



# Quality Assurance Manual

Document Title and Reference	UniHaven Quality Assurance Manual
Purpose	The core document in which the College's policies, procedures, principles, and practices upon which quality assurance mechanisms are based are summarised and referenced.
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## Revision History

Date	Revision Details
March 2022	<p>Revised after the first QQI provider approval panel meeting to implement mandatory changes as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Insertion of the first programme development process for the development of the first programme including an externally appointed interim programme development team.</li> <li>- Inclusion of new annual HEI Partner Review process.</li> <li>- Revised student policy text to enhance clarity and understanding for students.</li> <li>- Enhanced clarity of the programme entry requirements.</li> <li>- Reviewed College RPL capability.</li> <li>- Revised staff minimum selection criteria.</li> <li>- Revised staff workload allocation.</li> <li>- Revised Appeals text for clarity around the separation of those involved with those involved in the appeals process.</li> <li>- Enhanced the psychological support offering to students.</li> </ul>
February 2023	<p>Revised after programme validation as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Selection of premises in Maynooth.</li> <li>- Revised document to update cross-referencing and to eliminate typo errors.</li> <li>- Updated reference list to Include London Statement.</li> <li>- Clarified UniHaven provision to reflect current non-QQI programme offerings.</li> <li>- Revised text for accuracy to reflect the development of the first programme.</li> <li>- Inserted references to a newly created UDOC012 UniHaven Teaching, Learning and Assessment Strategy formed at the Programme Validation stage.</li> <li>- Revised text to list correct programme title/name as per QQI Programme Validation Naming criteria.</li> <li>- Removed programme table from Chapter 1 which had listed a possible programme structure pre-programme validation that is now obsolete.</li> <li>- Clarified that Transfers to/from another Irish provider's QQI Level 5 Foundation Programme are possible as per Programme Validation clarification.</li> <li>- Enhanced student policy text for greater ILEP clarity.</li> </ul>

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# 1. BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

## 1.1. Overview

This document, the UniHaven Quality Assurance Manual (QAM), together with associated policies and procedures have been developed to meet the Quality and Qualifications Ireland (QQI) requirements for all providers<sup>1</sup> and independent providers<sup>2</sup>. The QAM has been written to satisfy the requirements of the Qualifications and Quality Assurance (Education and Training) (Amendment) Act 2019 (the 2019 Amendment Act), as well as Quality and Qualifications Ireland's (QQI) requirements. All relevant QQI guidelines, reference documents, reference website links and relevant legislative references are listed in Appendix 1.1.

The principles and policies outlined in this QAM, together with associated forms, manuals and handbooks referenced in Appendix 1.3 and 1.4, apply to all recruitment and admissions activities, academic activities, student support services and the progression of students to Higher Education Institution ("HEI") degree programmes concerning UniHaven's college. Key policy information is summarised in this manual with the policy document and associated procedures, documents, and forms outlined in standalone separate documents. This has been done to allow staff and students a quick way to access the specific policy, procedure, form, handbook, or manual of interest to them easily and quickly. In this context, the QAM has been written to pull together and summarises the key aspects of all referenced and individually attached documents to show the cohesive approach to quality assurance at the College. For the standalone individual policies, procedures, forms, manuals and handbooks, see links in this document and attached referenced standalone documents. A glossary of terms relevant to the QAM is included in Appendix 1.5.

The QAM has been drafted for implementation from 2023 and will be subject to annual review under the auspices of the Academic Council (AC) to support the ongoing

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<sup>1</sup> Statutory Quality Assurance Guidelines developed by QQI for use by all Providers (2016).

<sup>2</sup> Statutory Quality Assurance Guidelines developed by QQI for Independent/Private Providers coming to QQI on a Voluntary Basis (2016).

commitment to continuous quality improvement. QQI will be notified of significant changes where relevant. It has been drafted as per UPOL001 UniHaven Quality Assurance Policy Rev 1.

## 1.2. References

The QAM is informed by the following references that are also listed in Appendix 1.1.

- QQI Provider References
  - Statutory Quality Assurance Guidelines developed by QQI for use by all Providers (2016).
  - Statutory Quality Assurance Guidelines developed by QQI for Independent/Private Providers coming to QQI on a Voluntary Basis (2016).
  - QQI HET Core Validation Policy and Criteria Revised (2013).
  - QQI Policies and Criteria for the Validation of Programmes of Education and Training (2017).
  - Guidelines for Preparing Programme Descriptors for Further Education and Training Programmes Leading to QQI CAS Awards (Revised October 2013).
  - National Framework of Qualifications  
[https://www.qqi.ie/Articles/Pages/National-Framework-of-Qualifications-\(NFQ\).aspx](https://www.qqi.ie/Articles/Pages/National-Framework-of-Qualifications-(NFQ).aspx).
- Student Admission and Recruitment References
  - QQI Code of Practice for Provision of Programmes of Education and Training to International Students (2015).
  - Policy and Criteria for Access, Transfer and Progression in Relation to Students for Providers of Further and Higher Education and Training (NQAI 2003, re-stated by QQI 2015).
  - Protection of Enrolled Learners (PEL): Protocols for the Implementation of Part 6 of the 2012 Act Guidelines for Providers.
  - The London Statement for Ethical Recruitment:  
[https://www.britishcouncil.org/sites/default/files/london\\_statement.pdf](https://www.britishcouncil.org/sites/default/files/london_statement.pdf)



- Teaching, Learning and Assessment References
  - The National Forum for the Enhancement of Teaching and Learning in Higher Education: <https://www.teachingandlearning.ie/>.
  - [http://www.iheqn.ie/fileupload/File/IHEQN\\_Guidelines\\_Collaborative\\_Provision\\_FINAL\\_21May13\\_55218605.pdf](http://www.iheqn.ie/fileupload/File/IHEQN_Guidelines_Collaborative_Provision_FINAL_21May13_55218605.pdf)
  - [Expanding our Understanding of Assessment and Feedback in Irish Higher Education - National Forum for the Enhancement of Teaching and Learning in Higher Education](#)
  - QQI Effective Practice Guidelines for External Examining Revised February (2015).
  - QQI Quality Assuring Assessment - Guidelines for Providers (Revised 2013).
- QQI Self-Evaluation Monitoring and Review References
  - QQI (2014) Policy on Monitoring.
  - QQI (2016) Policy for Cyclical Review of Higher Education Institutions.
  - QQI (2016) Policy on Quality Assurance Guidelines, Section 4.4.1, 'The Provider-Owned QA Principle', Section 4.4.7, 'The Continuous Improvement Principle'.
- Quality Assurance Legislative References
  - Qualifications and Quality Assurance (Education and Training) (Amendment) Act 2019 (the 2019 Amendment Act).
  - Companies Act (2014).
- Data Protection References
  - General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) 2018.
  - Data Protection Legislation including Article 5 guidelines on (GDPR) General Privacy Data Regulations.
  - The Data Protection Acts 1988 and 2003 (as amended).
- Child Protection references
  - Children First Act 2015 and Children First: National Guidance for the

Protection and Welfare of Children 2017.

- The Child Care Act 1991.
- The Children Act 2001.
- The National Vetting Bureau (Children and Vulnerable Persons) Act 2012.
- The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child.
- Staff References
  - Employment (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 2018:
  - Minimum Notice and Terms of Employment Acts 1973–2005.
  - Industrial Relations (Amendment) Act 2015.
  - Organisation of Working Time Act 1997.
  - Organisation of Working Time (Records) (Prescribed Form and Exemptions) Regulations 2001.
  - Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Act 2005 (as amended): replaced the provisions of the Safety, Health and Welfare Act 1989.
  - The Employment Equality Acts 1998–2015.
  - Equal Status Acts, 2000 to 2004.
  - Equality (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 2015.
  - Protection of Employees (Part-Time Work) Act 2001.
  - Protection of Employees (Fixed-Term Work) Act 2003.
  - Cara Inclusion Charter - <https://caracentre.ie/sport-inclusion-disability-charter/>.

### 1.3. About UniHaven

UniHaven Limited (“UniHaven”) was established in 2020 as an international HEI pathway education company based in Naas, Co. Kildare. UniHaven helps international students to gain access to predominately Irish HEIs but also to HEIs in the USA, the UK and Europe by recruiting them through its agent networks and online channels, teaching them its accredited foundation and pathway programmes, and progressing those who successfully complete these programmes to HEI partners with whom it has written agreements. Written agreements take the form of Memorandums of Understanding (MoUs), Memorandum of Agreements (MoAs) and Agency Agreements.

Pathway programmes are preparatory courses that are designed to help international students build the skills, knowledge, and qualifications that they will need to enter an undergraduate bachelor's degree programme at a specific HEI. Pathway programmes generally last one academic year. Completing a pathway programme is essential for many international students who do not have the required academic grades nor English language level to apply to HEIs directly. Pathway programmes are accepted by many HEIs in Ireland and overseas as acceptable preparatory education programmes that they are happy to accept students from, subject to students securing successfully completing the programme and meeting their respective entry criteria.

UniHaven intends to open a foundation pathway college (“UniHaven College”/“the College”) in Ireland in 2023 that will teach a QQI-validated visa-approved international foundation pathway programme. The programme will be called the “Level 5 Specific Purpose Certificate in International Foundation Studies” programme (“the programme”) and students who successfully complete it will be awarded a QQI Level 5 Specific Purpose Certificate in International Foundation Studies award as per QQI requirements<sup>3</sup>...see section 1.3.2 for College and programme details. A detailed description of the programme, including the minimum intended programme learning outcomes (MIPLOs) and minimum intended module learning outcomes (MIMLOs) are available via the College website and UDOC001 UniHaven Programme Handbook Rev 2. Students who successfully complete

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<sup>3</sup> QQI Awards Standards for Pre-Higher Education Foundation Awards for International Students (2015)

the programme and who secure a visa to study their degree in Ireland will progress to Irish HEIs as per signed Memorandum of Agreements.

### 1.3.1. UniHaven non-QQI- Validated Programmes

UniHaven currently offers just one non-QQI programme.

- An online postgraduate business pathway programme that is taught by UniHaven teachers with students progressing to various UK progression partners. The programme is accredited by the UK regulator, Ofqual (<https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ofqual>), and is taught online at the UniHaven approved QUALIFI ([www.qualifi.net](http://www.qualifi.net)) centre under UniHaven's dedicated online QA system.

All academic management and staff working in the Irish College, with the exception of the Academic Director, will be dedicated to the College and will not work in any other UniHaven centre or programme. The QA system for use for online teaching will mirror the QQI approach.

### 1.3.2. The Ireland College and Programme

The College will provide high-quality well-prepared students to Irish HEI undergraduate degree programmes. Students will complete a QQI – validated programme over approximately 25 weeks of in class learning before progressing to year one of an HEI degree. This will be a Level 5 (NFQ) Specific Purpose Certificate in International Foundation Studies-awarded programme. This programme will have two core modules, i.e., English for Academic Purposes (“EAP”), and Intercultural Studies and Communications, with an additional three modules to be studied depending on students’ choice of pathway stream. One pathway stream is for those intending to progress onto a Business or Social Sciences programme at a HEI; the other pathway stream is for those intending to progress onto an Engineering or Science programme at a HEI. Both EAP, which will account for 50% of the programme, and Intercultural Studies and Communications modules will be common to both pathway streams.

### 1.3.3. College Location, Premises and Facilities

The College will open in suitable premises in Ireland in 2023 at Moyglare Rad in Maynooth, Co. Kildare. It adheres to the QQI -approved premises specification as detailed below:

Suitable premises can accommodate at least 75 students initially by having a minimum of 3-5 classrooms, 1-2 offices for Programme Manager and Teacher use, a student common room for students to meet and socialise in, local eating facilities for students and staff, onsite self-serve kitchen facilities where possible, a library room with hard copy books and resources and one that is equipped with an IT infrastructure/network that allows students to download/print essential materials from, and one that students can easily plug their portable devices into. The classrooms will facilitate the desired student/teacher ratio of 20:1 subject to a maximum ratio of 25:1. Laboratory facilities, where required for science or media pathways, and sports facilities, for sports programme assessments, will be rented on an as needs basis from HEIs, school or private laboratory providers. The College will offer students a high-quality learning environment in modern, education-use buildings in a safe area that offers great public transport links, great amenities and local homestay and commercial accommodation options.

### 1.3.4. College Learning Management System and Virtual Learning Environment

The College uses a Finnish-designed learning management system (LMS) designed and operated by Claned ([www.claned.com](http://www.claned.com)) to facilitate online learning support and that acts as the College virtual learning environment... see chapter 9, section 9.4. for more details. The LMS offers great learning design, delivery, and analytics capability to maximise student engagement, learning effectiveness and academic progression. How student data is stored, collected, and used is described in Chapter 9. Claned LMS will be used in the College as an all-in-one virtual learning environment, content sharing platform and LMS.

## 1.4. College Academic Governance

A summary schema of academic governance and management at the College is outlined in Figure 1.1. Full descriptions of the terms of reference for AC and associated boards and committees are outlined in Chapter 2, sections 2.3.1 and 2.3.2.



### 1.4.1. College Academic Line Management

The College will have a simple academic line management structure as outlined in Figure 1.2.

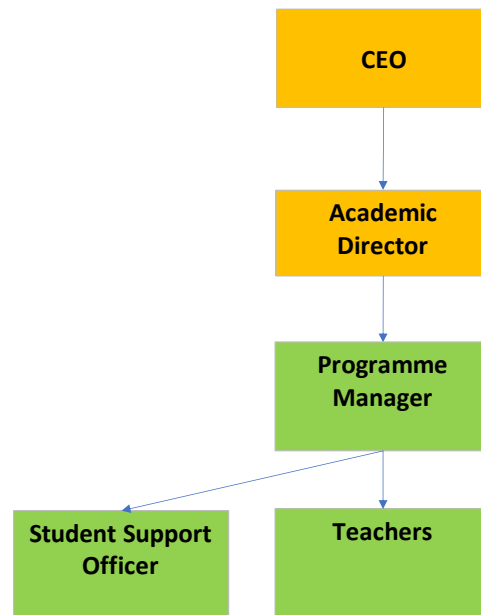


Figure 1.2 College Academic Line Management

- **CEO** – the CEO has responsibility for the day to day running of UniHaven and for the strategic implementation of the company’s strategic priorities (see section 1.4.5). The CEO reports to the Board of Directors of UniHaven and leads the Executive Management Team (EMT) to include the Academic Director and Chief Revenue Officer...see section 2.2.2, 2.2.3 and 2.3.1.3 for further details for BoD, EMT and AC respectively and section 2.4.1 for a full CEO role description.
- **Academic Director** – this person will have overall responsibility and accountability for all academic and operational affairs reporting to the CEO operationally and to Academic Council for all academic matters. The latter includes oversight of admissions, teaching, assessment, student support, quality assurance, programme review and development, self-evaluation/monitoring, programme accreditation, student support services, and college administration. The Academic Director fulfils the role of College Registrar – see section 2.4.2 for a full role description.

- Programme Manager – this person will have day-to-day responsibility for running the College reporting to the Academic Director. This person will also teach until the student numbers grow to a level that demands this role to be a full-time standalone role. The Programme Manager will be a qualified Teacher. See section 2.4.3 for a full role description.
- Teachers – will be recruited to teach English language modules and to teach academic modules according to his/her expertise, experience, and qualifications. An example of an academic module would be Biology for a science pathway stream, Business for a business pathway stream and so on. Teachers may be part-time or full time depending on the number of students who wish to study that Teacher’s module. See section 2.4.4 for a full role description.
- Student Support Officer - this person will take full responsibility for all student support matters. The role will be a part time standalone administrative role that will become full time once student numbers grow. See section 2.4.5 for a full role description.
- HR, DPO and People Officer (“People Officer”) – this person will have responsibilities concerning Data Protection...see chapter 9, section 9.7, and with the recruitment, performance management and development of staff...see chapter 5, sections 5.2 (recruitment) and 5.4.2.1 (development) respectively.

#### 1.4.2. College Mission

The College mission is to provide as many future international student graduates as possible with the skills they need for successful careers on a global scale.

#### 1.4.3. College Vision

The College vision is to create an international network of destination HEIs, provider HEIs, recruitment partners and education suppliers who will work symbiotically to widen global access to HEI education.

#### 1.4.4. College Values

Figure 1.3 shows the College’s core values.



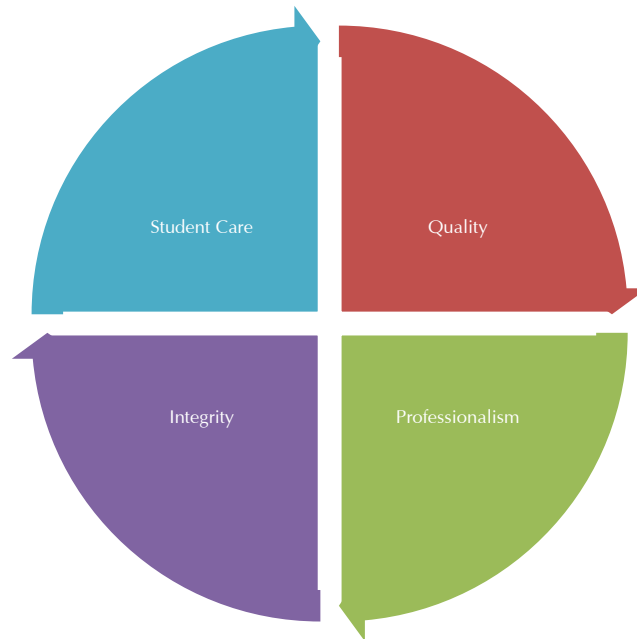


Figure 1.3 Core College Values

- Student Care –genuine care, concern, and compassion for students in all aspects...academic progress, health, safety, security, wellbeing, and general welfare.
- Quality – the quality of student being recruited and taught as a preparation for HEI learning, the quality of HEI partner to receive students, and the quality of teaching in the College.
- Integrity – being true to the given word, being honest in all dealings with everyone, and especially being willing to say ‘no’ to the wrong type of student, agent, partner, opportunity, or activity.
- Professionalism – being the proverbial “*safe pair of hands*” for all stakeholders but especially students to include security of personal data and finances. The College will be an educational institution that students, their families, staff, and stakeholders can trust and rely on.

### 1.4.5. College Strategic Priorities

The College has identified strategic priorities as displayed in Figure 1.4.



Figure 1.4 College Strategic Priorities

## 1.5. Documentation

The QAM and associated policies and procedures apply to all College activities. The Level 5 Specific Purpose Certificate in International Foundation Studies-awarded programme will be delivered according to the approved programme schedule and will comply with conditions set by QQI. All documentation has been written in the context of this programme and its associated scope of services.

### 1.5.1. Policies, Procedures and Forms

Policies and procedures are listed in Appendix 1.2. Where referenced in the QAM, each policy or procedure is referenced as follows:

- UPOLxxx.
- UPROxxx.

College policies have been developed according to the following series of steps as outlined in UPOL004 UniHaven Policy-on-Policy Policy Rev 1:

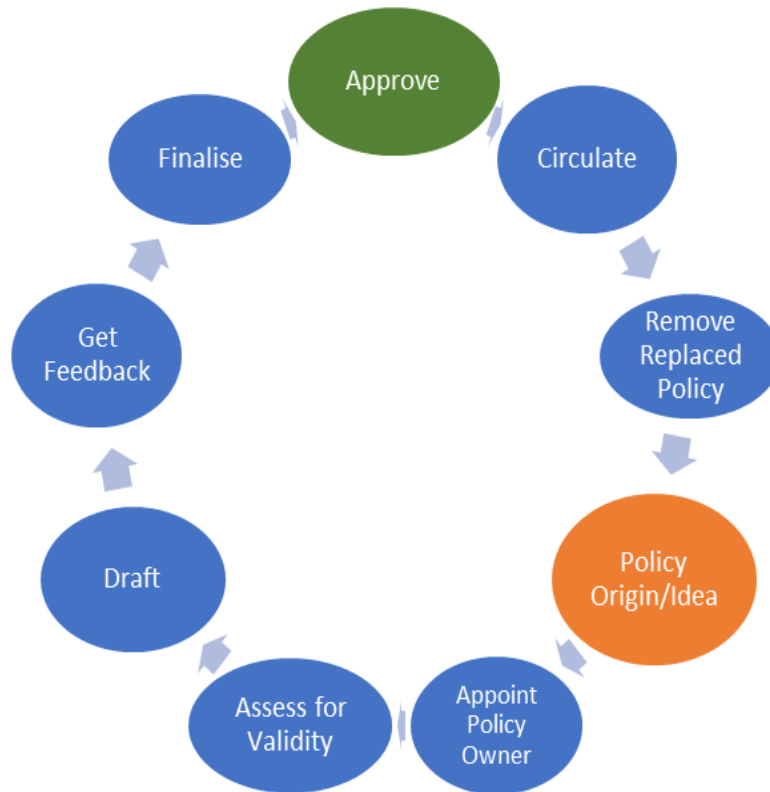


Figure 1.5 The Policy Development Cycle

Forms are standalone, are referenced as part of the above procedures and are listed in Appendix 1.3. Forms are referenced as follows:

- UFORMxxx.

#### 1.5.2. Codes, Handbooks and Manuals

Documents such as codes, handbooks and manuals listed in Appendix 1.4 complement and some cases summarise several policies and/or procedures and are referenced as follows:

- UDOCxxx

### 1.5.3. The QAM

The QAM will be reviewed at least annually. The updated QAM will be approved by AC and any major changes will be notified to QQI before publication. The Academic Director has the responsibility for ensuring that AC is informed of any proposed changes to the QAM. The Academic Director is responsible for its accuracy and completeness, and for ensuring compliance with all QA policies and procedures about all College academic affairs and student supports.

## 1.6. Overarching QA Principles

The QAM has been developed on the following principles as guided by QQI<sup>4</sup>.

- The primary responsibility for quality assurance lies with the College as an international education provider.
- The scale and scope of provision have determined the College's approach to and descriptions of how QA operates in the College.
- The College will provide evidence of its QA approaches and policies publicly on its website.
- Quality is a core value at the College. Students will be taught in a high-quality culture, one that College staff view as being essential to driving continuous improvement across all College activities.
- The College mission is to bring international education to as many students as possible and its foundation pathway programme is designed, implemented, and evaluated with stated programme learning outcomes in mind.
- College policies and procedures have been informed by QQI guidelines and are monitored for effectiveness to continually improve what is done in all aspects.
- The College is committed to making appropriate use of external persons who are independent of the College and who are qualified to bring national and/or international knowledge and experience into the College to improve the effectiveness of its QA systems.

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<sup>4</sup> QQI Policy on Quality Assurance Guidelines (2016), section 4.4

## 1.7. Summary

The College, through the initial draft QA policies and procedures, demonstrates that it has established a coherent framework for the provision of its programme that leads to the QQI Level 5 Specific Purpose Certificate in International Foundation Studies award. The management of QA outlined in this manual will ensure that high standards will be embedded into the College, through policies and procedures, staff development and training, the incorporation of multiple forms of student feedback, and work practices at all levels.

### 1.7.1. Transparency

The College will ensure that sufficient and accurate information is accessible to all relevant stakeholders. All programme information e.g., minimum intended programme learning outcomes (MIPOs), minimum intended module learning outcomes (MIMLOs), syllabi, timetables, assessment schedules, assessment requirements etc. is made available to students in UDOC001 UniHaven Programme Handbook Rev 2 before the College delivers the programme for the first time and thereafter. The College is committed to ensuring that the rights and obligations of students as set out in UDOC008 UniHaven Student Charter Rev 1 and UDOC002 UniHaven Student Handbook Rev 2 will be upheld.

The management and governance structures are provided showing clear lines of authority for academic decision making and the development of QA policies and procedures. The College recognises that these will be further developed when additional staff and students join the College and as student numbers grow. The College intends to be consultative and collaborative with stakeholders working together to achieve recognition as a College of educational excellence in which staff and students feel welcomed, included, cared for, developed, and valued.

## 2. GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT OF QUALITY

### 2.1. Context

The College governance, management, and decision-making ensure that the QQI requirement that academic decision-making (matters relating to education and training) is independent of commercial considerations, or the undue influence of business owners is satisfied<sup>5</sup>. A summary of the relationships between key management roles and governance groups is outlined in section 1.4.1. These are more fully detailed in this chapter.

### 2.2. Company Management

#### 2.2.1 Company Management Structure

UniHaven's company management structure is described in Figure 2.1. UniHaven CEO reports to BoD and is responsible for the day to day running of the company. The Finance Officer, People Officer, Academic Director and Chief Revenue Officer report to the CEO as functional managers of their respective departments. The Chief Revenue Officer oversees the commercial activity in UniHaven to include commercial collaborations, marketing activities and student recruitment activities/agents. The Academic Director oversees all academic matters...see full role description in section 2.4.2.

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<sup>5</sup> Statutory Quality Assurance Guidelines developed by QQI for use by all Providers (2016), section 1.

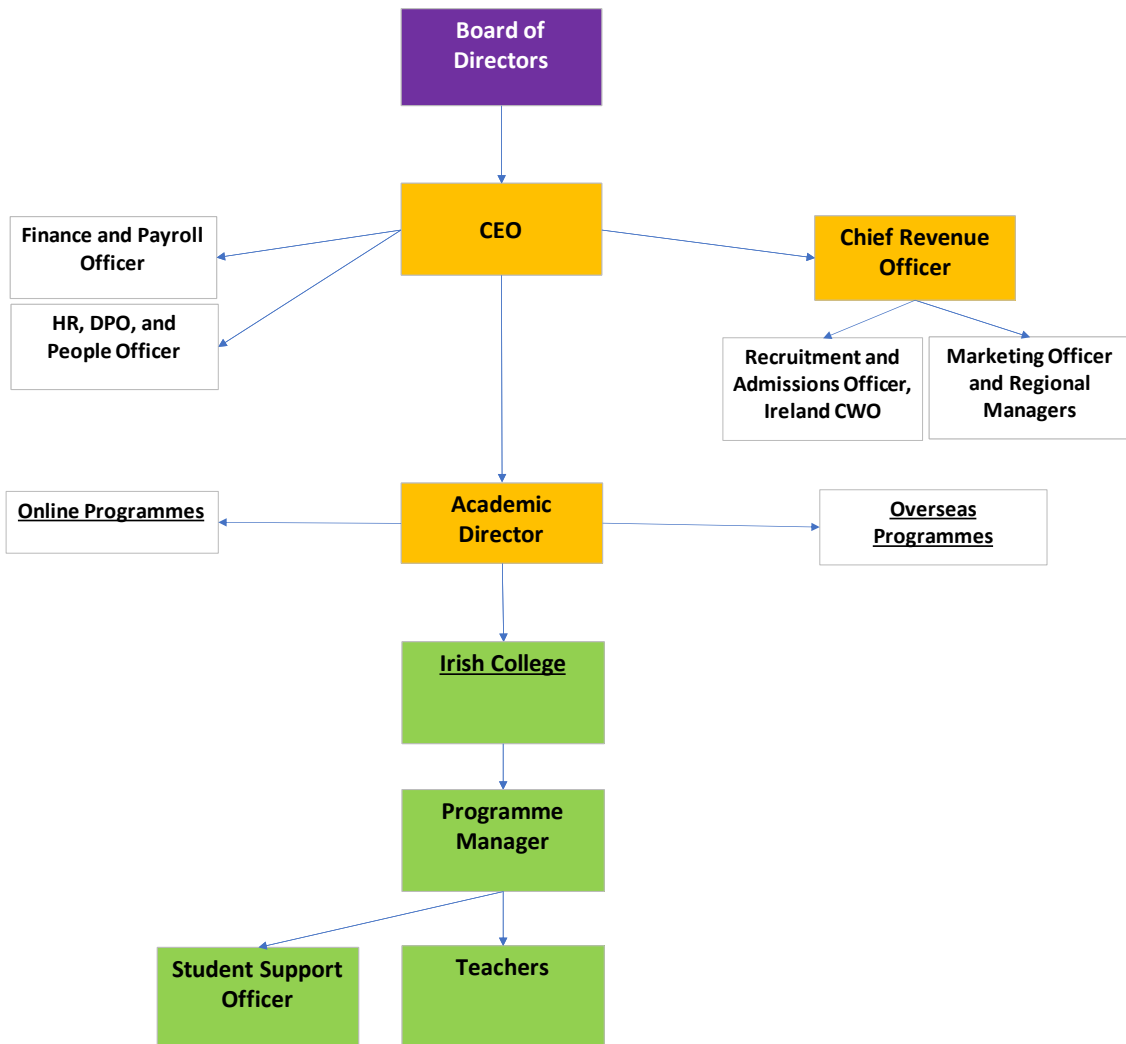


Figure 2.1 Company Management Structure

## 2.2.2 UniHaven Board of Directors

UniHaven BoD consists of both UniHaven founders who are directors of the company plus one of UniHaven's investor shareholders. It meets quarterly and

- Sets overall strategic direction.
- Signs off on major company debt and expenditure decisions.
- Approves shareholder agreements, changes, share transfers etc.
- Oversees overall performance.

- Seeks reassurance from the CEO that EMT (see section 2.2.3) is running the College in a way that minimises risk to include College quality/accreditation, legal, financial, corporate and people (staff, student, etc.) risk.
- Seeks QA reassurance from the Independent Chair of AC for all QA matters in the College through the receipt of AC minutes and Independent Chair reports.

BoD delegates responsibility to

- College Executive Management Team (EMT) to manage the College on a month-to-month basis as it implements the strategic direction the BoD has set out. See section 2.2.3 for more details.
- AC to develop, oversee, monitor, and review all College QA infrastructure and systems. It is sufficiently autonomous of EMT with its Independent (External) Chair who reports into BoD. Notwithstanding such autonomy, some proposals coming from AC may need to be referred to EMT for decision approval, for example, new programmes, the recruitment of new academic staff and so on. See section 2.3.1.3 for full details of AC terms of reference and section 2.5 for a list of relevant EMT and AC approvals.

### 2.2.3 College EMT

EMT has executive decision-making authority for the College on a month-to-month basis as delegated by UniHaven's Board of Directors. EMT comprises the CEO, the Chief Revenue Officer, and the Academic Director. This team meets formally every month. Other colleagues attend as required. The reporting relationship and key areas of responsibility are outlined in Figure 2.3.



