevant -

- a) Assessment schedule for particular programmes
- b) Penalties for work submitted late
- c) Procedures for seeking deadline extension
- d) Guidelines for referencing

11. LEARNER RESPONSIBILITY

11.1 Learners are expected to:

- a) Ensure that they are correctly entered for assessments
- b) Attend practical assessments
- c) Complete all continuous assessment work as required
- d) Immediately notify the relevant tutor and the relevant Core Tutor of any absences from class
- e) Comply with any College requirements for (i) seeking deadline extensions, and (ii) referencing
- f) Retain a copy of submitted work

11.2 It is the responsibility of candidates to check the date, time and venue for each assessment.

12 GENERAL REMARKS

12.1 Learners are expected to bring to the attention of the relevant tutor, at the earliest possible opportunity, any ambiguity in the requirements of an assignment

12.2 Learners are expected to bring to the attention of the relevant tutor, at

the earliest possible opportunity, circumstances preventing them completing a prescribed assignment in the allotted time.

13. BREACHES OF THE ASSESSMENT REGULATIONS

13.1 Cheating:

The College defines the very serious academic offence of cheating as:

- a) Acting dishonestly in any way, whether before, during or after an assessment, so as to either obtain or offer to others, an unfair advantage in an assessment
- b) Deliberate plagiarism

13.2 Plagiarism:

Presenting as one's own, the words or ideas of someone else, whether published or not, without proper acknowledgement, within one's own work is called plagiarism. There are three main types of plagiarism:

- a) Direct copying of text from a book, article, fellow learner's essay, hand-outs, web page or other source without proper acknowledgement
- b) Claiming individual ideas derived from a book, article etc. as one's own and incorporating them into one's work without acknowledging the source of these ideas
- c) Overly depending on the work of one or more other sources without proper acknowledgement of the source, by constructing an essay, project etc., extracting large sections of text from another source and merely linking these together with a few of one's own sentences.

14 ASSESSMENT REGULATIONS COMMITTEE

14.1 The Programme Leader will establish an Assessments Regulations Committee in the event of an alleged breach of the College's Assessment Regulations.

14.2 The membership of the committee will be:

- Programme Leader (or his nominee)
- Extern Examiner (or his nominee)
- A senior tutor (not directly involved with the alleged breach of the Assessment Regulations.)

- 14.3 The committee will recommend a course of action. The candidate may seek a review (and appeal) of the decision of the committee through the College's procedures on rechecks, reviews, and appeals.
- 14.4 Where it is proven beyond a reasonable doubt that a learner has sought to gain an unfair advantage by cheating in a single assessment, the normal minimum penalty is that the result of that assessment is declared null and void. The Programme Leader will decide what action is to be taken in regard to possible re-assessment. The College reserves the right to invoke disciplinary procedures also.
- 14.5 Where it is proven beyond a reasonable doubt that a learner has sought to gain an unfair advantage by cheating in more than one assessment, the normal minimum penalty is that all assessments at that particular level will be declared null and void. The Programme Leader will decide when and if the candidate can be re-assessed. The College reserves the right to also invoke disciplinary procedures.

Guidelines for Internal Assessors

1. All assessment is to be consistent with the syllabus and the stated learning outcomes.
2. The design of assessment is to take cognisance of the need to discriminate, have objectivity in scoring, validity and reliability.
3. The timing and weighting of assessments is to be in accordance with the approved course schedule and the assessment schedule.
4. Feedback to learners on their assessment performance is an integral part of the process.
5. Internal assessors are to take cognisance of all suggestions proposed by the Extern Examiner.
6. Internal assessors must notify the Programme Leader of any special assessment requirements or deviations from normal practice.
7. Learners are to be informed well in advance of an assessment of the structure of the assignment.
8. The front cover of the completed assignment must detail the module number and title, learner's name and ID number, and be signed by the student to verify that this is his/her own work.

9. Learners' marks are to be submitted by the tutor to the designated College secretary within four weeks of receipt of the scripts. The secretary records those marks on the College Results Sheet.
10. Internal assessors are aware that assessment materials are made available, as required, to Extern Examiners.
11. Internal assessors may be required to meet Extern Examiners prior to the Assessment Board meetings to discuss assessment issues.
12. Corrected assessment material is retained by the College for six months following the meeting of the relevant Board of Assessment. Material that is the subject of review/appeal is retained for one year following the completion of the review/appeal process.
13. Corrected scripts are given to the Recording Secretary for safe storage.
14. Internal assessors are to carry out their role in respect of rechecks, reviews and appeals.

Section K

Rechecks, Reviews and Appeals Procedures

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Purpose of Procedure

It is the policy of PCI College to endeavour, in so far as is practicable, to:

- a) Deal within the College with all reviews, appeals and disputes in relation to assessment matters involving learners, and to do so in accordance with the principles of natural and constitutional justice.
- b) Provide arrangements in relation to reviews, appeals and disputes in relation to assessment matters which ensure that they are dealt with fairly, transparently and in a timely way and which may involve, as necessary, wholly independent persons of appropriate knowledge and experience in the process.

1.2 Overview of Procedure

- (a) It is a requirement of the College that any complaint or dispute arising in relation to any result, shall fall to be resolved as a matter of first recourse, via the procedures set out below.
- (b) The following are the levels at which decisions are taken in relation to candidate's performance:
 1. Allocation of marks/ grades
 2. Adoption of provisional results
 3. Recheck
 4. Review
 5. Appeal
 6. Approved results
- (c) A learner who is unhappy with his/her mark for a particular assignment is encouraged, in the first instance to discuss the matter with the relevant tutor and the Year Head. If the learner is still unhappy he/she may seek a recheck/review of his/her marks.

2. GLOSSARY

2.1 Result:

The decision taken by a Board of Assessment in relation to a candidate's progression or eligibility for award or the outcome of any recheck, review or appeal.

2.2 Recheck:

The marks awarded for a particular module can be the subject of a recheck. A recheck is carried out to ensure that there have been no arithmetical or clerical errors and that all the marks to which the student is entitled have been included in the final total.

2.3 Review:

A student may request a re-consideration of a decision in relation to marks granted in the light of additional information provided by the candidate in relation to the assessment process.

2.4 Appeal:

Re-consideration by an Appeal Board of the outcome of a Review.

2.5 Outcome:

A decision in relation to a recheck, review or appeal.

3. STATUS OF RESULTS

3.1 A result that is the subject of recheck, review or appeal is provisional while any recheck/review/appeal is being processed.

