



Support for Learners Policy

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1. REVISION HISTORY AND APPROVAL

Revision	Nature of change	Approval	Date
1.0	First Issue	JL	27/07/21

2. SUPPORT FOR LEARNERS POLICY PREAMBLE

- 2.1. It is the policy of PCI College to afford to each learner the highest level of support consistent with adult education principles.
- 2.2. Student Services are responsible for coordinating the learning resources and learner supports in addition to leading the College's effort to provide efficient, user-friendly services for all learners.
- 2.3. Student Services are the first point of contact for all learners across programmes.
- 2.4. The College is committed to providing a stimulating learning experience in a supportive environment.
- 2.5. Accessible support services for all learners will be provided including individualised support for learners with specific needs.
- 2.6. The College provides clear information on how to access learner supports and encourages learners to seek and avail of appropriate supports aimed at their academic, personal and professional learning experience.
- 2.7. Role of Student Services
 - 2.7.1. The Student Services Department is the first point of contact for general queries related to learner support.
 - 2.7.2. The role of the Student Services Department is to manage all elements of learner support including admissions, registration, finance and the learner experience.
 - 2.7.3. An important element of this department includes clear and consistent communication to all learners, offering Disabilities Support through admissions (when enrolled) in conjunction with the Programmes Office and adhering to appropriate deadlines for all registry and finance management.
 - 2.7.4. In addition, this department manages the co-ordination and delivery of learner events such as the PCI College graduation.
 - 2.7.5. This department's aim is to deliver high standards of quality and service to maximise the experience of learners.

3. ACADEMIC SUPPORT POLICY

- 3.1. In order to receive the highest standard of education, PCI College recognises the necessity for providing academic support for learners.
- 3.2. The guidance and resources provided by the College in the area of academic support is in place to assist learners reach their potential.
- 3.3. The aim is to provide equitable support for learners across all facets of their academic journey.
- 3.4. Scope of this policy
 - 3.4.1. The academic supports provided by the College are available to all learners on all programmes, specifically taught programmes, blended learning, online and transnational provision. This does not extend to short programmes (e.g. Continuing Professional Development (CPD)).
 - 3.4.2. The College is committed to providing a nurturing, supportive environment for all learners.
 - 3.4.3. The College is committed to providing information to learners in a clear and accessible manner.
 - 3.4.4. Additional supports e.g. Academic Supports can be availed of based on learner need. Please see Disability Policy and Procedure for further information.
- 3.5. The academic supports available to learners include:
 - 3.5.1. Learner Induction and Orientation
 - 3.5.2. Office 365 Suite
 - 3.5.3. Student Portal

- 3.5.4. Sage Online Library with discount for purchasing texts
- 3.5.5. Middlesex University Library (for Middlesex Validated Programmes)
- 3.5.6. Academic Writing Knowledge Base
- 3.5.7. Academic Writing Webinars
- 3.5.8. eSubmissions
- 3.5.9. Formative and Summative Feedback
- 3.5.10. Module Materials
- 3.5.11. Lesson Plans
- 3.5.12. Grading rubrics/guidelines
- 3.6. Quality Assurance of Academic Supports
 - 3.6.1. Quality assurance of academic support is the responsibility of relevant departments and overseen by the Academic QA Co-Ordinator.
 - 3.6.2. A number of academic quality assurance checks are completed annually.
- 4. CLINICAL SUPPORT FOR LEARNERS**
 - 4.1. Clinical requirements are integral components to PCI College qualifying courses.
 - 4.2. Learners on courses requiring clinical work are obligated to partake in same as part of the programme award in conjunction with accrediting and validating body standards.
 - 4.3. Learners are supported in the area of clinical requirements primarily through the role of the Clinical Manager and the programme team.
 - 4.4. Supports and provisions required for clinical work account for professional standards and those required by potential employers.
 - 4.5. Scope of this policy
 - 4.5.1. The Clinical Manager provides support to learners across all qualifying PCI College programmes (requiring clinical work)
 - 4.5.2. Clinical support is accessible and equitable to all learners
 - 4.5.3. Clinical Requirements typically consist of:
 - 4.5.3.1. Personal Therapy
 - 4.5.3.2. Client Work
 - 4.5.3.3. Supervision
 - 4.5.3.4. CPD
 - 4.6. Clinical Supports
 - 4.6.1. Clinical support information is provided at learner orientation and inductions
 - 4.6.2. The Client Work Handbook outlines all procedures associated with clinical requirements and contains templates, tools, forms and contracts
 - 4.6.3. Programme Handbooks outlining clinical requirements and timelines
 - 4.6.4. Schedule of clinical deadlines within timetable
 - 4.6.5. Client Work Briefings provided in Year 1 and Year 2 as per programme requirements
 - 4.6.6. Student Development and Progression Officer for ongoing monitoring and support
 - 4.6.7. Progress Review Meetings
 - 4.6.8. Client Work Sign Off process with multiple opportunities for learner readiness to be approved
 - 4.6.9. Internal PCI College Clinical Placement opportunity available nationwide and transnationally, including online counselling provision
 - 4.6.10. Garda Vetting
 - 4.6.11. Internal CPD workshops to work therapeutically online
 - 4.6.12. External Placement support
 - 4.6.13. Regular, direct contact with the Clinical Manager
 - 4.7. Fitness to practice
 - 4.7.1. PCI College's Fitness to Practice Policy recognises that, in conferring appropriate academic qualifications where they lead to a professional qualification or admission

to a professional body and/or statutory registration, the College must be satisfied that the learner will be a robust and suitable entrant to the given profession.

- 4.7.2. The Fitness to Practice policy is intended to address College concerns about a learner at any point in their training which may impair their ability to practice competently and at an appropriate level required of their programme of study.
- 4.7.3. Monitoring Fitness to Practice is a collective and collaborative responsibility involving the learner and programme team.
- 4.7.4. Where either a learner or a member of the programme team raises a Fitness to Practice concern, supports will be put in place in order to address these concerns fairly and transparently. Consult the Fitness to Practice Procedure for more.