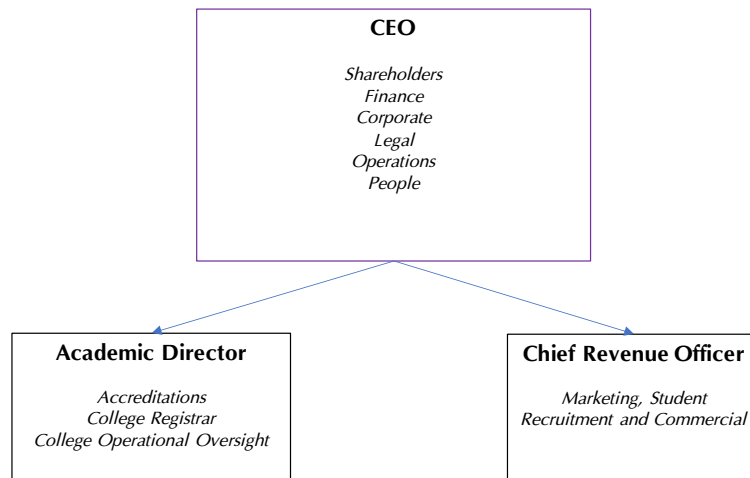


Figure 2.3 UniHaven EMT, Reporting Relationships and Key Areas of Responsibility

EMT has the following as standing items on its monthly management meeting agenda with items listed under each role to signify who is the business owner of each discussion item. Items are decided on by EMT post discussion.

- CEO
  - Reviewing UniHaven’s strategic direction.
  - Financial decision-making, monitoring, and oversight.
  - Monitoring action plans.
  - Monitoring, evaluating, and mitigating risk across College finances and operations.
  - Approval for new projects including new programme cost/benefit analysis.
  - Preparing EMT Reports for BoD.
- Academic Director
  - Review College premises, facilities, and resources.
  - Review AC proposals regarding programmes, policies, procedures, publications, and practices.
  - Review staff management, recruitment, and development.
  - Review student academic progress, student supports student welfare and student feedback.
  - Review teaching and learning.
  - Review risk concerning all College matters.
- Chief Revenue Officer

- Review student recruitment data, agents, and activities.
- Reviewing commercial collaborations.
- Review risk concerning commercial activities and collaborations.

## 2.3 College Academic Governance

College academic governance is overseen by AC together with its boards and committees as reflected in Figure 1.1 in chapter 1, section 1.4. AC, boards, and committees have defined memberships (including student representation as appropriate), meeting schedules, and terms of reference to describe the respective remit of each. AC reviews all such groups at least annually as coordinated by the Academic Director. Terms of reference are outlined in sections 2.3.1.3 for AC and 2.3.2 for all other boards and committees.

The schedules of meetings of AC and key groups are prepared at the beginning of the academic year and are included in the college academic calendar that is publicised to staff and students. Every effort is made to ensure gender balance in the composition of boards and committees. Meeting agendas and minutes are securely stored on college IT systems/servers with edit access limited to the Academic Director and the Programme Manager. AC minutes will be shared with students and staff through the College LMS (see chapter 1, section 1.3.4). The Academic Director ensures that all relevant files are retained under UPOL020 UniHaven Data Protection Policy Rev 1, UPOL023 UniHaven Data Retention Policy Rev 1 and UPOL024 UniHaven Data Security Policy Rev 1, key elements of which are outlined in chapter 9.

### 2.3.1 Academic Council Overview, Autonomy and Terms of Reference

#### 2.3.1.1 Academic Council Overview

Academic Council (AC) is the overall accountable academic authority with the following aspects key to it successfully fulfilling its autonomous academic governance requirements.

- AC has full responsibility for all academic matters in the College as having been delegated to it from BoD (see section 2.2.2 for BoD delegated authority and section 2.3.1.3 for AC terms of reference).

- A variety of academic boards and student-related committees report to it.
  - Programme Board...see section 2.3.2.1 for terms of reference.
  - Exam Board...see section 2.3.2.2 for terms of reference.
  - Student Disciplinary Committee...see section 2.3.2.3 for terms of reference.
  - Academic Misconduct Committee...see section 2.3.2.4 for terms of reference.
  - Appeals Board...see section 2.3.2.5 for terms of reference.
  - Admissions Board...see section 2.3.2.6 for terms of reference.
  - HEI Partner Review Committee...see section 2.3.3.7 for terms of reference.
- An Independent Chair of AC who reports to BoD.
  - The role of the Independent Chair is to
    - Bring independent, external, public sector QA expertise for the benefit of the College's academic governance and decision-making.
    - Ensure that objective oversight and academic decision-making (matters relating to education and training) is independent of commercial considerations.
  - The key responsibilities associated with this role are to
    - Chair AC meetings.
    - Provide academic leadership to AC.
    - Encourage members to actively participate.
    - Have due regard to the proper use of resources.
    - Report to BoD on matters impacting QA and Programme delivery.
    - Reports to BoD on College-related risk.
  - The selection criteria and term include
    - At least 10 years of public sector higher education experience at Registrar/Vice President Academic Affairs or Provost/President/Deputy President level in Ireland.
    - Excellent knowledge and familiarity with QQI requirements as they apply to independent providers of education.
    - A term of three years.
- The role of the Academic Director at AC includes
  - Having overall responsibility for academic standards, quality assurance and improvement.
  - Convene, as necessary, other groups to address issues concerned with quality assurance and enhancement.

- Organises independent auditing of samples of policies and procedures to assure BoD that policies and procedures are being implemented as planned and that the College QA governance processes remain fit for purpose.
- Present information for discussion at AC to include External Examiner Reports, appeal refusal decisions, etc.
- Members of the Academic Council are expected to
  - Contribute to academic policy oversight, review, and development activities.
  - Participate in programme, teaching, learning and assessment, admissions, and student support monitoring, review, and development processes.
  - Provide advice on the consistency of academic principles and policies with the College's mission, strategic priorities, and values.

#### 2.3.1.2 Academic Council Autonomy

The clear delineation between academic and commercial aspects are particularly emphasised by

- EMT and AC having separate Terms of Reference.
- An Independent AC Chair.
- Admissions Board led by the Academic Director. The criteria for admitting a particular cohort of applicants are approved by AC on a recommendation from Admissions Board. Applicant approval is then undertaken by the Academic Director to ensure they meet the programme entry criteria but also making sure students that will have completed the programme, meet partner HEI entry criteria. See chapter 4, section 4.5.3 for a summary of the student recruitment and admissions policies to include Access, Transfer and Progression and Recognition of Prior Learning.

#### 2.3.1.3 Academic Council Terms of Reference

Purpose

AC is delegated responsibility from the Board of Directors (see section 2.2.2) for all academic matters and, as such, is the body with full academic authority in the College when it comes to making academic regulations, ensuring academic standards are maintained, the management of summative assessment, the approval of all College policies and procedures, and making recommendations to BoD about academic matters.

## Key Responsibilities

Its role is to ensure that

- Quality Assurance and Programmes
  - Programmes are developed and maintained to meet QQI validation criteria<sup>6</sup> (see also section 4.2) and that all QQI recommendations are implemented.
  - Developing quality enhancement activities and a quality culture within the College.
  - Teaching and learning are of the required standards.
  - Policies and procedures in the areas of access, transfer, progression, and recognition of prior learning is fit for purpose.
  - Assessment strategies, methodologies, formats, and types are suitable for the programme being run and the modules being taught with student and assessment data securely collected, processed and retained.
  - Examination and awarding structures and processes ensure that assessment outcomes are processed fairly and transparently in line with benchmarked standards and criteria. In this context, AC delegates the formal responsibility for summative assessment to Teachers to prepare in conjunction with the Programme Manager and Academic Director, External Examiners to externally examine and provide external assessment oversight, and Exam Board to formally endorse final award grades.
  - Recruitment and admissions policies and procedures are appropriate for both the programme being run as well as for the HEI partners that students will progress to.
  - Proposals for new programmes are assessed and forwarded to EMT for approval.
- Students
  - The range of student support services are working well to ensure students are satisfied, safe and supported while studying in the College.
  - Student complaints and misconduct are handled as per very well documented, and fairly and consistently implemented policies and procedures.

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<sup>6</sup> Statutory Quality Assurance Guidelines developed by QQI for use by all Providers (2016), section 3.1.

- Student academic progress and performance is at or above acceptable standards.
- Students are properly taken care of and supported as befits a high-quality international education provider.
- Students have representation to allow them the opportunity to feed into College QA and academic processes generally. Students are represented at AC, through student class representative structures and informal student-staff interaction (see chapter 3, section 3.3.3, and chapter 8, section 8.4.8).
- Staff
  - Appropriately qualified staff are recruited to adequately resource the programme and academic administration functions.
  - Staff are presented with opportunities to develop themselves within and outside of the College to ensure that they keep abreast of best practice education standards for the type of programme and the module subject matter that is being taught.
- Communications and Collaborations
  - All formal academic communications are approved before release as external publications to include through the College website and social media channels.
  - Academic collaborations are adequately vetted and approved with written agreements sufficiently outlining the key responsibilities of all parties.
  - The Academic Director has the authority to sign off on external communications and external academic collaborations under the auspices of AC.
- Self-Evaluation, Monitoring, and Review
  - Student, teaching, assessment, progression, and institutional performance are monitored with recommendations made for improvement as informed by best practice and benchmarking against similar providers using publicly available data from both providers and staff previous experience of competitor programmes.
  - Outcomes of the various annual and periodic reviews are assessed and implement improvement actions.
  - QQI reviews are assessed, and all relevant recommendations are implemented.

- Ensures that policies and procedures, forms, and documents such as manuals and handbooks are fit for purpose and implemented correctly. The responsibility for such auditing processes falls under the remit of the Academic Director...see chapter 12, section 12.3.4 also.
- All student appeals/reviews/rechecks, misconduct and disciplinary hearings are dealt with in a fair, consistent, and transparent manner, and no Teacher responsible for marking an assessment that is appealed will sit on the Appeals Board.
- Feedback from students, staff, External Examiners, and external members is valued, collected, reviewed, and acted upon professionally.
- Identified risk is managed with major College risks raised with EMT for management and mitigation...see section 2.2.3 for EMT monthly meeting agenda items.
- Programme resources are made available by EMT.
- Premises, facilities, and technologies are monitored to ensure they remain fit for purpose and any issues are raised at EMT.
- Programmes leading to awards meet QQI requirements.
- EMT is briefed of any relevant matters beyond AC's remit.
- QQI's Annual Quality Report is drafted by the Academic Director and submitted to QQI on an annual basis<sup>7</sup>.
- Approval and Endorsements...document approvals are outlined in section 2.5.2.
  - Appointment of External Examiners (in conjunction with QQI) and Academic Collaborations.
  - AC endorses examination results and awards that are approved by Exam Board for forwarding to QQI.

## Membership

- Independent External Chairperson...see section 2.3.1.1 for terms of reference.
- Academic Director...see section 2.4.2 for role description.
- Programme Manager...see section 2.4.3 for role description.

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<sup>7</sup> <https://www.qqi.ie/Articles/Pages/Annual-Institutional-Quality-Report.aspx>

- Teacher representatives (one per pathway stream) ...see section 2.4.4 for role description.
- Student Support Officer...see section 2.4.5 for role description.
- Student representatives (at least two nominated from the student pathway stream/class representative cohort)...see chapter 3, section 3.3.3 and chapter 8, section 8.4.8 for a description of the student representation structures.
- AC may co-opt not more than three additional members (from higher or further education if external) according to the type of input it needs to fulfil its role to the best of its ability.

#### Frequency of meetings

- At least four times per year, with additional meetings scheduled if/as required.

#### Receives reports/information from

- Programme Board as an Annual Programme Report...see section 2.3.2.1 for terms of reference.
- Exam Board for examination results for endorsement as they are forwarded to QQI...see section 2.3.2.2 for terms of reference.
- Appeals Board for appeals decisions...see section 2.3.2.5 for terms of reference.
- Admissions Board after a review of student intake data and processes ...see section 2.3.2.6 for terms of reference.
- Other ad hoc committees as relevant such as the Student Disciplinary Committee, Academic Misconduct Committee as decisions made (see sections 2.3.2.3 and 2.3.2.4 respectively for terms of reference).
- HEI Partner Review Committee for feedback from HEI Partner Annual Reviews...see section 2.3.2.7 for terms of reference.

#### Reports to

- BoD as an Annual Quality Report on the delivery and assessment of its programmes and the performance of the College generally. This report will be prepared by the Academic Director, approved at AC, presented to BoD by the Independent Chair



before being sent to QQI as part of their annual reporting requirements...see section 2.2.2 for BoD terms of reference and chapter 12, section 12.3.2 for QQI annual reporting requirements.

- EMT via the Academic Director who sits on EMT and represents AC in this forum...see section 2.2.3 for EMT terms of reference.

### 2.3.2 Academic Boards and Sub-Committees

The terms of reference for the academic governance boards and committees listed below are described in the following sections:

- Programme Board.
- Exam Board.
- Student Disciplinary Committee.
- Academic Misconduct Committee.
- Appeals Board.
- Admissions Board.

Other committees such as a Teaching and Learning Committee will be recommended for adoption as the College grows, in which case Programme Board will set out its terms of reference, membership etc.

#### 2.3.2.1 Programme Board Terms of Reference

##### Purpose

Programme Board is responsible for the effective development, management, operation, and review of the programme as well as the monitoring, review and development of new modules, programmes, and assessments.

##### Key Responsibilities

Its main responsibilities include – see chapters 4, 6 and 7 for full details on the programme including admissions, recruitment, teaching, learning and assessment.

- Programme Development

- Ensure that the programme is developed to ensure that it meets the required standards for the Level 5 (NFQ) Specific Purpose Certificate in International Foundation Studies award. Each of the 12 QQI validation criteria will be addressed in the submission<sup>8</sup> to ensure that the programme
  - Is designed with overall programme objectives and programme strategies that are in line with the provider strategy and have explicit intended learning outcomes.
  - Is developed in line with the requirements of the National Framework of Qualifications and associated policies and procedures on Access, Transfer and Progression.
  - Is designed with the involvement of students and other stakeholders. For the College programme, student input from previous roles held by existing staff has been included.
  - Benefits from external expertise and reference point to ensure it fulfils vocational needs where appropriate.
  - Is designed to enable smooth progression for students within and between programmes. For the College programme, progression between pathways is more relevant.
  - Defines the expected student workload.
  - Is compliant with internal and other regulatory or professional policies and requirements.
  - Has procedures for coordinating provision at faculty (or equivalent) level and college or centre (or equivalent) level for multiple programmes.
  - Includes well-structured placement opportunities where appropriate (including traineeships, internships, and other time outside the provider designed to offer experience in an area related to the programme of study).
  - Is subject to formal internal provider approval processes against defined criteria.
  - Is subject to ongoing monitoring and periodic review.

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<sup>8</sup> Statutory Quality Assurance Guidelines developed by QQI for use by all Providers (2016), section 3.1.

- Is designed with the intended mode of delivery and learning environment in mind.
- Formally proposing new programmes and or programme suggestions and improvements to EMT initially for resource and demand evaluations/decisions and later AC for final programme proposal to EMT.
- Programme Monitoring and Review
  - Ensuring all QA College policies and procedures are adhered to.
  - Ensuring arrangements are in place that addresses all aspects highlighted by the QQI validation criteria.
  - Developing and ensuring implementation of programme-specific quality assurance arrangements.
  - Undertaking and evaluating student and staff feedback. After the first student intake has completed the programme, feedback from College graduates and partner HEIs will be sought and evaluated.
  - Agreeing on the schedule of assessments and feedback to students to manage student assessment workload.
  - Ensuring that programmes are adequately staffed to include staff development needs assessment and enhancement.
  - Ensuring that programmes and modules are reviewed as per UPOL005 Programme Review and Development Policy Rev 2.
  - Ensuring that premises, facilities, and technologies remain fit for purpose for the programme(s) run at the College...see sections 1.3.3 and 1.3.4.
  - Checking that library – physical and online - resources remain up to date and relevant to the modules and content being taught.
  - Reviewing programme action plans to ensure proposed actions are followed up and implemented.
  - Identifying risks, perform a quantitative and qualitative risk analysis, implement preventative and mitigation actions and review as per UPOL003 UniHaven Risk Management Policy Rev 1.
- Teaching, Learning and Assessment
  - Developing the College teaching, learning and assessment policies.
  - Monitoring, reviewing, and enhancing the curriculum, learning, and teaching, student development and achievement, student engagement, and academic standards.

- Collecting, evaluate and securely retain data manually and via the LMS (see chapter 9, section 9.5 and 9.6 for the collection of student and institutional data, and chapter 7, section 7.9 for assessment records) about learning effectiveness and engagement, exam and assessment results, student academic progression during their programme, student progression into partner HEI degree programmes, and implement corrective and /or improvement actions as appropriate.
- Seeking to recognise and enhance all high-quality student learning experiences and opportunities.
- Reviewing External Examiners, make recommendations to AC and implement agreed actions.
- Public Information
  - Ensuring that programme information is made publicly available to applicants, students and agents in a way that is easily accessible, accurate and transparent.

#### Membership

- Programme Manager (Chair).
- All Teachers.
- Student representatives (at least two nominated from the student pathway stream/class representative cohort).
- Student Support Officer.
- External Adviser for external input as relevant...examples include experts in Teaching and Learning, Blended Learning, Business, Industry, International Education, Student Communications, Multicultural teaching and so on.

#### Frequency of Meetings

At least twice per semester.

Receives reports/information from

- Academic Director for institutional performance data...see chapter 9, section 9.6.
- Programme Manager for programme and student data...see chapter 9, section 9.5.
- External Examiner Reports for examination-related input...see chapter 7, section 7.5.5.5.
- Student Representative Meetings for student feedback and input...see chapter 8, section 8.4.8.
- Staff regarding feedback about the programmes, teaching, student performance, etc...see chapter 5, section 5.3.

Reports to

An Annual Programme Report is prepared and agreed upon by Programme Board and sent to AC for approval.

### 2.3.2.2 Exam Board Terms of Reference

Purpose

Exam Boards are convened to provide oversight of the assessment grading process.

Key Responsibilities

Key areas to be discussed by the Exam Board include:

- Formal adoption of individual student grades for recommendation to QQI for awards and classification.
- Consideration of borderline cases.
- External Examiners reports as furnished by the Academic Director.
- Academic misconduct.
- Determination of eligibility for progression.
- Overall student performance.

## Membership

- Academic Director (Chairperson) and QQI point of contact.
- Programme Manager.
- Internal Assessors/Teachers.
- External Examiner(s).

## Frequency of meetings

As required.

Receives reports/information from

Academic Director and staff to include

- Programme Manager for Examination Broadsheets for the recommendation of formal adoption of student grades...see chapter 7, section 7.2.
- Internal assessor feedback...see chapter 7, section 7.2.
- Appeals Board for outcomes of student appeals, reviews and recheck requests...see chapter 7, section 7.8.
- Output from Extenuating Circumstances as determinations...see chapter 7, section 7.6.
- Output from Academic Misconduct Committee as decisions made...see chapter 7, section 7.7.

Reports to

AC for endorsement of results/awards for subsequent forwarding to QQI.

### 2.3.2.3 Student Disciplinary Committee Terms of Reference

#### Purpose

The Student Disciplinary Committee aims to consider cases where student behaviour has dropped below acceptable levels and where informal attempts to resolve have failed. This includes the destruction or defacing of any item of College equipment, premises, or facilities.

## Key Responsibilities

The committee assesses cases that come before it to determine

- If the student behaviour is a minor or a major infringement.
- The penalties are appropriate to the nature of the behaviour presented.

Such decisions are guided by UPOL017 UniHaven Student Support Policy Rev 2 and UPRO010 UniHaven Student Complaints and Disciplinary Procedure Rev 1...key steps for both are outlined in chapter 8, section 8.7.

## Membership

- Programme Manager (Chair).
- Three other members as appointed by the Programme Manager and who must be independent of the issues to be discussed and decided upon.
- Members external to the College may be invited onto this committee if the Programme Manager deems it appropriate to do so.

## Frequency of meetings

Ad hoc basis, as required.

## Receives reports/information from

Teachers in the form of a detailed report of any incidents or behaviours, as relevant...see chapter 8, section 8.7.

## Reports to

AC regarding issues that emerge, and decisions made.

CEO at EMT for any recommendations to expel a student from the College.

#### 2.3.2.4 Academic Misconduct Committee Terms of Reference

##### Purpose

The Academic Misconduct Committee aims to consider cases where academic misconduct such as plagiarism, collusion or cheating is suspected and alleged.

##### Key Responsibilities

The committee runs the meeting as a hearing to

- Assess cases that come before it as presented by the Programme Manager.
- Review the evidence.
- Interview the student...the student can be accompanied by a companion.
- Determine an outcome.

Suspected incidents are assessed and decided upon as per UPRO008 UniHaven Academic Misconduct Procedure Rev 1...see also chapter 7, section 7.7.

##### Membership

- Programme Manager (Chair).
- Two teachers and who are independent of the issue at hand.

##### Frequency of meetings

Ad hoc basis, as required.

##### Receives reports/information from

##### Academic Director and staff to include

- Internal Assessor and Examiners Information/Reports...see chapter 7, sections 7.4 and 7.5 respectively.
- Invigilators Reports...see chapter 7, section 7.2.
- Plagiarism Reports from anti-plagiarism software tools...see chapter 7, section 7.7.



Reports to

AC and Exam Board regarding issues that emerge, and decisions made.

### 2.3.2.5 Appeals Board Terms of Reference

Purpose

The Appeals Board aims to consider cases where a student has provided legitimate grounds to appeal the decision of:

- An Exam Board.
- An Academic Misconduct Committee.
- A Student Disciplinary Committee.
- Attendance Disciplinary Decisions.
- Admissions.

The Board is made up of the Academic Director (Chair) or a nominee, and at least three members, all of which are external independent members with appropriate senior academic experience and with no conflict of interest in relation to the matters for deliberation and the applicants or students involved. Where there is a conflict of interest an alternative person may be substituted. An external member will be appointed Chair in situations where the Academic Director will have been a part of the process that led to the appeal. The membership must be independent of those that dealt with the original case or any Teacher/Manager who was responsible for marking the original assessment. The Appeals Board and its members are appointed by AC.

Membership

- Academic Director (Chair). For Admissions appeals, an external member will be appointed Chair because the Academic Director will have been a part of the process that led to the appeal.
- Three persons appointed, all of which are external members with appropriate senior academic experience as determined by the Academic Director.

- The membership must be independent of those that dealt with the original case or for assessment appeals any Teacher/Manager who was responsible for marking the original assessment. Where there is a conflict of interest an alternative person may be substituted.

Frequency of meetings

Ad hoc basis.

Receives reports/information from

Students via appeals made through the Academic Director...see chapters 7, section 7.8 for assessment appeals, chapter 8, sections 8.4.10 and 8.7.3 for attendance and disciplinary appeals, and chapter 4, section 4.5.3 for admissions appeals.

Reports to

AC regarding issues discussed, and decisions made.

#### 2.3.2.6 Admissions Board Terms of Reference

Purpose

The purpose of the Admissions Board is to make applicant determinations to approve or deny programme enrolment and to advise AC on admissions processes and suggestions for enhancement.

Key Responsibilities

The key areas that this group works on are

- Admission Assessment and Determination
  - Reviews applications to ensure that only those who meet the minimum academic requirements/entry criteria are admitted.
- Admissions Process Improvement
  - Monitors and develops the college's recruitment and admissions policy to ensure that policies are adhered to and improved, respectively.

- Advising AC on all matters related to student admissions.
- Advises AC and Programme Board on admissions criteria for new programmes and foreign qualifications. It will consult with NARIC Ireland on recognition of foreign qualification.
- Prepares such reports as may be considered appropriate or as requested by AC concerning its operations having regard to requirements of QQI, procedures applied in the other institutions, or admissions developments.

#### Membership

- Academic Director (Chair).
- Programme Manager.
- Recruitment and Admissions Officer.
- Teachers (2).

#### Frequency of meetings

Formal admissions reviews - two times per annum, approximately one month after each admission campaign has concluded.

#### Receives reports/information from

- Recruitment and Admissions Officer for admissions information... see chapter 9, section 9.5.
- Programme Manager for student data and trends...see chapter 9, section 9.5.

#### Reports to

AC and EMT regarding admissions review and enhancement recommendations.

### 2.3.2.7 HEI Partner Review Committee Terms of Reference

#### Purpose

The purpose of the HEI Partner Review Committee is to review student progression to the respective HEI partners, to review the College-HEI Partner academic standards and progression, and to review lessons learned generally with a view to enhancing the partnership on an annual basis. This review will feed into the College's annual self-monitoring and review processes with its findings included in the Annual Quality Report...see chapter 11, section 11.4.4.

#### Key Responsibilities

UniHaven has added a new HEI Partner Review Committee into its governance structures with associated terms of reference and membership described. This committee will conduct annual reviews with HEI partners under this formalised structure and associated roles. Its key responsibilities include:

- Student Progression Reviews.
  - Reviews the quantity of students who have successfully progressed from the College to the HEI partner and from year 1 of the HEI partner degree to subsequent years to include the number of conditional offers issued to UniHaven students.
  - Reviews and considers HEI feedback about the quality of students who have successfully progressed.
  - Reviews the pastoral or other needs of any students who are progressing subject to students' permission.
  - Reviews any student-related feedback.
- Academic Reviews
  - Reviews respective institution programme entry criteria to ensure they are aligned and, where necessary, updates the respective QA documentation to reflect any changes that may be needed.
  - To ensure that academic standards have been maintained as planned.
  - Reviews any other relevant academic feedback.
- Partnership Enhancement

- Discusses ways to further enhance the relationship between the College and the HEI partners with a view to providing the best opportunities and outcomes to students.

## Membership

Its membership will include:

- Academic Director (Chair).
- Programme Manager.
- CEO.
- Other College members as relevant.
- A College graduate attending the HEI partner.
- HEI Partner senior representative (normally the International Officer/Manager).  
Additional HEI Partner representatives may attend as necessary.

## Frequency of meetings

Annually.

## Receives reports/information from

- Programme Manager for student admissions, academic performance and HEI partner progression data.
- HEI partner representative for HEI partner data, feedback, and insights.

## Reports to

- AC for academic reports and recommendations.
- EMT regarding any resource requirements, where relevant.

## 2.4 College Role Descriptions

The following sections outline the roles descriptions, including key responsibilities, for College staff, namely the

- CEO.
- Academic Director.
- Programme Manager.
- Teacher.
- Student Support Officer.

### 2.4.1 CEO Role Description

#### Purpose

To run UniHaven in all its aspects on a day-to-day basis. The CEO reports to the Board of Directors.

#### Key Responsibilities

- Corporate, Legal and Shareholders
  - Securing agreements regarding funding and ownership.
  - Communicating regularly about company and College performance.
  - Ensuring the College complies with its legal and regulatory requirements for areas such as insurances, learner protection, etc.
  - Managing and mitigating risk.
- Finance
  - Ensuring the College is run in a financially sustainable manner.
  - Ensuring sufficient resources are made available to maintain academic standards at the College.
- Operations
  - Ensuring that fit for purpose premises and facilities are maintained.
- People
  - Ensuring that the College has sufficient staff numbers for the proper running of the programme and proper provision of its student support services.

- Ensuring that all staff are treated with dignity and respect at the College, are managed fairly and consistently and are given sufficient opportunities for their professional development.

## 2.4.2 Academic Director Role Description

### Purpose

To provide strategic academic leadership to the College, to have overall responsibility for the academic management of the College and is the designated officer with responsibility for ensuring that the College complies with relevant statutory, regulatory and accreditation agencies. The Academic Director is the College point of contact for QQI, fulfils the role of College Registrar and reports to the CEO. See chapter 5, section 5.2.2.1 for selection criteria.

### Key Responsibilities

- Academic Leadership and Management
  - Overseeing Accreditation Processes including Programme Validation and Revalidation.
  - Promotion and representation of the College externally as an educational institution of high academic standing.
  - Upholding College governance and accountability, enforcing academic standards, and supporting the work of AC.
  - Oversee the Programme Manager's leadership and management of the College's academic and student support staff to ensure that they maintain high QA standards as providers of high-quality education and to deliver a high-quality service to students.
  - Keep abreast of and integrate, as appropriate, best practice in education, statutory frameworks, legislation, and awarding body regulations.
- QA
  - Developing and maintaining policies and procedures to ensure they remain fit for purpose, are compliant with QQI guidelines, are updated as per agreed schedules and are being implemented as designed.

- Safeguarding the integrity and currency of programme validation and awards, including compliance with the terms and conditions of programme approval and the requirements and regulations of accrediting bodies for the ongoing provision of delivery.
- The initial point of liaison with accreditation agencies on matters such as validation requests, reviews, and reporting.
- Is a member of each of the College boards and advises AC on any matter of concern.
- Ensuring that examination regulations are standardised and reviewed and that examination standards are maintained through the management of the exams function, including exam sitting, external examiners, actioning Exam Board decisions.
- Students
  - Work to ensure that the College remains a destination of choice for students.
  - Ensure that College activities that contribute to the quality of the student experience are provided in ways that result in students having a great study abroad experience in Ireland.
- Programmes
  - Ensure, in conjunction with the Programme Manager, that programmes are run, taught, assessed, and awarded as per QQI validation criteria.
  - Ensure that new ideas for programme development from both academic and non-academic staff are identified, evaluated, and actioned.
- Staff
  - Overall responsibility for College staff management, evaluation, and development with authority for same delegated to the Programme Manager.
- Admissions
  - Ensuring admissions are reviewed under programme entry criteria and that only those eligible are admitted.
- Data
  - Management of data and information under College data protection policies and in conjunction with the Data Protection Officer.
- External Collaborations



- Connect and nurture external relations with College alumni and stakeholders to seek feedback that improves the programme and College services and to explore possibilities for fruitful academic collaborations.
- Public Information
  - Approve all information to be made available as public communications including all academic reports, programme information, anonymised data etc. that is published on the College LMS and website.
- As an EMT member...see section 2.2.3.
  - Develop and keep under review College academic, management, operational and QA structures, policies, procedures, and processes to ensure that resources are properly utilised in the delivery of College strategic goals.
  - Actively identify and manage risk, recording risk on the Risk Register.
  - Approve the appointment of academic staff and conditions.
  - Review College premises, facilities, and resources to ensure they remain fit for purpose, especially in the context of increasing student numbers as the College grows.

### 2.4.3 Programme Manager Role Description

#### Purpose

To be responsible for the academic and operational running, coordination, management, and development of the College, its staff, and the programme. This includes the management and support of students. The Programme Manager reports to the Academic Director. See chapter 5, section 5.2.2.2 for selection criteria.

#### Key Responsibilities

- Programmes
  - Develop programme submission documents for new programmes in consultation with College staff.
  - Ensure quality assurance policies are implemented and any incremental changes to QA policies and procedures required by the programme are developed having regard to QQI's statutory QA guidelines.