3.2 A provisional result becomes an Approved Result when approved by the Board of Assessment

3.3 A provisional result may be changed arising from the completion of a recheck/review/appeal process.

4. PROCEDURES TO BE FOLLOWED TO REQUEST A RECHECK

- 4.1 A student wishing to have the marks awarded for a particular module re-examined should seek a recheck of the relevant module. A recheck is a re-examination of the marks awarded for a module to ensure that there have been no arithmetical or clerical errors and that all the marks to which the student is entitled have been included in the final total.
- 4.2 The College endeavours to complete a recheck within 15 working days where a request has been received by the Programme Leader (or his/her nominee) not later than fifteen working days after the results have been sent to the learner.
- 4.3 Rechecks are coordinated by the Programme Leader and carried out by a tutor nominated by him.
- 4.4 Only a written request for a recheck, signed by the person concerned, is considered. The candidate may supply details that he/she believes will help expedite the recheck.
- 4.5 The fee for a recheck is €40 per module, which in the event of a successful recheck, is refunded.
- 4.6 The Programme Leader informs the learner in writing of the outcome of a recheck.

5. REVIEW

5.1 Grounds For A Review

The grounds for a review are as follows:

- (i) The assessment regulations of the College have not been properly implemented
- (ii) The regulations do not adequately cover the candidate's case

5.2 Procedures to Be Followed To Request a Review

- a) The College endeavours to complete all reviews within fifteen working days where review requests have been received, in writing, by the Programme Leader. Such requests must be lodged not later than fifteen working days after the assessment results have been sent to the learner.
- (b) Only a written request for a review and signed by the person concerned is considered.

- (c) A request for a review must state the grounds, in accordance with 5.1 above, upon which the review is sought.
- (d) The candidate must supply evidence in support of his/her request.
- (e) The fee for a review is €75, which in the event of a successful review, is refunded.

5.2 Membership of Review Board

- A member of the Teaching, Learning and Assessment Committee
- Two senior tutors not already involved in the case

5.4 Modus Operandi of the Review Board

- a) The Review Board considers requests for a review received by the Programme Leader, and decides whether a review should be granted, taking into account the requirements of 5.1 above
- b) Where a review is granted, the Review Board considers the evidence presented to it and decides the outcome of the review
- c) In carrying out a review, the Review Board may consult with such persons, as it deems appropriate. The Review Board may require that a re-marking of a script be undertaken by a second intern assessor
- d) A majority vote of the Review Board is sufficient to carry a decision
- e) The Programme Leader informs the student, in writing, of the outcome of the review
- f) A candidate dissatisfied with the outcome of a review may appeal the decision of the Review Board in accordance with paragraph 6 below
- g) The Programme Leader notifies the candidate's tutor of the outcome of the review

6. APPEAL

6.1 Grounds For Appeal

A student may appeal the outcome of a Review on the grounds that the Review Board did not properly address his/her case. The introduction of new material that could have been included in the submission for the attention of the Review Board is not permitted.

6.2 The Programme Leader may require that an appeal be conducted in respect of any Review.

6.3 Procedure to be followed to Request an Appeal

(a) A request for an appeal must be received by the Programme Leader not later than the date specified in the letter notifying the candidate of the decision of the review.

(a) Only a written request for an appeal and signed by the person concerned is considered.

(b) A request for an appeal must state the grounds in accordance with 6.1 above, upon which the appeal is sought.

(c) The candidate must supply evidence in support of his/her request.

(d) The fee for an appeal is €100, refundable where the appeal is successful.

6.4 Decision to Establish Appeal Board

The Programme Leader decides whether an Appeal Board should be established, taking into account the provisions of 6.1 above.

6.5 Membership of an Appeal Board

- Chairperson: A person experienced in higher education procedures with particular reference to assessment, who is external to the College, who has had no previous involvement with the matter under appeal and who is nominated by the Programme Leader to act as Chairperson of the Appeal Board.
- An experienced extern examiner who has had no previous involvement in the case.
- A member of staff of the College who has had no previous involvement in the case

6.6 Modus Operandi of Appeal Board

(a) The Appeal Board:

- (i) Considers the report of the Review Board or Programme Leader.
 - (ii) May ask the appellant to address it on the circumstances of the appeal.
 - (iii) Seeks (through the Chairperson) such information or advice as it considers necessary and in such manner as it considers appropriate.
 - (iv) Having considered the circumstances, decides the outcome of the appeal.
- (b) The College reserves the right to engage the services of any appropriate professionals that it deems necessary.
 - (c) All decisions of an Appeals Board shall be by majority vote
 - (d) The appellant is informed in writing of the outcome by the Programme Leader.
 - (e) All decisions of the Appeal Board are final within the College.
 - (f) The Programme Leader notifies all relevant persons within the College of the outcome of the appeal.

Section L

Procedures to Obtain Learner Feedback

1. INTRODUCTION

PCI College is committed to involving learners in its Quality Assurance efforts. It is necessary that systematic procedures for capturing learners' views are in place and that changes/improvements can be introduced quickly to benefit current and future learners. Learners through their participation in Boards of Studies have a direct role to play in monitoring and reviewing programmes of study. The learner representatives can express the views of their classes on all aspects of College activities - course information, assessment mechanisms, programme organisation and delivery, and associated services at the biannual Board of Studies Meetings.

2. BOARD OF STUDIES

The Board of Studies meets twice each year. It is chaired by the Programme Leader or his/her nominee. All tutors, Year Heads, Core Tutors, members of the Teaching, Learning and Assessment Committee, extern Examiners and Student Representatives are invited to attend. There is a designated place on the agenda of every Board of Studies meeting for a report from each class representative. This affords learners a forum to bring to the attention of the most senior College personnel matter of interest/concern. Issues raised by students at the Board of Studies meetings are considered at the appropriate level within the College e.g. Teaching, Learning and Assessment Committee, Management Board and action taken when / where necessary and where resources permit.

3. LEARNER APPRAISAL OF MODULES

At the end of each module each student is given an End of Module Feedback Form (Appendix B). This questionnaire is designed to elicit the learners' views on:

- The organisation and content of the module
- Presentation of subject
- Effectiveness of communication

- And asked to give a general evaluation of the module and offer suggestions re. changes /improvements.

A summary of the findings is contained in the Annual Monitoring Report and after due consideration by the Teaching, Learning and Assessment Committee and College Board the suggestions/recommendations of learners are implemented, where possible.

Section M

Procedures for External Examiners

1. NOMINATION

- 1.1 The Teaching, Learning and Assessment Committee of the College approves the appointment of persons to act as External Examiners to programmes offered by the College, where appropriate.

The Teaching, Learning and Assessment Committee ensures that persons appointed as External Examiners are competent to fulfil this role.

The Committee also approves such procedures as may be required, relating to the appointment, role and duties of External Examiners.

- 1.2 In general, the process of nominating External Examiners is carried out by the Programme Leader in consultation with the Teaching, Learning and Assessment Committee.

2. APPROVAL

- 2.1 The Teaching, Learning and Assessment Committee considers nominations for appointment as External Examiners received from the Programme Leader or nominated by the Committee itself.