5. CODE OF CONDUCT FOR LEARNERS

- 5.1. This code outlines what is accepted as reasonable behaviour and has been established to prevent the development of practices which may be considered contrary to ethical codes or practice. Further, this code safeguards the good name of the College, fellow learners, staff the profession and the public. The code of conduct sets out learners responsibility to peers, colleagues and the College. Each learner agrees to abide by this code and seeks to ensure that the rights and dignity of colleagues are in accordance with the values of the College.

5.2. Position Statement

- 5.2.1. PCI College endeavours to recruit learners who are naturally empathic, with good communication skills, and who can maintain emotional balance, empathy, and respect for others even when experiencing frustration, discomfort, and stress. This ability must be upheld as the most basic standard for learners who train in the fields of mental health and wellbeing. Most of our learners meet this standard, which allows the College to provide a supportive and welcoming place to train.
- 5.2.2. Learners who cannot maintain an emotionally balanced, empathic, and respectful position at times of frustration or stress can – intentionally or unintentionally - create considerable ongoing disruption, upset and anxiety for both staff and learners, and impact the learning experience of others. We expect occasional disagreements and conflicts, which are a natural and healthy part of working and learning in groups (as well as being vehicles of continuous improvement), but they must be managed through conversation in which respect and care for others is paramount.
- 5.2.3. Behaviours have been identified which are deemed unacceptable and may lead to sanction. These apply to all enrolled learners of PCI College, whether they occur during class time or between classes. They are unjustifiable in all circumstances for adults training for work with vulnerable people within the helping professions, regardless of any provocation a person feels they have been exposed to, as we have established processes in place to manage such concerns in a professional and fair manner. Learners who engage in these behaviours will be reviewed under the College's Fitness to Practice Policy, which can be invoked, as necessary via the Programme Leader, at any stage during this process.

- 5.3. Unacceptable Behaviours: Learners are always accountable for their behaviour: in college, outside of college, and while in clinical placement. Unacceptable behaviours include (but are not limited to the following):

- 5.3.1. Verbal aggression/ a verbal 'attack'/ shouting at another person
- 5.3.2. Demanding, dictatorial or dominating behaviour which excludes the possibility of a mutually respectful conversation.
- 5.3.3. Physical and verbal aggression, including physical gestures.
- 5.3.4. Threatening comments or behaviour of any kind
- 5.3.5. Disrespectful comments or behaviour, including but not limited to those relating to

gender, gender identity, race, dress, appearance, age, sexuality, sexual identity, religion and beliefs, ability or disability and social background (or the rejection of any of the above).

- 5.3.6. Any behaviour which could potentially bring the College or one of our associated professions into disrepute.
- 5.3.7. Demeaning or belittling others
- 5.3.8. Sexual harassment or exploitation (verbal, non-verbal and physical)
- 5.3.9. Attending College intoxicated (including the impact of prescribed medicines), which may render a learner impaired and thus unable to participate in learning or inhibit the learning of others.
- 5.3.10. Disruptive behaviour preventing the planned learning in the group or the work of College staff
- 5.3.11. Malicious damage to College property
- 5.3.12. Actions likely to cause injury to others or otherwise affecting the health and safety of others.
- 5.3.13. Fraud, deception, or dishonesty
- 5.3.14. Behaviour which interferes with legitimate freedom of speech or College business
- 5.3.15. Electronic recording of College activities without prior permission
- 5.3.16. Refusal to participate in a working group contract.
- 5.3.17. Breach of a working group contract
- 5.3.18. Breach of confidentiality
- 5.3.19. Misuse of College resources, services or systems for illegal, unethical, inappropriate or unprofessional activities
- 5.3.20. Criminal or public order offences including slander or libel especially when related to the use of social media platforms (e.g. Facebook, WhatsApp, etc.)
- 5.3.21. Inappropriate, disrespectful and/or offensive comments posted on a public forum in any format, likely to cause distress or offence.
- 5.3.22. Disregarding or breaching of written regulations and/or contractual requirements relating to the course, including all placement requirements and contracts.

6. COMPLAINTS POLICY

- 6.1. The PCI College Complaints Policy recognises that learners have the right to complain, without prejudice.
- 6.2. The complaints procedure offers learners a clear and accessible step by step guide of how to initiate a complaint, both informally and formally.
- 6.3. Scope of this policy
 - 6.3.1. The Complaints Policy and Procedure is available to all learners on all programmes within PCI College, including learners availing of blended learning and online provision.
 - 6.3.2. The College Complaints Procedure covers situations including but not limited to dissatisfaction with tuition, misleading information, standards of administrative services or unfair treatment etc.
- 6.4. Commitment to Addressing Complaints
 - 6.4.1. The College is committed to offering a fair and transparent Complaints Procedure. We would expect that all complaints are made in good faith.
 - 6.4.2. The Complainant will not be treated any more or less favourably than other learners as a consequence of making a complaint.
 - 6.4.3. Learners enrolled on Middlesex University validated courses can also avail of the Middlesex University Student Complaints and Grievance Procedures once the PCI College Complaints Procedure has been fully exhausted.
 - 6.4.4. Please refer to the Complaints Procedure for more information and a step by step guide to making a complaint.