- Develop new policies and procedures for approval by AC.
- Proposing programme-specific criteria for selecting persons who meet the programme's staffing requirements.
- Proposing suitable programme-specific criteria for selecting physical resources that meet the programmes physical resource requirements.
- Write the Programme Handbook as a concise summary of programme teaching, learning and assessment.
- Reviewing programme documentation to ensure that the teaching schemes, module guides, reading lists, assessment criteria, blended learning approaches are all relevant, current, and accurate.
- Ensuring that LMS pages are populated with current and accessible material.
- Ensuring the appropriate teaching, learning and assessment strategies are implemented and that modules are taught and assessed under approved programme schedules.
- Students
  - Working with the Student Support Officer in the management and support of students on programmes.
  - Mentoring students and ensuring they have timely access to guidance and support on both academic and non-academic matters.
  - Communicating with students on all programme-related matters, liaising with the Student Representatives and participating in the Student Representative Meetings.
- Assessment
  - Coordinating assessment submission deadlines across a stage to ensure appropriate student workload.
  - Ensuring all exam papers for modules on their programme(s) are written and moderated well in advance of the examination taking place and are appropriate to the programme level.
  - Liaising with the relevant External Examiners.
  - Ensuring exam results for modules on their programme(s) are inputted into the LMS (see chapter 9, section 9.4).
- Data

- Creation, retention, and maintenance of data relating to the registration and academic performance of students, and the admission, registration, and deregistration of students under College data protection policies.
- As Programme Board Chair...see section 2.3.2.1
  - Lead programme and module reviews and development.
  - Reporting to Programme Board on all programme-related matters such as student feedback, numbers, attendance, progress, learning analytic data and student support services.
  - Preparing the Annual Programme Report based on feedback from staff, students, and stakeholders, and implement all associated actions.
  - Developing and implementing transition plans for programmes upon completion of a revalidation process.
  - Leading the validation process for new programmes.
- Staff
  - Allocate appropriate staffing for constituent modules - both planned staff and have contingencies ready for last-minute absence scenarios.
  - Maintain a list of part-time and contract staff that can be called on to cover last-minute absences, to include existing staff if qualified to teach multiple modules.
  - Ensure board and committee meetings, team meetings and all relevant staff meetings are scheduled to include part-time and contract staff attendance to get their input into and feedback on the programme, teaching and learning, assessment, student academic progression etc.
  - Managing staff recruitment activity in conjunction with the People Officer (see chapter 1, section 1.4.1) to ensure that sufficient and suitable staff have been recruited in time to teach the programme.
  - Ensure all staff have fair access to staff learning and development activities.

#### 2.4.4 Teacher Role Description

##### Purpose

To teach and assess specific modules on the programme and to participate in all College boards and committees as requested. To support students in their learning journey at the College. Teachers report to the Programme Manager. See chapter 5, section 5.2.2.3 for selection criteria.

## Key Responsibilities

- Programmes
  - Material and resource development including assessment materials.
  - Digest programme documentation provided by the Programme Manager to ensure familiarity with all teaching schemes, module guides, and reading lists to ensure that the programme is taught as per College programme validation criteria to include the blended learning support aspects.
  - Teach the approved curriculum using the relevant teaching and learning strategies under approved programme schedules under the guidance and oversight of the Programme Manager.
  - Provide regular prompt (i.e., within 2 weeks) formative feedback to students to help them to succeed with their learning and assessments.
  - Pre-load all student content into the LMS before class and add supplementary teaching material and assessments post-class as relevant to maximise the opportunity for students to succeed in their studies and to avail of prompt formative feedback.
  - Complete all necessary documentation related to classes.
  - Manage classroom and maintain classroom discipline, always promoting positive behaviour and appropriate conduct.
  - Assign homework including written assignments and provide feedback.
- Students
  - Monitor student interaction and performance for signs of learning difficulty, calling in relevant student supports as appropriate.
  - Mentor and provide initial support to students on both academic and non-academic matters.
  - Record student attendance information and forward it to Student Support Officer for collation.
  - Be approachable such that students feel that they can discuss academic issues professionally and confidentially.
- Assessment
  - Perform module assessments as per College assessment policies and procedures providing prompt assessment feedback to students.
  - Correct and mark summative assessments.

- Ensure all exam papers for modules are written and moderated well in advance of the examination taking place and are appropriate to the programme level.
- Ensuring exam results for modules on their programme(s) are inputted into the student management system (see chapter 9, section 9.4) promptly.
- Data
  - Use and retain student data carefully and only for the purpose for which it is collected under College data protection policies.
- Staff Engagement
  - Actively engage with staff performance management guidelines.
  - Be responsible for learning and development, especially regarding continuing professional development (CPD). This includes scholarship concerning innovative ways to improve teaching and learning, especially in a multicultural context.
  - Attending staff meetings and be an active, constructive contributor.
  - Participating in issues related to school planning and quality enhancement.
  - Provide Feedback to the Programme Manager on syllabus implementation, development, resources, and student issues.

#### 2.4.5 Student Support Officer Role Description

##### Purpose

To ensure that there is a coordinated approach to the care and support the College provides to students.

##### Responsibilities

- Ensuring there are current and appropriate Student Support policies and procedures in place and implemented and identifying updates for revision and approval where relevant.
- Ensuring student data concerning attendance and visas are collected and issues immediately rectified via the enforcement of the preventive and corrective aspects of College policies.

- The initial point of liaison with parents and students after students enrol with the College on matters such as travel, accommodation, food and nutrition requirements, pastoral care, visa advice, medical and physical health needs/actions, and student extracurricular activities.
- Resolving all student-related issues either directly where possible by ensuring that other and/or more senior colleagues act as required and in line with College policies and procedures.
- Ensuring that all staff treat all students with genuine compassion and care to maximise the best non-academic student experience during their time with the College from the moment they enrol to the time they graduate and progress to the relevant HEI.
- Actively participate by attending appropriate internal committee meetings and external fora about best practice student care in international education settings.

## 2.5 Governance Requirements for Documentation

The QAM is approved by AC and endorsed by EMT. Relevant other documentation approvals include:

### 2.5.1 EMT Approvals

EMT approves...see section 2.2.2. for full terms of reference.

- New programme proposals especially regarding resources and demand, for submission for validation.
- Appointments on the recommendation of the People Officer (see also chapter 1, section 1.4.1) in conjunction with the Academic Director for academic posts and Chief Revenue Officer for non-academic posts.
- Commercial Collaborative Agreements.
- Resources for the business generally.
- Resources for programmes.
- Risk Register with BoD oversight...see section 2.6.

## 2.5.2 AC Approvals

Academic Council approves and reviews – see section 2.3.1.3 for full terms of reference.

- Quality Assurance Manual.
- Policies and procedures.
- Appointment of External Examiners and Academic Collaborations.
- New programme documentation for submission to QQI.
- Annual Programme Reports as proposed by Programme Board.
- Admissions reports as proposed by Admissions Board.
- Teaching, learning and assessment strategies, guidelines etc. as proposed by Programme Board.
- Academic Council endorses examination results and awards recommended by Exam Board that are to be forwarded to QQI for approval.
- QQI's Annual Quality Report.

## 2.6 Management of Risk

There is a policy with associated procedures in place for the identification, assessment, and management of risk. All units are expected to locally identify, manage, mitigate and escalate risk as relevant. The key steps are as follows with the complete policy and procedures outlined in UPOL003 UniHaven Risk Management Policy Rev 1.

- Identify the Risk.
- Assess the Risk.
- Manage the Risk.
  - Terminate: some risks may only be treatable or containable by ceasing the underlying activity.
  - Treat: the purpose here is to contain the risk to an acceptable level. Most risks will be treated in this way.
  - Tolerate: the exposure may be tolerable and may not, therefore, require taking any further action.
  - Transfer: this entails measures to transfer risk, or responsibility for risk, to a third party.

- Monitor and Review the Risk.

Both EMT and AC have responsibilities under the oversight of BoD to ensure that policies and procedures are in place and being implemented to ensure that the College is not engaged in activities or partnerships that might undermine the integrity of the education offered or the awards in the National Framework of Qualifications to which they lead.<sup>9</sup> A Risk Register has been compiled to identify and manage risk...see UFORM012 UniHaven Risk Register.

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<sup>9</sup> Statutory Quality Assurance Guidelines developed by QQI for use by all Providers, section 1.1d.



## 3. A Documented Approach to Quality Assurance

### 3.1. Context

The QAM summarises the main aspects of College policies and procedures. The detailed policies, procedures, and documents such as handbooks, codes, forms, and manuals are listed in the Appendix and exist as standalone documents. Hard copies of this manual and all documents listed in the Appendix are available from the Academic Director. This QAM, policies and procedures will be made available publicly on the College LMS (see chapter 9, section 9.4) and externally on the College website. How information will be made publicly available is outlined in chapter 10. .

### 3.2. A Documented Approach

The QAM is laid out to ensure that QA is managed, implemented, and reviewed effectively in the College following QQI principles<sup>10</sup>, namely, that policies and procedures

- Are informed by QQI quality assurance guidelines.
- Are fully documented and available publicly (published); necessary information is available to staff and the public as required in usable formats.
- Are fit for purpose and appropriate to the provider context.
- Have formal standing within the provider and form part of strategic management include a role for learners and other stakeholders.
- Promote a culture of quality.
- Facilitate diversity and support innovation.
- Cover any elements of a provider's activities that are subcontracted to, or carried out by, other parties both at home and abroad.
- Demonstrate accountability as a given, but always aim for continuous improvement.
- Are reviewed periodically to ensure they are fit for their purpose and remain effective.
- Are consistent with the requirements of relevant legislation.

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<sup>10</sup> Statutory Quality Assurance Guidelines developed by QQI for use by all Providers, section 2.1.

### 3.3. A Comprehensive System

The QAM describes how QA at the College is comprised of an integrated set of policies and procedures that offers assurance to stakeholders, students, and staff that the programme offered together with complementary supports and services is of a high academic standard. The College's academic governance structures (see chapter 2) together with its self-evaluation, monitoring, and review mechanisms (see chapter 12) offer a variety of internal quality assurance processes that allow participation by students, staff, and stakeholders.

#### 3.3.1. Stakeholders

HEIs in Ireland and overseas, international recruitment agents, and consultants with experience of QQI requirements and standards have been consulted as part of the development of the QAM, the outline foundation pathway programme (see UDOC001 UniHaven Programme Handbook Rev 2), policies, and procedures. Stakeholders will feed into College QA via the Independent Chair of AC (see section 2.3.1.1), members of Programme Board (see section 2.3.2.1), members of Appeals Board, members of HEI Partner Review Committees, and members, as External Examiners, of Exam Board (2.3.2.2)<sup>11</sup>.

#### 3.3.2. Staff

The QAM and associated policies and procedures have been developed through engagement with current staff. The current team has worked in and has run similar organisations previously and bring this shared experience to bear to ensure that policies, procedures, and the outline programme have been written with staff and future students in mind. The Academic Director has recent academic teaching and management experience with an Irish university foundation programme and has brought this experience to bear to help draft the College QAM, its policies and procedures as well as the outline foundation pathway programme. UniHaven's CEO has recently worked in both Academic Operations Director and CEO roles in an Irish foundation provider with full responsibility for academic matters. The Recruitment and Admissions Officer has worked

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<sup>11</sup> Statutory Quality Assurance Guidelines developed by QQI for use by all Providers, section 10.3.

in the English language sector in Ireland with several years' experience dealing with students. The Chief Revenue Officer has a wealth of international education experience in UK higher education and as Commercial Director of an Irish foundation provider. He has fed in on the recruitment, agent management, and admissions policies and processes. As processes are developed, consultations will be undertaken to ensure staff – current and future - have an ongoing opportunity to positively shape and influence policy and process via the various QA reviews and feedback mechanisms described throughout this document.

As the College is established, staff feedback will be actively sought and processed...see chapter 5, section 5.3.1<sup>12</sup>. Staff and external stakeholders will be members of AC, boards, and committees as relevant (see chapter 2) to ensure that the review and enhancement of QA, programmes, modules, policies, procedures, and practices are performed inclusively, with a diversity of opinion and in an informed manner.

### 3.3.3. Students

Student input and feedback is valued at the College. Student feedback will be actively sought and will be used to develop and enhance College policies, programmes, procedures and the level and type of student supports that have been made available to students<sup>13</sup>. It will take the following forms:

- Membership of College Boards and Committees
  - Academic Council – student representatives will have direct input into the College's highest academic governing body. At least two students will be members of AC chosen from the wider student pathway stream/class representative cohort. Student feedback will be considered as part of the monitoring, review, and development of all academic matters at the College that leads to all new documents policies, procedures and practices.
  - Programme Board – student representatives will have direct input into programme monitoring, review, and development at Programme Board.

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<sup>12</sup> Statutory Quality Assurance Guidelines developed by QQI for use by all Providers, section 4.3.

<sup>13</sup> Statutory Quality Assurance Guidelines developed by QQI for use by all Providers, section 7.1.d.

Student feedback will be considered as part of the development of all new programme-related documentation to included programmes, modules, programme handbooks, as well as programme, teaching and assessment-related policies and procedures.

- Student Representatives
  - Student Representatives will feed the student perspective into the general running of the College, the programme, and the learning experience via monthly Student Representative meetings...see chapter 8, section 8.4.8. Feedback will be considered as part of the monitoring, review and development of student support activities and services. Essentially, the student representative is the point of contact for a particular programme or pathway stream on behalf of their peer students, also acting as a conduit for student concerns.
- A review of an array of student data is performed annually to ensure that both qualitative and quantitative information is used to inform the College as to the success of its programme, teaching and learning, student progression, student engagement, student support services and activities, and student satisfaction generally...see chapter 12, section 12.3 for more details on the review process and chapter 9, sections 9.5 and 9.6 for the type of data collected and analysed.

## 4. PROGRAMMES OF EDUCATION AND TRAINING

### 4.1. Context

A programme is the package of learning designed, developed, and delivered by the College. It provides an insight into the learning experiences on offer that will enable the student to reach the standards of knowledge, skill and competence required to achieve the award that the programme is designed to deliver. A module can be defined as a sub-component of a programme with a defined title, learning outcomes, syllabus, and credits. Completion of the validated programme means that the student has been assessed to have acquired, and where appropriate, demonstrated the necessary knowledge, skill, or competence to justify the QQI award being made. This chapter sets out the College's approach to programme validation, programme development, programme review, and the recruitment and admissions of students.

### 4.2. Programme Validation

Specific to the College, the Level 5 Specified Purpose Certificate in International Foundation Studies-awarded programme has been developed in line with the policies and criteria of QQI as the sole awarding body. Programme-related policies and procedures have been written in line with QQI guidelines<sup>14</sup>. International reports from sources such as "QS" and "The Pie" have informed the opportunities that international education provides to bring students not just to the College to study the foundation pathway programme in Ireland but to study at Irish HEIs. These insights inform the College's assessment of programme need, programme demand, and programme pricing that, with College cost controls, assure programme viability.

#### 4.2.1. Programme Validation Guidelines

The College sets out to comply with QQI core validation criteria namely

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<sup>14</sup> Policies and criteria for the validation of programmes of education and training (2017), sections 3 and 17

- The provider is eligible to apply for validation of the programme by satisfying QQIs prerequisites for programme submission for validation<sup>15</sup>, i.e.
  - Established procedures for quality assurance under section 28 of the 2012 Act.
    - *College procedures are outlined in this manual and in the associated policies and procedures.*
  - Established procedures for access, transfer, and progression under section 56.
    - *College procedures are outlined later in this chapter...see section 4.5.3.*
  - Complied with section 65 in respect of arrangements for the protection of enrolled learners.
    - *See chapter 8, section 8.3 and UPOL002 UniHaven Learner Protection Policy Rev 1 for College PEL arrangements.*
  - Consulted with the person referred to in section 44 subsection (11) if that subsection applies to the provider.
    - *In the case of the College where co-provision is not being employed in programme delivery, this pre-requisite is not applicable.*
- The provider goes through the following key stages as outlined by QQI<sup>16</sup>
  - Stage 1 of Provider Access to Initial Programme Validation.
    - *The College has successfully passed this stage.*
  - Internal Assessment by the Provider.
    - *This is addressed in the programme development process outlined in section 4.3.*
  - The External Assessment Process for Validation.
    - *This was performed by QQI and led to a final determination for the first foundation programme as follows<sup>17</sup>:*
      - *Validate the proposed programme.*
      - *Validation, where determined, will lead to an approved College scope of the provision.*
  - Post-validation follow-up by QQI.

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<sup>15</sup> Policies and criteria for the validation of programmes of education and training (2017), section 3

<sup>16</sup> QQI HET Core Validation Policy and Criteria Revised (2013)

<sup>17</sup> Policies and criteria for the validation of programmes of education and training (2017), section 7

- *This will be performed by QQI.*

The programme will not commence until evidence of programme validation has been obtained from QQI following its external assessment stage and the programme is QQI- and visa-approved for delivery by the College.

#### 4.2.2. Changes that can be made to a Validated Programme

The College may wish to make improvements or changes to modules or the programme itself as an outcome of its programme and module reviews as described in section 4.2.3. There are limits to what may be changed before a modified programme must be submitted to QQI for validation as a new programme that depends on the scope of the College QA procedures that QQI had previously approved<sup>18</sup>. The College may not need to reapply to QQI for programme (re) validation if the proposed changes are catered for in the College's QA policies and procedures. An extensive change to a programme is one that effectively results in a new programme. Examples of an extensive change would include:

- Undermining anything essential for the original validation decision.
- Elimination of any intended programme learning outcomes.
- A change in the pre-requisite learning requirements for a given programme that may have an impact on, for example, FET credits etc.

The Academic Director will consult with QQI where any programme changes are suggested – minor or those considered as extensive - to ensure compliance with validation criteria is maintained and will keep a record of any occurrences...see chapter 12, section 12.3.1.1, for more information on permitted programme changes.

#### 4.2.3. Programme Review and Revalidation

Revalidation is validation by QQI of a programme that has emerged or evolved from a programme review of a programme (see section 4.4) that had previously been validated. This can occur if the original programme may have reached a point where, for example, it

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<sup>18</sup> Policies and Criteria for the Validation of Programmes of Education and Training (2017), section 8

needs to be substantially modified or updated such that the result is effectively a new programme. Revalidation is also required for any programme that is to continue to enrol students following the expiry of the approved duration of enrolment.

### 4.3. Programme Development

#### 4.3.1. Approvals and Roles

As per sections 2.5.1 and 2.5.2, both EMT and AC have separate roles to play in approving new programmes for QQI validation submission. AC is concerned with approving the academic content and programme submission documentation provided by Programme Board whereas EMT approves the programme in the context of its need, demand, and profitability, as well as the programme resources to include building, facilities, people, or technological resources. EMT holds the final programme approval decision. Programme Board is responsible for the internal assessment and proposal of the new programme to AC and for seeking EMT approval for resource requirements. Specific responsibilities as they pertain to certain roles are as follows:

- The Academic Director has overall responsibility for
  - The academic resources needed to develop the programme.
  - Informing AC of programme developments, organising approval, and arranging the validation process with QQI.
  - Being the College point of contact for QQI.
  - Notifying EMT and AC of the outcome of the validation, providing them with the QQI Panel findings, and responding to QQI queries and recommendations.
  - Publication of programme details, the independent evaluation report, the validation determination by QQI and the Certificate of Validation as well the applicable PEL on the College website (refer to chapter 10).
- The Programme Manager has responsibility for
  - Appointing and leading an academic programme development team to develop, internally assess and formally propose the programme.
  - Oversee the programme development and review processes with Programme Board.



- Completing the proposed programme document in conjunction with the programme development team for submission to QQI.

#### 4.3.2. Programme Requirements

The College programme is designed in line with the QQI programme validation criteria<sup>19</sup> listed below.

- The programme's content and learning environment must be appropriate to the programme's intended learning outcomes.
- The programme should involve authentic learning opportunities to enable the achievement of the intended programme learning outcomes.
- The programme should compare well against benchmarks (where appropriate).
- The information about the programme as well as its procedures for access, transfer and progression should be consistent with the procedures described in national Policies, Actions and Procedures for Access, Transfer and Progression for Learners.
- The programme should meet genuine education and training needs.
- The programme should be viable.
- All programmes should have procedures for assessment of learners which should be consistent with Assessment and Standards, Revised 2013.
- The provider should have, where required, suitable arrangements for protection for enrolled learners if it ceases to provide the programme.
- The provider should have appropriate quality assurance arrangements for the proposed programme. Any new quality assurance arrangements required should be agreed upon with QQI.

The development of new College programmes and programmes that have extensive updates (see section 4.2.2) are conducted in a defined way with sufficient time allowed for the necessary internal and external assessments and consultations. The College insists that the following principles underpin and provide the rationale for its programme developmental approach:

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<sup>19</sup> QQI HET Core Validation Policy and Criteria Revised (2013)

- Programme development should follow the processes defined in this chapter and in UPOL005 UniHaven Programme Review and Development Policy Rev 2 to ensure that there is sufficient clarity around roles, responsibilities, approvals, the business case (including premises, facilities, staffing, profitability, demand, need etc.) and that there will be sufficient time to introduce any new or extensively changed programmes (see section 4.2.2).
- There should be sufficient clarity around the programme objectives, learning outcomes and scope from the start with relevant staff aware of the implications of its introduction and its impact on the wider College offerings.
- Sufficient consideration needs to be given to how the programme structure, modules, content, blended learning elements, and assessment strategies all align to meet the intended learning outcomes, both MIPLOs and MIMLOs....see MIPLO and MIMPLO references in chapter 1, section 1.7.1.
- The programme must be designed in line with QQI policies and standards concerning access, transfer, and progression, recruitment and admissions, and fees and refunds.
- There should be an external validation of the programme by QQI.

#### 4.3.3. The Interim Programme Development Process – First Programme Validation

The Interim Programme Development Process is outlined in figure 1.2 below.

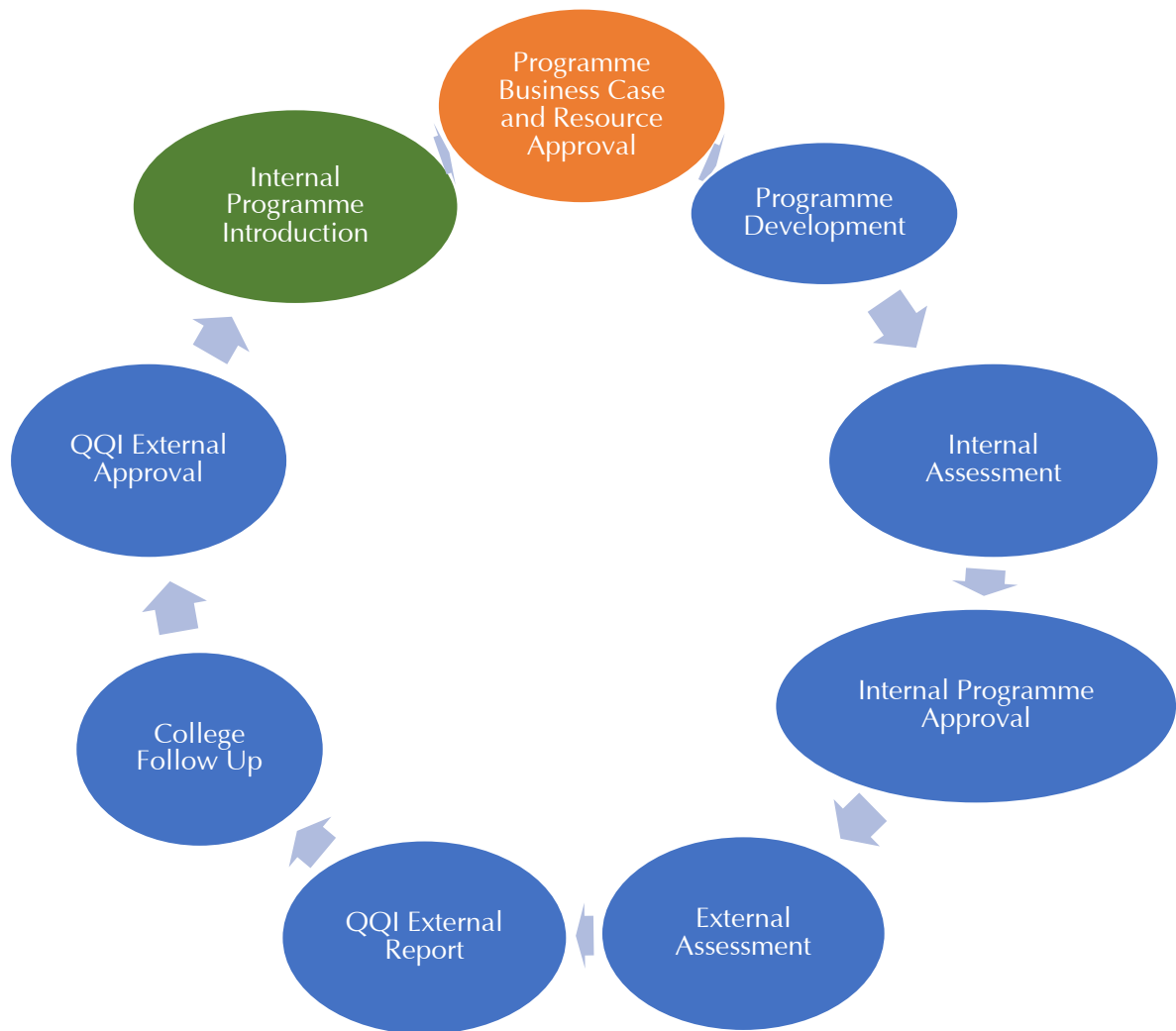


Figure 4.1 College Interim Programme Development Process

#### Programme Business Case and Resource Approval

The Programme business case was established at the time that UniHaven was established.

The key questions asked and answered satisfactorily were

- Does it fit with the College's core mission and strategic priorities?
- Is there sufficient demand and need for the programme externally?
- Are there sound financial reasons for its introduction?
- Are there sufficient resources to develop and implement the programme to include rental of premises and facilities to accommodate the programme?

The programme was discussed and approved at BoD. BoD approved the resources required to fund the

- Development of the quality assurance policies and procedures to meet Quality and Qualifications Ireland requirements.
- Initial access to validation requirements, including evaluation by QQI.
- Introduction of the programme.
- Opening of the College in Ireland.
- QQI programme approval process in full.

Subsequently, the programme was approved at EMT where the decision to pay for externally recruited resources was approved. The provisional programme and its intended modules were approved at AC together with the decision to appoint an externally recruited Interim Programme Manager and Teachers/Subject Matter Experts (SMEs) as requested by QQI.

Table 4.1 Proposed Initial Pathway Streams and Modules

Module Number	Module Title	Mandatory / Optional	FET credits
UNI001	English	Mandatory	60
UNI002	Intercultural Studies and Communications	Mandatory	10
<i>Business and Social Sciences Pathway</i>			
UNI003	Mathematics (Ordinary)	Mandatory for this Pathway*	20
UNI004	Business Studies	Optional	15
UNI005	Computer Science	Optional	15
UNI006	Global Studies	Optional	15
UNI007	Introduction to Social Sciences	Optional	15

<i>Engineering and Science Pathway</i>			
UNI008	Mathematics (Higher)	Mandatory for this Pathway*	20
UNI009	Biology	Optional	15
UNI010	Chemistry	Optional	15
UNI011	Physics	Optional	15
UNI012	Computer Science	Optional	15

\* Unless the student's choice of HEI degree programme necessitates a different level of Mathematics in which case such choice will be accommodated.

### Programme Development

The following interim staff were identified for the development of the programme submission as agreed with the Independent Chairperson of AC.

- Interim Programme Manager
  - Master's qualified with 30 years of teaching experience in Irish further and higher education.
  - Experience of programme development and submission to QQI.
  - 25 years of academic management experience.
- English Language Specialist Teacher
  - Postgraduate qualification in Teaching English as a Foreign Language.
  - 5+ years' experience of teaching English.
  - Programme development experience.
- Teachers/Subject Matter Experts) (7 in number)
  - Level 8 degree or higher qualifications in relevant disciplines with teaching qualifications and/or equivalent experience.
  - More than 3 years of secondary, further, or higher education experience in multicultural classrooms.
  - Programme development experience in their respective subject area, i.e., one of Mathematics, Biology, Physics, Chemistry, Business, Global Studies, Computer Science and Social Sciences.

- Student Support Expert.
  - Experienced student support expert in multicultural settings.

The Teachers and the Student Support staff reported into the Interim Programme Manager. The Interim Programme Manager reported to the Academic Director and their role was to develop the programme and to prepare its QQI submission in conjunction with academic and support staff to meet the core QQI validation criteria as described in Policies and Criteria for the Validation of Programmes of Education and Training (2017) and to identify any additional resources that the programme development process may identify. The Interim Programme Manager brought the proposed programme, the draft submission and any identified resource requirements to AC for approval before proceeding to the internal assessment stage.

### Internal Assessment

Once AC was satisfied that the proposed programme sufficiently met QQI requirements and approved its progression to the internal assessment stage, AC approved the establishment of an internal review panel and appointed its members. The Assessment Panel consisted of panel members external to UniHaven. This Panel made a recommendation to AC whether the programme submission document should be submitted to QQI or not in its current state.

This panel consisted of all external members each with at least five years of relevant academic experience (other than student representatives) as follows:

- Experienced chairperson with experience of QQI programme validation panels.
- English language specialist.
- Teachers/SMEs from the College's HEI partners or other further/higher education institutions to provide feedback on the modules that have been developed with expertise in the following areas.
  - Maths.
  - Business.

- Science.
- Computing.
- Social Science.
- Student Support expert to provide feedback on the student support aspects of the proposed programme.
- Student representative(s) with sufficient knowledge of the programme or a graduate of an international programme currently studying at an Irish HEI.
- External Adviser for external input.

After the internal assessment stage has been completed, the Interim Programme Development Manager addressed the feedback from the panel and amended the documentation as appropriate in conjunction with the interim programme development team. The revised documentation was submitted to AC and any further resources that may be required brought to the attention of EMT.

#### Internal Programme Approval

AC formally endorsed the programme for submission to QQI and proposed this step to EMT. EMT provided final sign-off on the business case for the introduction of the programme prior to submission of the final programme documentation that was signed by the CEO and submitted to QQI as well as approving any additional resource requirements that may have been identified from the programme development process. The new programme details are reflected in the revised UDOC001 UniHaven Programme Handbook Rev 2.

The Interim Programme Manager prepared the submission material and documents to facilitate the QQI validation processes<sup>20</sup> in conjunction with the programme development team and the Academic Director. The Interim Programme Manager led on the internal

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<sup>20</sup> QQI Policies and Criteria for the Validation of Programmes of Education and Training (2017)

compiling of documentation while the Academic Director led on the coordination of communications, panel reviews and site visits with QQI. Ultimately, the Academic Director is responsible for oversight of the submission working closely with the Interim Programme Manager and approves all documented submissions to QQI. The programme was then formally submitted to QQI comprised of the

- Completed submission.
- Supporting documentation.
- Self-evaluation of the programme against QQI programme validation requirements.
- Applicable fee.

The evaluation of the programme will be subsequently undertaken by a QQI appointed Panel.