- 2.2 The Teaching, Learning and Assessment Committee satisfies itself that, in general, persons nominated for appointment satisfy the criteria for appointment.

- 2.3 The Teaching, Learning and Assessment Committee approves the appointment of such and as many persons as it deems necessary to act as External Examiners of the College for such periods as it decides – normally four years.

CRITERIA FOR APPOINTMENT OF EXTERNAL EXAMINERS

- (a) An External Examiner's academic/professional qualifications should be in the area that is being examined. The level of his/her qualifications should

be one step up on the programme being examined and he/she should have significant experience in that field

- (b) An External Examiner should have appropriate standing, expertise and the experience necessary to maintain comparability of standards. Standing, expertise and breadth of experience may be indicated by:
- The present (or last, if retired) post and place of work
 - The range and scope of experience across higher education/professions
 - Current and recent active involvement in research/scholarly/professional activities in the field of study concerned.
- (c) An External Examiner should have recent external examining or comparable related experience to indicate competence in assessing students in the subject area.
- (d) There should not be:
- More than one examiner from the same institution in the team of External Examiners
 - Reciprocal external examining between Programmes or departments in two institutions
- (e) Examiners should not be over-extended by their external examining duties. The examiner should not currently hold more than the equivalent of two other substantial undergraduate External Examiner appointments.
- (f) There should be an appropriate balance and expertise in any team of External Examiners. The proposed examiner should complement the external examining team in terms of expertise and examining experience. There should be:
- An appropriate balance between academic and professional Practitioners.
 - At least one practitioner with appropriate experience in the external examining team where the Programme is associated with, or may lead to, a professional qualification
 - The phasing of appointments to the team should be structured to ensure continuity.

- (g) External Examiners should be impartial in judgement and should not have previous close involvement with the College, which might compromise objectivity.

Over the last five years, the proposed examiner should not have been:

- A member of staff, a student, or a near relative of a member of staff in relation to the Programme
 - Involved in the teaching or delivery of seminars or lectures in the College
 - Likely to be involved with student placements or training in the examiner's organisation
- (h) External Examiners are usually appointed from September to August, normally for 4 years, subject to annual review. An extension of appointment may be approved.

4. APPOINTMENT

4.1 Following approval of nominations by the Teaching, Learning and Assessment Committee, the Programme Leader issues a letter of appointment to the External Examiner, along with a contract to be signed by the External Examiner and the Programme Leader (or his/her nominee) which includes, inter alia:

- Duties and responsibilities
- Term of office
- Reporting requirements
- Fees payable by the College
- Conditions relating to other appointments
- Termination of contract procedures
- Conflict of interest declaration.

4.2 The External Examiner is appointed from the date of signing of the Contract.

4.3 The term of office shall normally be for a period of four academic years, subject to annual re-appointment

4.4 Normally, the term of office commences on 1st October of the academic year in which the External Examiner is appointed.

4.5 The Programme Leader maintains a register of External

Examiners appointed and periods of tenure.

- 4.6 Should it be necessary to terminate the contract of appointment, the Programme Leader recommends termination of the contract to the Teaching, Learning and Assessment Committee detailing the reasons for the proposed termination. The Programme Leader notifies, in writing, an External Examiner whose contract has been terminated. Following appointment, the Programme Leader ensures that the External Examiner receives adequate documentation to enable him/her to understand the assessment system operated by the College.

Such documentation includes:

- Quality assurance policies and procedures
- College academic and administrative structures and procedures
- Programme/subject/module documentation
- Assessment procedures and schedules

- 4.7 The College normally invites the External Examiner to visit in order to become familiar with its operations and to discuss his/her responsibilities as External Examiner. This is particularly important when an External Examiner is being appointed for the first time. Such visits should occur before the External Examiner commences assessment activities.

5. NUMBER OF EXTERNAL EXAMINERS

- 5.1 The College shall ensure that sufficient External Examiners are appointed so that it is satisfied that:

The standard of its courses and student performances can be adequately moderated and the assessment processes are being fairly and consistently conducted.

- 5.3 It is not a requirement that a subject expert be appointed to cover every aspect of a programme. The emphasis is on ensuring the programme as a whole is adequately moderated.

6. ASSESSMENT

- 6.1 External Examiners attend the College at the time of determination of results and at such other times as may be determined by the College in consultation with the External Examiners for the purpose of assessing the standard of the programme and/or the standard of student performance.

- 6.2 External Examiners determine, in their expert judgement, if the assessment procedures are fair and consistent and in accordance with the appropriate standards.
- 6.3 External Examiners ensure that all significant elements of the programme(s) with which they are involved have been adequately assessed. It is not necessary that all elements are considered each year. The External Examiners pay particular attention to the award years of a programme.
- 6.4 External Examiners decide, in consultation with the Programme Leader:
- The marking schemes (s)he wishes to review prior to the assessment
 - The particular marked scripts s/he wishes to consider
 - The nature and content of other assessment material s/he wishes to consider

The Programme Leader ensures that such material is provided to the External Examiner in good time.

The Internal and External Examiners endeavour to arrive at a consensus on contentious issues.

- 6.5 The Programme Leader may request that particular assessment materials be examined, subject to a reasonable quantity of such material being examined.
- 6.6 Where an External Examiner wishes to carry out a viva-voce on candidates, s/he shall notify the College in good time to allow appropriate arrangements to be made.

7. BOARD OF ASSESSMENT

- 7.1 Meetings of the Board of Assessment are held for the purpose of approving individual learner's results at such times as the College determines, usually December and May.
- 7.2 The External Examiners attend the College to review the proposed results for the programme as a whole, concentrating on:
- Reviewing module performance with Internal Examiners, including marked scripts, project work or continuous assessment material, as required.
 - Reviewing borderline cases and, if necessary, interview such candidates.
 - Carrying out a viva-voce examination, if required.

- Agreeing with the respective Internal Assessors(s) the proposed final marks/grades for consideration by the Board of Assessment.

The Programme Leader provides the External Examiner with suitable statistical information to assist in this process.

- 7.2 Where the External Examiner proposes adjustments to the results of a group of students as a whole, he/she shall consult with the Programme Leader in advance of the meeting of the Board of Assessment. Efforts should be made to achieve consensus in relation to such proposed amendments.
- 7.4 The External Examiner attends the meeting of the Board of Assessment.
- 7.5 The External Examiner may comment on such matters relating to individual student performance, module performance, programme performance as s/he deems necessary. The Board of Assessment shall give due consideration to such comments.
- 7.6 The External Examiner may request to have her/his dissenting opinion on any matter recorded in the Minutes of the Board of Assessment Meeting.
- 7.7 The External Examiner signs the Attendance Sheet - such a signature indicates that the External Examiner participated in the Board of Assessment as a member of the Board.