7. DISABILITY POLICY

- 7.1. PCI College recognise that in order to provide an equitable educational experience to all learners, there will be occasions where additional supports are necessary for learners with a disability.
- 7.2. PCI College endeavours to support learners with disabilities where possible to do so in a fair, transparent and respectful way.
- 7.3. Scope of this policy
 - 7.3.1. The Disability Policy and associated procedure is applicable to all learners across all PCI College programmes, including taught programmes, blended, online, collaborative, transnational and joint award provision.
 - 7.3.2. Support provided ensures that learners experience opportunities and access to personal and professional development as approximate as possible with non-disabled learners.
 - 7.3.3. This conforms to the UDL principle of multiple means of representation as the college strives to make accommodations to allow learners who may experience specific learning challenges to fully engage with and take part in the learning experience.
- 7.4. Disability Policy
 - 7.4.1. At PCI College, we endeavour to assist adult learners with recognised health conditions or impairments to successfully complete their studies. This extends to support required for completion of class assessments, and any other requirements a learner's studies require of them.
 - 7.4.2. While we will always endeavour to support learners with health conditions or impairments; the type of support provided must be reasonable to accommodate at a nominal cost to the College. There may be occasions when we are unable to provide support due to the costs involved or the limits of the College's human, physical and technological resources.
 - 7.4.3. To assess adult learners' needs and to match those needs to available resources, prospective adult learners should disclose any impairment as soon as possible in their engagement with us.
 - 7.4.4. On occasion, we will ask that prospective adult learners complete an Evidence of Disability Form from an appropriately qualified professional so that we can muster the appropriate/necessary supports for that learner.
 - 7.4.5. This is not to disbar any potential candidate for entry, but to ensure we have sufficient time to explore and where possible, to put in place, the resources necessary to reasonably accommodate the adult learner with health conditions or impairments.
 - 7.4.6. Consultation with the Programmes Office and the relevant Programme Leader for the specific course of study being pursued by a learner requiring that support will occur to communicate and gain support regarding any accommodations to be implemented. Please refer to the Disability Procedure for further information.
- 7.5. Disability Support Officer
 - 7.5.1. Access to the Disability Officer is via email in the first instance at: disability.officer@pcicollege-edu.ie
 - 7.5.2. The College Disability Support Officer acts as the point of contact for all matters relating to college facilities and resources available to adult learners requiring disability support.
 - 7.5.3. The role includes liaising between key college departments and adult learners with health conditions or impairments.

8. FINANCIAL SUPPORTS FOR LEARNERS

- 8.1. PCI College is committed to providing support for learners experiencing financial difficulties and endeavour to do so where required and within reason.
- 8.2. Learners Fees: Full Disclosure
 - 8.2.1. All course fees are explicitly outlined on all public facing material related to the delivery of programmes.
 - 8.2.2. Programme fee structures are available publically prior to and on application, offer and acceptance of a place on a programme.
 - 8.2.3. Learners commit to pay fees owed upon acceptance of their place or as per the prescribed payment schedule agreed with the college.
 - 8.2.4. Learners must engage with Student Services on all aspects of fees and payments.
- 8.3. Fee Structures
 - 8.3.1. Learners can avail of the following options for payment of course fees:
 - 8.3.1.1. Pay in full prior to commencing their programme of study
 - 8.3.1.2. Commit to a Direct Debit Payment Plan
 - 8.3.2. Failure to meet agreed payment schedules may result in a learner's account being 'Frozen' and their programme suspended.
- 8.4. Outstanding Fees
 - 8.4.1. All Tuition Fees must be expedited in advance of the Board at which the learner's results are being presented for an award.
 - 8.4.2. Learners with outstanding fees from a previous academic year will not be permitted to progress into the next year of study before addressing outstanding fees AND making a payment towards the proceeding semester's fees.
 - 8.4.3. Learners will not be permitted to graduate if they have outstanding fees.
 - 8.4.4. If a learner disengages with Student Services regarding outstanding fees, and the learner still attends classes, they may be denied access to that class and have that attendance dismissed until the matter is resolved.
- 8.5. Financial Difficulties
 - 8.5.1. It is recognised that learners may experience financial difficulty at any stage of their enrolment and where this is the case, learners can discuss their options directly with a member of Student Services.
 - 8.5.2. PCI College encourage all learners to discuss any concerns regarding their ability to pay fees due with Student Services at their earliest opportunity.
 - 8.5.3. If learners are unable to pay fees by the dates agreed, they should contact Student Services as soon as possible at studentservices@pcicollege.ie.

9. FITNESS TO PRACTICE

- 9.1. PCI College's Fitness to Practice (FTP) Policy recognises that, in conferring appropriate academic qualifications where they lead to a professional qualification or admission to a professional body and/or statutory registration board e.g. CORU, the College must be satisfied (from a pre-qualification perspective) that the learner will be an ethical and suitable entrant to the that profession.
- 9.2. The Fitness to Practice policy is intended to address concerns about a learner's impairment and or ability to practice competently and at a level appropriate to their programme of study.
- 9.3. PCI College reserves the right to activate the FTP procedure where a concern is raised which triggers a timely, appropriate and thorough review of progression, and which results in a recommendation that a learner should progress, pause or exit the programme.
- 9.4. Principles Underlying the Fitness to Practice Policy
 - 9.4.1. All actions under the Fitness to Practice policy will be guided by the following principles:

- 9.4.1.1. To act in a fair and proportionate manner when dealing with vulnerable individuals.
- 9.4.1.2. To consider relevant professional advice and guidance where appropriate.
- 9.4.1.3. To comply with legal and ethical duties and responsibilities.
- 9.4.1.4. To safeguard the needs of staff and learners affected by inappropriate behaviours.
- 9.4.1.5. To consider the impact of any breaks in study holistically and provide appropriate advice, information and guidance to those concerned.
- 9.4.2. Any data handled as part of this process will be managed under PCI College's Data Protection Policy.
- 9.5. Definition of Fitness to Practice
 - 9.5.1. Being fit to practice requires that a learner of the College has the requisite skills, knowledge, attitude, good health and good character to practice safely, ethically and effectively.