#### External Assessment

QQI formed a panel to externally assess the programme submission against the QQI programme validation requirements. The panel reviewed the submitted documentation, meet with college management, interim programme development manager and interim programme development team. The panel issued a report in line with QQI requirements.

#### College Follow Up

In line with QQI requirements<sup>21</sup>, the Academic Director in conjunction with the Interim Programme Manager reviewed QQI's report received as part of the programme validation process to implement any conditions and recommendations made by the Panel and respond accordingly. The Academic Director liaised with QQI as the person designated as the contact for QQI.

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<sup>21</sup> QQI Policies and Criteria for the Validation of Programmes of Education and Training (2017)



### QQI External Approval

QQI received the College response to its initial assessment and proceeded with its final assessment. It then produced the QQI Report that also contains its determination. The programme validation process led to an approval decision, the programme was approved by QQI for the College to promote and teach it. QQI notified the College in writing of its programme validation approval and issued a Certificate of Validation. QQI will also follow up to make sure its recommendations have been implemented by the College.

### Internal Programme Introduction

Once QQI programme accreditation is secured for the new programme, the Academic Director oversees the preparation of the College for the introduction of the approved programme. The College Programme Manager, English language specialist Teacher, module Teachers/academic staff and Student Support Officer are recruited and tasked with setting up the staffing, administrative and student supports for the programme. EMT will have pre-approved budgets for any additional physical or technical infrastructure needed and the Academic Director oversees the renting/purchasing of all additional resources required.

#### 4.3.4. The Programme Development Process

Programme development proceeds using the following process for all programme changes and or new programmes after the validation of the College's first programme:

- Internal Programme Development at the College to include
  - Idea Generation.
  - Idea Evaluation.
  - Programme Proposal.
  - Internal Assessment.
- Internal College Programme Approval.
- College Programme Submission to QQI to include
  - Completed submission.
  - Supporting documentation.
  - A self-evaluation of the programme against QQI programme validation requirements.

- The applicable fee.
- QQI Programme Evaluation to include
  - External Assessment.
  - QQI Report.
- College Follow Up to include
  - Response to QQI Report queries.
  - Implementation of QQI Report recommendations
- QQI Approval to Offer the Programme (assuming validation is approved) to include
  - Final Assessment.
  - Determination.
  - Follow Up.
- Internal Programme Introduction at the College
  - EMT will authorise the running of the programme. The programme, once approved for offering and running at the College, is subject to ongoing monitoring and periodic review...see chapter 12, section 12.3.

The QQI steps in the above process are performed as per QQI's detailed policies and procedures that have been described in section 4.2.1 and that can be accessed at [https://www.qqi.ie/Publications/Publications/Initial\\_Validation\\_policy\\_7\\_10\\_13.pdf](https://www.qqi.ie/Publications/Publications/Initial_Validation_policy_7_10_13.pdf).

College steps relevant for securing approval to offer a programme together with any extensive changes (see section 4.2.2) or any new programme that may follow are summarised below. A graphic showing these steps is displayed in figure 4.2 followed by a short description of each. Full descriptions of each step are outlined in detail in UPOL005 UniHaven Programme Review and Development Policy Rev 2.

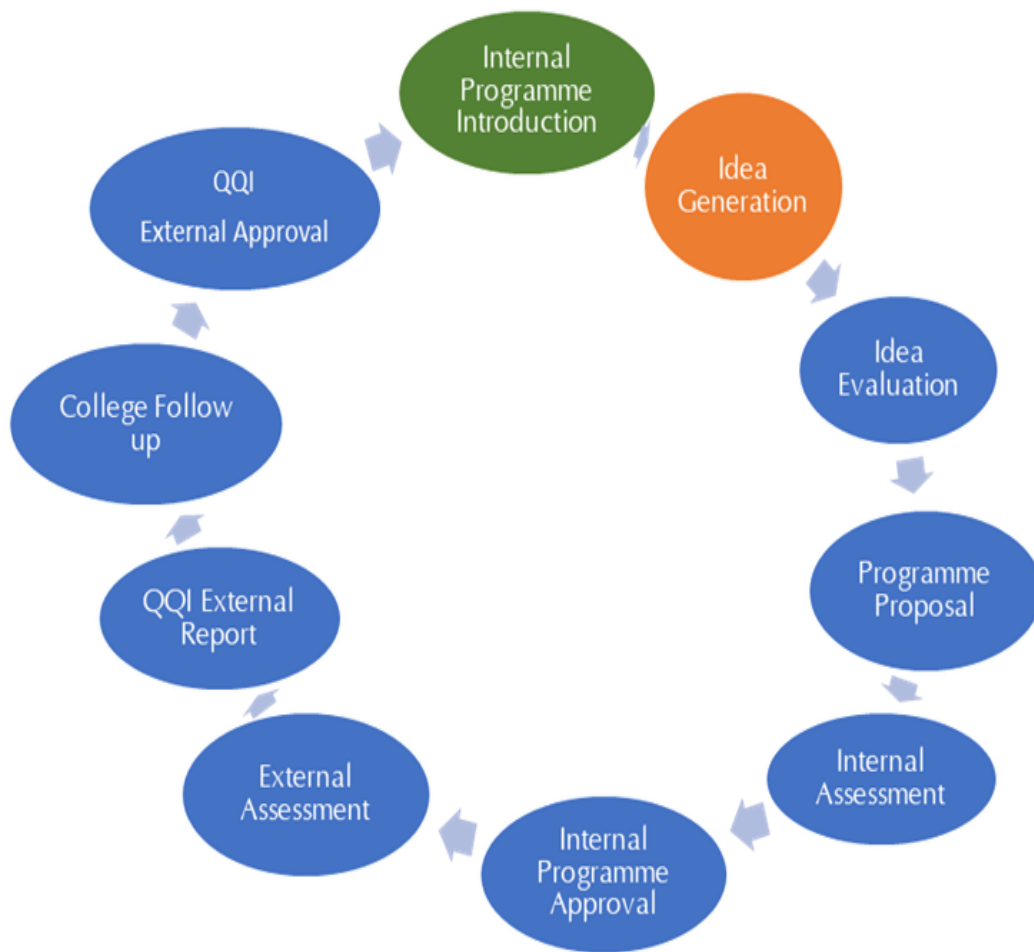


Fig 4.2 College Programme Development Process

#### 4.3.4.1 Idea Generation

Ideas for new and updated programmes can arise from College staff, from student feedback, from engagement with HEI partners, from engagement with external experts, from engagement with government bodies in Ireland and overseas, from a formal programme review at Programme Board, or staff and management research into the international education trends.

#### 4.3.4.2 Idea Evaluation

The proposed programme or update is discussed initially at the programme level with the Programme Manager taking the lead. The Programme Manager requests approval from EMT regarding the following aspects in particular

- Does it fit with the College's core mission and strategic priorities?
- Is there sufficient demand and need for the programme externally?
- Are there sound financial reasons for its introduction?
- Are there sufficient resources to develop and implement the programme?

If EMT does not give its approval for the suggested programme/update, the process stops at this stage. If it does verify that the programme/update is worth pursuing, then the programme development process continues to the next stage.

#### 4.3.4.3 Programme Proposal

The Programme Manager must consider further aspects of the programme/update to decide whether to formally propose new or updated programme suggestions to Programme Board, including

- Are there sound academic reasons for its introduction?
- Will it meet the required academic standards as specified by QQI?
- Is the programme workable internally regarding staff competence and capability, the availability of External Examiners etc.?

If the outcome of the above deliberations endorses the suggested programme/update, the Programme Manager then prepares a detailed programme proposal for consideration at Programme Board in line with the details outlined in UPOL005 UniHaven Programme Review and Development Policy Rev 2, section 5. See section 2.3.2.1 for Programme Board terms of reference.

#### 4.3.4.4 Internal Assessment

The Programme Manager brings the proposed programme to Programme Board. Programme Board perform an initial evaluation of the proposal. If further information is required, the Programme Manager adds such information to the proposal before bringing it back to Programme Board. If Programme Board is satisfied that the proposal is worth taking forward, an internal assessment panel is assembled under the oversight of the Programme Manager to internally assess the programme proposal...see UPOL005 UniHaven Programme Review and Development Policy Rev 2, section 5, for membership

of the internal assessment panel. The internal assessment panel will include business, employer or higher education experts and providers that will help to assess the programme against QQI requirements to include areas such as learning outcomes, potential transfer and progression option concerning other providers or HEI partners, and so on. If the outcome of this internal assessment endorses the proposed programme, the Programme Manager takes the endorsed programme back to Programme Board for proposing to AC for formal approval. If it does not, the proposed programme goes back to the Idea Evaluation stage in conjunction with EMT.

#### 4.3.4.5 Internal Programme Approval

Programme Board will meet to discuss the programme after its internal assessment has been completed and will formally decide to approve it for proposal to AC. AC will then formally endorse the programme for validation through QQI and proposes this step to EMT. EMT signs off on the business and academic case for the introduction of the programme.

The Programme Manager assembles a programme team to prepare the submission material and documents to facilitate the QQI validation processes<sup>22</sup>. The Programme Manager leads on the internal compiling of documentation while the Academic Director leads on the coordination of communications, panel reviews and site visits with QQI. Ultimately, the Academic Director is responsible for oversight of the submission working closely with the Programme Manager and s/he approves all documented submissions to QQI before they are sent until QQI programme accreditation is secured. The programme is then formally submitted to QQI comprised of the

- Completed submission and supporting documentation.
- Self-evaluation of the programme against QQI programme validation requirements.
- Applicable fee.

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<sup>22</sup> QQI Policies and Criteria for the Validation of Programmes of Education and Training (2017)

#### 4.3.4.6 External Assessment

QQI form a panel to externally assess the programme submission against the QQI programme validation requirements. This may include site visits.

#### 4.3.4.7 QQI External Report

Once the external assessment is complete, QQI produces and sends its report with findings and recommendations to the College requesting a formal response.

#### 4.3.4.8 College Follow Up

In line with QQI requirements<sup>23</sup>, the Academic Director in conjunction with the Programme Manager will review QQI's report to implement any actions recommended by QQI, information requests and any other recommendations, and respond accordingly. The Academic Director will liaise with QQI as s/he coordinates the follow-up process.

#### 4.3.4.9 QQI External Approval

QQI receives the College response to its initial assessment and proceeds with its final assessment. It then produces the QQI Report and makes its determination. Assuming the programme validation process has not led to a refusal, the programme will be approved by QQI for the College to promote and teach it. QQI will notify the College in writing of its programme validation approval and issue a certificate of validation. It will also follow up to ensure its recommendations have been implemented.

If refusal has been the determination, the College may follow up as follows

- Make representations up to and including an appeal.
- Act to fully address QQI's recommendations to satisfy all QQI's programme validation requirements.
- Reapply for programme validation.

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<sup>23</sup> QQI Policies and Criteria for the Validation of Programmes of Education and Training (2017)

#### 4.3.4.10. Internal Programme Introduction

Once QQI programme accreditation is secured in writing accompanied by the validation certificate, the Academic Director will oversee the preparation of the College and its staff for the introduction of the programme. The programme team will set about developing the course materials and online material where necessary. Meanwhile, the Programme Manager is tasked with setting up the staffing, administrative and student supports for the programme. EMT will have pre-approved budgets for any additional physical or technical infrastructure needed and the Academic Director will oversee the renting/purchasing of all additional resources required.

### 4.4 Programme Review

#### 4.4.1 Programme Monitoring

Programme delivery is monitored in a way that allows for the identification of needs and the modification and adjustment of the programme and the delivery method as relevant. The monitoring process is iterative, and much of this activity takes place at different times and through a variety of mechanisms during the year such as Programme Manager-staff interactions, assessment results reviews, and staff and student feedback via formal and informal channels. Information collected that feeds into programme reviews includes but is not limited to student academic data, programme completion data, HEI progression data, as well as feedback from students, Teachers, External Examiners and/or stakeholders...see chapter 9, sections 9.5 and 9.6 for more details on the type of programme data collected and how it is used and chapter 12, section 12.3.1 for the overall College approach to programme self-evaluation, monitoring and review.

#### 4.4.2 Annual Programme and Module Reviews

Programme and associated module reviews are carried out under UPOL005 UniHaven Programme Review and Development Policy Rev 2 as summarised in section 4.3. The outcomes of programme reviews are incorporated into the Annual Programme Report that in turn is incorporated into the College Annual Quality Report that is sent to QQI as part of the College's annual reporting requirements...see chapter 12, section 12.3 for more details.

#### 4.4.2.1 Programmes

It is good practice for the College to periodically evaluate modules and programmes to consider advances in knowledge or technology, changing societal or international contexts, changing student profiles, changing learning delivery expectations, and change in HEI requirements concerning the type of programmes needed to satisfy their entry criteria or the change in student profile that HEIs need to satisfy academic requirements<sup>24</sup>. More specifically, programme review will be taken as an opportunity for the College to:

- Ensure that the programme remains appropriate and creates a supportive and effective learning environment.
- Ensure that the programme achieves the objectives set for it.
- Review the student workload, student progression and completion rates benchmarked against competitors.
- Review the effectiveness of assessment policy and procedures.
- Review the physical premises and facilities including but not limited to classroom sizes, library and IT, science/media laboratory facilities etc.
- Update programme content, delivery modes, teaching and learning methods, learning supports and resources, and information provided to students.
- Review quality assurance arrangements that are specific to the programme.
- Review blended learning and assessment aspects.

#### 4.4.2.2 Modules

Module reviews are coordinated by the Programme Manager in conjunction with the Teachers. The review assesses student academic performance, module assessment successes/issues, and general teaching effectiveness using feedback from student achievement and progression data (formative and summative), teacher/external examiner feedback and student feedback. Improvement measures are implemented in consultation with internal assessors and External Examiners in respect of each module. Any minor changes or extensive changes suggested are first communicated to QQI by the Academic Director to ensure such suggestions do not compromise programme validation criteria.

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<sup>24</sup> Statutory Quality Assurance Guidelines developed by QQI for use by all Providers (2016), section 3



## 4.5. Marketing, Recruitment and Admissions

### 4.5.1. Marketing

Before commencing the programme, and before any payments from or on behalf of an enrolled student for programme fees are accepted, applicants will be provided with the relevant information in line with QQI principles for international students who wish to study in Ireland<sup>25</sup>, namely that

- Recruitment of students shall be conducted transparently and ethically.
- Providers shall ensure that clear, unambiguous, and up-to-date information is provided in their marketing and promotional materials.
- Providers shall provide all students with clear, unambiguous, and up-to-date information on all study costs, including subsistence and accommodation.
- Providers shall inform students about fees and other costs associated with undertaking a programme of study in Ireland.

Furthermore, the College commits to providing applicants with the following clear and accurate programme information in an accessible way via the College website, social media channels and via both UDOC001 UniHaven Programme Handbook Rev 2 and UDOC002 UniHaven Student Handbook Rev 2 in line with QQI requirements<sup>26</sup>:

- That the programme leads to a QQI (as the awarding body) Level 5 Specific Purpose award and that it is recognised in the National Framework of Qualifications (NFQ) as a Level 5 Specific Purpose Certificate in International Foundation Studies award.
- That the programme is subject to procedures for Access, Transfer, and Progression as described in this chapter, section 4.5.3 and as outlined in more detail in UPOL006 UniHaven Access, Transfer and Progression Policy Rev 2.

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<sup>25</sup> Code of Practice for Provision of Programmes of Education and Training to International Students (2015), section 3.2

<sup>26</sup> Code of Practice for Provision of Programmes of Education and Training to International Students (2015), section 3.2.1.b

#### 4.5.2. Recruitment

The College has created recruitment practices with a commitment to delivering advice, guidance, and support for international applicants to enable them to make informed decisions about the programme in advance of enrolling on or paying for it.

##### 4.5.2.1 Student Information

The information described in this chapter together with information concerning the relevant costs both for the programme, administration costs, including insurances such as PEL, health insurance etc. and about living and studying in Ireland generally will be provided on the College website and social media and in UDOC002 UniHaven Student Handbook Rev 2. Also, the following will be provided to students and applicants in advance of enrolling with translation options provided on request for the main languages that the College recruits from, namely Chinese/Mandarin, French, Afrikaans, and Malay.

- Details of the College Protection of Enrolled Learner (PEL) arrangements in place as described in chapter 8, section 8.2, and as detailed in UPOL002 UniHaven Learner Protection Policy Rev 1.
- Contact details of the College Recruitment and Admissions Officer through which student applications are processed.
- How attendance rates of 85% or higher are required to satisfy Irish visa authorities and sanctions applying to students who do not comply. Such information is outlined in chapter 8, section 8.4.10, and described in detail in UPOL017 UniHaven Student Support Policy Rev 2, UPRO011 UniHaven Attendance Monitoring Procedure Rev 1, and UDOC002 UniHaven Student Handbook Rev 1.
- The commencement date for the programme via UDOC001 UniHaven Programme Handbook Rev 2 also contains information on both the programme and the guaranteed progression to HEI partner undergraduate degree programmes on successful completion of the programme and from satisfying Irish visa requirements for Ireland.
- Detailed information on the College's fees will be provided in advance of enrolment. College fees fall under one or more of the following headings
  - Mandatory student fees include
    - Tuition fees.
    - Registration fees.

- Learner protection fees.
- Medical insurance fees.
- Examination fees.
- Progression Fees.
- Fees for programme books, online resources, online study platforms and so on.
- Administration fees are relevant to College procedures such as admission appeals, assessment reviews/rechecks, rebooking fees etc.
- Optional additional fees include fees for support services to include:
  - Airport transfers.
  - Accommodation arrangements.
  - Guardian nominee services for students who may need this service if they are aged 17 years or younger on the enrolment date. This service is explained in full in UPOL017 UniHaven Student Support Policy Rev 2 with outline information included in chapter 8, section 8.4.12.
- Should there be any change in fees from those stated, students will be informed in advance as a matter of urgency.
- Full details on the College policy on fees and refund together with the refund procedures are outlined in UPOL008 UniHaven Fees and Refund Policy Rev 1.
- All blended learning and assessment aspects to the programmes as outlined in chapter 6, section 6.4, and as described in detail in UPOL014 UniHaven Blended Learning Policy Rev 1.

All published information will be approved in advance by the Academic Director including the prospectus, student handbooks, websites, and social media promotion and will provide comply with QQI policies. See more details in chapter 10 with the detailed communications policy described in UPOL026 UniHaven Communications Policy Rev 1. All staff are briefed and kept up to date on programme content and specific entry requirements to ensure recruitment and admissions staff are communicating current and accurate programme information to prospective students. Such information is monitored and audited by the Academic Director – see chapter 12, section 12.3.4 for more details.

#### 4.5.2.2 Recruitment Agents

Specific to recruitment agents that the College contracts to help to recruit students on its behalf, the College will ensure that agent agreements incorporate the principles of the London Statement, will include a termination clause in instances where the agent does not comply with the principles of the London Statement or is found to have acted in an unethical fashion...see UDOC009 UniHaven Agent Agreement Rev 1 for full details together with UDOC003 UniHaven Agent Handbook Rev 1 that outlines Agents' ethical responsibilities as recruiters of international students. The College verifies the credentials of, appoints, manages, and reviews Agents and their communications/information as outlined in chapter 11, section 11.3.3, and under UPOL027 UniHaven Agent Policy Rev 1. The approval of Agents as providers of agreed recruitment services is the responsibility of the Chief Revenue Officer with agent communications managed by the Recruitment and Admissions Officer and inspected for accuracy by the Academic Director.

#### 4.5.3 Admissions

The College is committed to widening access to and participation in HEI education on behalf of international students. Student admission to the programme is governed by the Qualifications and Quality Assurance (Education and Training Act (2012), under the national QQI policies and procedures for Access, Transfer and Progression<sup>27</sup>. The College is committed to operating an admissions policy for suitably qualified applicants who fulfil the requirements to study the programme that is based on transparency, inclusivity, consistency, diversity, and equality in line with QQI guidelines<sup>28</sup>, i.e., that policies and procedures for student admission, progression and recognition include:

- Fit-for-purpose admission, recognition, and completion procedures.
- Appropriate recognition procedures.
- Student induction to both the provider and the programme.
- Processes and tools to collect, monitor and act on information on student progression and completion rates.

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<sup>27</sup> Policy and Criteria for Access, Transfer and Progression in Relation to Students for Providers of Further and Higher Education and Training (NQAI 2003, re-stated by QQI 2015)

<sup>28</sup> Statutory Quality Assurance Guidelines developed by QQI for use by all Providers (2016), section 3.2

- Fair recognition of education and training qualifications, periods of study and prior learning, including the recognition of non-formal and informal learning.

The College ensures that

- All applicants are treated in a professional, fair, and consistent manner, providing equality of opportunity, transparent entry requirements and decisions, both academic and non-academic, and present no unnecessary barriers to applicants.
- It does not discriminate on the grounds of gender, civil status, family status, sexual orientation, religion, age, disability, race (which includes race, colour, nationality or ethnic or national origins).
- Clear information is provided to applicants on how the admission process will be conducted.
- Guidance is offered to prospective applicants to enable them to make informed choices and to apply to the programme and our HEI partners that are appropriate to their interests, academic qualifications, and potential.
- Appropriate arrangements and procedures for handling admissions appeals and complaints about recruitment and admissions processes are fair and accessible as per UPOL007 UniHaven Student Recruitment and Admissions Policy Rev 2.
- Applicants are informed of any significant changes to a programme to which they have applied at the earliest opportunity. Prospective students are advised promptly of the options available in the circumstances.

If an applicant chooses to appeal an admissions decision, they are entitled to do so. All admissions appeal must be made by email to the Academic Director within five working days of the decision being communicated. UPOL007 UniHaven Student Recruitment and Admissions Policy Rev 2 outlines the steps that an applicant should follow.

#### 4.5.3.1 Access

Access is the process by which applicants enter the programme to become registered students. Applicants must have achieved at least the minimum requirement for entry into the programme. Should the programme be oversubscribed, the College will discuss the potential for applicants that it cannot accommodate, assuming deferral is also not an

option, to take up a place in its Irish partner HEI's respective foundation programmes or an Irish competitor's QQI-equivalent foundation programme. The Academic Director approves all admissions under the auspices of the Admissions Board.

#### 4.5.3.1.1 *Minimum Entry Requirements*

The entry criteria listed below are designed to ensure that all applicants interested in studying the programme will not only have a reasonable expectation of successfully completing the programme but also doing so in such a way as to meet the entry criteria for the undergraduate degree programme they wish to study at the partner HEI.

- Age
  - o Applicants must normally be 17 years old but will be 18 years old by the end of the programme.
- Academic
  - o Applicants must hold a certificate of secondary education at GCSE level or equivalent to include a minimum pass grade in maths and a minimum pass grade in four other subjects. For a detailed list of entry criteria on a country-by-country basis, see the College website.
- English Language
  - o All applicants whose first language is not English and who have not been educated through the medium of English must be able to show English language ability as follows:
    - An English level of Council of Europe B1+ Proficiency Level<sup>29,30</sup> /IGCSE C/IELTS 5.0 or equivalent.
    - IELTS 5.0 overall with no less than 5.0 in the written component and 4.5 in the listening, speaking, and reading components.
  - o In certain circumstance, results in examinations other than those outlined above may be accepted as proof of competence in the English language as

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<sup>29</sup> <https://www.coe.int/en/web/common-european-framework-reference-languages/table-1-cefr-3.3-common-reference-levels-global-scale>

<sup>30</sup> QQI Awards Standards for Pre-Higher Education Foundation Awards for International Students (2015)

decided on by the Academic Director under the oversight of the Admissions Board.

- o English language certification must have been awarded within two years of start date of the programme.

Entry requirements will be available to applicants on the College website in advance of applying for a place on the programme as per chapter 10, section 10.3, and as described in UPOL026 UniHaven Communications Policy Rev 1.

#### 4.5.3.1.2 *Recognition of Prior Learning*

Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) is a method of assessment (leading to the award of credit) that considers whether learners can demonstrate that they can meet the assessment requirements for a unit through knowledge, understanding or skills they already possess, and so do not need to develop through a course of learning. RPL encompasses all forms of prior learning, including formal learning, and non-formal learning (learning outside the formal education system), through the workplace and experience.

To comply with QQI requirements, RPL must be considered for any student who wishes to access the programme<sup>31</sup>. The College must also comply with Irish study visa requirements for Level 5 (NFQ) programmes as set out by the Department of Justice where students must study in class for at least 15 hours a week with an attendance rate of a minimum of 85%<sup>32</sup>. The College must also make sure that students successfully complete the programme with 120 FET credits to be eligible for the QQI Level 5 (NFQ) Certificate in International Foundation Studies award which in turn facilitates progression to year one of the HEI partner undergraduate degree programmes. With these contexts in mind, the College will discuss RPL with partner HEIs to explore the extent, if any, to which RPL applies to a given applicant's request but such RPL will be conditional on the student passing the programme and complying with the above visa requirements. In the case of English language, RPL will

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<sup>31</sup> Statutory Quality Assurance Guidelines developed by QQI for use by all Providers (2016)

<sup>32</sup><http://www.inis.gov.ie/en/INIS/Guidelines%20for%20Language%20and%20Non-Degree%20Programme%20Students.pdf/Files/Guidelines%20for%20Language%20and%20Non-Degree%20Programme%20Students.pdf>

not be available due to the need for students to satisfy minimum in-class hours of 15 per week which is not possible if students are not studying the English language modules. An example of permitted RPL might be where the HEI partner deems an applicant's Physics score to be sufficient to study an Engineering degree but, to successfully complete the College programme in a visa-compliant way, the student may need to study Biology instead, it being a complementary alternative module for the degree to which the applicant wishes to study at the partner HEI. All student requests for RPL must be submitted in writing to the Academic Director at the admissions stage and will be considered in the context of this policy and subsequently decided on by the Academic Director in conjunction with the HEI partner on a case-by-case basis. If an applicant chooses to appeal an admissions RPL decision, they are entitled to do so. All admissions appeals must be made by email to the Academic Director, within five working days of the decision being communicated. The admissions appeal procedure is outlined in Section 5 of UPOL007 UniHaven Student Recruitment and Admissions Policy Rev 2.

#### *4.5.3.1.3 Applications Procedure*

All applicants will complete the College application form that, when submitted, will be used by the College to assess applicants against the minimum entry criteria. All applicants with a disability or other specific needs that may impact their ability to learn should declare those requirements at this stage as per UPOL018 UniHaven Learner Disability Policy Rev 2 to ensure that the College can evaluate any additional supports that may be required. Applicants must also provide supporting documents to include academic transcripts, ID, curriculum vitae, and relevant visa information. Applicants are evaluated against minimum entry criteria by the Recruitment and Admissions Officer with an interview possible should areas such as English language competency need to be verified further. Final approval for admission will be given by the Academic Director. Full details of the admissions procedure are outlined in UPOL007 UniHaven Student Recruitment and Admissions Policy Rev 2.

#### *4.5.3.1.4 Applicants with Disabilities*

Students with disabilities can broadly be described as those with physical disabilities, with specific learning difficulties, and with medical conditions that may have an impact upon their studies. Applications are welcomed from students who present with such learning challenges and reasonable accommodations will be made, where possible and within the



College's resource constraints, to help students to overcome these challenges. Further details can be found by referring to UPOL018 UniHaven Learner Disability Policy Rev 2.

Should a student have a learning challenge that they believe could hinder full participation in the College programme, they are invited to contact the Academic Director during the admissions process to discuss the issues involved in complete confidence. Students must use UFORM015 Evidence of Disability Form Rev 1 to declare the relevant disability with supporting information to allow the College to first understand what impact such challenges may have on their ability to successfully complete the programme and to allow the College to make sure that the College programme is suitable for the student's learning needs. Such admissions queries are evaluated by the Academic Director who will determine if the programme is suitable for the student or not and by reference to the relevant HEI partner that the student wishes to progress to where relevant leading to a decision whether to admit the student or not. If the Academic Director decides that the student's learning needs can be reasonably accommodated, the student will be admitted (assuming the standard entry criteria have been met) but if the Academic Director deems the programme not to be best suited to the student's needs, the student's enrolment application will be declined. As with all student admission decisions, the Academic Director's decision can be appealed via the College Appeals Board...refer to UPOL007 UniHaven Student Recruitment and Admissions Policy Rev 2, section 5.

#### *4.5.3.1.5 Higher Education Institution Conditional Offer Letters*

As a pathway provider, the College only recruits students who wish to study degrees at the College's Irish HEI partners. To reassure applicants about their progression to the HEI degree programme, the HEI partners will issue Conditional Offer Letters (COLs) to College applicants showing how their progression to a degree programme is assured on the condition that College students successfully complete the programme and successfully get a visa to study with the HEI in Ireland. Refer to UPOL007 UniHaven Student Recruitment and Admissions Policy Rev 2 for full details on the application procedures.

#### *4.5.3.1.6 Making an Offer*

Once an applicant has been accepted for enrolment onto the programme, a formal College

COL is generated. This letter outlines the offer made to the applicant and the conditions on which such offer is made together with timelines for accepting the offer, payments etc. Conditions attached to the offer of a place will be clear and specific. College COLs will only be issued if accompanied by a the HEI partner conditional offer letter. Refer to UPOL007 UniHaven Student Recruitment and Admissions Policy Rev 2 for full details on the application procedures.

#### *4.5.3.1.7 Registration of Students*

After accepting the offer, students must pay their fees as detailed in UPOL008 UniHaven Fees and Refund Policy Rev 1 to secure their place on their course. Students will then be registered on the College LMS (see chapter 9, section 9.4) and receive their registration packs. UPRO002 UniHaven Student Registration and Induction Procedure Rev 1 outlines the full registration and induction procedures.

#### *4.5.3.1.8 Deferrals*

An applicant who has received an offer but does not wish to take up their place may apply for a Deferral of Admission. Deferred place offers will expire within one year because of the need for applicants to prove English language competency at the admission stage that is less than 2 years old. Deferred applicants must be made aware that admission is subject to programme availability and capacity at the postponed date. Refer to UPOL007 UniHaven Student Recruitment and Admissions Policy Rev 2 for full details on the deferral procedures.

#### *4.5.3.1.9 Withdrawals*

Every student will be helped to achieve their educational goals. However, on occasion, it may be in the best interest of the student that they withdraw from their programme before the end of the programme because of a need to go back to their home country for family or other reasons, because of illness, or for other relevant reasons that may lead a student to the conclusion that withdrawing is in their best interest then despite the College options such as deferring, delaying due to extenuating circumstances and so on. Refer to UPOL007 UniHaven Student Recruitment and Admissions Policy Rev 2 for full details on the withdrawal procedures.

#### *4.5.3.1.10 Appeals*

If an applicant chooses to appeal an admissions decision, they are entitled to do so. All admissions appeal must be made by email to the Academic Director, within five working days of the decision being communicated. Refer to UPOL007 UniHaven Student Recruitment and Admissions Policy Rev 2 for full details on the admissions appeal procedures.