8. REPORTING ARRANGEMENTS

- 8.1 Following the Board of Assessment meeting, the External Examiner provides a report to the Programme Leader
- 8.2 The External Examiner may refer in his/her written report to such matters as s/he deems appropriate, and may request that such matters be investigated by the College.
- 8.3 The Programme Leader provides a copy of the External Examiners' report to the members of the Teaching, Learning and Assessment Committee, and invites comments and details of any proposed action to be taken on foot of the External Examiners' report.
- 8.4 The Programme Leader shall forward a copy of these comments and details of proposed action to the External Examiner in order to keep them informed of actions taken on foot of their recommendations.

- 8.5 On completion of his/her term of office, the External Examiner shall submit a general report to the Programme Leader on his/her opinion of the standards of the course/programme and learner performance.

Section N

Learner Complaints Procedure

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The Complaints Procedure outlined in this section applies to all learners in PCI College. This procedure does not cover academic appeals for which there is a separate procedure – See Section K.
- 1.2 No learner will be disadvantaged through availing of the complaints procedure. However the College expects that in raising possible issues of complaint, learners themselves will have observed their own obligations and responsibilities. The College also expects that learners will not engage in frivolous or vexatious complaints.
- 1.3 The intention is that most problems will be dealt with locally, in a spirit of conciliation. Thus the formal complaints procedure should be seen as a last resort in the search for a solution
- 1.4 The procedure is intended to produce a speedy and efficient resolution. The aim is to prevent unnecessary delay, whilst ensuring a full and fair assessment of the particular circumstances of any individual complaint.
- 1.5 Complaints provide an important source of feedback on the performance of the College's services. As such, the College will monitor the registration of complaints and the progress made towards resolution.
- 1.6 All complaints should normally be made within 21 days of the alleged incident, matter or concern occurring.
- 1.7 The complaints procedure is based on the principle of Natural Justice. Consequently anonymous complaints will not be accepted.

2. STAGE I

- 2.1 A learner who feels that s/he has been treated unfairly or inequitably has the right to make a complaint.

- 2.2 Firstly, the learner should address the issue with the subject of his/her complaint or with the Core Tutor. Where the Core Tutor is the subject of the complaint, the complaint should be forwarded to the Year Head.
- 2.3 Stage I is generally an oral process and a written record is not made. However staff members involved are encouraged to share their experience of the process to the benefit of the College.
- 2.4 If the learner's complaint is not resolved at this level, then Stage II of the procedure, outlined below, should be followed.

3 STAGE II

- 3.1 The College appreciates that there may be occasions where Stage 1 is inappropriate and/or that a more formal approach is necessary.
- 3.2 The relevant Year Head explains to the student the operation of the remaining stages of the Learner Complaints Procedure.
- 3.3 At this point the learner should make his/her complaint in writing and forward it to his/her Year Head. The complaint should be specific and comprehensively documented. The complaint must detail the learner's name and contact details, any relevant documentation, and dates, locations and witnesses as appropriate. Any previous efforts to resolve the matter should also be given.

The Year Head advises the person who is the subject of the complaint and provides that person with a copy of the complaint.

The Year Head arranges to meet with the learner to discuss the complaint. The Core Tutor makes a written record of the meeting.

To establish the facts of the complaint, the Year Head holds a separate meeting with the person who is the subject of the complaint and may also interview any material witnesses. The Core Tutor makes a written record of the meeting(s).

The Year Head tries to mediate an agreement. Where mediation is not successful the Year Head notifies both parties in writing of the outcome of the complaint and his/ her efforts to resolve the matter.

4 STAGE III

- 4.1 If the complaint remains unresolved at Stage II, either party may write to the Programme Leader, outlining how the complaint resolution process has progressed in their view and requesting him/her to proceed to Stage III.
- 4.2 The Programme Leader receives all the evidence considered under Stage II, and a report from the Year Head involved in Stage II
- 4.3 The Programme Leader forwards the complaint and the accompanying information to two members of the College Staff for their consideration. They examine the material and may seek further information from the learner to clarify matters concerning the complaint. They may decide if, in their opinion, the evidence justifies it, to uphold (or not to do so) a complaint without proceeding further with the complaint process.
- 4.4 The Programme Leader and his nominees may interview separately, the student and the subject of his/her complaint and any appropriate witnesses. The complainant may be accompanied by a fellow student. The subject of the complaint, may also be accompanied by a colleague.
- 4.5 The Programme Leader and his nominees agree a written record of these meetings.
- 4.6 The College aims to complete this stage of the complaints procedure within 14 working days. The parties to the complaint will be informed if delays are expected.
- 4.7 The Programme Leader notifies both parties in writing of the decision reached concerning this stage of the procedure and the reasons for it, together with any recommended consequent action.
- 4.8 The Programme Leader notifies the appropriate person(s) or committee without undue delay concerning changes recommended or required as a consequence of the complaint.

5. STAGE IV (Appeal)

- 5.1 Either party may appeal the outcome of Stage III within 14 days of receipt/knowledge of the decision. The relevant party must confirm the wish to appeal in writing to the Programme Leader.

- 5.2 The Programme Leader establishes a Complaints Committee to examine the appeal.
- 5.3 Typically the Complaints Committee will have three members, chaired by a Programme Leader and include an experienced person from another College as well as a member of staff of the College. No member of the committee will have been previously associated with the complaint.
- 5.4 The committee will receive the documentation so far generated by the complaint and will consider that documentation and hear evidence
- 5.5 The hearing will enable the committee to consider the way in which the complaint has been handled at previous stages of the procedure and/or to reconsider the appropriateness of the result of the previous stage of the procedure. However, the hearing will not be conducted as an alternative to any part of the disciplinary procedures which apply to members of staff.
- 5.6 The decision of the committee will be final as far as the College's Learner Complaints Procedures are concerned.
- 5.7 The Programme Leader will inform both parties, in writing, of the decision of the committee.

Section O

Procedures for Student Care and Monitoring Student Progression

It is the policy of PCI College to afford to each student it accepts on to its programmes the highest level of support consistent with adult education principles. Because of the nature of many of its programmes in the area of counselling and psychotherapy, learners need an elaborate support structure to be in place and available to them when/if they encounter personal/professional difficulties as they progress through the various modules.

Each learner in the College is assigned a Core Tutor. Core Tutors are charged with the following responsibilities:

- (a) To be available to students who need to address questions arising from their participation in the programme;
- (b) To help students to select the pathway to education awards that is most appropriate to their needs when options are offered
- (c) To help students who are experiencing difficulties with regard to aspects of the programme - inner conflict, dilemmas, or simply things that do not seem to them to make sense or meaning
- (d) To monitor the learner's client work
- (e) To monitor the learner's participation in personal counselling
- (f) To ensure the learner keeps up to date with assignments
- (g) To mediate in disputes between students

As well as offering a unique Student Care service the College also offers the service of a Reader for students. All students in first, second and third years can send two essays each year to a Reader to have it read, commented upon and suggestions re improvements. This service is available free.