"Fitness to Practice is the habitual and judicious use of communication, knowledge, technical skills, clinical reasoning, emotions, values and reflection in daily practice for the benefit of the individual and the community being served. To this aim, clinicians should maintain sufficient physical, mental, academic and developmental resources necessary to undertake and sustain professional work as a therapist." Adapted from Defining Professional Competence by Epstein & Hundert (2002)
- 9.6. Monitoring Fitness to Practice
 - 9.6.1. In line with best practice, PCI College monitors learners FPT on an ongoing basis. Monitoring also takes place via the following formal mechanisms.
 - 9.6.2. Attendance:
 - 9.6.2.1. A record of learner attendance is taken at every class as a requirement of their academic programme, including late arrivals and early departures. This is collated and stored electronically on a password-protected secure database.
 - 9.6.3. Lecturer End-of-Module Feedback:
 - 9.6.3.1. At the end of every module, each lecturer is required to submit a short formal report to the Year Head or Programme Leader, outlining learner engagement and performance, highlighting positive engagement and/or concerns. Patterns of concern are noted and evaluated by the relevant programme staff, who then liaise directly with affected stakeholders. This information is stored by the Programmes Office.
 - 9.6.3.2. Informal feedback on learner engagement/performance in practice may also be provided to the relevant programme staff, as and when the need arises. This feedback may be provided by a lecturer, member of staff or Third Party for example Supervisor, Placement or a member of the public. Where a concern arises, the learner will be notified and given an opportunity to respond.
 - 9.6.4. Progress Review Meetings (PRMs):
 - 9.6.4.1. During the year, learners have one or more meetings with the programme's core staff. The purpose of this meeting is to assess and monitor a learner's suitability for client work, review personal therapy and supervision logs as well as address any clinical, academic or administrative matters that may arise. It is also an opportunity for the learner to reflect and feed back to the college, clarifying their position if required. The outcome of these meetings are communicated to the Year Head or Programme Leader and agreed actions are tracked to completion.

Unresolved outcomes or concerns are listed for attention at the bi-annual Progression Boards.

9.6.5. Progression Boards:

9.6.5.1. Progression Boards are formal faculty and administrative meetings, Chaired by the Head of Counselling and Psychotherapy (or nominee) and formally minuted. At these meetings, each Year Head or Programme Leader reports on the learners in their year, including concerns arising and how issues from previous meetings have been actioned and resolved. Fitness to practice, clinical and academic progression, as well as attendance, is used to inform progression decisions. If a learner's progression is affected by a decision taken at Progression Boards, they will be notified in writing by their Year Head or nominee within 28 days of the board meeting.

9.7. How the College Managed Fitness to Practice Concerns

9.7.1. Self-disclosure

9.7.1.1. Whereby a learner through a process of self-reflection and likely in consultation with a Supervisor or SDPO, reaches a conclusion that it is in the best interest of stakeholders they withdraw from practice for a period and notifies the College of same.

9.7.1.2. Where a learner is concerned about their ability to practice, we invite and encourage a route of personal acknowledgment and self-disclosure, followed by appropriate disclosure to college personnel. Taking a pause demonstrates professional maturity, ethical awareness and is aligned with the duty of self-care.

9.7.2. Independent referral

9.7.2.1. Whereby a learner is required by the College to attend a Fitness to Practice Review Meeting due to a concern raised by a stakeholder.

9.8. Circumstances Which Render a Learner Unfit To Practice

9.8.1. Exploiting the vulnerability of a client or another learner by entering into a sexual relationship. This violates the principle of appropriate boundaries.

9.8.2. Offences against the vulnerable, including children, the elderly and the mentally incapacitated.

9.8.3. Drug or alcohol abuse (including prescribed medication which may impair learning or attendance in class).

9.8.4. Acting in an inappropriate manner on or away from College premises.

9.8.5. Conviction of a relevant criminal offence.

9.8.6. Intimidation or harassment of fellow learners, other stakeholders, clients or staff.

9.8.7. Failure to rectify behaviour that has been subject to any disciplinary actions under PCI College's regulations

9.8.8. Repeated inappropriate behaviour towards others.

9.8.9. Falsification of client, learner or other professional records or data.

9.8.10. Misrepresentation of learner status, level of training/experience or qualification to stakeholders.

9.8.11. Insufficient self-awareness, maturity and engagement with the work of personal development necessary to work with clients.

9.8.12. Breach of the code of ethics as outlined by the appropriate accreditation body.

9.8.13. Concern from a College stakeholder as to the present emotional, physical or developmental status of a learner.

9.8.14. Any other circumstance which may call into question a learner's fitness to practice not listed above but material to their suitability or preparedness to be admitted to the profession in question.

9.9. Taking Action

9.9.1. This policy allows for an agreed way for the learner to continue their programme with appropriate support or to take a break from their programme without academic consequences until they are fit to return to practice.

9.9.2. Where a concern under fitness to practice arises, the procedure for level one, two and three adjudication of fitness to practice is described in the relevant programme handbook and within the Fitness to Practice Procedure.

10. GARDA VETTING POLICY

10.1. In accordance with the Children and Vulnerable Person's Act (2012-2016) learners who are enrolled on programmes which include clinical requirements, i.e. client work, are required to undergo Garda Vetting.

10.2. Garda Vetting requirements are communicated to all prospective learners through front facing public material, such as the College Website, and discussed at interview.

10.3. Garda Vetting is managed internally through the appointment of a Garda Vetting Liaising Officer, as directed by the Garda Vetting Bureau (GVB).

10.4. A GVB approved 3rd party organisation is contracted to process the Garda Vetting applications on behalf of PCI College.

10.5. There are procedures in place for return of disclosures and evaluating the impact of same on the learners enrollment or progression into the target profession of that programme.

11. HEALTH & SAFETY POLICY

11.1. PCI College take the health and safety of all staff, learners and visitors to PCI College property very seriously.

11.2. PCI College employ a Health and Safety Officer to ensure compliance with Health and Safety legislation.

11.3. The Health and Safety policy and associated procedures are applicable within all PCI College owned/leased venues.

11.4. In all other venues, PCI College abide by the health and safety procedures as dictated by the relevant organisation.

11.5. A Health and Safety Officer is employed by PCI College to oversee compliance with health and safety regulation/legislation in PCI College owned/leased venues.

11.6. A number of safety checks will be developed and conducted during the year, these include:

11.6.1. Daily Checks

11.6.2. Weekly Checks

11.6.3. Monthly Reviews

11.6.4. Bi-annual Checks

11.6.5. Tri-annual Checks

11.6.6. Annual Checks

11.7. There are established reporting structures in place to highlight health and safety issues, note corrective actions and plan for these to be remediated.

12. IT SUPPORT POLICY

12.1. In the modern age of education, PCI College recognise the need for support in the area of information technology.

12.2. PCI College are committed to supporting learners to access the many online resources available through our internal software and systems.

12.3. PCI College aim to provide equitable access to learner supports via the information technology systems in place.

12.4. The use of information technology systems will enable learners to gain the most from their educational experience and reach their developmental potential.