#### *4.5.3.1.11 Applicant Complaints*

The College is committed to ensuring that any interaction with an applicant is conducted in a professional, courteous, confidential, and respectful manner and it is expected that any communication from an applicant is conducted in the same way. Should any applicant have any feedback or complaints regarding the recruitment or admissions process, they should email [studywithus@unihaven.ie](mailto:studywithus@unihaven.ie). Refer to UPOL007 UniHaven Student Recruitment and Admissions Policy Rev 2 for full details on the application procedures.

#### *4.5.3.1.12 Student Visas*

Students from many Non-European Economic Area countries will likely require a visa to study in Ireland. The Recruitment and Admissions Officer will provide guidance and support to the applicants with any visa-related questions, informing them of the necessary visa requirements. Students should also contact their local Irish Embassy for information. The College cannot give any guarantees for successful visa applications. The documents that students require for their visa application can only be issued once the payment for their programme has been received as per agreed payment deadlines. Refer to UPOL007 UniHaven Student Recruitment and Admissions Policy Rev 2 for full details on the application procedures.

#### *4.5.3.1.13 Partner Visas*

College staff will connect students with HEI partners to facilitate the smooth progression to the HEI partner and the relevant programmes. This will include the provision for support of visa applications. Refer to UPOL007 UniHaven Student Recruitment and Admissions Policy Rev 2 for full details on the application procedures.

#### 4.5.3.2 Transfer

A student can transfer internally from one programme pathway stream to another if the modules of study and the completion of same allow in the context of both the learning the student has already completed to date and the entry requirements of the HEI degree they seek to progress to. Pathway stream transfers must be requested in the first four weeks of the programme to reduce the potential for negative impacts and allow for a natural transfer opportunity. In exceptional cases, a pathway stream transfer will be considered after the first 4 weeks. The stream transfer request would normally only be considered where a natural transfer opportunity occurs, i.e., at the end of a term or a semester. Pathway stream transfers are dealt with as per UPOL006 UniHaven Access, Transfer and Progression Policy Rev 2. Transfers from and to similar level 5 Specific Purpose Certificate in International Foundation Studies programmes may be considered. Students should discuss such requests with the Academic Director who will consider such requests in good faith.

#### 4.5.3.3 Progression

As a pathway provider, students have decided while enrolling with the College what HEI and degree they wish to study post programme assuming successful completion of same and subject to the students securing the necessary visa to enter Ireland. Progression to a programme of education and training leading to awards at levels 6, 7 and 8 on the NFQ will be possible when students successfully complete the programme and achieve any specific requirements as specified by the receiving programme or institution. Decisions on the progression of students into undergraduate programmes at the UniHaven College partner HEIs are ultimately made by the respective partner universities and institutions.

To reassure applicants about their progression to the HEI degree programme, the HEI partners will issue Conditional Offer Letters (COLs) to College applicants showing how their progression to a degree programme is assured on the condition that College students successfully complete the programme, meet the HIE Partner requirements and successfully get a visa to study with the HEI in Ireland. HEI Partner COLs are separate to UniHaven College COLs with HEI Partner COLs outlining partner requirements and College COLs outlining UniHaven requirements. Such agreements to provide COLs are enshrined in Memorandums of Agreements signed with each HEI partner.

## 5. STAFF RECRUITMENT, MANAGEMENT AND DEVELOPMENT

### 5.1 Context

The College considers the quality of its staff to be critical to it being able to deliver on its promise to offer high-quality, professional teaching led by staff who always act with the utmost integrity, and in ways that lead to students feeling that they will have been well cared for while studying at the College. The policies and procedures for staff recruitment, management, and development aim to comply with QQI criteria as follows<sup>33</sup>

- The provider assures itself as to the competence of its staff.
- There is a systematic approach to the fair and transparent recruitment and further professional development of people engaged in programme and service delivery.
- Academic and administrative staff have sufficient experience and expertise to fulfil their designated roles and thereby enhance the teaching and learning environment for students.
- The College will appoint suitably qualified staff to Teacher and all other roles.
- Appraisal of teaching (including assessment) ability is a key part of the selection procedures for Teachers.
- Procedures for recruitment address
  - Roles, responsibilities, and codes of conduct with roles benchmarked with those of similar providers.
  - Academic/professional/technical standards for all staff and how these are maintained and enhanced.
  - Pedagogical standards for teaching staff and how these are maintained and enhanced.
  - Recruitment, selection, probation, and tenure.
- Provide fair, objective, and consistent means by which staff are managed and their performance is reviewed.

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<sup>33</sup> Statutory Quality Assurance Guidelines developed by QQI for use by all Providers (2016), section 4

- Provide opportunities for and promote the professional development of teaching and academic management staff to include the encouragement of innovation in teaching methods and the use of new technologies.
- Collect regular and timely learner and other relevant feedback on the teaching staff.
- Pedagogical training and certification of teaching staff.

Also, all staff recruitment, management, and development practices are performed in compliance with the following Irish legislative requirements and guides:

- Employment (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 2018:
- Minimum Notice and Terms of Employment Acts 1973–2005.
- Industrial Relations (Amendment) Act 2015.
- Organisation of Working Time Act 1997.
- Organisation of Working Time (Records) (Prescribed Form and Exemptions) Regulations 2001.
- Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Act 2005 (as amended): replaced the provisions of the Safety, Health and Welfare Act 1989.
- The Employment Equality Acts 1998–2015.
- Equal Status Acts, 2000 to 2004.
- Equality (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 2015.
- The Criminal Justice (Spent Convictions and Certain Disclosures) Act 2015.
- Protection of Employees (Part-Time Work) Act 2001.
- Protection of Employees (Fixed-Term Work) Act 2003.
- Cara Inclusion Charter - <https://caracentre.ie/sport-inclusion-disability-charter/>.

This chapter sets out the Colleges approaches for the recruitment, management, and development of staff in ways that meet the above criteria. The policies outlined in this chapter are relevant to all staff, full time and part-time, contract staff and employees, whether they hold academic, managerial, or administrative roles.

## 5.2 Staff Recruitment

Recruiting staff at the required level of competence and with the required levels of experience helps to enhance the teaching and learning environment for students to ensure that they will achieve their academic and career goals. Teaching and student support staff roles are critical to the levels of engagement students have while studying at the College and the degree to which they are satisfied with the overall study abroad experience while studying in Ireland. These roles are held by staff who are the main points of contact and interaction with students and are the ones most likely to detect and observe the learning or non-learning issues that cause most concern to students. For these reasons, the recruitment and selection of staff at the College are paramount to making sure that the College ethos, mission, values, strategic priorities, and programme objectives are all achieved for the benefit of students and is performed in line with QQI requirements<sup>34</sup>.

It is the responsibility of the People Officer to ensure that the policies outlined in this chapter are implemented in full. The Programme Manager is responsible for ensuring that Teacher and Student Support staff selection results in the appointment of College teaching and support staff who are a true reflection of the type of people-centred educator it wants to be and whose competence is suitable to the programme being taught in all aspects. All staff are expected to comply with UDOC005 UniHaven Code of Ethics Rev 1, and the staff-related policies and procedures that are outlined in UDOC007 UniHaven Employee Handbook Rev 1. Final approval for staff hiring decisions is made at EMT...see sections 2.2.3 and 2.5.1. College line management structures are described in section 2.2.1.

There are three key stages in the College's recruitment and selection process, namely Planning, Selection, and Verification and Offer, an overview of which is outlined in sections 5.2.3, 5.2.4 and 5.2.5 below. The selection and offer procedures and relevant documentation are described in detail in UPOL009 UniHaven Staff Recruitment and Selection Policy Rev 2.

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<sup>34</sup> Statutory Quality Assurance Guidelines developed by QQI for use by all Providers (2016), section 4.1

### 5.2.1 Principles

The College commits to:

- Operating a competitive recruitment process founded upon a fair, open, and transparent approach designed to enable the selection of the most suitable person from the widest possible range of suitable applicants. To this end, interviewing staff are expected to have completed the following short courses to guide fair recruitment at the College:
  - Unconscious Bias (online) - <https://www.mslearning.microsoft.com/course/72169/launch>.
  - Recruit and Selection (online) - <https://www.open.edu/openlearn/money-business/human-resources/human-resources-recruitment-and-selection/content-section-0?active-tab=description-tab>.
- Ensuring that all candidates are treated fairly, with dignity, respect, and courtesy, and ensuring a positive candidate experience.
- Attracting and engaging staff from a wide and diverse background and proactively seeks to avoid unfair bias in its processes. The College encourages the recruitment of staff with disabilities and will make reasonable adjustments at all stages of the recruitment process as required.
- Promoting best practice in recruitment and selection and will continuously develop innovative attraction and delivery strategies in College practices.
- Treating all documentation relating to applicants confidentially under GDPR legislation and UPOL020 UniHaven Data Protection Policy Rev 1.
- If necessary, the successful candidate is required to provide appropriate documentary evidence of their right to work in Ireland before taking up their employment.

### 5.2.2 Roles and Selection Criteria

The key College roles were outlined in section 2.4 and were listed as being, in an academic context, the Academic Director, Programme Manager, and Teacher with the Student Support Officer relevant in a student care context. Initially, the Programme Manager and role will be held by individual who is also a qualified Teacher. Key selection criteria for each key academic role are listed below. The selection criteria have been



identified from key College staff previous work experience in and knowledge of similar providers. These criteria are used to inform job descriptions at the advertising stage, shortlisting for the interview stage, and identification of the best candidate at the recommendation stage.

#### 5.2.2.1 Academic Director Selection Criteria

- Essential Requirements
  - Masters qualified with a recognised TEFL certification.
  - 5+ years of teaching experience in a QQI or equivalent accreditation environment, at least 2 of which are in a multicultural environment.
  - Curriculum design.
  - 2+ years' experience in managing programmes.
  - Experience in online teaching, assessment, and support.
  - Must be comfortable with change/flexibility, working on own initiative, working in and with a small team.
  - Garda Vetting.
- Desirable Requirements
  - PhD with 2+ years of centre management experience.
  - Has taught overseas.

#### 5.2.2.2 Programme Manager Selection Criteria

- Essential Requirements
  - Degree qualified at NFQ level 8 minimum.
  - 3+ years of secondary, further, or higher education teaching experience in a related discipline, at least 1 of which is in a multicultural environment.
  - Curriculum design with experience in teaching, assessment, and learning support.
  - 1+ years' experience in managing programmes.

- Must be comfortable with change/flexibility, working on own initiative, working in and with a small team.
- Garda Vetting.
- Desirable Requirements
  - Masters qualified.
  - A recognised TEFL certification (CELTA, Trinity TESOL or QQI Certificate in Teaching English as a Second or Other Language (TESOL) - NFQ level 7 (Special Purpose Award)).
  - 1+ years' experience in centre management.
  - Teaching qualification.

#### 5.2.2.3 Teacher Selection Criteria

- English Teachers
  - Essential Requirements
    - Degree qualified at NFQ level 8 minimum.
    - Recognised TEFL certification (CELTA, Trinity TESOL or QQI Certificate in Teaching English as a Second or Other Language (TESOL) - NFQ level 7 (Special Purpose Award))
    - English teaching experience – 3 years minimum.
    - Experience of teaching, assessment and learning support.
    - Garda Vetting.
  - Desirable Requirements
    - MA TESOL, Applied Linguistics, or related discipline.
    - Teaching qualification.
- Academic Module Teachers
  - Essential Requirements
    - Degree qualified at NFQ level 8 minimum in a related discipline.
    - 3+ years of secondary, further, or higher education teaching experience in a related discipline, at least 1 of which is in a multicultural environment.
    - Experience of teaching, assessment and learning support.
    - Garda Vetting.

- Desirable Requirements

- Postgraduate degree in a related discipline.
- Teaching qualification.

#### 5.2.2.4 Student Support Selection Criteria

- Essential Requirements

- Degree-qualified at NFQ level 7 minimum or equivalent work experience.
- Excellent administrative and organisational skills with the ability to prioritise their work to meet deadlines.
- Good IT skills, experience working with MS Office.
- Excellent interpersonal skills including both verbal and written communication.
- Garda vetting.

- Desirable Requirements

- Experience in a similar role with international provider or higher education institution.
- Experience in working with and providing both administrative and pastoral support to students.

#### 5.2.3 Planning

The recruitment and selection process will not commence until the need for a role has been established consistent with the College's strategic plans and its budgetary constraints. EMT signs off on all new roles in the College. Before signoff is secured, a Manager or Officer must present a business case to EMT to justify the rationale for proposing any new role. This rationale should include at a minimum:

- The role proposer is tasked with refining the role description for the role outlining the aim of the role, its key responsibilities, the skills, and competencies needed for the role, the level of experience required and the required qualifications, both essential and preferred.

- The workload rationale explaining why the workload relevant to the proposed role cannot be done by someone else, by a reorganisation of workload allocations among existing staff or by IT improvements that minimise existing staff workloads.
- If the proposed role is full time or part-time.
- The cost-benefit analysis relevant to the proposed role includes financial and non-financial factors.

If EMT is satisfied with the rationale presented, the role is signed off together with the salary band and benefits applying, and the advertising budget and location. All College roles will be open to internal and external applicants. Preparation for the selection stage then starts.

#### 5.2.4 Selection

The role proposer consults with the People Officer who oversees the section process. The following aspects of selection are key to the successful appointment of a new role holder at the College:

- Advertising
  - The People Officer is responsible for placing recruitment advertisements for staff in line with the relevant job description selection criteria (see section 5.2.2), at the agreed location, within agreed budgets and using language in line with College diversity and inclusion selection aims...see section 5.2.1.
- Closing Date
  - Vacancies will be advertised for between 2 and 4 weeks with the more senior roles being advertised for a longer period.
- Membership of Selection Committee
  - The People Officer will decide on the composition of the interview Selection Committee as relevant to the role being filled.
- Shortlisting
  - The Selection Committee carries out the initial shortlisting of applications by comparing evidence in the application against the essential and desirable criteria for the post as set out in the job description.
  - Where a candidate does not meet one or more of the essential criteria, the role must be re-advertised until suitable candidates have been identified.

- The Interview
  - All shortlisted candidates will be seen and considered by the same Selection Committee and should typically be interviewed on the same day. Where this is not possible, the interviews should be held over as short a period as possible.
  - Video conferencing facilities are available and should be considered as needed. Candidates will be offered additional support and will make reasonable adjustments as required.
  - Before interviews being held, each member of the Selection Committee should prepare thoroughly for the interview in question as per College selection procedures.
  - Presentations on areas such as strategy, college management etc. are included as part of the selection process for EMT and Academic Management roles.
  - Presentations to assess pedagogical standards, teaching and assessment ability, and teaching style are included as part of the selection process for Teachers where Teachers will be asked to ‘teach’ a sample of programme content on which they will be assessed by the interview panel.
  - After each interview, all members of the Selection Committee should record their comments and rate each candidate against the pre-determined essential and desirable criteria from the job description in the Interview Assessment Form with one Interview Assessment Form representing the collective view of the Selection Committee also completed post interviews.
  - The interview outcome and justification for a recruitment decision should be recorded on each form to ensure the process is suitably robust and transparent. This will enable the College to demonstrate that the most suitably qualified candidate is appointed along with the requisite documentary record of the decision and will enable constructive feedback to be provided to candidates on their request.
- Recommendation
  - Once a preferred candidate has been identified by the Selection Committee, the People Officer will formally notify EMT of the decision and seek their approval to proceed. The EMT reserves the right to call for a second

interview and/or to have the CEO or Academic Director (as relevant to the role) discuss the proposed role with the proposed candidate.

- The People Officer will issue all post-interview correspondence, including regret communications.

#### 5.2.5 Verification and Offer

The formal written offer of employment and written particulars of terms and conditions of employment will be issued by the People Officer, typically following verbal or email acceptance by the preferred candidate. The candidate is asked to accept the offer in writing by a specified date. All offers are conditional on the successful candidate meeting the following verification requirements:

- Qualifications.
- References.
- Occupational Health (if appropriate).
- Garda Vetting.

If the evidence of any candidate's qualifications shows that such candidates do not meet the minimum selection criteria in this aspect, whether through oversight, error or through misinformation, such candidate will no longer be considered for the role in question and will be dismissed if such fact is uncovered after being appointed to a role. Once appointed, all staff will be issued with a statement of employment, an employment contract, and a copy of UDOC007 UniHaven Employee Handbook Rev 1 that forms a part of the employment contract.

## 5.3 Staff Management

### 5.3.3 Staff Communication and Involvement

Communication to staff and feedback from staff is disseminated and collected both formally and informally. Staff will liaise with their Line Manager in the first instance who arranges formal or semi-formal briefing sessions to ensure all staff are up to date with the requirements of the QAM, policies and other relevant information in line with QQI requirements<sup>35</sup>. The College Line Management structure is as follows and in line with that outlined in section 2.4:

- The Academic Director reports to the CEO.
- The Programme Manager reports to the Academic Director.
- Teachers and the Student Support Officer reports to the Programme Manager.

The weekly class timetable will highlight key staff meetings and events that normally involve the Programme Manager, Teachers and Student Support Officer. Formal communication is also facilitated through the College boards and committees that staff are members of as outlined in section 2.3. The minutes of the various board and committee meetings are available as read-only documents on the College IT systems/servers for all staff to read and digest, both full and part-time, as relevant, and appropriate to the roles they hold.

### 5.3.4 Teacher Workload Allocation

Teachers – permanent, part-time or contract - must have a fair workload balanced against the needs of their students, the needs of their colleagues and the needs of the College and the Programme Manager is expected to work in line with the following College guidelines.

- Staff have a balanced workload with the expectation that Teachers will both teach as their main role but that they will perform administrative duties as required.

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<sup>35</sup> Statutory Quality Assurance Guidelines developed by QQI for use by all Providers (2016), section 4.2

- Workload allocation must be flexible to deal with any extra internal and external demands that may arise during an academic term or year.
- Workload allocation approaches need to be transparent, practical, equitable, and easy to both understand and implement.
- The workload envisaged must reflect a reasonable work-life balance and be compatible with a healthy working environment.
- Staff must have adequate time for the delivery of prompt and effective feedback to students and such time will be made available in the weekly timetables. This is essential to the delivery of effective teaching and the successful academic progression of students<sup>36</sup>.
- No Teacher will be asked to teach more than 25 contact hours a week at a maximum. The actual number of hours per Teacher will depend on class sizes and modules being taught. With the College's blended learning approach to teaching, it is envisaged that Teachers will strike a healthy balance between live taught classes and both online and in-class tutorial support.

The Programme Manager will consider the above in preparing a weekly timetable that works well both for Teachers and students and will agree on it with Teachers before implementation. A list of contract staff and their availability will be held by the Programme Manager so that a substitute can be organised depending on the situation.

The College commits to recognising that an administration workload to include the teaching and general administration activities described above is necessary for any Teacher to undertake in addition to any Teacher's teaching workload. From researching comparable institutions' approaches for administration workload estimates for Teachers who teach foundation or equivalent programmes, the College estimates that over the entire teaching year, a Teacher's administration workload will be at a ratio of 0.5 hours for every four hours taught. The College, therefore, will pay every Teacher 0.5 hour's administration work for every four hours of teaching that they do which it believes is in line with other Irish higher education environments. This will include the teaching

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<sup>36</sup> Statutory Quality Assurance Guidelines developed by QQI for use by all Providers, section 7.1.d.



administration described below and to include any other form of administration required as part of their role, to include meetings attendance. This will be an all-inclusive rate to cater for the fact that some weeks will have heavier administration workloads than others (i.e., during assessments and exam periods) while other weeks will have much less administration duties. The intention is that teachers will complete their administration requirements and activities knowing that they are being fairly compensated for doing so. Furthermore, that teachers are compensated for the entirety of the work they do at the College knowing that the extent of their teaching and other administration activities is duly recognised. Academic workload encompasses a broad range of components that have been categorised under the headings of teaching, administration, and scholarship. Full details are outlined in UPOL011 UniHaven Academic Staff Workload Allocation Policy Rev 2 with a summary of same below.

#### 5.3.4.1 Teaching Activities

Teaching activities include contact hours with students, whether in class, tutorials, workshops, or other types of situations where the teacher is delivering module content to students and/or guiding student discussion, presentation, or other activities. Teaching activities also include the time spent in the preparation of classes. Teachers – permanent, part-time and/or contract - are expected to keep up to date with developments in the area(s) in which they teach and to incorporate new material or approaches into their classes...see also section 5.4 and UPOL010 UniHaven Staff Learning and Development Policy Rev 1. Academic assessment workloads can vary greatly depending on class size and because of all identified enhancements in teaching and learning. This includes the correction of essays, exams, supervising projects and other continuous assessment pieces, and the delivery of feedback to students.

#### 5.3.4.2 Administration Activities

The College is committed to ensuring that essential administration activities fulfilled by Teachers are catered for in the weekly timetables in an equitable, transparent, and flexible manner. Administration activities are those activities that are related to teaching but also include activities necessitated by the Programme Manager role. An indicative list is outlined in UPOL011 UniHaven Academic Staff Workload Allocation Policy Rev 2.

#### 5.3.4.3 Scholarship Activities

While not a research institution, the College does encourage scholarship in the context of meeting staff learning and development aims and the aims of the College as an international and multicultural education institution. Teachers are encouraged to make time for scholarship activity in agreement with the Programme Manager in advance of the timetable being finalised and with the aims of such activity being agreed between Teachers and the Programme Manager in advance.

#### 5.3.5 Staff Performance Management

All College staff expect that they will approach their Line Manager at any time to discuss their performance. Not only that, but it is expected that true performance management will be done week in week out, day in day out in the sense that praise and recognition for good work done, and correction of behaviour and performance that needs improving, be all actioned promptly and not left to an annual review meeting.

##### 5.3.5.1 Teacher Observations

Scheduled teacher observations are an important part of ensuring that the College teaching, pedagogical, technical, and general academic standards are maintained. As such, teacher observation serves both performance management and staff development (see section 5.4) purposes. From a performance management perspective, the Programme Manager will observe a live teaching class and a live assessment exercise at least once per academic year. Post observation, the Programme Manager and Teacher will discuss the observation, the Programme Manager will provide feedback on areas where performance is satisfactory and areas for improvement, after which a corrective action plan is formed to address any shortcomings. The Programme Manager will follow up to ensure action is taken and will sign off on progress. Staff individual documentation will be kept as part of the confidential staff file on the College server with access limited to the Programme Manager and Academic Director. Any staff member who refuses to engage in the Teacher Observation process will be dealt with under the staff disciplinary procedures outline in UDOC007 UniHaven Employee Handbook Rev 1.

#### 5.3.5.2 Annual Performance Review Meetings (PRMs)

PRMs should be held in December each year to close off the previous year's action plans and to plan for the new calendar year to follow. The PRM should be future-focused, and goal-oriented rather than spending time discussing issues that should have been resolved promptly throughout the preceding year. It will encompass a discussion of performance-related actions from teacher observations, individual Line Manager interactions and development opportunities that may have emerged in the preceding year or that may be requested/approved for the following year. The output is an agreed action plan. The full procedure is outlined in UPRO010 UniHaven Performance Management Procedure Rev 1. Any staff member who refuses to engage in the PRM procedure will be dealt with under the staff disciplinary procedures outline in UDOC007 UniHaven Employee Handbook Rev 1.

#### 5.3.5.3 Staff Complaints and Protected Disclosures

All staff are encouraged to air any grievances to their Line Manager in the first instance or, should that not be appropriate to the People Officer or a member of EMT. For all informal or formal complaints and grievances, staff should follow the procedures outlined in UDOC007 UniHaven Employee Handbook Rev 1. Staff are also entitled to make a protected disclosure if they believe the College is guilty of any major wrongdoing as per UPOL031 UniHaven Protected Disclosures Policy Rev 1.

## 5.4 Staff Development

In line with QQI requirements<sup>37</sup> and as relevant to the type of programme run, the College is committed to

- Offer opportunities for and promote the professional development of teaching staff.
- Encourage scholarly activity, as appropriate, to strengthen the link between education, teaching, and research.

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<sup>37</sup> Statutory Quality Assurance Guidelines developed by QQI for use by all Providers (2016), section 4.3.

- Encourage activity to strengthen the links between education, teaching, research, and other developments within fields.
- Encourage innovation in teaching methods and the use of new technologies.
- Staff members have access to support and opportunities for development based on a systematic approach to the identification of their continuing professional training and development needs.
- An internal system of support for newly qualified staff, or staff with minimal experience, is documented and in operation.
- A mechanism is in place to impart feedback to staff members on their strengths and areas requiring improvement.
- Planning and resources are committed to identifying and addressing staff training needs.

Staff development refers to the policies, practices, and procedures used to develop the knowledge, skills, and competencies of College staff to improve their confidence, competence, and effectiveness. The College wishes to provide managers and staff with a framework that supports and encourages their development in line with College objectives. In this context, staff development applies to both full time and part-time staff. Development activities that have no direct relevance to the individual's role nor the College's objectives are not included. UPOL010 UniHaven Staff Learning and Development Policy Rev 1 outlines the full policy in detail with the below sections describing its key aspects.

#### 5.4.3 Principles

The overall College approach to the development of its staff is guided by the following commitments:

- The College is committed to providing staff with development opportunities backed by sufficient budgets for same to ensure that staff can contribute fully to the achievement of their own and the College's development aims.

- EMT members and Line Managers are provided with the skills, knowledge, and competencies they need to work in partnership with their staff to support their continuous development.
- All staff – permanent, contract, temporary, and part-time - have equitable access to staff development opportunities, appropriate to their role and aligned to their objectives.
- All internal developmental activities will support the need to heighten awareness of equality, diversity, and inclusion issues. Where relevant, this will be reflected in the design, content, and delivery of each activity.
- The College is subject to several statutory regulations – examples include health and safety, employment law, child protection etc. - and it must ensure that staff are trained to levels appropriate to their roles to comply with such legislative requirements. Participation in such staff development activities will, therefore, be mandatory.
- All proposed staff development activity must be approved in advance by the Academic Director for academic staff and the CEO for non-academic staff who will approve the activity and the budget, the latter against pre-assigned staff development budgets.
- Line Managers are expected to encourage all staff to partake in internal and external staff development opportunities relevant to their identified development needs.
- Staff must take responsibility for their development. In addition to undertaking mandatory and relevant training, they are expected to avail of the development opportunities provided to enable them to keep their skills updated, to respond flexibly to changing College learning approaches and needs, and to actively partake in development opportunities as relevant to their role and the learning communities they are encouraged to be members of. This includes but is not limited to development concerning the use of technology in blended learning contexts<sup>38</sup>.

Staff learning and development needs can emanate from staff individual formal and informal discussions, teacher observations, annual budgetary cycles and reviews, staff

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<sup>38</sup> Statutory Quality Assurance Guidelines for Providers of Blended Learning Programmes, section 3.1.3

requests, Programme Board reviews or from suggestions arising from external input or engagements.

#### 5.4.4 Roles and Responsibilities in Staff learning and Development

While the People Officer provides support to Line Managers to ensure the College takes a structured, documented approach to staff learning and development, the critical roles in the implementation of this policy are College Line Managers. It is these leaders who will determine the satisfaction levels of staff that in turn, when positive, will improve the satisfaction levels of students. Staff also have their own level of responsibility for their own development.

##### 5.4.4.1 People Officer

The People Officer is responsible for:

- Effective staff development provision, from clarifying the need, to design and selecting methods, through to the delivery and evaluation of interventions.
- Providing all Line Managers and those involved in the identification and prioritisation of staff development activities with the relevant support.
- Providing an advisory service to Line Managers and staff on external developments within the staff development field.
- Offering guidance on the external provision of staff development interventions.
- Providing the mechanisms to ensure accurate training records are maintained.
- Evaluating staff development activities to assure and enhance their quality.

##### 5.4.4.2 Line Managers

Line Managers are responsible for:

- Ensuring that individuals have the opportunity at regular intervals, to discuss their development needs and identifying appropriate development opportunities.
- Giving staff constructive, honest, and timely feedback on their performance in line with the policies and outlined in section 5.3 (staff management).

- Identifying individual and team development needs that take account of both the College goals and the aspirations of individuals.
- Regularly considering the development needs which will enable individuals or groups to respond effectively to internal and external changes.
- Establishing priorities taking account of individual, team and College priorities and making appropriate provision to meet them within the resources available.
- Where appropriate, approving attendance at relevant staff development activities and making appropriate provision for the release of staff from their duties.
- Briefing and de-briefing their staff who participate in staff development activities, to facilitate effective consolidation of their learning and in some cases dissemination more widely.
- Ensuring that action plans are agreed, documented, and implemented.

#### 5.4.4.3 Individual Staff Members

Individual staff members are responsible for:

- Reflecting at regular intervals upon their performance in their current jobs and future career aspirations and identifying their appropriate development needs.
- Discussing these with their Line Manager during their PRM to establish priorities concerning their personal, team or College objectives.
- For the upkeep and maintenance of their development portfolio as evidence of their development and achievement.
- Applying newly developed knowledge and skills to their work and the development of their careers while taking advantage of available developmental opportunities.
- Where difficulties occur, raising issues with their Line Manager and People Officer in the first instance.

#### 5.4.5 Developmental Opportunities Available at the College

Developmental opportunities originate from one of the following:

- Induction.
- Continuing Professional Development (CPD).
- Staff Performance Management...see also section 5.3.3.

#### 5.4.5.1 Induction

Induction, that includes but is not limited to

- Informational Presentations.
- Cultural and intercultural awareness training.
- Policies and procedures to include QA and Employment.
- Mentoring – mentors will be appointed to all new staff to guide them in their early weeks and months in the College and beyond where necessary.
- The extent to which online learning is used at the College in the context of learning support pre- and post-class and how best to use it.
- Shadowing/Peer Observations – these are different to performance-oriented Programme Manager Teacher observations and allow for peer-to-peer feedback to improve teaching and assessment approaches.
- IT – to include logins, usernames, passwords.
- Facilities/Premises Walkabout.
- Health, Safety, Welfare, and Emergency Procedures.

#### 5.4.5.2 Continuing Professional Development (CPD)

The College will ensure that academic, professional, and technical standards of staff are maintained through the development opportunities specified in UPOL010 Staff Learning and Development Policy, summarised here as follows:

- Reviewing all jobs descriptions on an annual basis.
- Encouraging staff to join relevant professional bodies and attend relevant conferences.
- Holding staff training workshops (at least one per semester) on areas identified or agreed upon by a cross-section of the staff.
- Ensure that pedagogical standards for teaching staff are maintained through the implementation of processes outlined in UPOL010 Staff Learning and Development Policy Rev 1 and UPOL013 Teaching and Learning Policy Rev 1, namely by:
  - Appointing mentors to all new staff to guide them in their early weeks and months in the College and longer where necessary.
  - Facilitating best practice in pedagogy through CPD opportunities.