The caring attitude of the Core Tutor earns the student's trust and confidence

STUDENT PROGRESS

The Student Progress Committee monitors individual student's academic performance, attendance, participation in class, client work, supervision, attendance at workshops and personal therapy. A number of different methods are employed to advise students of their progress. The Student Progress Committee meets at least twice in each academic year.

Attendance and progress are monitored using the following methods:

- Tutors give feedback to the Year Heads at the end of the delivery of each module, noting in particular any learner who may be experiencing difficulties.
- Attendance is recorded by module tutors and is monitored by the Year Head on a regular basis.
- Supervisors of students' client work make a written report of each student's progress - See Appendix H
- Each student receives a written confirmation of having attended personal therapy and this report is submitted to the College.
- A designated College secretary keeps a record of each student's module marks
- The Year Heads ensures that a student with an unsatisfactory level of attendance is advised in accordance with the policy of the College. Attendance guidelines are included in the Course Information Pack made available to learners at the beginning of each academic year.
- A report on the progress of students is presented to the Student Progression Board by the Year Head. This committee will then make recommendations to the Programme Leader to take whatever action is deemed appropriate in the case(s) of learners who fail to meet specified targets.

Section P

Procedures for Appointment of Academic Staff

- 1.1 It is College policy to employ sufficient numbers of appropriately qualified staff to professionally deliver the programmes offered.
- 1.2 In the recruitment of staff the different strands of the programmes offered are taken into account – person centred counselling, cognitive/behavioural therapy, personal development, psychodynamic approaches in counselling, addiction studies, art therapy, sexuality, bereavement etc. The College has put in place procedures to ensure that people with the appropriate level of knowledge, skills and teaching ability are employed to deliver the various modules of the programmes.

2 APPOINTMENT CRITERIA

- 2.1 While the criteria for appointment will vary depending on the particular vacancy that occurs, there are some basic criteria that apply to all teaching posts within the College:
 - (a) A sufficient level of academic achievement to teach the module(s) involved
 - (b) A sufficient level of teaching skills/experience to teach the specified modules to an adult population of students
 - (c) Have the ability to fit in to an existing staff where a high level of co-operation is demanded, given the modular nature of the programmes
 - (d) Be open and responsive to learners whose programme involves a considerable concentration on their personal development
 - (e) Be competent to assess learners on a continuous basis
 - (f) Be able to give constructive feedback to learners
 - (g) Be familiar with and guided by the codes of ethics of professional bodies

2.2 A number of strategies are in place to fill vacancies as they arise:

- (a) The Programme Leader (or his nominee) carries out an audit to ascertain the expertise and workload of existing staff
- (b) Based on the results of this audit he may decide to offer new/different modules to some present members of the teaching staff whose workload and level of expertise allows such an arrangement
- (c) If the vacancy cannot be filled internally, applicants are sought from outside the College. The Programme Leader, in consultation with relevant senior tutors, draws up the job specification for the particular post, keeping in mind the general criteria listed above, and adding the specific requirements for the vacant position

2.3 Some or all of the following procedures are then followed:

- (a) The curriculum vitae of people who have already expressed an interest in teaching in the College are examined to ascertain if they meet the criteria laid down for the particular vacancy.
- (b) Advertisements are placed in the College's newsletter
- (c) Advertisements are placed in the journals/magazines of counselling organisations
- (d) Advertisements are placed in national newspapers

2.4 If the vacant position is to be filled by short-term contract i.e. of no more than one year, the Programme Leader, having interviewed those who he considered sufficiently qualified for the position, may recommend a candidate to the Teaching, Learning and Assessment Committee for approval. Having gained the approval of the Teaching, Learning and Assessment Committee, the Programme Leader may offer a short term contract (not more than one year) to the successful applicant.

2.5 For contracts of more than one year:

An Interview Board is established, consisting of the Programme Leader, a senior tutor nominated by the Programme Leader, and a senior tutor nominated by the Teaching, Learning and Assessment Committee.

The Programme Leader receives all applications for the position, sends copies of the CVs to the other members of the Interview Board and arranges a date for interviews to take place.

The Interview Board meets to short list the candidates for interview.

Candidates are given at least one weeks notice of date and place of interview.

Candidates are allocated marks by each of the interviewers against each of the criteria for the position and a mark for overall performance at interview. A candidate who fails to get 50% in any one of the criteria deemed essential for a particular position would not be deemed suitable even where such a candidate had a greater gross score than other candidates.

The Interview Panel recommends to the Teaching, Learning and Assessment Committee and to the College Board the name of the person to be offered the position advertised. Having gained the approval of the Teaching, Learning and Assessment Committee and the College Board the successful candidate is offered a contract of employment.

2.6 Staff Appraisal and Development

PCI College is committed to the appointment, retention, and development of a team of high-calibre tutors. In order to retain a dedicated, enthusiastic staff that can offer a professional service to all learners, the College has put in place the following procedures:

- (a) Lecturer's work under the direction of Year Heads who monitor feedback in relation to their work and consult with the Programme Leader as necessary.
- (b) Newly appointed tutors are coupled with a more experienced tutor, the Module Leader or some other senior tutor from within the team, whose role it is to pay particular attention to the induction of the new tutor.

The Module Leader/Coordinator meets his/her team early in the academic year to review the delivery of that module in the past, take on board learner feedback, and discuss what changes/improvements need to be made. Module Leaders/Coordinators, under the direction of the Programme Leader, also guide their teams, particularly newly appointed members or tutors teaching this module for the first time, regarding the assessment of learners. Staff are encouraged to bring to the attention of the module Leader/Coordinator any concerns they may have regarding the teaching and / or assessment of the module.

The College views the ongoing development of staff as a priority. All Lecturing Staff is notified of all CPD courses offered by the College and discounts are offered. At least three times each year meetings of all Lecturing Staff are held where half of the day is devoted to In-service Training at no cost.