- 12.5. The IT supports provided by the College are equally available to all learners on all programmes, this includes taught programmes, blended learning, online and transnational provision.
- 12.6. The College is committed to providing a nurturing, supportive environment for all learners.
- 12.7. The College is committed to providing information to learners in a clear and accessible manner.
- 12.8. Additional supports can be accessed on the basis of an identified need. Please see Disability Policy and Procedure for further information.
- 12.9. IT supports for learners
 - 12.9.1. Internal IT Supports
 - 12.9.1.1. Microsoft Office 365 Suite which includes access to Word, Powerpoint, Excel, Teams, One Drive and many other useful apps.
 - 12.9.1.2. PCI College dedicated email address.
 - 12.9.1.3. Student Portal which contains all relevant programme information including programme handbooks, clinical information, module materials, timetable, in addition to 'how to' information and demonstrations with clear instructions on how to access the IT systems and supports in place.
 - 12.9.1.4. Academic Writing Knowledge Based which contains a number of tools and templates to assist with creating documents such as essays, research papers and presentations.
 - 12.9.1.5. Database search engines embedded into the Sage Online Library and Middlesex University Library with instructional videos and presentations available through the Student Portal detailing how to use same.
 - 12.9.1.6. Access to an eSubmissions Portal.
 - 12.9.1.7. Internal IT support for learners where classes are being conducted online via Teams.
 - 12.9.1.8. Overview of supports, including demonstrations, provided and learner orientation and inductions.
 - 12.9.2. External IT supports provided via CODEC (Company providing IT services).
 - 12.9.2.1. Microsoft back up server in place, including Azure server for back up and storage in the event of a systems failure.
 - 12.9.2.2. Internal contingency plans are in place for the delivery of programmes in an online/blended learning environment should a systems failure occur/
 - 12.9.2.3. A second broadband line is in place within our Head Office/Main Campus which houses the key non-faculty departments thus reducing potential impact.
 - 12.9.2.4. Mobile phone technology can provide a further backup solution and hot-spot access in non-PCI venues.
 - 12.9.2.5. Many non-PCI venues provide free wifi access to staff and learners.
- 12.10. IT conduct guidelines
 - 12.10.1. The majority of IT supports available to learners are accessed via the internet.
 - 12.10.2. Learners are required to have access to a suitable device, operating system, software and internet connection.
 - 12.10.3. Learners are expected to conduct themselves maturely and ethically at all times while accessing online supports, online provision or engaging in any of the online learner forums via the Teams app.
 - 12.10.4. Learners are expected to maintain the contract of confidentiality, mutuality, privacy and respect that is negotiated within the classroom and referenced within the programme handbooks and Code of Conduct policy. This extends to engagements via class WhatsApp groups and on social media platforms.
 - 12.10.5. Learners in breach of the above will be considered under one of the following

policies: Code of Conduct, Fitness to Practice, Complaints.

12.11. Quality Assuring IT Supports

- 12.11.1. Quality assurance of IT support is facilitated by the relevant departments and overseen by the Academic QA Co-Ordinator.
- 12.11.2. External IT support is provided to the College by CODEC.
- 12.11.3. Support related to Blended Learning provision is provided by the Blended Learning External Consultant.

13. LEARNER INDUCTION AND ORIENTATION POLICY

13.1. Definitions

- 13.1.1. **Induction:** A timetabled welcome day designed to provide learners with an overview of their programme, introduction to the College's ethos, demonstration of college services and supports and guidance on what is expected of them as adult learners.
- 13.1.2. **Orientation:** Ongoing periods of engagement during which learners are supported in developing the skills necessary to engage with all educational requirements and expectations.

13.2. Policy Elements

- 13.2.1. Induction and orientation for learners is recognised as a fundamental support in ensuring sufficient preparation, clarity on the expectations of adult learners and as a means of assisting learners in enhancing their overall learning experience. Early intervention has been shown to improve the quality of learner outcomes as well as improving the academic standards of the programme overall when the college engages early by creating a space in which college rapport with learners is maximised.
- 13.2.2. Induction and orientation afford an opportunity to formally welcome learners to the College, to inform them of college expectations as well as the requirements of their programmes of study so that they can look forward with hope and enthusiasm for the learning journey ahead.
- 13.2.3. Structured induction and orientation sessions are provided to all learners at the commencement of their studies and at pivotal points throughout each stage of their learning.
- 13.2.4. Induction and orientation sessions must include:
 - 13.2.4.1. Overview of college staff, their roles/responsibilities and contact details
 - 13.2.4.2. Overview of programme team, their roles/responsibilities and contact details
 - 13.2.4.3. Overview of learner supports including demonstrations related to accessing same
 - 13.2.4.4. Overview of programme requirements including programme assessments and progression information.
 - 13.2.4.5. Overview of clinical requirements and support
 - 13.2.4.6. Information related to the role of Student Voice Leader (SVL)
- 13.2.5. All induction and orientation classes are easily accessible to learners and facilitated in a manner that is clear and transparent.
- 13.2.6. Induction and orientation sessions are managed through: Student Services.

14. MITIGATING CIRCUMSTANCES POLICY

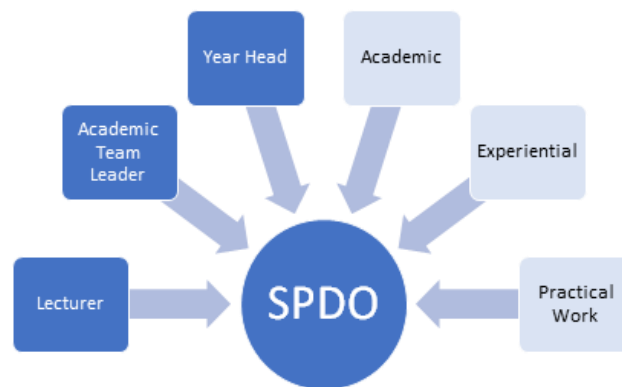
- 14.1. PCI College accept that unexpected circumstances, beyond a learner's control, can occur at any point during an enrolment and impact on a learner's ability to complete programme assessments.