- Appointing teaching staff to Programme Board to be a part of the programme monitoring, review, and development process.
- Holding regular moderation sessions before assessments to ensure best practice assessment strategies are implemented.
- Shadowing/Peer Observations – these are different to performance-oriented Programme Manager Teacher observations and allow for peer-to-peer feedback to improve teaching and assessment approaches.
- Training teaching staff in the development and delivery of blended learning tools...see also UPOL014 UniHaven Blended Learning Policy Rev 1.
- People – to include formal or informal learning about communications, emotional intelligence, student mental health issues and so on.
- CPD Membership – membership of bodies such as the National Teaching and Learning Forum, AHEAD and the Higher Education Colleges Association (HECA) will be pursued once membership criteria have been satisfied.

#### 5.4.5.3 Staff Performance Management

Development actions emanate from PRMs and Teacher Observations - see section 5.3.3.

## 6. TEACHING AND LEARNING

### 6.2 Context

This College aims to provide the highest standard of international education regarding the learning approaches used to deliver the specific module and programme learning outcomes and regarding how e-learning contributes to the student study experience. The College aims to create a positive and supportive learning environment where student can flourish and in line with QQI guidelines<sup>39</sup> as follows

- Respects and attends to the diversity of students and their needs, enabling flexible learning pathways.
- Considers the use of different modes of delivery, where appropriate.
- Flexible uses a variety of pedagogical methods that are evaluated and monitored and adjusted accordingly.
- Encourages a sense of autonomy in the student, while encouraging adequate guidance and support for the student.
- Promotes mutual respect within the student-teacher relationship.
- Has procedures for dealing with student complaints.
- Has procedures for dealing with student appeals.

The College's aspirations for excellent teaching and learning aims to create a teaching and learning culture that

- Works to achieve high levels of student engagement via flexibility of programme delivery, modularisation, and the deployment of state-of-the-art online learning technology to promote an excellent standard of blended learning and teaching supported by excellent learning analytics in line with QQI's blending learning guidelines<sup>40</sup> and with UPOL014 UniHaven Blended Learning Policy Rev 1.

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<sup>39</sup> Statutory Quality Assurance Guidelines developed by QQI for use by all Providers (2016), section 5.2

<sup>40</sup> Statutory Quality Assurance Guidelines for Providers of Blended Learning Programmes, section 3.1

- Empowers students to be autonomous learners on the College foundation pathway programme such that they will be very well prepared for the third level education that they will progress to.
- Provides students with programme details, including the award, modules, learning outcomes etc. and including appropriate out-of-hours academic contexts as outlined in UDOC001 UniHaven Programme Handbook Rev 2.
- Promotes high-quality teaching and pedagogies which encourage active, independent, learning, in which the roles and responsibilities of staff and students are clear.
- Establishes an inclusive college that promotes diversity in the student population through active and balanced recruitment approaches in conjunction with Agents.

### 6.3 Roles and Responsibilities

The Programme Manager is responsible for the programme in all aspects under the auspices of the Programme Board that reports into AC. The annual teaching and learning review is led by the Programme Manager as part of the annual programme review process culminating in the Annual Programme Report that is submitted to AC...see also chapter 2, section 2.3.2.1 for Programme Board terms of reference, and chapter 4, section 4.4.2 for programme and module reviews.

### 6.4 The Programme

The College teaches a single programme that is overseen by Programme Board and it is intended that

- The programme award complies with the NFQ classification as a Specific Purpose Level 5 Certificate in International Foundation Studies award.
- The programme and modules are described in terms of MIPLOs and MIMLOs, FET credits, and its corresponding NFQ level as per the QQI programme validation specifications<sup>41</sup>.

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<sup>41</sup> QQI's Awards Standards for Pre-Higher Education Awards for International Students (2015)

- All students and staff will be clear as to the workload associated with the modules that need to be completed in terms of total learning hours and teaching/tutorial contact hours before teaching and learning of that module commence.
- The College's Recognition of Prior Learning considerations included in UPOL006 UniHaven Access, Transfer and Progression Policy Rev 2 enables applicants for programmes to seek recognition of previous study or professional experience.
- For full programme details see chapter 4.

### 6.4.3 Learning Outcomes

Learning outcomes are sets of competencies, expressing what the student will know, understand or be able to do after completion of a module or programme with a focus on what the student has achieved rather than merely focussing on the content of what has been taught. Students need to be able to demonstrate attainment of key competencies and knowledge before being judged to have successfully completed a programme of learning in line with QQI requirements<sup>42</sup>.

MIPLOs are more general statements used to refer to the overall attributes, skills, and knowledge of graduates of a given programme. They provide a means of demonstrating the integration of the modules, module components, and personal learning and development that will result from successful participation in the programme. In line with the above programme and learning outcome module requirements:

- The programme will have an associated set of MIPLOs.
- All modules have MIMLOs that described what the student will have learned from each module component and link back to the programme MIPLOs.
- Learning outcomes at both the programme and module-level should be used as the basis on which decisions are made regarding approaches to teaching and learning, and the selection of appropriate assessment strategies.
- Programme Board will consider the extent and effectiveness to which learning outcomes are being employed in curriculum design, teaching and learning provision, and to ensure that over-assessment and under-assessment are

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<sup>42</sup> Policies and criteria for the validation of programmes of education and training (2017)

avoided...see also chapter 7 and UPOL015 UniHaven Assessment and Awards Policy Rev 2.

- Programme Board will examine the extent to which the MIPLOs and MIMLOs are being achieved when reviewing programme and module content, assessment, and student performance. See chapter 2, section 2.3.2.1, for Programme Board Terms of Reference where the ability to consider the employment of additional external teaching and learning expertise is outlined.

#### 6.4.4 Programme Board

Programme Board is responsible for the monitoring, review and improvement of teaching and learning at the College. See chapter 2, section 2.3.2.1 for full Programme Board terms of reference. Once the College grows, a Teaching and Learning Committee will be formed as the dedicated body to oversee teaching and learning at the College. Specific to teaching and learning, Programme Board aims to

- Develop and enhance College teaching and learning policies and procedures as outlined in UPOL013 UniHaven Teaching and Learning Policy Rev 1. It may recommend changes and improvements to policies and procedures related to teaching, learning and assessment.
- To improve teaching, learning and assessment in practice within the College. It evaluates staff CPD needs to include blended learning and assessment aspects...refer to UPOL010 UniHaven Staff Learning and Development Policy Rev 1.
- Monitor and review the curriculum, learning and teaching, student development and achievement, student engagement, assessment, and academic standards.
- Seek to enhance the quality of student learning opportunities... see also section 6.5 for student feedback mechanisms.
- Monitor and review learning as outlined in section 6.3.3. Further information is outlined in chapter 9, section 9.5 and detailed in complementary ways in UPOL020 UniHaven Data Protection Policy Rev 1 and UPOL025 UniHaven Learning Analytics Policy Rev 1.

#### 6.4.5 Learning Monitoring

Learning will be monitored to enable improved feedback to be given to students to help with their learning and to help the teachers to know if their style and way of teaching are effective or not in line with QQI requirements<sup>43</sup>. Methods used include

- Teaching survey: to get student feedback on teaching methods, modules and content, assessments, the learning experience, and homework, to include the blended learning aspects.
- Assessment data: to include formative and summative assessment grades to check students' academic progress throughout the modules and the programme.
- Retention data: to include deferrals, leaves of absence, withdrawals to monitor if and why students may temporarily or permanently leave the programme.
- Learning analytics: for online pre-work and post-class work distributed through the online learning management system. The system itself collects and reports data analytics around learning effectiveness through this medium and student engagement with each other, with their Teachers and with the content itself. A full description of the type of data collected and how it is used is provided in UPOL025 UniHaven Learning Analytics Policy Rev 1.
- Student Attendance: To comply with Department of Justice (INIS) regulations, students from outside the European Economic Area (EEA) are required to attend a minimum of 85% of all classes. Attendance is recorded for every class and monitored regularly. Poor attendance is a serious issue and will be followed up immediately. If not addressed, it can lead to warnings up to and including dismissal from the programme and/or visa withdrawals. UPRO010 UniHaven Student Complaints and Disciplinary Procedure Rev 1 outlines the steps involved in this process and is available on the College website and LMS. See also chapter 8, section 8.4.10.
- Progression data: to include the number/percentage of students who completed the programme successfully and the number/percentage of students who progressed to their selected degree programme as planned when they first enrolled

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<sup>43</sup> Policies and criteria for the validation of programmes of education and training (2017), section 17.9.d

with the College, i.e., access to the degree from the pathway they chose has been successfully achieved. See also chapter 9, section 9.5.

## 6.5 Approaches to Teaching & Learning

The College's teaching and learning approaches will be driven by a desire to maximise student engagement and learning effectiveness with the ultimate twin intentions of providing the student with a thorough education that academically prepares them for higher education study but one that also provides an excellent study (abroad) experience. The pathway approach where students are recruited to study the College programme on the assumption that they are doing so to get access to degree programmes at one of its HEI partners places a responsibility on the Teachers and Programme Manager to employ a range of teaching and learning approaches that mirror those used by these partners. Such approaches, for example, may include problem/enquiry-based learning, individual/team project work, blended learning, laboratory practical's, project work, skills workshops, participative large class meetings (i.e., classes with opportunities for discussion and activity), learning communities, peer mentoring groups, and presentations. See UDOC012 UniHaven Teaching, Learning and Assessment Strategy Rev 0 that provides more detail on the range of teaching, learning and assessment approaches available when teaching at the college.

### 6.5.3 Technology

The increasing range of technologies available to support learning will be effective if systematically integrated within a blended learning experience or used, perhaps, to free up time within lectures and classes to allow for a more communicative and participative approach for both Teachers and students. The College's chosen LMS (see chapter 9, section 9.4) will aid this approach through its ability to allow students to socialise online, to pre-read class material, to post-class question and digest material, and to do so in a manner that allows ease of access to Teacher input. This system also provides learning analytics that measures student engagement and learning effectiveness as students engage with the programme content. The LMS will be available to support the learning support delivery and formative assessment of modules. New and emerging technologies will be explored and suggestions from Teachers will be discussed at Programme Board. See

UPOL014 UniHaven Blended Learning Policy Rev 1 and UPOL025 UniHaven Learning Analytics Policy Rev 1 for more details.

#### 6.5.4 Principles

As a general guide, the College expects that

- Teachers will select appropriate methods of teaching and promoting student learning based on the specified MIMPLOs and MIMLOs and link these also with approaches to assessment. Programme and assessment documentation will outline the methods to be used in addressing the intended learning outcomes<sup>44</sup>.
- Teachers will provide timely, i.e. within 2 weeks, formative feedback to students regularly and not just limited to formal assessment feedback<sup>45</sup>.
- Programme Board will review the teaching and learning methodologies, student impact, and learning effectiveness to identify potential areas for development and, where necessary, development and resource requirements.
- Curriculum development and review will consider the student learning experience and identify how the different blend of teaching methods and technologies serves the overall programme aims and intended learning outcomes.
- The selection of and use of premises and facilities is done in ways that maximise the creation of good quality learning spaces. The wider learning infrastructure that includes a library and IT facilities will be resourced appropriately to support teaching and learning aims. Premises and facilities will be reviewed annually via Programme Board, at AC and EMT.

### 6.6 Student Feedback and Expectations

Students must be encouraged to be independent, autonomous learners as they prepare themselves for progression to degree programmes post programme completion at the College. While College staff will do their best to care for and academically progress students as much as possible, students need to take responsibility for their learning and

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<sup>44</sup> Policies and criteria for the validation of programmes of education and training (2017), section 17.2 and 17.9

<sup>45</sup> Policies and criteria for the validation of programmes of education and training (2017), section 17.9.e



their behaviour while learning at the College.

### 6.6.3 Student Feedback

Student feedback is vital to College staff understanding how students are navigating their way through the programme materials and assessments, formative and summative. To ensure that student feedback is gathered and valued to help with teaching and learning enhancement, feedback will be collected as follows:

1. Student Representation...see also chapter 3, section 3.3.3. and chapter 8, section 8.4.8.
  - A Student Representative is a student chosen for each College pathway programme stream to facilitate interaction between staff and students regarding programme-related matters and student-support-related matters. Essentially, the student representative is the point of contact for a particular programme or class/module on behalf of peer students.
  - The student representative will receive training to explain the role and responsibilities and will receive support from the Student Support Officer as to how best to fill this important student-voice role. Meetings will be held monthly to gain feedback on classes and the programme, student wellbeing and any issues students may be encountering.
2. Student Surveys...see also chapter 8, section 8.4.9.
  - Separate from the student representative channel, feedback will be sought from students through surveys that will be generated each semester and at the end of the programme as follows:
    - Engagement surveys: to find out more about the student experience at the College and to get an insight into student opinions on the broader study abroad College experience to include the programme, teaching facilities and technologies, student support services, social programme activities, and accommodation.
    - An overall experience survey will be conducted at the end of the programme to enable students to give feedback and recommendations based on College experience throughout the full academic year and to allow for any change in experience from the start of the programme through to its end.

#### 6.6.4 Students Expectation

Students are expected to behave as per the recommendations outlined in detail in UDOC008 UniHaven Student Charter Rev 1 to ensure that their learning journey is fruitful for them and respectful of fellow students, staff, and facilities. In a teaching and learning context, students can reasonably expect certain behaviours from the College and the College can expect certain behaviours of students.

##### 6.6.4.1 Expectations of Students

Students can expect that the College will

- Create a stimulating and challenging learning environment.
- Provide high-quality teaching and supervision.
- Provide access to adequate facilities and resources sufficient for the achievement of student's educational goals.
- Provide regular feedback on students' academic progress.
- Inform students of penalties for late submission or non-submission of coursework.
- Inform students of any attendance requirements and the consequences of failure to attend classes and examinations.
- Review programmes regularly to enhance the quality of learning.
- Inform students of any changes to your programme in a timely fashion.
- Explain all forms of unacceptable academic behaviour such as plagiarism, cheating, collusion, fabrication of data or breach of copyright.
- Assess students using fair and competent methods that meet national academic standards.
- Provide access to student results in a timely fashion on completion of the programme in line with the requirements outlined in chapter 7, sections 7.2 and 7.7.
- Provide access to a clear set of procedures around deferrals and appeals.

##### 6.6.4.2 Expectations of the College

As a student, the College expects that students will

- Work to the best of their abilities.

- Inform themselves of all programme requirements and observe them.
- Raise any questions on their progress with appropriate staff in a timely fashion.
- Observe College rules and regulations on plagiarism, cheating, collusion, fabrication of data, breach of copyright, deferrals, and appeals.
- Make themselves available for academic feedback when requested.
- Attend designated lectures, programmes assessments, tutorials, seminars, or other timetabled activities associated with the programme in a punctual manner.
- Submit all written assignments, practicals, or other coursework within the specified time limits.
- Make their best attempt at each element of assessment in the programme.
- Respect the rights of others in all learning spaces.

## 7. ASSESSMENT OF LEARNERS

### 7.2 Context

The College programme is subject to QQI's programme validation criteria for programmes of this type. Students are required to sit all assessments/exams and pass all modules to successfully complete the programme and to be provided with a QQI award that is recognised nationally on the National Framework of Qualifications (NFQ). The NFQ is a system of ten levels used to describe the Irish qualifications system and is mapped to the UK and European equivalents and describes what students should know, understand and be able to do at a given qualification and level. QQI has set out the relevant award criteria for foundation programmes for international students that, as pre-undergraduate foundation programmes, are classified as a Level 5 Specific Purpose Certificate in International Foundation Studies award<sup>46</sup>.

In respect to assessment strategy, the key aim of the College is to support the development of students in becoming self-directed autonomous learners who are responsible for making judgements on their learning so that they may progress to HEI degree programmes. The College strives to enhance students' ability to self-monitor and self-evaluate their work to a high level such that they will successfully complete the programme with a sense of shared responsibility for their learning. The independent learner is valued by HEIs in Ireland and overseas and so it is in the student's interest and the College's interest as a pathway provider to ensure that students will progress to HEI partners and succeed with their degree studies when there.

College assessment strategies are formed at programme and module stages in line with QQI assessment requirements<sup>47</sup> as follows:

- Students are responsible for demonstrating their learning achievement.

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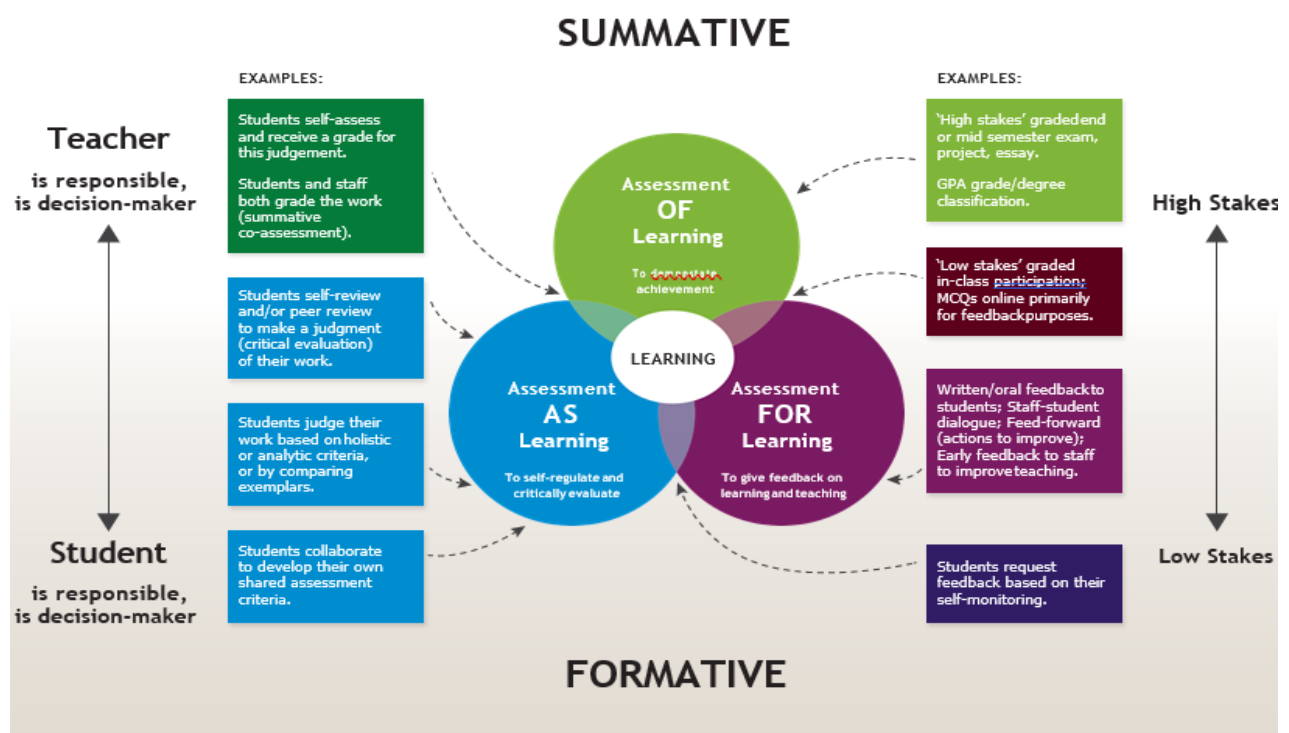
<sup>46</sup> QQI Awards Standards for Pre-Higher Education Foundation Awards for International Students (2015)

<sup>47</sup> Assessment and Standards, Revised 2013, section 2.1

- Students are well informed about how and why they are assessed.
- Students are involved in the periodic review of assessment procedures<sup>48</sup>.
- Assessment supports standards based on learning outcomes.
- Assessment promotes and supports both effective learning and teaching.
- Assessment procedures are credible.
- Assessment methods are reviewed and renewed as necessary to adapt to evolving requirements.
- The programme has sound assessment strategies.<sup>49</sup>

### 7.2.3 Assessment Types

The below schematic taken from the National Forum for the Enhancement of Teaching and Learning in Higher Education<sup>50</sup> as one that the College subscribes to.



Taken from "Expanding our Understanding of Assessment and Feedback in Irish Higher Education", National Forum for the Enhancement of Teaching and Learning in Higher Education (2017)

<sup>48</sup> Statutory Quality Assurance Guidelines developed by QQI for use by all Providers (2016), section 6.1

<sup>49</sup> QQI Policies and Criteria for the Validation of Programmes of Education and Training (2017), section 17.10

<sup>50</sup> <https://www.teachingandlearning.ie/our-priorities/student-success/assessment-of-for-as-learning/>

### Figure 7.1. Assessment and Feedback Terminology and Examples

Summative assessment is also termed Assessment OF Learning, to emphasise its nature as an assessment of an activity that has occurred (i.e., after a period of learning). However, the term also emphasises a numeral aspect and it is often associated with a number or letter grade. Assessment of learning can help students to take a high level of ownership for their learning by facilitating student feedback that results in the form of both the grade itself and the Teacher feedback that accompanies it. The Teacher is most responsible for summative assessment, s/he is the key decision-maker. The College expects teachers and academic management to be conscious that the power in this context is not abused and that they are sensitive to the needs of the student while ensuring that the assessment process is equitable, fair, and evenly applied throughout the cohort of students studying the programme.

Formative assessment is related to the concept of ‘feedback’ on learning. The importance of learning because of feedback to students has led to the use in some contexts of the term Assessment FOR Learning, which emphasised the learning aspect. Assessment FOR Learning also includes the idea of feedback to staff on their teaching. It emphasises the importance of a dialogue between teachers and students. Feedback needs to be timely, i.e. within 2 weeks, actionable, and understandable. In formative assessment as Assessment AS Learning, it is the student who becomes more empowered, is more responsible and can become the key decision-maker. This growth of student self-confidence and student self-esteem is critical to the aims of the College as one that provides autonomous, self-directed, critically thinking, and well-prepared students that are ready to begin HEI degree studies on completing their programme.

It is these two types of assessment that are most used in UniHaven. Teachers will work to ensure that the programme provides students with sufficient opportunity for formative feedback that is individualised and regular<sup>51</sup>. Each programme will measure the degree to which students do engage with such support when it is available. This will be done using the LMS (see chapter 9, section 9.4), from staff and student feedback channels, and through

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<sup>51</sup> QQI Policies and Criteria for the Validation of Programmes of Education and Training (2017), section 17.9

formal Programme Board reviews in which student representatives partake.

#### 7.2.4 Students with Disabilities

The College is committed to the provision of an equitable learning environment that supports all students to fulfil their academic potential, including students with disabilities. The rights of students with disabilities to avail of reasonable accommodations to enable them to participate on equitable terms is recognised...see also UPOL018 UniHaven Learner Disability Policy Rev 2.

There is recognition that some students can be late or miss assessments through no fault of their own. This chapter includes how such situations are dealt with...see section 7.6 Extenuating Circumstances.

### 7.3 Managing Assessments

Concerning the assessment regulations, the policies outlined in this chapter will be implemented by College academic staff with the Programme Manager taking the lead, supported by Teachers. Programme Board will have formal responsibility for the review and improvement of this policy with its assessment recommendations included in its Annual Programme Report post-programme review that will be forwarded to AC for consideration and approval...see chapter 2, sections 2.3 and 2.5, for more details. Programme Board has oversight and responsibility for managing the assessment process<sup>52</sup> and should ensure that the assessment requirements as outlined in this chapter are in place as delegated to the Programme Manager. Table 7. 1 summarises the key steps involved with corresponding roles as relevant...see UPRO007 UniHaven Assessment Procedure Rev 1 for full details.

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<sup>52</sup> Assessment and Standards, Revised 2013, section 4.5

Table 7.1 Management of Assessments

Step	Description	Responsibility
1	Assessment briefs and associated marking schemes are developed incorporating assessment strategy revisions where relevant.	Programme Manager
2	Assessment venues are selected and approved.	Programme Manager
3	Facilitate any students that require special accommodations.	Programme Manager
4	Assessment tasks are coordinated to facilitate an appropriate assessment schedule.	Programme Manager
5	Examination papers are securely printed and distributed.	Programme Manager
6	Examinations or other assessment types are invigilated.	Teachers
7	Possible causes of plagiarism or misconduct and reported and investigated.	Teachers
8	Scripts are collected from venues and logged on the server with records of attendance.	Teachers
9	Scripts are securely transferred to the internal assessors.	Programme Manager
11	Student assessments are graded under agreed marking schemes and regulations.	Teachers
12	Possible causes of plagiarism or misconduct concerning assessment are investigated.	Academic Director
13	Marks and grades are processed and securely uploaded according to the relevant College policies and procedures.	Programme Manager
14	Provisional results are communicated to students.	Programme Manager
15	Student appeals, rechecks and reviews are processed.	Academic Director
16	All student data is gathered, protected, and used securely under College data protection policies.	Academic Director
17	Student assessment records are maintained with accuracy and securely.	Academic Director
18	Results are communicated to students.	Academic Director
19	Ensure that accurate results, assessment material and other data are available for the External Examiners.	Academic Director
20	Review and moderate representative samples of assessment material, meet and discuss findings with Academic Director and/or Programme Manager and complete and submit a comprehensive External Examiner report.	External Examiners
21	Process and decide on student appeals, where relevant.	Appeals Board



UPOL011 UniHaven Academic Staff Workload Allocation Policy Rev 2 will take account of marking and grading of student assignments and examinations and seek to ensure that there is a realistic and sustainable distribution of activity and responsibility among Teachers. The workload associated with grading and assessing students will be addressed by managing alternative, efficient approaches (in some cases, for example, using technology, or increased use of self and peer assessment). All data will be collected, processed, and retained securely under UPOL020 UniHaven Data Protection Policy Rev 1, UPOL023 UniHaven Data Retention Policy Rev 1, and UPOL024 UniHaven Data Security Policy Rev 1 ...see also chapter 9, sections 9.5 – 9.7.

## 7.4 Guidelines

Academic staff should ensure that the following guides to assessment are employed<sup>53</sup>:

- Assessment tasks will be based upon the intended learning outcomes of modules and programme and should provide students with an opportunity to demonstrate their level of achievement in each.
- Assessment strategies will be prepared for both the programme and its constituent modules<sup>54</sup>. See more details in UDOC012 UniHaven Teaching, Learning and Assessment Policy Rev 0.
- The amount, type and timing of assessment will be designed to facilitate student learning and students should acquire experience of a range of assessment methods. Valid and reliable assessment techniques or methods for QQI awards are grouped into the following six broad categories<sup>55</sup>:
  - Assignment.
  - Project.
  - Portfolio.
  - Skills Demonstration/Presentation (e.g., laboratory skills, oral language skills).
  - Examination.

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<sup>53</sup> Quality Assuring Assessment Guidelines for Providers Revised 2013 (Version 2 - revised 2018)

<sup>54</sup> Assessment Guidelines, Conventions and Protocols for Programmes Leading to QQI Awards, section 17.10

<sup>55</sup> Quality Assuring Assessment Guidelines for Providers Revised 2013 (Version 2 - revised 2018), section 3.3.1

- Student Record.
- There will be an appropriate (and coherent) mix of assessment tasks undertaken by students on each programme and the overall amount of assessment should not be excessive.
- Students will be provided with opportunities for formative assessment, and a strategy for balancing formative and summative assessment may be built around a process of integrative assessment.
- Opportunities for peer assessment and self-assessment (to enable students to make judgements about their level of progress) will be made available where possible and appropriate.
- Assignments will be designed to ensure that the principles of academic integrity (e.g., proper referencing of source materials, the avoidance of plagiarism, absence of cheating) are maintained and that students are fully aware of the appropriate practice in this regard. Submission of written summative assignments will be required to be uploaded onto the LMS (see chapter 9, section 9.4), after which it will be checked with anti-plagiarism software.
- Care is taken to ensure that any forms of online assessment are sufficiently secure, robust, and reliable to maintain confidence in the grading of individual students and the integrity of the module/programme.
- New assessment type suggestions will be assessed formally via Programme Board and will not be introduced until assessed against programme validation criteria, with suggested changes notified to QQI by the Academic Director before implementation. Student representatives will be allowed to provide suggestions to improve the assessment strategies and process from their assessment engagement experience as members of the Programme Board.

## 7.5 General Grading Criteria

These grade descriptions are intended to provide guidelines for the marking of coursework and examinations in line with the standards relevant to an NFQ Level 5 Specific Purpose Certificate in International Foundation Studies programme (120 FET credits). They are not to be taken as rigid prescriptions, but as general indications of the qualities that are looked for at each level of classification. Markers should exercise their discretion in applying these guidelines and should not expect every criterion to be fulfilled in all cases

for a particular grade to be awarded. For example, some criteria may be more applicable to coursework than to examination answers. In all cases, assessment criteria and marking schemes will be provided for all coursework and examinations.

### 7.5.3 Grading Scheme

The College shall adopt a percentage grading scheme, where the maximum mark attainable is 100. Consistent with QQI Awards at level 4, level 5 and level 6, grades are classified as Pass, Merit or Distinction where a student has achieved the following standards for the award within the grading criteria<sup>56</sup>:

- A Pass is a grade awarded to a student who has attained the minimum standard. To be awarded a pass grade a student must have achieved a mark of between 50-64%.
- A Merit is a grade awarded to a student who has exceeded the minimum requirements. To be awarded a merit grade a student must have achieved a mark of between 65-79%.
- A Distinction is a grade awarded to a student who has substantially exceeded the minimum requirements. For a student to be awarded a distinction s/he is must have achieved a mark of 80% or over.
- When a student has not achieved the minimum standards for an award the grade is recorded as Referred.

### 7.5.4 Grade Descriptors

Descriptors for each grade are as follows as directed by QQI<sup>57</sup>

#### 7.5.4.1 Distinction (80% and over)

A Distinction indicates that the learner has:

- Achieved the learning outcomes as outlined in the minor award - a distinction implies that an excellent standard has been achieved.

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<sup>56</sup> Quality Assuring Assessment Guidelines for Providers Revised 2013 (Version 2 - revised 2018\*), section 3.5

<sup>57</sup> Quality Assuring Assessment Guidelines for Providers Revised 2013 (Version 2 - revised 2018\*), section 3.6

- Used the language of the vocational/specialised area fluently and confidently.
- Demonstration-depth understanding of the subject matter.
- Demonstrated a high level of initiative, evaluation skills.
- Demonstrated analytical and reflective thinking.
- Clearly expressed and developed ideas, systematically, and comprehensively.
- Presented coherent, detailed, and focused evidence.

#### 7.5.4.2 Merit (65-79%)

A Merit indicates that the learner has:

- Achieved the learning outcomes as outlined in the minor award - a merit implies a good standard has been achieved.
- Used the language of the vocational/specialised area with a degree of fluency.
- Expressed and developed ideas.
- Demonstrated initiative, evaluation, and analytical skills.
- Presented coherent and comprehensive evidence.