Section Q

Procedures to Evaluate Student Services

It is College policy to provide a level of student service that will enable each learner to complete his/her programme of study in a supportive, caring environment. To this end a Manager of Student Services has been appointed to coordinate and lead the College's effort to provide an efficient, user-friendly service for all students. The best way of evaluating the level of satisfaction with the services provided by the College is to provide a number of avenues for the learners to convey their opinions to the College authorities. The following procedures are in place to give students an opportunity to evaluate the services provided:

- (a) Each class has its own Student Representative. One of the responsibilities of the Student Rep. is to bring to the attention of Student Services any concern/suggestions that emanate from the group
- (b) Individual students may bring deficiencies in the service directly to the attention of Student Services or the College Manager
- (c) Individual learners may bring deficiencies in the service to the attention of a tutor who in turn will bring it to the College Manager
- (d) Individual learners may bring deficiencies in the service to the attention of his/her Core Tutor who in turn will bring the matter to the attention of Student Services or the College Manager
- (e) Individual learners may bring deficiencies in the service to the attention of office staff who will bring the matter to the attention of the College Manager
- (f) Any member of the Lecturing Staff may at any time bring a concern/suggestion to the attention of Student Services or the College Manager
- (g) At the regular Management meetings the efficiency of Student Services is open to scrutiny
- (h) The College Board at their regular meetings review the delivery of Student Services in the College

Section R

Procedures for Evaluation of Facilities

It is the policy of PCI College to provide the facilities necessary for the delivery of its programmes in an environment appropriate for learners at Third Level. To ensure that this policy is implemented one member of the College Board acts as Facilities Manager with specific responsibility for this area. Among his/her duties are the following:

- (a) To ensure classrooms are adequate in terms of space, heat, light, and seating
- (b) To ensure that off campus facilities hired by the College are of a standard that meets the learners' needs
- (c) To ensure that canteen services are available to students
- (d) To ensure that sufficient cleaning staff is employed
- (e) To liaise with maintenance personnel to ensure that repairs are carried out expeditiously and safely
- (f) To monitor Health and Safety issues in the College

The different groups within the College are encouraged to bring to the notice of the College authorities any concerns/recommendations regarding its facilities.

- (a) Students are to bring their concerns/suggestions to the attention of the office staff or tutor, who in turn will notify the Facilities Manager
- (b) Lecturing Staff bring their concerns/suggestions directly to the Facilities Manager
- (c) Managers and administrative staff take their concerns/suggestions directly to the Facilities Manager
- (d) Maintenance personnel bring their suggestions/concerns directly to the attention of the Facilities Manager

When a matter of concern or suggestion is brought to the attention of the Facilities Manager, s/he considers the issue and prioritises what action (if any) is to be taken.

Many of the actions to be undertaken can be done by College maintenance personnel and/or by skilled trades people hired for those specific jobs. Some of the

actions may involve considerable expense and need the approval of the Financial Director. Such approval is sought as soon as is practical in order to expedite the action required.

When an action is taken as a result of a concern expressed or a suggestion made by a student or member of staff, that person is informed of the action taken.

Appendix A

Learners' Charter

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The College is committed, through a partnership of students, staff and management to ensuring that its affairs are conducted in a fair and equitable manner, thus creating an environment which is conducive to good working relations between all the stakeholders. This Learner's Charter, which sets out the rights and obligations of learners, has been prepared and will be implemented in that spirit.
- 1.2 The Charter includes particulars of:
 - (a) The rights of learners
 - (b) The College's Code of Conduct
 - (c) Disciplinary procedures.
- 1.3 The Charter applies to all registered students of PCI College

2. RIGHTS OF LEARNERS

Learners have the following rights:

- (a) The right to expect from the College tuition of a professional standard on the course for which they are registered, and reasonable educational and support facilities consistent with the resources available to the College.
- (b) If attending a one year course or longer, the right to elect one student representative for each class group.
- (c) A right to one representative from each class (if attending a course of one year duration, or longer) to attend and speak at Board of Studies Meetings.
- (d) The right to be treated equally.

- (e) The right to fair and just procedures, including appropriate appeals procedures, in all matters involving breaches of the code of conduct.
- (f) The right to be treated as responsible adult members of a third-level institution, to be able to represent personal views in a reasonable manner and to be treated with normal standards of courtesy by all other members of the College.

3. CODE OF CONDUCT

3.1 The College recognises the respect due to third-level students as responsible adults. Accordingly, it expects that each student of the College behaves in a mature, reasonable and honest manner which protects the good name of the College, meets the requirements of his/her course of study, has due regard to the rights of others and does not adversely affect the conduct of the business of the College.

While self-discipline will be expected and encouraged, failure to meet the standards expected may result in sanctions up to and including suspension and exclusion.

3.2 The following specific provisions shall apply

1. Only students who have paid the appropriate fees and are validly registered may be admitted to classes.
2. Students shall at all times obey the lawful instruction of College staff.
3. Students shall refrain from conduct liable to infringe the rights of others.
4. Students shall respect the property and persons of all members of the campus community.
5. Students must pay the appropriate College fees and charges prescribed for each year in advance of registration or must satisfy the College that the appropriate payments will be made within such a period as the College may allow. Fees are non-refundable.
6. Students must keep the Student Services Office informed of their current contact details
7. Students must comply with the academic discipline laid down for their course, including the requirements relating to attendance,

participation and assessment as laid down by the College. The right to continue a course of study depends upon satisfactory enrolment, the maintenance of satisfactory attendance, participation, academic performance and satisfactory conduct.

8. Students must comply with the Assessment Regulations of the College. The Teaching, Learning and Assessment Committee decides on the appropriateness of any academic sanctions against candidates on foot of recommendations from the Progression Committee and / the Programme Leader. All decisions are subject to the College's procedures on rechecks, reviews and appeals. Students may also have the disciplinary procedures (outlined below) initiated against them in respect of an alleged breach of the Assessment Regulations.
9. Students shall comply with all safety regulations that may be in force at the time, governing the buildings and outdoor areas.
10. The display of posters is subject to the approval of the Student Services Office. Posters and notices concerning student social activities may be displayed only on the appropriate notice boards.
11. Vehicles and bicycles may be parked only in designated places and are parked at owner's risk.
12. The College does not accept responsibility for any loss of personal property.

4. DISCIPLINARY PROCEDURES

The Charter assumes that students will comply with the requirements of the Code of Conduct on a voluntary basis through the exercise of mature self-discipline. Should it become necessary to invoke disciplinary procedures, and it is hoped that this will rarely occur, the following procedures will apply:

- (a) All allegations of breaches of the Charter will be dealt with in accordance with procedures approved by the College Board and which satisfy the requirements of Natural Justice.
- (b) No sanction or disciplinary action will be imposed on a student except in accordance with the Charter.
- (c) Allegations of breaches of the Charter may be made by any member of the College staff. While the accountability of students is in the main to the Programme Leader, students are also accountable and

amenable to other College Officers for certain services and facilities. Where it becomes appropriate that disciplinary proceedings be invoked arising from a complaint by one student against another student, the formal procedure will be initiated by the relevant Core Tutor.

- (d) Where circumstances warrant it, the College authorities may suspend a student pending the completion of inquiries and without prejudice to the outcome of disciplinary procedures.
- (e) Nothing in these procedures shall prevent the College from referring matters to the Garda Síochána where it considers this to be appropriate.
- (f) Where a disciplinary action results in the imposition of a sanction against a student, that fact will be noted on the student's record and may be taken into account by the College authorities in responding to requests for character references if such is deemed relevant and appropriate.