- 14.2. PCI College endeavour to support learners through in these circumstances to complete their programme requirements through implementation of the College's Mitigating Circumstances procedure.
- 14.3. Mitigating Circumstances applies to all learners on all programmes across PCI College provision, including taught programmes, blended, online, collaborative, transnational and joint award provision.
- 14.4. Policy Components
 - 14.4.1. The mechanism through which learners can avail of late submissions of coursework is called Mitigating Circumstances.
 - 14.4.2. Mitigating Circumstances requests can be made by learners where circumstances beyond a learner's control prevent a timely summative submission.
 - 14.4.3. Applications for mitigating circumstances are managed by the Executive Examinations Officer through the Programmes Office.
 - 14.4.4. Grounds for mitigating circumstances and details on how to submit same are clearly communicated to learners via their programme handbook and outlined within the Mitigating Circumstances Procedure.

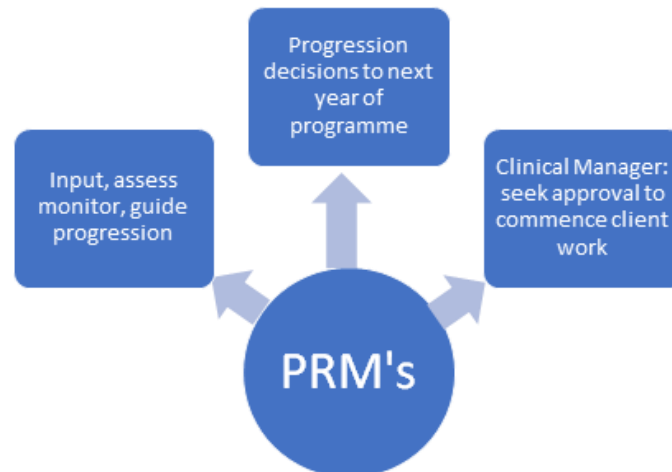
15. PASTORAL CARE OF LEARNERS POLICY

- 15.1. It is the policy of PCI College to afford each Learner 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 counselling and psychotherapy, learners require an elaborate support structure to be in place and available to them when/if they encounter personal/professional difficulties as they progress through their programme.
- 15.2. The College is committed to providing a stimulating learning experience in a supportive environment. Accessible support services for all Learners are in place as well as individualised support for Learners with specific needs.
- 15.3. Pastoral Care Model
 - 15.3.1. The model of programme related pastoral care varies depending on the programme in question, however a collaborative approach to learner care and development is adopted across all programmes.
 - 15.3.2. Collaboration is required from within the relevant programme teams and through communication with supporting departments, for example, Programmes Office, Student Services, Clinical Manager.
 - 15.3.3. It is the responsibility of the Programme Leader, in collaboration with the lecturing team and Clinical Manager (where applicable) to support learners throughout their enrolment on Certificate and Postgraduate programmes.
 - 15.3.4. The Programme Leader, seeking support from the Clinical Manager where programmes have clinical requirements, is charged with the following responsibilities:
 - 15.3.4.1. To be available to learners who need to address questions arising from their participation in the programme.
 - 15.3.4.2. To help learners to select the pathway to education awards that is most appropriate to their needs when options are offered.
 - 15.3.4.3. To help learners who are experiencing difficulties about aspects of the programme - inner conflict, dilemmas, or simply things that do not seem to them to make sense or meaning.
 - 15.3.4.4. To shepherd learners through their programme from beginning to end
 - 15.3.4.5. To advocate on behalf of learners
 - 15.3.4.6. To conduct Progression Review Meetings as required by the programme
 - 15.3.4.7. To highlight progression concerns and resolve active issues on an ongoing basis in a timely manner.

- 15.3.4.8. To monitor the learners client work
- 15.3.4.9. To monitor the learner's participation in personal counselling, where required
- 15.3.4.10. To ensure the learner keeps up to date with assignments.
- 15.3.4.11. To mediate in disputes between learners.
- 15.3.5. The model of programme related pastoral care on the BSc (Hons) Counselling and Psychotherapy includes a Year Head and a Student Development and Progression Officer (SDPO), in addition to the Programme Leader.
- 15.3.6. The SDPO is the main point of contact and advocate for learners on their programme (as appropriate).
- 15.3.7. The SDPO is charged with the responsibilities outlined above in addition to communicating and liaising directly with Year Heads where required.
- 15.3.8. The Clinical Manager is also part of the programme support available to learners within appropriate programmes.
- 15.4. Role of the Student Progression and Development Officer



- 15.5. The role Student Development and Progression Officer (SDPO) is at the heart of the College Care Team specific to the BSc (Hons) Counselling and Psychotherapy programme and a direct point of contact for both Learners and Lecturers concerning actively supporting the development of the therapist in training throughout their programme.
- 15.6. The Role of Progress Review Meetings
 - 15.6.1. Progression Review Meetings (PRMs) are common across all BSc and Postgraduate programmes.
 - 15.6.2. PRMs are conducted by the SDPO on the BSc programme and by the Programme Leader with support from the Clinical Manager on all Postgraduate programmes.
 - 15.6.3. PRMs provide an opportunity for two way feedback between the College and the learner in relation to a programme experience including learner engagement.
 - 15.6.4. Learner Progression is monitored closely by the College. Monitoring learner progress is a collaborative process. Learner progression is dependent on positive feedback from the learner in question, Learner Development and Progression Officers, Lecturers, Year Heads, external stakeholders (e.g. Clinical Supervisor(s)) and the Client Work Team (if the programme includes a client work element).
 - 15.6.5. PRMs are held at set points in the academic year as dictated by the programme schedule.
 - 15.6.6. PRMs support the process for progressing a learner to commence clinical work.
 - 15.6.7. PRMs are a tool for monitoring learner progression throughout their programme of study.
 - 15.6.8. Learners are encouraged to adequately prepare for PRMs using the reflection tools available.