#### 7.5.4.3 Pass (50-64%)

A Pass indicates that the learner has:

- Achieved the learning outcomes as outlined in the minor award - a pass is the minimum acceptable standard
- Used the language of the vocational/specialised area competently.
- Attempted to apply the theory and concepts appropriately.
- Provided sufficient evidence which has relevance and clarity.

## 7.6 Assessment Awards Standards

### 7.6.3 Guidelines

The following guidelines are intended to provide clarity to staff and students about assessment awards standards to be used for the successful and validation criteria-compliant way assessments should be conducted, and awards awarded.

- Award standards are distributed to internal assessors and External Examiners.

- Grade descriptors and guidelines for marking are issued to examiners.
- Award standards and comprehensive grade descriptors are made available to students on the LMS (see chapter 9, section 9.4), and principal extracts are included in UDOC001 UniHaven Programme Handbook Rev 2 to outline what is expected of them in assessed work.
- Marking schemes are submitted by examiners in conjunction with sample exam papers to facilitate consistency of marking. Exam questions and marking schemes and, where appropriate, model answers approved by External Examiners are included.
- Teachers provide clear and timely assessment feedback to students on submitted work, i.e., within 2 weeks.
- Administrative processes are in place to oversee the dissemination of marks and standards, grading schemes, results processing.
- Pre-Exam Board review meetings are run at the programme level to review marks, special cases, and mitigating circumstances.
- Sample of student's assessed work and model answers/marketing schemes are reviewed by external Examiners.
- Clear procedures and guidelines concerning absence from examinations, the release of examination results, feedback on examination results, appeal of results, and re-assessment of material are communicated to staff and students via College policies and procedures and handbooks.
- Internal assessor comments are returned with corrected scripts, providing commentary on the standard of student material, question choice etc, and identifying issues for further programme and assessment improvement that are considered at Programme Board.
- Exam Board is convened to consider and approve examination results.
- External Examiner reports and awarding body comments are made available to Programme Board for review and action.
- External Examiner reports (based on QQI templates) are submitted to QQI with AC endorsement assessing and approving the standard of examination questions, marking schemes, marking of student work, exam administration and Exam Board conduct.
- Post-exam statistics are provided to assessors and examiners for review and action.

#### 7.6.4 Requirements for Awards and Progression

- Progression standards are dictated by the College's HEI partners for the relevant programme pathway stream.
- While QQI awards are achieved as relevant to the grading system and standards outlined in this policy, the progression to HEI partners will also be dependent on the grades such partners need to satisfy entry to their undergraduate degree programmes. Such requirements are communicated to students before they enrol at the College as part of the programme entry requirements...see UPOL007 Student Recruitment and Admissions Policy Rev 2.
- Eligibility for Award
  - The Level 5 Specific Purpose Certificate in International Foundation Studies award may be made at Pass, Merit or Distinction as classified in section 7.4.2. These awards will be based on the aggregate percentage marks for the programme.
  - To be eligible for consideration for the award a candidate must:
    - Undertake all modules listed in the programme schedule for an award stage and satisfy all the assessment and other requirements set for the programme (e.g., attendance).
    - Pass each module required for their pathway stream.
    - Obtain an aggregate mark.
  - The aggregate mark shall be computed from the marks scored at the first attempt or a resit of an assessment component in the modules of the award stage. In other words, the marks scored in the second attempt would replace those of the first attempt.
  - Where extenuating circumstances are relevant concerning a student's absence from an examination or about a candidate's performance at an examination or assessment, such scenarios will be dealt with as per section 7.6.
  - A student who is granted a deferral from an examination will be permitted to hold any classification due based on their final aggregate.
  - Where a student passes a module, they may not make a subsequent attempt at an assessment for that module to increase their mark.

### 7.6.5 Release of Awards to Students

- Availability of Results
  - Examination results must be agreed upon by internal assessors and External Examiners at an Exam Board meeting, and then signed by the Chairperson and Secretary.
  - Results agreed by the Exam Board will be posted to the student's correspondence address following the Exam Board meeting. If for unknown reasons, students have not received their results within seven days, results may be given by email.
  - Under no circumstances should Teachers, administrative staff or any other staff or external member involved in the examination process release results to a student, formally or informally, or to any unauthorised third party, in advance of the Exam Board meeting.
  - Results will not be released to a student who has outstanding fees to pay.
  - Results will not be released to a third party without the prior written permission of the student. This must be presented in writing signed by the student.
- Presentation of Results
  - Results are provided to students within 10 working days of the Exam Board meeting.
  - The results letter should give actual percentages obtained in each module and an overall award classification for the year.
  - Results should be considered provisional until they are ratified by QQI, and results letters should state this.
  - The College shall arrange a specific date or dates, to fall within 10 working days of the notification of examination results, on which students may discuss their examination results with teaching staff.
- Supplementary Examinations
  - Information on the availability and date of supplementary examinations for specific programmes will be contained in UDOC001 UniHaven Programme Handbook Rev 2.
  - Only students who have registered for the main examinations, or who in special circumstances have secured the permission of the Academic Director will be allowed to take the supplementary examinations.

- Students retaking modules may do so at the next sitting of that module. In cases where the student has yet to complete another module, they may proceed on the understanding that the module outstanding must be sat before they can meet eligibility for the programme award.
- In the case of a candidate repeating an examination, marks awarded based on continuous assessments, shall, normally, be carried forward from the original examination to the repeat examination and aggregated with the marks scored in the latter to determine the total marks to be awarded in respect of the repeat examination.
- In the case of a candidate whose results at a repeat examination are liable to be jeopardised by the carry-forward of poor marks awarded in respect of continuous assessment, the college reserves the right, in exceptional circumstances, to devise alternative assessment arrangements.
- A student is permitted to attempt the same examination two times only. Any further attempts will be at the absolute discretion of the Academic Director.
- Students retaking examinations will take responsibility for completing registration processes in line with relevant course requirements.

#### 7.6.6 Internal Assessors

Internal Assessors, in line with QQI requirements, should fulfil their role as outlined below<sup>58</sup>.

- Internal assessors must be identified at the top of each examination paper.
- Internal assessors are responsible for
  - Setting continuous assessment exercises.
  - Setting exam papers for the principal and supplementary examinations
  - Submitting model answers/solutions and marking schemes for relevant exam papers.
  - Correction and grading of continuous assessment, dissertations, and examination scripts.
  - Submission of examiner reports.

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<sup>58</sup> Adapted from Assessment and Standards, Revised 2013, section 4.7



- Working within tight deadlines according to the relevant assessment schedule.
- To ensure uniformity of standards across modules and programmes, marks awarded by an internal assessor must be a fair and accurate assessment of the student's performance and must conform with the marking schemes and the grade descriptors in use.

### 7.6.7 External Examiners

External Examiners play a vital role in the wider context of quality assurance. Whether they are reviewing the standard of examination papers or monitoring the academic standards achieved in modules or programmes, they ensure fairness and provide guarantees to students and stakeholders that the College meets the relevant awards standards. The external examiner should be satisfied that the minimum intended programme learning outcomes accord with the relevant awards standards.<sup>59</sup> S/he should also be satisfied that the summative assessment of students is valid and reliable to determine whether the standards have been achieved by students and for classifying the qualifications under QQI requirements.

External Examiners for the programme are appointed by the College under the Qualifications and Quality Assurance (Education and Training) Act 2012. External examiners act as independent guarantors of the examination process and are appointed by Academic Council (AC) for a three-year term and will work with the College under the oversight of the Academic Director. This is to ensure that the appointment is sufficiently long to allow the external examiner to assess trends and sufficiently short to provide diversity and maintain the required level of independence<sup>60</sup>. Upon approval by AC, the candidate is formally invited to become an External Examiner, are supplied with an External Examiners' Induction Pack, and are invited to an induction process where details of the programme are provided (e.g., module descriptors and assessment criteria). Examiners will be notified of the timing of External Examiner activities as well as the terms and conditions

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<sup>59</sup> QQI Effective Practice Guidelines for External Examining Revised February 2015, section 1.4

<sup>60</sup> QQI Effective Practice Guidelines for External Examining Revised February 2015, section 1.6

of appointment.

#### 7.6.7.1 External Examiner Role

The role of the external examiner is to provide independent confirmation of fair and consistent assessment of students and to ensure consistency of assessment results with national standards. External Examiners approve exam questions and the marking of them. They confirm that the standard of assessments is consistent with that of QQI requirements for the programme and in line with other providers who offer a similar programme.<sup>61</sup> They are also members of the Exam Board...see chapter 2, section 2.3.2.2 for terms of reference. The Academic Director is responsible for the appointment of External Examiners under the auspices of AC. Because the programme is designated as a Level 5 Specific Purpose Award<sup>62</sup>, the QQI external examining requirements for FET awards<sup>63</sup> will apply. External examiners will:

- Confirm the fair and consistent assessment of students consistent with the College's procedures and with QQI policy on quality assuring assessment.
- Review internal verification report(s) and authenticate the findings/outcomes.
- Apply a sampling strategy to moderate assessment results consistent with QQI requirements<sup>64</sup>.
- Moderate assessment results under standards outlined in UPOL015 UniHaven Assessment and Awards Policy Rev 2.
- Visit the College and meet with appropriate staff and students.
- Participate in the results approval process as per UPOL015 UniHaven Assessment and Awards Policy Rev 2.
- Identify any issues/irregularities concerning the assessment process.
- Recommend results for approval.
- Produce an External Examiner Report for consideration at Programme Board/AC and by QQI.

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<sup>61</sup> QQI Effective Practice Guidelines for External Examining Revised February 2015, section 1.4

<sup>62</sup> QQI Awards Standards for Pre-Higher Education Foundation Awards for International Students (2015)

<sup>63</sup> Quality Assuring Assessment Guidelines for Providers Revised 2013 (Version 2 - revised 2018), section 4.3.1

<sup>64</sup> Quality Assuring Assessment Guidelines for Providers Revised 2013 (Version 2 - revised 2018), section 4.4

#### 7.6.7.2 Criteria for Appointing External Examiners

The following criteria are adopted by AC for consideration during the appointment of proposed External Examiners. External Examiners should<sup>65</sup>:

- Have experience in delivering programme assessment.
- Agree to undertake appropriate training and attend appropriate briefings.
- Have the qualities necessary to interact with students, internal assessors, and senior staff members i.e., have good communication skills.
- Undertake to operate within the code of practice and guidelines issued by QQI<sup>66</sup>.
- Have academic qualifications and/or professional expertise appropriate to the programme being examined (minimum of an Honours Bachelor's degree – NFQ Level 8).
- Have at least 3 years of relevant examining experience.
- Have a willingness to devote time to their role.
- Have a willingness to arbitrate on or adjudicate on problem cases.
- Have a willingness to respond quickly to requests for comments on exam papers and production of final reports within time deadlines.
- Be external to the College and must not already be a member of any of its other boards or committees.

#### 7.6.7.3 External Examiner Induction

Upon appointment by AC, External Examiners will be invited to an induction process...see UPRO009 UniHaven External Examiners and Members Selection Procedure. Following the induction process, External Examiners should<sup>67</sup>:

- Know the College's policy on external examining, including the reporting requirements.
- Understand the mission of the College and its context (e.g., the Irish Further and Higher Education system).

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<sup>65</sup> Quality Assuring Assessment Guidelines for Providers Revised 2013 (Version 2 - revised 2018), section 4.3.2

<sup>66</sup> Quality Assuring Assessment Guidelines for Providers Revised 2013 (Version 2 - revised 2018), Appendix 11

<sup>67</sup> QQI Effective Practice Guidelines for External Examining Revised February 2015, section 3.2

- Be able to distinguish how the MIMLOs and actual learning outcomes attained by graduates compared with similar programmes with which they are already familiar and with programmes in the same discipline for which suitable benchmarking data has been gathered by the College.
- Know the overall structure of the programme.
- Be able to evaluate and critique the programme assessment strategy.
- Understand how the MIMLOs relate to the award standard, and how the award standard relates to the National Framework of Qualifications (and, if the examiner is from outside Ireland, how the NFQ relates to the other HE Qualifications Frameworks with which s/he may be familiar).
- Understand the programme assessment strategy and procedures, the grading system and how awards are classified.
- Understand the principles of learning-outcome-based criterion-referenced assessment.

#### 7.6.7.4 Exam Board Meetings

At an agreed date after the examination period, the internal assessors and External Examiners will meet to discuss assessment grades at Exam Board under the chairmanship of the Academic Director. At least one External Examiner must be present. See chapter 2, section 2.3.2.2 for Exam Board full terms of reference.

- The Exam Board will be responsible for endorsing each set of results and for deciding on recommendations concerning a module result or overall award.
- Examiners can expect a copy of each student's result to be made available for review on a table or broadsheet with other students' results for the same course. Examiners should see a student's aggregate result for each module (combined examination and continuous assessment score) and an overall result with information indicating whether the student has passed, at which grade, if any exemptions apply, has received a referred grade or has been recorded as absent/deferred. Each set of results will be arranged according to programme and module.
- The Academic Director or his/her nominee will lead the External Examiners in a review of each set of results in a timely and efficient manner. External Examiners are

free to raise queries during the meeting and get an opportunity to make any comments after the completion of each set of results.

- At the end of each set of results throughout the meeting, an official broadsheet of results is circulated showing the results just approved. These should be signed by the chairperson and the secretary. These sheets are usually available on white paper.
- The secretary will keep a record of any comments for later use.
- The signed broadsheets are sent to QQI for approval.

#### 7.6.7.5 External Examiner's Report

The external examiner issues UFORM027 UniHaven External Examiner Report Rev 1 that addresses the following<sup>68</sup> each time an individual or a cohort of students is assessed. External Examiner reports and related correspondence will be used extensively as part of the College's programme and module reviews...see UPOL005 UniHaven Programme Review and Development Policy Rev 2 where, if necessary, the College will make appropriate adjustments to the programme, a module or assessment method, or future examination paper as recommended in an External Examiner Report. The report includes

- The evidence considered — including meetings and interviews with students and Teachers and others.
- The appropriateness of the College's minimum intended programme learning outcomes considering the external examiner's experience and having regard to the relevant awards standards and the NFQ.
- The External Examiner's perception of the actual attainment of students.
- The External Examiner's opinion of the quality of the programme (its teaching and learning environment and its processes) as distinct from the intended programme learning outcomes addressed previously, citing strengths and areas for improvement.
- The quality of the assessment instruments (strategy, examination papers, etc.) and grading rubrics/schemes etc.

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<sup>68</sup> QQI Effective Practice Guidelines for External Examining Revised February 2015, section 4.2

- The fairness, consistency, and fitness for purpose (valid, reliable, authentic, robust) of assessment procedures.
- The reliability of the College's benchmarking of its assessment procedures.
- Appropriate national and international comparisons.
- Any substantial concerns (even if they have already been communicated verbally) so that these may be addressed and followed up by the College's quality assurance procedures.
- Evidence concerning the extent to which teaching, learning and assessment arrangements have changed in response to the feedback provided by previous External Examiners' reports.
- Progress on recommendations in recent External Examiner and other relevant reports on the programme.

The External Examiner report is reviewed by the Programme Manager and Academic Director in conjunction with the relevant internal assessors. presented to AC. This information also feeds into the programme development and review process via Programme Board. A formal response to the External Examiner's report is prepared by the Programme Manager within four weeks of receipt of the final report and approved by the Academic Director for consideration at AC and for sending as the College's formal response to the External Examiner. The College commits to publishing the identity of the external examiner, his/her reported conclusions and recommendations, and the College's actions arising from the report as per UPOL026 UniHaven Communications Policy Rev 1.

#### 7.6.7.6 External Examiners – Internal Assessor Conflict

It is not in the interests of the College, the External Examiner, or the internal assessor that conflicts arise and are not resolved<sup>69</sup>. With the best of intentions on the part of all parties, disagreements can occur, and conflicts identified by the Programme Manager that may exist between External Examiners and internal assessors will be resolved as per the below guidelines:

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<sup>69</sup> QQI Effective Practice Guidelines for External Examining Revised February 2015, section 2.2

- The protection of the integrity of the College’s assessment grading and awards standards in the interests of students is paramount and a resolution of the conflict will be dealt with in this context without compromising the rights of the individuals involved.
- Any conflict will be dealt with via Exam Board where the Academic Director, as Chair, will consider all views and decide that all parties are expected to comply with.

## 7.7 Extenuating Circumstances

The College is committed to a policy of reasonable accommodation<sup>70</sup> to meet individual needs and enable full access and participation for all students with specific needs or where exceptional mitigating circumstances temporarily prevent them from participating in the academic and/or assessment process.

### 7.7.3 Disability

In the case of specific challenges or any ongoing issues for students that may affect their academic performance, the issue must be declared to Student Support Office as soon as practicable if it has not already been declared at the enrolment stage...see UPOL007 UniHaven Student Recruitment and Admissions Policy Rev 2. The Student Support Officer will liaise with the student and the Academic Director. Appropriate mitigation will be considered in consultation with the Academic Director. All students granted reasonable accommodations on the grounds of disability will be dealt with as per UPOL018 UniHaven Learner Disability Policy Rev 2. The Student Support Officer is responsible for liaising with Teachers to ensure agreed supports in respect of teaching, learning and assessment are made available. Adaptations of assessment for a student may be implemented and may include the following and/or other reasonable adaptation<sup>71</sup>:

- Modified presentation of assignments/examination papers e.g., enlargements.
- Scribes/readers.
- Use of sign language.

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<sup>70</sup> Quality Assuring Assessment Guidelines for Providers Revised 2013 (Version 2 - revised 2018), section 3.2.8

<sup>71</sup> Quality Assuring Assessment Guidelines for Providers Revised 2013 (Version 2 - revised 2018), section 3.2.8

- Practical assistants.
- Rest periods.
- Adaptive equipment/software.
- Use of assistive technology.
- Extra time.

#### 7.7.4 Compassionate Consideration

Students should seek advice and support offered by the College via the Student Support Officer in circumstances where an assessment is missed, or their performance may have been adversely affected. The following are examples of circumstances under which a compassionate consideration may be given<sup>72</sup>:

- A physical injury or emotional trauma during a period four to six weeks previously.
- A physical disability or chronic or disabling condition such as epilepsy, glandular fever, or other incapacitating illness of the student.
- Recent bereavement of a close family member or friend.
- Severe accident.
- Domestic crisis.
- Terminal illness of a close family member.
- Other extenuating circumstances.

#### 7.7.5 Considering Extenuating Circumstances

Detailed procedures for the consideration of extenuating circumstances are outlined in UPOL015 UniHaven Assessment and Awards Policy Rev 2 with the below text a summary of the key steps.

- In the case of missing an assessment deadline, the student must notify the Teacher who will direct them to the Programme Manager who may arrange for an extension or advise the student to apply for consideration of mitigating circumstances.

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<sup>72</sup> Quality Assuring Assessment Guidelines for Providers Revised 2013 (Version 2 - revised 2018), section 3.2.9



- Where a student has not communicated with College staff at all a late penalty will be applied as described in section 7.5.4. In the case of an exam where a student knows in advance that they are going to miss the examination, they must apply to the Academic Director's office for authorised absence from the examination.
- In the case of missing an examination due to an unforeseen circumstance or being taken ill during an examination, then the student must apply for compassionate consideration as soon as they are well enough to return to the College.
- In cases of an ongoing issue, a student may apply for a leave of absence, a deferral or an alternative assessment or additional supports in cases involving disability. An alternative assessment will be aligned to the same learning outcomes and be of the same standard as the original assessment. Leave of absence and deferrals will be handled using the Deferral Procedure in UPOL007 UniHaven Student Recruitment and Admissions Policy Rev 2.
- Where a student is taken ill just before or during an examination the invigilator should be notified, and the circumstance recorded in the Invigilator's Report. The student may fill out UFORM024 Extenuating Circumstances Application Form Rev 1 on their return. In all cases medical certification will normally be required – such certification must be issued by recognised practitioners and dated at the time of the illness and not be retrospective. Where a student presents at an examination, they have deemed themselves fit to take that examination.

Once a student applies for special consideration, the Academic Director and Programme Manager will meet to consider those applications that the Academic Director has approved for compassionate consideration. They determine:

- If the circumstances presented were exceptional and may have affected performance.
- The degree to which the performance may have been affected.
- The actions are taken to mitigate the effect on performance.
- The typical outcomes where a case is upheld are:
  - The student can defer the examination.
  - Penalties for late submission may be lifted or reduced - see section 7.6.4.
  - Consideration will be made in respect of borderline cases, where there is other evidence the learning outcomes have been achieved.

If it is an eligible request, the form will be passed to the Exam Board. Where there is a suite of examinations at the same time, a student may not select to take some and present mitigation for others unless there were special circumstances. In all cases the nature of the compassionate consideration is confidential, and the Exam Board is provided with sufficient information to discharge their duty. The Programme Manager will note the decision and liaise with the Academic Director to update the student management system. All applications for reasonable accommodations and compassionate consideration are recorded and an overall, anonymised, analysis is included in the Academic Director's Exam Board Report to AC. Deferrals are not indefinite, students who defer an examination must take that examination at the next available sitting or apply to renew the deferral. The student's registration status must also be taken into consideration.

#### 7.7.6 Extensions and Late Submission of Assessed Coursework

A student may apply for an extension to the deadline for an element of continuous assessment under the College's policy for extenuating circumstances. Extensions are considered only where the written application is submitted to the Programme Manager in advance of the deadline with supporting evidence as to why the extension is warranted (e.g., medical certificate). Extensions to coursework may be approved by the Programme Manager who will consult with the Academic Director as appropriate. Technical problems, such as computer failure or viruses, are not deemed legitimate reasons for late submission or non-submission of work. The only exception is if the assessment is to be submitted via the LMS (for formative assessments only) is not operating and in those cases, a report will be sent from the Programme Manager to the Academic Director to ensure students are not disadvantaged. If an extension has not been granted and work is submitted after the extended due date, late submission of assignments is penalised as follows:

- 10% penalty for assignments submitted within three calendar days of the submission deadline.
- 20% penalty for assignments submitted within one week (seven calendar days) of the submission deadline.

Later submissions, i.e., after one calendar week, will not normally be accepted. Students are expected to retain a copy of all submitted coursework.

## 7.8 Academic Misconduct

The College promotes academic integrity<sup>73</sup> and is proactive in encouraging correct academic writing and research skills. All students are advised of the expectations concerning academic work submitted for assessment in advance via UDOC001 UniHaven Programme Handbook Rev 2 and UDOC002 UniHaven Student Handbook Rev 2 and are provided with access to services to support the development of appropriate academic skills while studying at the College. Also, the College will use plagiarism detection software.

Students are advised that the College takes cases of academic misconduct very seriously and will apply penalties up to and including expulsion from the college with no right to return or entitlement to a refund. It reserves the right to protect its reputation as an academic institution and will defend any legal challenge to the implementation of this policy and the outcomes of deliberations relating to academic misconduct. All assessment tasks are to be entirely the work of the individual submitting it unless stated otherwise. Any assessments found to contain work the same as, or like, that of another student, past or present, will also be considered academic misconduct and the appropriate procedure will be applied and penalties determined as appropriate.

### 7.8.3 Academic Misconduct Types

All examiners are reminded that poor academic conduct or academic impoverishment is not to be confused with academic misconduct. Instances of academic impoverishment should be addressed through marking accordingly and providing the appropriate feedback to assist academic development. Cases of suspected academic misconduct, i.e., the intention to secure an unfair advantage through dishonest academic practice in the assessment process, should be addressed through UPRO008 UniHaven Academic Misconduct Procedure Rev 1. To deter students from considering academic misconduct as a low-risk option in cases where they feel failure is likely, in considering the penalty to be imposed the Academic Misconduct Committee should normally ensure that any penalty

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<sup>73</sup> Assessment and Standards, Revised 2013, section 4.11

is more significant than having made an honest attempt at assessment and failed. The following definitions will guide staff as to what a student is suspected of under the overall heading of academic misconduct:

- Cheating - examples of cheating include but are not restricted to
  - Any form of communication with or copying from any other source during an examination/assessment.
  - Use of a third party for the completion or partial completion of an assessment e.g., friend, family member or essay writing service.
  - Introducing any form of written or other material into an examination (including that stored electronically) other than that specified on an examination paper.
  - Use of mobile phone during an assessment or examination.
  - Forgery, alteration or misuse of College documents, records, or identity cards.
  - Submission of false claims of prior qualification, research, or experience to gain credit for prior learning.
- Plagiarism - is defined as the presentation of work, written or otherwise, of any other person, including another student, or institution, as the candidate's own. Plagiarism includes but is not restricted to:
  - Verbatim copying of another's work without clear identification and acknowledgement.
  - Close paraphrasing of another's work by simply changing a few words or altering the order of presentation without clear identification and acknowledgement.
  - Unidentified /unacknowledged presentation of another's concept as one's own.
- Collusion – is defined as the conscious collaboration, without official approval, between two or more students in the preparation and production of work which is ultimately submitted by each in an identical or substantially similar form and/or is represented by each to be the product of his or her efforts. Collusion also occurs where there is an unauthorised co-operation between a student and another person in the preparation and production of work, which is presented as the student's own.

#### 7.8.4 Academic Misconduct Procedure

This outline procedure describes how academic misconduct cases are handled at the College. UPRO008 UniHaven Academic Misconduct Procedure Rev 1 describes the process in full detail. The College provides extensive information to all students on the regulations and their responsibilities within them. Dishonest conduct in the assessment will not be tolerated and students should look to alternative options in times of high pressure or uncertainty. Any student who believes they are subject to pressure that is impacting their studies and their ability to satisfy assessment requirements are advised to consult Student Services Officer or the Programme Manager or Teacher and request appropriate supports or information on the options available to them.

##### 7.8.4.1 During the Examination Sitting

Any member of staff who suspects academic misconduct during assessment under examination conditions must report such suspicions immediately to the Programme Manager. The Programme Manager is required to approach the student concerned and ask them to step outside the examination hall. A second invigilator or staff member should be present for this. The Programme Manager needs to:

- Confirm the identity of the student and confiscate the student's I.D card temporarily, explaining the suspicions and reason for suspicion, noting the response of the student, and removing any unauthorised material.
- Advise the student of the entitlement to complete the examination and confirm the requirement for the student to report to the Academic Director immediately after the examination concludes.
- On returning to the hall, the invigilator is required to annotate the script clearly at that point. The student is then permitted to finish the examination.
- At the end of the examination, the student concerned must present himself/herself immediately to the Academic Director where s/he will be advised on the next steps in the case of suspected academic misconduct.
- The student will have their ID card returned at this juncture, along with any personal items not deemed relevant to the investigation.
- The relevant script is corrected as normal.

- The Programme Manager is required to submit a full, written report on the incident to the Academic Director.

#### 7.8.4.2 Suspected Academic Misconduct during Grading of Student Assessment

Any teacher or examiner who suspects academic misconduct must report such suspicions immediately to the Academic Director. In making such a report the examiner is required to provide:

- A copy of the student submission.
- The mark sheet and feedback for the student based on being marked as normal.
- Copies of all relevant evidence/documentation, supporting this suspicion.
- A completed copy of UFORM020 UniHaven Academic Misconduct Form Rev 1.

This should be done as soon as the academic misconduct is suspected, to allow for appropriate investigatory action and possible disciplinary proceedings in advance of the examinations and/or Exam Boards. Each student is entitled to the presumption of innocence and therefore the assessment must be marked as normal. The grade and feedback will not be released until such a time as the allegation has been investigated and an outcome determined on the balance of probability. Where suspicion arises due to a report from plagiarism detection software, the teacher must first have reviewed and interpreted the report and made an informed judgement on whether it appears academic misconduct may have occurred. Information produced by the plagiarism detection software does not automatically equate to confirmation or evidence of plagiarism. Further guidance can be obtained from the Programme Manager.

#### 7.8.4.3 Procedures in Cases of Suspected Academic Misconduct

The Programme Manager reviews the Invigilator's report or the examiner's report and evidence to determine if there is a case of potential academic misconduct or whether it is academic impoverishment. If it is decided that there is an insufficient basis for a charge of academic misconduct, no further action is taken in the matter. If it is decided that there is a case to answer, the Programme Manager will arrange for the student to be advised of the allegation and requested to respond to the evidence and allegation put forward.

#### 7.8.4.3.1 *Investigation Stage*

The Academic Director is responsible for determining whether an identified case of suspected misconduct warrants further investigation. Where a suspicion of misconduct is identified this procedure must be applied promptly to ensure the interests of the student concerned and consideration of Exam Board requirements. A student must be notified of any suspicion and of any proceedings where a matter is being investigated. Notification should be in writing and should normally be by email to the student's correspondence email address within a maximum of 5 working days of the decision to notify. The student should be notified of their rights and provided with a link to or copy of the Academic Misconduct Policy as outlined in UPOL015 UniHaven Assessment and Awards Policy Rev 2 and UPRO008 UniHaven Academic Misconduct Procedure Rev 1 along with any source material identified in cases of suspected plagiarism.

Each student has a right to attend a formal deliberating committee in respect of a case brought against them. Should they choose not to attend or participate the committee is authorised to proceed regardless. The College strongly encourages the attendance of students at applicable hearings held by the Academic Misconduct Committee. Students are permitted to ask the Student Support Officer, their class representative, or a support person (e.g., a close friend or family member) to attend the hearing with them. If students wish to have a legal representative attend, they must inform the College in advance and provide details such as name and relationship to the student.

Students are advised that the Academic Misconduct Committee is required to determine if, on the balance of probability, the misconduct occurred or not. In that regard, the College believes there is no justification for misconduct, and claims of stress, financial pressure, ill health, or other such instances will not be accepted as justification for academic misconduct. Equally, lack of knowledge is not considered a suitable defence. The College will retain a written record of each stage of proceedings. If it is found on the balance of probabilities that no offence has occurred, all records of the allegation will be removed and deleted from the student record. Each student is entitled to the presumption of innocence and must also be afforded the right of response to any allegations. A student should be provided with a minimum of 5 working days to provide their response before any subsequent action is taken.

#### 7.8.4.3.2 *Potential Outcomes of the Investigation Stage*

On completion of the investigatory stage, the PM is required to determine one of the following outcomes on the balance of probability:

- No offence has occurred.
- Admission of the offence by the student.
- Unresolved i.e., the evidence suggests there may be a case to answer but the student has not admitted to any offence, intentional or otherwise.

The student must be notified of the outcome of the investigatory stage, and any associated actions, at the earliest opportunity and not normally more than 10 working days after the response deadline provided to the student. Where the Programme Manager finds that no offence has occurred the matter will be considered concluded, and the results will be authorised for release to the student. Where the Programme Manager is dealing with the admission of the offence by the student the following options apply:

- For a first offence, a mark of 0%, requirement to repeat the assessment, capping the module mark at 40% and capping of the award as a pass award will apply. The student will also be obliged to attend and complete a course on Academic Writing and present their confirmation of completion to the Programme Manager with 4 weeks.
- Any instances of a second or subsequent offence will be referred to the Student Disciplinary Committee. Students found to have committed multiple offences of academic misconduct will be subject to serious penalties up to and including withdrawal from the programme, with no entitlement to refund or readmission. To deter students from considering academic misconduct as a low-risk option in cases where they feel failure is likely, in considering the penalty to be imposed the PM should normally ensure that any penalty is more significant than having made an honest attempt at assessment and failed.