Allegations of breaches of the Charter will be dealt with through a staged process.

- (a) Stage I – Informal (see paragraph 5)
- (b) Stage II – Formal (see paragraph 6)
- (c) Stage III – Appeal (see paragraph 7)

College staff shall initiate formal disciplinary procedures in the event of serious breaches of the Code of Conduct.

5. STAGE I

- 5.1 College Staff who have observed a student breach the Code of Conduct or are affected by a breach of the Code are entitled to raise the matter with the student concerned with a view to dealing with the issue informally.
- 5.2 Students shall at all times obey the lawful instructions of College staff.
- 5.3 Allegations of serious breaches of the Code of Conduct and for allegations of a less serious breach, where informal efforts have failed to resolve the issue satisfactorily, should proceed to Stage II.

6. STAGE II

- 6.1 The College appreciates that there may be occasions where Stage I is inappropriate and/or that a more formal approach is necessary.
- 6.2 At this point the staff member concerned should outline in writing the alleged breach of the Code of Conduct and forward the details to the Programme Leader. The information should be specific and comprehensively documented. The staff member must detail the student's name, class etc., dates, locations and witnesses as appropriate. Any previous efforts to resolve the matter should also be described.
- 6.3 The Programme Leader will acknowledge receipt of the documentation within five working days. It is the College's aim that all alleged breaches of the Code of Conduct, under Stage II, will be resolved within 21 days.
- 6.4 The Programme Leader will arrange to meet with the staff member to discuss the allegations. The Programme Leader will make a written record of the meeting.
- 6.5 To establish the facts of the complaint the Programme Leader will hold a separate meeting with the student concerned, and may also interview any material witnesses. The Programme Leader will make a written record of the meeting(s).
- 6.6 The Programme Leader will notify both parties in writing of the result of the complaint and the reasons for the decision. Where the result of the complaint includes consequent action or recommendations, the Programme Leader shall notify the appropriate person(s) or committee, internal or external.
- 6.7 The Programme Leader can, as appropriate, impose the following sanctions:
 - The imposition of a period of probation during which the student will be obliged to fulfill all academic requirements of his/her course
 - Withdrawal or restriction of certain rights
 - Suspension from the College for a period
 - A requirement to pay compensation for damage caused
 - Recommend to the Teaching, Learning and Assessment Committee the permanent exclusion of the student(s) from the College.

Compliance with the sanctions will be monitored. Failure to comply will be referred back to the Programme Leader.

7. STAGE III (APPEAL)

- 7.1 The Student may appeal the outcome of Stage II within 14 days of receipt/knowledge of the decision. The student should confirm his/her wish to appeal the outcome of Stage II in writing to the Programme Leader.
- 7.2 The Programme Leader will establish a Student Disciplinary Appeal Committee to examine the student's appeal.
- 7.3 Typically the Student Disciplinary Appeal Committee will have three members, chaired by a senior member of staff, and include an experienced person from another College. No member of the committee will have been previously associated with the complaint.
- 7.4 The committee will receive the documentation so far generated by the disciplinary proceedings and will consider that documentation and hear other evidence.
- 7.5 The hearing will enable the committee to consider the way in which the disciplinary proceedings have been handled at any previous stage and/or to reconsider the appropriateness of the result of the previous stage of the process.
- 7.6 The decision of the Student Disciplinary Appeal Committee will be final as far as the College's student disciplinary procedures are concerned.
- 7.7 The Programme Leader will inform both parties, in writing, of the decision of the committee and the reasons for the decision.

Appendix B

END-OF-MODULE FEEDBACK FORM

End-of-Module Feedback

Module No.: _____

Tutor: _____

Module Title: _____

Date: _____

Please rate items on a scale 1 to 6 of 1 (negative) to 6 (positive)

- | | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 Facilitator presented materials in a clear, organised manner
1 is not clear organised. 6 is very clear, very organised. | | | | | | |
| 2 Facilitator stimulated and maintained your interest
1 is not at all stimulating. 6 is very stimulating. | | | | | | |
| 3 Facilitator was interested in and accessible to those attending.....
1 is aloof, detached. 6 is genuinely concerned, interested. | | | | | | |
| 4 Overall rating of the facilitator
1 is among the very worst. 6 is among the very best . | | | | | | |
| 5 Value of your time and money spent on this programme
1 is waste of time and money. 6 is definitely worth time and money . | | | | | | |
| 6 Objectives of the programme were stated clearly and accurately
1 is incomplete or misleading. 6 is accurately publicised. | | | | | | |
| 7 Programme objectives were achieved
1 is very low. 6 very satisfactorily. | | | | | | |

PLEASE RESPOND TO ITEMS 8 -12

- 8 What did you like most about this module?
- 9 Can you suggest any ways to improve presentation of the programme/unit?
(for example, change in format, instructional techniques etc.)
- 10 What other programme topics would you like to explore within the module?
- 11 Additional comments:
- 12 May we quote you? We would like to include positive comments in upcoming publicity.
May we use your comments anonymously? (Mark Yes or No)
Yes No

Signature (optional): _____

Appendix C



Student Name:

ID Number:

Module No. :

Level:

Year:

Module Title:

Tutor Name:

General Comments:

Areas of Strength:

Areas for Improvement:

GRADING SCHEME

PCI College uses the following grading scheme:

GRADE	CLASS OF HONOURS DEGREE	
1 to 4	FIRST CLASS	
5 to 8	UPPER SECOND CLASS	
9 to 12	LOWER SECOND CLASS	
13 to 16	THIRD CLASS HONOURS	
17 to 20	FAIL	

Your provisional grade lies in the band as indicated across:

Appendix D



Late Submission of Coursework – Mitigating Circumstances Form

Where you are applying for a waiving of late penalties for overdue course work, you must complete and submit this form with the late work in question.

Extensions of any kind will not be granted ahead of time and so you can only avoid penalties through the use of this form. The circumstances you detail as being responsible for why your work is being submitted late will count as your official explanation and once this form is submitted, it will be forwarded to your Year Head who will decide if your circumstances warrant a waiving of penalties.

The circumstances under which penalties would be waived are likely to be on the basis of a known extended period of absence from the College for serious personal and/or family reasons. These circumstances should be sufficiently documented (through doctors' notes, etc.), where possible.

Students must ensure they are familiar with PCI College policy on late submission and grounds for mitigation of penalties (see your relevant Handbook).

Section A	
Student ID	
Student Name	
Student contact information (phone number / email address)	
Assessment component Type/Title (e.g., essay/title)	
Module Code	
Module Title	
Year Head	
Core Tutor	
Submission Deadline Date	
Submission Date	
Reason for Late Submission (use separate page and attach if necessary)	
What verifying documentation are you including? (e.g., doctors' notes, etc.)	