15.7. The Role of Academic Staff

- 15.7.1. Advice, guidance and support on academic matters pertaining to learner's engagement with, and performance on, their programme are available through the programme team throughout the course of a learner's studies.
- 15.7.2. Lecturers will undertake to deliver modules in a professional manner, giving accurate information and model good timekeeping. They will give clear guidelines for all exercises so as to fully prepare learner's for their programme requirements.
- 15.7.3. Lecturers will work to create an environment where learners feel safe, facilitating class contracts at the beginning of each module and will give constructive feedback, both individually and to the group to shape and enhance their academic, personal and professional development.
- 15.7.4. Lecturers also undertake to accept and utilise learner's feedback constructively. Individual lecturers may bring activities, tasks or methods to an individual module based on their unique style of lecturing in order to enhance the module experience.
- 15.7.5. Learners receive lecturer feedback by email for their written assessments.
- 15.7.6. The feedback informs learners of their strengths, and of areas they may need to improve and work on.
- 15.7.7. Within the classroom, learners are encouraged to give and receive constructive feedback to and from their colleagues.
- 15.7.8. Lecturers also provide in-class feedback, allowing the learners direct insight into their growth and development.

15.8. The Role of Clinical Support

- 15.8.1. Learners receive advice, guidance and support on matters pertaining to the Clinical Requirements of their programme from the College's Clinical Manager in a Client Work Briefing in year 1 of their programme. Thereafter, this information is available to the Learner on the Student Portal in the Client Work Information Policy and Procedures. The Clinical Manager is the first point of contact for clinical support across all programmes.
- 15.8.2. Learners are assessed as to their readiness to commence Client Work, at specific points of their programme. This assessment is carried out by the Clinical Manager and the relevant programme team.
- 15.8.3. Learners, once assessed and approved to commence Client Work, are supported by the Clinical Manager in accessing a suitable, college approved placement in which to carry out their course required Client Work.
- 15.8.4. The monitoring and verifying of Client Work, Supervision and Personal Therapy is carried out by The Clinical Manager, Programmes Office, and Programme Team at scheduled intervals throughout the programme.

16. PROGRAMME INTERRUPTION AND WITHDRAWAL POLICY

- 16.1. During the course of study, personal circumstances may arise which can impact on learner's progression.
- 16.2. Learners can make an application to interrupt their studies, and learners are responsible for making themselves aware of the implications of an interruption which can include:
 - 16.2.1. Recognition of modules completed
 - 16.2.1.1. Attendance
 - 16.2.1.2. Engagement in class
 - 16.2.1.3. Assessments
 - 16.2.1.4. Academic ability
 - 16.2.2. Policy and procedures on Fees
 - 16.2.3. Group Supervision (if applicable)
 - 16.2.4. Client Work
 - 16.2.5. Personal Therapy
 - 16.2.6. Workshop Hours (if applicable)
 - 16.2.7. Re-entry Requirements
- 16.3. Following a programme interruption, learners can apply for programme re-entry.
- 16.4. Programme Interruption and Withdrawal Policy and Procedures are available for all learners on award based programmes, i.e. excluding short CPD courses, including taught programmes, online, blended learning and transnational provision.
- 16.5. Categories of Interruptions
 - 16.5.1. There are two categories of interruption:
 - 16.5.1.1. Temporary Interruption: Deferral or Pause of Programme
 - 16.5.1.2. Permanent Interruption: Withdrawal
- 16.6. Learners who are approved for deferral or Pause of Programme cannot include clinical requirement hours while on interruption from their programme.
- 16.7. Learners who do not use the College's Deferral or Pause of Programme process and informally step back from the programme are still liable for accumulating tuition fees and are at risk of failing modules.
- 16.8. Temporary Interruption: Deferral
 - 16.8.1. Deferring a programme refers to learners temporarily leaving the course for various reasons.
 - 16.8.2. Deferral applications can be accepted from 1st August to 15th September each year.
 - 16.8.3. Deferral is not a learner right and the decision lies with the College.
 - 16.8.4. Approval for deferral is made on a case-by-case basis.
 - 16.8.5. Deferrals are approved for 1 academic year.
- 16.9. Temporary Interruption: Pause of Programme
 - 16.9.1. If extenuating circumstances arise during the academic year (excluding financial difficulties), which result in a learner needing to pause their engagement with their academic programme, a learner can make an application for a Pause of Programme.
 - 16.9.2. Pause of Programme is not a learner right and the decision lies with the College.
 - 16.9.3. Approval for Pause of Programme is made on a case-by-case basis.
 - 16.9.4. Provisions and supports will be put in place for learners where Pause of Programme is approved in relation to completing modules outstanding and clinical requirements.
 - 16.9.5. Conditions for re-entry may be set during Pause of Programme approval.
 - 16.9.6. Pause of Programmes are approved for the remainder of the academic year in progress.

16.10. Permanent Interruption: Withdrawal

- 16.10.1. Choosing to withdraw from their programme of study is a learner right.
- 16.10.2. Withdrawal is a permanent status.
- 16.10.3. If a learner wishes to re-enter after a withdrawal, they must apply as a new applicant.

16.11. Programme Re-Entry

- 16.11.1. Learners have the opportunity to re-enter their programme of study following an approved temporary interruption period.
- 16.11.2. Student Services support learners through the process of re-entry.
- 16.11.3. On return from an interruption, learners are required to pay the current tuition fee.
- 16.11.4. Decisions regarding readiness to return to studies, and the point in the programme at which the learner resumes their studies again, are at the discretion of the College.
- 16.11.5. Factors taken into account by the College in considering a learner's return to studies include:
 - 16.11.6. The stage of the programme which the learner had reached prior to the interruption.
 - 16.11.7. Their previous academic performance
 - 16.11.8. Length of absence from the programme
 - 16.11.9. Conditions of re-entry may be set upon approval of a temporary interruption.
 - 16.11.10. A programme may change during a period of interruption. It will be necessary for those returning to complete all relevant academic requirements of the programme they return to.
- 16.11.11. Upon returning from an interruption, there is a requirement to satisfy the College that remaining modules and programme commitments are sufficient to meet the most recent course requirements.