Appendix E

Nomination Form for an External Examiner

Section A: Proposal

1. Details of proposed external examiner

a. Surname

b. Title

c. Forename(s)

d. Qualifications

e. Address for correspondence

f. Telephone number

g. Email

2. Details of subject/programme

a. Approved title of Subject and/or programme

b. Normal length of Programme (semesters/years) Full-time

c. Normal length of Programme (semesters/years) Part-time

d. Month in which final assessment board is held

3. Module(s) with titles for which examiner will have particular responsibility, with average student numbers where known.

4. Proposed period of tenure

(from 1 September to 31 August - normal appointment is four academic years)

Appointed from September

(year) to August

(year)

Section B: Examiner: Current Position and Previous Experience

5. **Present post . If retired please give last post with dates and home address**

a. Present/last position

b. Address of institution/company

c. Telephone number

6. **Previous posts.**

Employer

Post(s) with dates

7. **Professional qualifications**

Professional body

Qualifications/status of membership with dates

8. **Other current external examining commitments of proposed**

9. **Previous experience as an external examiner within Higher Education**

10. **Research and related scholarly/professional activity/consultancy.** Give brief account of main activities (including committee membership with particular reference to last five years and list major publications (books/articles in refereed academic or professional journals) with dates.

11. **Teaching experience.** Give brief account of main areas of teaching responsibilities (if any) over the last five years .

12. **Previous experience as an external examiner within Higher Education**

13. **Research and related scholarly/professional activity/consultancy.** Give brief account of main activities (including committee membership with particular reference to last five years and list major publications (books/articles in refereed academic or professional journals) with dates.

Director of Education and Training

Signature: _____ Date / /

Appendix F

Report of Extern Examiner

Section A: Purpose of the External Examiner's report

External Examiner reports are an integral part of the College's quality monitoring and quality enhancement process and play an important role in the Subject/Programme review cycle.

The College requires all External Examiners to submit a written report annually. The report should be submitted within **one month** following the final Assessment Board and should not be delayed until re-sit boards have taken place.

The report should focus on the assessments just concluded and should be linked with the aims and outcomes for the qualification and the assessment criteria for each module as described in the subject/programme learner's handbook.

The College invites External Examiners to be fully objective and to make positive criticism and/or recommendations, where appropriate.

Reports are public documents and are considered by the Teaching, Learning and Assessment Committee.

1. All reports form a part of the quality monitoring of Subjects and Programmes. Reports are scrutinised and any actions taken in response to a report goes forward as an agenda item to the subsequent Assessment Board meeting.
2. Once the report is received and considered by the Teaching, Learning and Assessment Committee a response is forwarded to the External Examiner

Section B: To be completed by the External Examiner

Name of External Examiner _____

Subject and/or Programme to which attached _____

Academic Year _____ Semester _____

Section C: Report content and guidelines

External Examiners are asked to submit a typed report making comments under the following headings:

Programme/Subject design, content and standards

This should include comments on:

- the extent to which standards are appropriate to the qualification or qualification element under consideration
- the curriculum, its aims, content and development
- Please comment only on those modules that have particular strengths, weaknesses or areas of good practice that you would wish to highlight.

Student performance (please avoid reference by name to individual students)

This should include comments on:

- standards achieved by students
- student performance in relation to their peers on comparable courses
- student performance in relation to clinical/professional practice (if applicable)
- effectiveness and quality of feedback to students
- strengths and weaknesses of the cohort
- effectiveness and quality of feedback to students
- the basis and rationale for any comparisons of standards made
- factors that the External Examiner is aware of that have positively or negatively affected student performance (e.g. resources, field trips etc).

Assessments: structure, design and marking

This should include comment on:

- appropriateness of assessment for measuring achievement of standards
- standards of marking and moderation
- procedures for assessment and examination.

Assessment Boards

(Please confirm attendance at assessment boards and in the event of non-attendance whether you were fully involved in the assessment process.)

This should include comments on:

- organisation and conduct of Assessment Boards.

Role of the External Examiner

This should include comments on:

- quality of the information you received concerning your role as an External Examiner
- quality of information you received concerning the modules for which you are appointed
- access to and availability of material needed to make required judgements
- the extent to which comments in your previous report have been considered and appropriately acted upon

Recommendations or actions

Please list any recommendations or actions arising from your report. Actions should be categorised as:

- necessary actions – these relate to issues which have a serious impact on academic quality, or

- advisable actions – these relate to issues which would significantly improve academic quality.

Good practice

Please list any good practice you have noted.

Appendix G



Supervisor Report Form

Name of Supervisor: _____

Student ID Number: _____

Name of Student: _____ Student's Year of Training 1/2/3 _____

Location{s} of Client Work

Total Number of Clients Seen Total Number of Supervision Hrs

Total Number of Client Hours Frequency of Supervision

Date when supervision commenced ____ / ____ / ____

Date when supervision ended ____ / ____ / ____

Students are required to complete 100 hours of client work with a minimum of 20 hours of supervision work. Please complete the Evaluation Form after each 10 hours of supervision in the presence of the Supervisee, using this key to indicate the level of competence demonstrated by the trainee counsellor:

Key: 1: Poor 2: Needs Improvement 3: Satisfactory 4: Very Good 5: Excellent

A: Evaluation of Supervisee's Counselling Skills:

1. Competence to work with client's _____
2. Capacity for empathy _____
3. Demonstrates acceptance and a non-judgmental attitude _____
4. Can monitor movement in the counselling process _____
5. Ability to formulate flexible working hypotheses _____
6. Awareness of Transference and Counter-transference issues _____
7. Can distinguish between presenting issues and deeper issues _____
8. Can enter the client's frame of reference _____
9. Understands and maintains confidentiality _____
10. Keeps satisfactory case notes _____
11. Upholds the ethical code of a national association of counsellors _____

B: Supervisee's Response to Supervision:

1. Regular, reliable attendance _____
2. Openness to using supervision and receiving feedback _____

- 3. Capacity for self-reflection _____
- 4. Ability to critically evaluate clinical work _____

C: Supervisee’s Professional Competence:

- 1. Ability to form and maintain a professional relationship with client’s _____
- 2. Interest and enthusiasm in the work _____
- 3. Awareness of blind spots _____
- 4. Awareness of boundaries in the work _____

D: Particular Strengths of Supervisee:

(List three areas of particular strengths)

1: _____

2: _____

3: _____

E: Areas of Performance Requiring Improvement:

(List three areas needing improvement)

1: _____

2: _____

3: _____

F: Overall Performance:

Please indicate an overall rating for the student using the above key (1, 2, 3, 4, 5,) _____

G: Other Comments:

Supervisor: _____

Date: ___/___/___

Supervisee: _____

Date: ___/___/___

Please Note

It is the responsibility of each student to complete and return this form to PCI College in order to successfully meet the assessment requirements for Modules 2210 & 2312