17. PROGRAMME VOICE GROUP POLICY

- 17.1. PCI College strives to develop partnerships between Learners and staff to allow for continual improvement and enhancement of the learner experience.
- 17.2. Feedback from learners is encouraged as an ongoing, constructive dialogue that enables learners to realise their potential and enables the College to review provision from the learner experience.
- 17.3. The Programme Voice Group (PVG) is a forum where Student Voice Leaders and staff across a programme of study meet to discuss learner's experiences.
- 17.4. This affords learners a platform to bring to the attention of the most senior College personnel any matters of interest/concern.
- 17.5. The Programme Voice Group meets twice each year and is chaired by the PCI College Link Tutor or their nominee.
- 17.6. All lecturers, Link Tutors, Year Heads, members of the Academic Council, and Student Voice Leaders are invited to attend to the PVG.
- 17.7. A representative of the validating body is also invited to the PVG.
- 17.8. Collaborative discussion is facilitated through the Chair and issues raised by Learners are considered at the appropriate level within the College (e.g., Academic Council, Management Board).
- 17.9. Action is taken when / where necessary and where resources permit.
- 17.10. The College investigates the various issues raised and provides a response to how the issues/requests were dealt with at the next PVG.
- 17.11. If a request cannot be fulfilled, an explanation is provided at the next PVG.

18. PROTECTION OF ENROLLED LEARNERS

- 18.1. In accordance with Middlesex University and the Qualifications & Quality Assurance (Education & Training) Act (2012), PCI College have secured appropriate protection for all enrolled learners on programmes of more than three months duration.
- 18.2. Protection of Enrolled Learners (PEL) is an arrangement that Higher Education Colleges are required to have by legislation in Section 65 (4) of the Qualifications & Quality Assurance (Education & Training) Act (2012).
- 18.3. Protection Arrangements
- 18.3.1. For all PCI College courses covered by the legislation, i.e. courses of more than three months in duration, learners are covered by a Protection of Enrolled Learners Insurance Policy provided by AVIVA Insurance.
- 18.3.2. In the event of the College ceasing to provide the programme, all fees most recently paid will be refunded to the learners.
- 18.3.3. Refunds will be made to those persons or organisations who paid the most recent programme fee.
- 18.3.4. All learners will receive an insurance certificate verifying their PEL status.
- 18.3.5. PEL arrangements and the insurance bond policy are taken out under PCI College, trading as PCI Counselling Ltd. All PEL liability lies with PCI Counselling Ltd.
- 18.4. PEL Eligibility
- 18.4.1. PEL is applicable for courses more than three months in duration under the following circumstances:
- 18.4.1.1. The College ceases operation, preventing the completion of an enrolled programme
- 18.4.1.2. A programme is terminated after it has commenced but before its scheduled completion date.
- 18.4.1.3. The validating arrangements of the programme are revoked, i.e. QQI withdraws programme validation
- 18.4.2. There may be circumstances whereby an offered programme may not run as scheduled due to a variety of reasons, for example, non-viable numbers. PEL is not applicable in these situations - however the college will offer the following options in this instance:
- 18.4.3. Transfer to the same course in an alternative location within PCI College
- 18.4.4. Transfer to an alternative PCI College course
- 18.4.5. A full refund of fees paid
- 18.4.6. The College will immediately inform all relevant stakeholders (Learners, Insurers, Validating and Accrediting bodies) if PEL arrangements need to be activated.
- 18.5. Additional Learner Protections
- 18.5.1. As per the PCI College Partnership Agreement with Middlesex University, the College has a Middlesex University Student Protection Plan (SPP) in place and a contingency agreement.
- 18.5.2. A detailed and robust risk assessment is in place to support both the Protection of Enrolled Learners Policy and the Student Protection Plan.

19. SUPPORTING NEW MOTHERS: BREASTFEEDING SUPPORTS

- 19.1. PCI College recognises the importance of creating an environment that is supportive of new parents generally, and new mothers specifically.
- 19.2. The purpose of this policy is to support learners who are breastfeeding to continue their studies with PCI College.
- 19.3. While the needs of breastfeeding mothers are varied and change over time, the College will, where possible, accommodate learners who must attend college classes with their baby.
- 19.4. Learners will be facilitated, upon request, to continue breastfeeding while attending class.

- 19.5. Sufficient notice should be given to allow appropriate arrangements to be put in place, i.e. 1 month where possible.
- 19.6. Learners availing of breastfeeding support during class are asked to be respectful of the learning environment and if the baby behaves in a way that is disruptive to the class, the onus is on the learner to respond to the disruption rather than the Lecturer to stop the class.
- 19.7. Learners should preferably sit in a location where they can exit the room should they need to in order to ensure the minimum amount of disruption to the learning environment for themselves and their fellow classmates.
- 19.8. Programmes office will, where possible arrange for a room to be available for the learners to breastfeed and/or to express milk.
- 19.9. Learners should provide their own cool bag and equipment for storage and transportation of breast milk. Please note that due to the various venues within PCI College, an isolated room may not always be available.
- 19.10. It is personal preference for the parent to breastfeed inside the classroom or not.
- 19.11. If the parent does leave the class to feed the baby, this does not constitute missed time.
- 19.12. The onus is on the learner to catch up on the learning from their classmates.
- 19.13. Any additional class time missed for any other disruption would fall within the missed time procedures.

20. LINKED POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

Access, Applications and Admissions Policy
Assessment of Learners Policy
Blended Learning Policy
Learning Environments Policy
Ongoing Programme Monitoring Policy
Privacy Policy
Public Information Policy
Recognition of Prior Learning Policy
Self Evaluation and Monitoring Policy
Teaching and Learning Strategy
Transfer and Progression Policy
Access, Applications and Admissions Procedure
Academic Misconduct Procedure
Assessment of Learners Procedure
Blended Learning Procedure
Administrative Quality Assurance Procedure
Annual Comparative Study Report
Annual Module Review Procedure
Annual Programme Review Procedure
Ongoing Programme Monitoring Procedure
Public Information Procedure
Recognition of Prior Learning Procedure
Self Evaluation and Monitoring Procedure
Support for Learners Procedure
Transfer and Progression Procedure