Where the matter is unresolved, the case is referred to the Student Disciplinary Committee. The Student Disciplinary Committee convenes once per academic term and before the meeting of the Exam Board or as required in respect of cases of Academic Misconduct. The Student Disciplinary Committee can be convened at the request of the



Programme Manager outside of the regular schedule as required. For full details on the proceedings of the Student Disciplinary Committee and potential outcomes see UPRO010 Student Complaints and Disciplinary Procedure Rev 1.

## 7.8 Assessment Appeals

An assessment appeal is a request for a review of an assessment decision. The College is committed to providing excellent education and student experience. It supports improvement in educational quality and academic decision-making. However, it recognises that from time-to-time situations arise when a student considers that they might have grounds for appeal against a decision related to assessment of their academic work. The College is committed to resolving appeals as quickly as possible with an emphasis on a local resolution as outlined in the procedures for appeals, rechecks and reviews<sup>74</sup> in UPOL015 UniHaven Assessment and Awards Policy Rev 2, section 5, and as summarised below. Reviews and rechecks are considered as part of the appeals process outlined in section 7.8.4.

### 7.8.1 Correction of Error

Errors can be noticed internally even before a student appeals a grade process or decision. If following a meeting of the Exam Board, an error is discovered in the recording or calculation of a grade and/or in the recording of an overall result, UFORM014 UniHaven Correction of Error Form Rev 1 will be completed by the Programme Manager and signed by the Academic Director. This form will be submitted to the Appeals Board for noting & sign off. An updated transcript will then be issued to the student by the Academic Director.

### 7.8.2 Grounds for an Assessment Appeal

A student who wishes to appeal may do so on a limited number of grounds to include administrative errors, material irregularity in assessment procedures or an appeal on medical, personal, or other extenuating circumstances. The student must identify the

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<sup>74</sup> Assessment and Standards, Revised 2013, section 4.10

module(s) and the elements for which the appeal is being made. The application must also specify the grounds on which the appeal is sought and must contain all information that the student requires to have considered in the appeal.

- Appeal on administrative error or a material irregularity in assessment procedures. An appeal of an assessment result shall be considered only if any of the following minimum standards of programme delivery were not met by the College.
  - A student believes they were adversely affected by an irregularity in how the assessment was conducted.
  - They believe they were adversely affected by an administrative error resulting in an incorrect grade being recorded on the student database.
  - They believe that due process was not followed and seek verification that their work was assessed following the College's policies and procedures and that the process was fair and consistent.
- An appeal on medical, personal, or extenuating circumstances as described in section 7.6.

### 7.8.3 Assessment Appeal Submission

After results have been published, students can discuss these with their Programme Manager or Teacher. The aim is to understand the results and provide guidance for students in the future. This early communication can provide useful clarification and feedback and may help to inform a student's decision on whether to proceed or not with an appeal. However, once an appeal is submitted to the Academic Director, it is no longer appropriate for a student to consult with staff about the appeal lodged.

A valid appeal requires submission to the Academic Director by a student of a completed UFORM013 UniHaven Assessment Appeals Request Form Rev 1 within twenty-one days of the publication of results as notified by the Academic Director together with evidential support for the appeal and the relevant fee (see UPOL008 UniHaven Fees and Refund Policy Rev 1). Requests received by post must be postmarked within these fourteen days. Only a signed written request for an appeal from the student concerned will be considered. Third-party submissions will not be considered. Appeals may be made for both written and practical assessments in line with UPOL015 UniHaven Assessment and

Awards Policy Rev 2, section 5. The Appeals Board does not attempt to replicate the assessment functions of an Exam Board and, therefore, does not involve itself in re-assessing any assessment elements of a student's work. Therefore, it is requested that students do not include any assessment materials such as dissertations, essays, programmes, or reports, with an appeal submission, as they will not be considered.

#### 7.8.4 Assessment Appeal Process

The Academic Director convenes an Appeals Board...see chapter 2, section 2.3.2.5 for terms of reference. The Board is made up of the AD (Chair) or a nominee, and at least three members, all of which are external with appropriate senior academic experience. An external member will be appointed Chair in situations where the Academic Director will have been a part of the process that led to the appeal. The membership must be independent of those that dealt with the original case or any Teacher/Manager who was responsible for marking the original assessment. Where there is a conflict of interest an alternative person may be substituted. The Appeals Board conducts the formal appeals process and will convene as often as is necessary after assessment periods scheduled in the academic calendar. The Appeals Board will arrive at one of the following decisions:

- To uphold the appeal.
- To reject the appeal.

Once the appeal has been lodged with the Appeals Board, it may request further information from the relevant programme unit including a call for reviews and/or rechecks to be done. A review means the re-consideration of the assessment decision by the Exam Board in consultation with the Teacher(s) concerned. A review will automatically include a recheck. A recheck means the administrative operation of checking (again) the recording and combination of component scores for a module and/or stage. The process normally involves establishing that all answers, part answers and/or other assessment materials have been assessed and totalled correctly. This involves checking the script again, re-calculating the final scores, and where appropriate, modifying the results accordingly. Marks allocated can be increased or decreased. There is no appeal process for a re-check. The review and recheck process may result in one of the following outcomes:

a) Grade remains unchanged b) Grade is increased c) Grade is decreased

The Appeals Board will review all documentation relating to the appeal, including a review and/or recheck response from academic staff, and will decide on their findings. The decision of the Appeals Board will be conveyed in writing by the Academic Director to the student within five working days of the outcome of the Appeals Board, informing them of the appeal decision. If the appeal is successful, the appeal fee is refunded via the student's bank account as per UPOL008 UniHaven Fees and Refund Policy Rev 1. The decisions of the Board are recorded in Minutes that are circulated to the Programme Manager. Copies of the Minutes and letters to the students are stored in a restricted access folder.

## 7.9 Assessment Record Security

The College will ensure that student assessment records will be prepared, distributed, collected, and stored in line with the College's data protection and data security policies and as per QQI requirements<sup>75</sup> – see UPOL020 UniHaven Data Protection Policy Rev 1, UPOL023 UniHaven Data Retention Policy Rev 1 and UPOL024 UniHaven Data Security Policy Rev 1. Records in this context include but are not limited to

- Assessment materials, i.e., test/assignment briefs, exams etc
- Assessment processes, i.e., supervision of tests, verification of authorship etc.
- Student work, i.e., assignments, practical tests, exam scripts, project work etc.
- Assessment grades and data.

All student records are safely collected, managed, and stored on backed-up systems with data security protection in place, and with restricted access regarding those who can store, edit, and retrieve the data limited to those who need to do so as part of their role at the College. This includes LMS and student management system storage and access which is controlled via restricted access user logins as relevant to the user role and as set by the Programme Manager. Physical assessment-related records are kept in locked cabinets with restricted key access to the Programme Manager/Academic Director.

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<sup>75</sup> Quality Assurance Guidelines and Criteria for Provider Access to Initial Validation of Programmes Leading to QQI Awards (2013), section 8.7

## 8. SUPPORTS FOR STUDENTS

### 8.1 Context

This chapter aims to set out how students will be cared for and supported during their studies at the College as a provider that teaches an entirely international student cohort and in compliance with QQI requirements<sup>76</sup> as follows:

- Providers shall offer orientation information before students' arrival.
- Providers shall ensure that inductions offered to students meet the particular needs of international students irrespective of when they join the programme.
- Providers shall provide information on all integration opportunities available to international students and encourage students to avail themselves of those opportunities.
- Providers shall ensure that international students are aware of opportunities to participate in, and be represented at, engagements between the provider and the student body.
- Providers shall have mechanisms in place to support international students financially in instances of personal or other emergency or hardship.
- Providers shall facilitate and encourage feedback from international students on the delivery of any supports and services. This includes informing students about complaints processes for these services.

The College believes that student care and not just support is an integral part of the student experience. It wants to provide students with academic and non-academic services to support the development of their knowledge, skills, and academic progression but in a way that never loses sight of the need to treat them as people first and students second. The College wants students to feel like the staff have their best personal interests at heart by making sure they have the information they need pre-arrival, that they can settle in quickly and easily to their accommodation, that they can succeed in their studies from participating

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<sup>76</sup> Code of Practice for Provision of Programmes of Education and Training to International Learners (2015), section 3.4

in a style of learning that empowers them academically, and that they are provided with the necessary pastoral, mental health, medical and other supports that they may need to deliver to avail to experience an exceptional study abroad experience. This is especially important for international students whose visit to study in Ireland may be their first time that they will have left their family home, not to talk of leaving their home country. All staff must be sensitive to the needs of students in this context.

## 8.2 Roles and Responsibilities

All staff are asked to support the pastoral ethos of the College, bringing together College services and teaching in a structured and coordinated way for the benefit of the students in its care and ensuring a positive learning experience for all. While the Programme Manager has overall College student support oversight, the Student Support Officer is the dedicated person responsible for student support activities and services...see chapter 2, section 2.4.5 for role description. Ultimately, the beneficiaries of this approach will be students who will benefit from a caring, compassionate, and supportive learning environment availing of a range of supports that are made available before they arrive in Ireland, while they are studying with the College in Ireland, and how we may keep in contact with them, subject to their consent after they leave.

## 8.3 Pre-Arrival Supports

The College recruits students worldwide but especially from Africa, the Middle East, India and Asia. Before students arrive in Ireland, they will be provided with information via the website and social media channels, and from speaking to Agents and the Recruitment and Admissions Officer...see chapter 4, section 4.5, and chapter 10 (Public Information and Communication) for more details. Information is made available to students before they arrive in Ireland to study at the College in a variety of ways as follows:

- The College as a provider and the benefits of studying with the College, together will full programme fees and the relevant refund procedures.
- The pathway programmes so that students know about the programme, entry criteria, the modules they will need to study based on their chosen pathway stream, MIMLOs,

the assessment approaches etc... see UDOC001 UniHaven Programme Handbook Rev 2.

- Protection of Enrolled Students (PEL) and Medical Insurance policies will be put in place for all students on an individual basis...see UPOL002 UniHaven Learner Protection Policy Rev 1.
- Fees and refund policies relevant to UniHaven programmes...see UPOL008 UniHaven Fees and Refund Policy Rev 1.
- The College application, enrolment, and admissions requirements such that they know what information they must provide for the College to be able to admit them to the programmes. This includes the HEI partner that the students will progress to once they successfully complete the programme including the range of degree programmes that they may enter, the grades they must attain to meet the HEI partner's entry criteria, career progression post-degree, relevant visa requirements and what is expected of them as an Irish HEI student generally...see UPOL007 UniHaven Student Recruitment and Admissions Policy Rev 2.
- Ireland as a country but in particular travel to get here, visa and inoculation requirements, the national culture, transport, accommodation options, food/meal options, services specific to the College location and so on...see UDOC002 UniHaven Student Handbook Rev 2.
- Guardian nominee requirements for students aged 17 or younger, i.e., minors, must be in place pre-enrolment and until the student reaches the age of 18. The College will nominate a third-party guardian nominee company to provide a guardian nominee service to minors on the College's behalf, but the students family/parents will enter a direct contract with this company – they will not sign a contract for such services with the College...see also section 8.4.12.
- Banking such that students can open a bank account as soon as possible after arrival for lodging cash, paying deposits etc. ...see UDOC002 UniHaven Student Handbook Rev 2.

All student and College communications are pre-approved by the Academic Director.

## 8.4 While Studying with UniHaven

There are several areas in which the College will support students while they study in Ireland and that will be outlined in full in UDOC002 UniHaven Student Handbook Rev 2 and associated UDOC008 UniHaven Student Charter Rev 1 to include:

- On Arrival.
- Induction and Registration.
- Student Charter.
- Teaching and Learning.
- Academic Support.
- Student Facilities.
- Information Technology and Computer Services.
- Student Representation.
- Student Interaction.
- Student Attendance.
- Students with Disabilities.
- Students who are Minors/Children.
- Academic Misconduct Prevention.
- Student Complaints and Grievances.
- Student Data.
- Social Programmes.
- Pastoral Care.
- Student Retention.

### 8.4.1 On Arrival

As students arrive in Ireland, the College will have asked them for their flight and travel details and, where necessary, helped to arrange travel or transport on their behalf. Similarly, for accommodation, the College offer to help arrange students first transition into their accommodation provider – homestay, corporate accommodation or other – such that when they first arrive at their destination in Ireland, the College will make sure that they seamlessly access their provider and get settled in as soon as possible. All providers will have been carefully selected and vetted, including Garda vetting. Minor students will



also be introduced to their guardian nominee company (see section 8.4.12). Students will also be given information about how to get around the locality, how to open bank accounts and other practical information that will help them to settle in. Students will also be encouraged to contact their parents or guardians at home to let them know of their safe arrival. Further pre-arrival information can be found in the UDOC002 UniHaven Student Handbook Rev 2.

#### 8.4.2 Induction and Registration

Once semester 1 starts, students will go through a formal registration and induction week where they will be informed about all aspects of the study and student support in the College to include how they can access and use the technology learning tools at the College, the necessary hardware and software required, immediate programme start information, the campus, its facilities, the local area regarding safety, amenities and so on. UPRO002 UniHaven Student Registration and Induction Procedure Rev 1 goes through these processes in more detail.

#### 8.4.3 Student Charter

The Student Charter details the level of service the College endeavours to provide to students from the start of their application process, through to life studying at the College including the academic, social, and cultural environments. UDOC008 UniHaven Student Charter Rev 1 helps students to understand the expectations the College has of them as students regarding their academic and general behaviours in describing the two-way relationship that exists between them and the College. It also outlines the expectations students are entitled to have of the College. The College seeks to foster a collaborative approach working together to achieve an inclusive learning environment and response to the diverse needs of students.

#### 8.4.4 Teaching and Learning

Staff are actively engaged in supporting students throughout their programme of study. UPOL013 UniHaven Teaching and Learning Policy Rev 1 outlines the approach to inclusive and supportive teaching and learning and is complemented by UDOC012 UniHaven

Teaching, Learning and Assessment Strategy. UPOL014 UniHaven Blended Learning Policy Rev 1 addresses the remote and online learning aspects. Online learning will be facilitated using the College LMS (see chapter 9, section 9.4), Office 365 and other appropriate technologies that support learning that takes place using both in-class and online formats. More information about teaching and learning, including the blended learning aspects, is outlined in chapter 6 with full details described in UPOL013 UniHaven Teaching and Learning Policy Rev 1 and UPOL014 Blended Learning Policy Rev 1.

All students will be aware of the workload associated with the modules that need to be completed in terms of total learning hours and the degree to which they will be taught in class versus the supports they will receive online before their study begins as described in UDOC001 UniHaven Programme Handbook Rev 2. Should students have any issues with the learning methodologies or any other aspects of teaching and learning in the college, they are encouraged to speak with their Teacher or Programme Manager.

#### 8.4.5 Academic Support

The College will provide additional tutor hours, tutorials and 1:1 tutor support as necessary to help students to succeed in the programme and to progress to the College's HEI partners. Formative assessment will be accompanied by timely, i.e., within 2 weeks, Teacher feedback to students to help them to understand how they are progressing academically and what actions are needed for improvement. Students are actively encouraged to provide feedback through the different fora described in later sections of this policy.

#### 8.4.6 Student Facilities

Student facilities will include a student common room, kitchen facilities, a room with IT/laptop access and a library. The College will also secure access to students for one or more of the HEI partners' online library facilities. See more details on the College website.

#### 8.4.7 Information Technology and Computer Services

Students will have full access to the LMS, Office365 and all relevant IT infrastructure to support their learning, whether in-class or remote/online. Students will need to provide their own laptops.

#### 8.4.8 Student Representation

A Student Representative is chosen for each programme pathway stream to facilitate interaction between staff and students regarding programme-related matters and student-support-related matters. Initially, the College will have one student representative per pathway stream but as class numbers increase, a student representative may be selected for each class. Essentially, the student representative is the point of contact for a particular programme or pathway stream on behalf of their peer students. The student representative will receive training to explain the role and responsibilities, and they will receive support from the Student Support Officer as to how best to fill this important student voice role. Meetings will be held monthly to gain feedback on classes and programmes, student wellbeing and any issues students may be encountering. See also chapter 3, section 3.3.3, and chapter 6, section 6.5.

#### 8.4.9 Student Interaction

Separate from the student representative approach, the College will gain feedback from students through informal week-to-week discussions with Teachers, Programme Manager etc. and from engagement surveys. Surveys will be generated each semester to find out more about the students' experience at the College in the following areas:

- Academic survey: feedback on teaching methods, modules and content, assessments, and homework, to include the blended learning and technology aspects.
- Student Life: looking for an insight into students' opinions on College facilities, student support services and social programme activities, as well as local services and amenities.

An overall experience survey will be conducted at the end of the programme to enable students to give feedback and recommendations based on their overall experience and to

allow for any change in their experience from the start of their programme through to exit.

#### 8.4.10 Student Attendance

To comply with the Irish Department of Justice regulations, students from outside the European Economic Area (EEA) are required to attend a minimum of 85% of all classes to maintain visa compliance. Attendance is recorded for every class by Teachers and is monitored regularly by the Programme Manager supported by the Student Support Officer. Poor attendance is a serious issue and will be followed up immediately. If not addressed, it can lead to warnings up to and including dismissal from the programme. UPRO011 UniHaven Attendance Monitoring Procedure Rev 1 outlines the steps involved in this process in detail, including the right to appeal, and will be made available on the College website, the College LMS (see chapter 9, section 9.4), and is also outlined in UDOC002 UniHaven Student Handbook Rev 2. This process is separate to the student disciplinary process outlined in section 8.7 which is for non-attendance disciplinary matters.

#### 8.4.11 Students with Disabilities

Students with disabilities can broadly be described as those with physical disabilities, with specific learning difficulties, and with medical conditions that may have an impact upon their studies. Applications are welcomed from students who present with such learning challenges and reasonable accommodations will be made, where possible and within the College's resource constraints, to help students to overcome these challenges. Students presenting with such learning challenges are asked to register with the Student Support Office upon enrolment to discuss any additional supports and services that may be offered. If at any time, during their programme of study, a student is concerned that they may have a learning challenge, they are encouraged to talk to the Student Support Officer who will notify the Academic Director to enable the making of an informed determination. UPOL018 UniHaven Learner Disability Policy Rev 2 outlines the policy concerning a student who may present with a disability with further relevant information to be found in chapter 4, section 4.5.3.1.4 concerning student applications, and chapter 7, section 7.1.2 and 7.6.1 for student assessments.

#### 8.4.12 Students Who Are Minors/Children

The College will put facilitate specific arrangements for students who are classified under Irish law as children, i.e., aged under 18 years. The College will nominate a third-party guardian nominee company to provide a guardian nominee service to minors on the College's behalf, but the students family/parents will sign a contract with this company – they will not sign a contract for such services with the College. The written agreement signed by the guardian nominee company and the College will outline the separation of responsibilities each party has when it comes to taking care of college students. The Academic Director will be responsible for monitoring compliance with this agreement terms and for capturing any associated risks in UFORM012 UniHaven Risk Register Rev 2 as per UPOL003 UniHaven Risk Management Policy...see also chapter 2, section 2.6. Typical services include accompanying minors to medical and visa appointments, being a 24-hour contact, seven days a week, for emergency support and care, and general external student welfare support. Such students will be partnered with the College's appointed guardian nominee company and, while in College care, any suspicions any staff or student has about any child protection issue will be dealt with as per UPOL019 UniHaven Child Protection Policy Rev 1.

#### 8.4.13 Academic Misconduct Prevention

The College will provide teaching and tutor support to clarify exactly what is and what is not acceptable regarding referencing, gathering, and presenting information for assessments on the programme to prevent any form of academic misconduct, all forms of which are unacceptable...see chapter 7, section 7.6 for full details.

#### 8.4.14 Student Data

Students will be informed about how their personal data will be used and stored when engaging with online platforms and while students at the College generally. Students will be issued with their own unique student identification number that will be used to identify the student for all College assessments, exams, and awards. Their individual email address for formal College communication purposes will be listed. They will be assigned their logins for LMS access. UPOL020 UniHaven Data Protection Policy Rev 1, UPOL023 UniHaven Data Retention Policy Rev 1, UPOL024 UniHaven Data Security Policy Rev 1

outline how student data is collected, secured, and retained while UPOL025 UniHaven Learning Analytics Policy Rev 1 refers specifically to student learning-related data and how it is used. See also chapter 9, section 9.5 for more details.

#### 8.4.15 Social Programmes

To enhance the student study abroad experience of living and studying in Ireland, the College will organise an appropriate range of local and national cultural, sporting, historical and entertainment activities that expose students to life in Ireland, past and present. These activities will be supervised by a staff member who will be Garda vetted as per UPOL012 UniHaven Garda Vetting Policy Rev 1. As student numbers grow, the College may arrange a more formal 'clubs and societies' approach to student activities.

#### 8.4.16 Pastoral Care

The College will provide many types of pastoral care to students from banking accounts and general queries about living in Ireland to a referral service where will refer them to specific mental health, medical and wellbeing providers, including hospitals and dentists where necessary, such that they are and feel truly taken care of during their time in Ireland. The College also provides 6 free counselling sessions per student for all students that can be availed of through a third-party provider. The College will also have an emergency student fund in case students need emergency financial assistance. Should students suffer a serious illness, injury or death, the guardian nominee provider (only if the student is a minor) and/or a member of College staff will accompany the student to doctor and hospital appointments and provide general support to the student. The Academic Director will be the College liaison person to deal with the student's family, to be the point of contact for any medical or other investigation or calls for information that is essential to help the situation and as agreed with the student and his/her family. Any child protection issues, if relevant, will be dealt with as per UPOL019 UniHaven Child Protection Policy Rev 1.

#### 8.4.17 Student Retention

Through a mixture of the full range of supports, the College hope that students will complete their programmes successfully. However, issues do arise from time to time. Where appropriate, it will support and encourage students to stay engaged with their

programme and learning. If students decide that staying on their programme or in Ireland is not in their best interest, we will facilitate such decisions through the implementation of UPOL007 UniHaven Student Recruitment and Admissions Policy Rev 2 where procedures for deferrals, leave of absence and withdrawals are described.

## 8.5 After Students Leave the College - Alumni

Once students move on to the College's HEI partners, the College aims to, with students' express permission, stay in contact with them. The College wishes to continue remote contact as a reflection of its commitment to caring for students while at the College and its desire to ensure that its students continue to achieve their education and career goals after they have left the College. It will seek to use a sample of past students as student ambassadors and for future marketing purposes subject to complying with data protection policies and legislation.

## 8.6 Additional Information

A variety of additional information is provided to students that is fully described in UDOC002 UniHaven Student Handbook Rev 2 including but not limited to information about

- Ireland.
- Transport.
- Bank Accounts.
- Shopping.
- Student Wellbeing.
- Safety and Medical Care.
- Cost of Living.
- Accommodation.
- Electricity/Voltage.
- Bank Holidays.
- Medical Insurance (see chapter 4, section 4.5.2.1)
- Emergencies and Emergency Services.

## 8.7 Student Complaints and Disciplinary Processes

The College seeks to ensure a positive student experience for all students and does this through actively monitoring student support systems, the programme, and administrative systems to continuously improve the quality of academic and non-academic services provided to students.

### 8.7.1 Student Complaints

Should an issue or grievance arise, student complaints are taken very seriously, and the College aims to resolve them in a confidential, transparent, fair, and timely manner and as required by QQI<sup>778</sup>. It is for this reason that the complaints and disciplinary processes provide for several stages, both informal and formal, in the handling of a grievance, complaint or concern that a student raises with the College staff, directly or indirectly. These processes apply to all registered students at the College as well as to students who have graduated within the previous academic year.

#### 8.7.1.1 Informal Complaints

It is the responsibility of any staff member in receipt of an informal complaint to investigate and respond to the student. In the interests of efficiency and good management, students are encouraged to approach the staff member who is closest to the disputed matter in the first instance. This informal approach may be made in person or through written communication.

- A member of staff who receives an informal complaint should undertake an investigation and then respond to the student within 5 working days. Records will be kept of all students' complaints by the Programme Manager on the College server where they are securely stored. Should a member of staff receive a complaint they may, if they feel appropriate, pass the complaint to a more senior member of staff but ensuring that the student's confidentiality is maintained.

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<sup>77</sup> Statutory Quality Assurance Guidelines developed by QQI for use by all Providers (2016), section 5.2

<sup>78</sup> Code of Practice for Provision of Programmes of Education and Training to International Learners (2015), section 3.4.1



- The response should give the student an indication of the outcome, providing explanations for the perceived problem or, if the complaint is justified, the actions are taken to remedy the problem. In some, relatively rare, cases, it may not be possible to rectify the matter to the benefit of the student who has complained.
- Notwithstanding that response, students may proceed to submit a formal complaint.

#### 8.7.1.2 Formal Complaints

The Programme Manager is responsible for acknowledging student complaints, investigating them, and responding appropriately all while maintaining student confidentiality. Should the complaint be made against The Programme Manager, a member of the College's Executive Management Team (EMT) is responsible for acknowledging student complaints, investigating, and responding appropriately and confidentially. A student who is dissatisfied with the outcome of an informal complaint, or who does not wish a complaint to be handled informally, may proceed with a formal written complaint using UFORM010 UniHaven Student Complaints Form Rev 1. This will be made available on the College website.

- The student will receive acknowledgement of receipt of the complaint from the Programme Manager within 3 working days. The complaint will be investigated and assessed by the Programme Manager unless the Programme Manager is the subject of the complaint, in which case the complaint will be dealt with by an EMT member. If an EMT member is the subject of the complaint, that member will not partake in the complaints process.
- The Programme Manager or EMT member will present a written report to the Academic Director suggesting recommendations to resolve the issue within 10 working days of the complaint being received. If the nature of the complaint necessitates longer investigation periods, the timelines for investigating and reporting to the Academic Director must be notified to the student within this same 10 working day period but not be any longer than an additional 10 working days.
- Once approved by the Academic Director, the outcome of the complaint with any corresponding action for implementation and follow-up outlined will be communicated to the student within 5 working days of the report being received.
- The student has a period of 14 working days in which they must respond.

### 8.7.2 Disciplinary Procedure

Student-related policies are communicated to students publicly on the website, on the College learning management system (LMS), and through UDOC002 Student Handbook. The College's expectations of students concerning their general, academic, and personal conduct and behaviour will have been communicated in UDOC008 UniHaven Student Charter Rev 1. Both Handbook and Charter documents will be provided to students at their induction. Academic Misconduct suspicions or allegations are dealt with under UPRO008 UniHaven Academic Misconduct Procedure Rev 1 and as outlined in chapter 7, section 7.7 with repeat offences being covered by this procedure. Attendance-related disciplinary issues are covered under UPRO011 UniHaven Attendance Monitoring Procedure Rev 1 which is referred to in section 8.4.10. Where allegations are made which suggest activity of child protection or criminal nature, the College reserves its right to refer the matter to Tusla and/or An Garda Síochána if it is considered appropriate to do so. In such instances, legal requirements under Irish law will overwrite duties and responsibilities of the College to the student concerning the privacy of their data under GDPR policies, if relevant...see UPOL019 UniHaven Child Protection Policy Rev 1 for full details on child protection reporting requirements.

The student disciplinary procedure exists to cover areas where students are in breach of their commitments under the Student Charter or breach of College student policies generally and to cover any other issue that warrants investigation and action, to include gross misconduct. The College reserves the right to suspend a student who is suspected of gross misconduct whilst the investigation into the incident is being carried out. Investigations will be conducted promptly to limit the academic impact on the student as much as possible. The College will inform the student in writing of their suspension in such situations.

The key steps in this process are as follows:

- An investigation will be carried out by the Programme Manager with a written report drawn upon completion. The report will detail the background to the case, the context applying, and the reasons why the matter needs to be dealt with formally.



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- This written report is forwarded to the College Student Disciplinary Committee where a hearing will take place to consider the matter. The full terms of reference for this committee are outlined in chapter 2, section 2.3.2.3, and no staff or external member can be a member of this committee that had any involvement in the matter under investigation and being heard. The student will be called to attend this hearing when it sits.
  - The student will be given 5 working days' notice in writing of the date of the hearing stating the need for him/her to attend and the student will be given a copy of the findings of the initial investigation.
  - The student has the right to be accompanied at the hearing by a member of staff or a fellow student or to have legal or translator representation and to present their case. If someone other than a member of staff or a student accompanies the student, the College must be informed in advance of the hearing as to the name, role and purpose of this person attending the hearing. If the student fails to attend or chooses not to attend the hearing, the hearing shall proceed in their absence.
  - Once a decision on the case has been reached, the Student Disciplinary Committee will apply a penalty appropriate to the offence committed or dismiss the allegation if it finds such allegations to be unwarranted. All hearings will be conducted sympathetically yet in a way that enforces the College policies and protects the integrity of the College.
  - The student is entitled to appeal the decision to the Appeals Board...see chapter 2, section 2.3.2.5 for terms of reference. In such cases, the application of the disciplinary penalty may be suspended pending the outcome of the appeal depends on the nature of the matter under consideration. For example, if a student was suspended for a misconduct complaint about being drunk and disorderly, their return to class pending their appeal may not be approved.

### 8.7.3 Appeals

The result of a Student Disciplinary Committee may be appealed to the Appeals Board on the following conditions:

- Procedural irregularity which, had not occurred, might have impacted significantly the validity of the original hearing and the subsequent penalty.

- New evidence that could not reasonably have been made available at the initial disciplinary hearing.
- That the penalty levied by the Student Disciplinary Committee was too severe when viewed in the overall circumstances of the case.

Appeal requests must be submitted to the Programme Manager no less than 5 working days following notification of the outcome of a Student Disciplinary Hearing. The decision made by the Appeals Board will be final.

#### 8.7.4 Penalties

Misconduct can be classified as either a minor infringement or a major infringement. Penalties will be appropriate to the category of misconduct that the student has been found guilty of.

##### 8.7.4.1 Minor Infringement

Where a student is deemed to have committed a minor infringement, the Student Disciplinary Committee is permitted to impose any of the following penalties, either separately or in combination:

- A reprimand and a note on the student's file.
- A formal verbal or written warning issued by either the Academic Director or the Programme Manager and such warning will be kept on the student's file.
- An order for the reparation of any damage or loss, if relevant, caused to the College or any members of staff, students, or members of the public.

Where an adjudication deems that a student has committed a minor infringement, students will be given every chance to prevent a recurrence and will be supported by staff as relevant.

##### 8.7.4.2 Major Infringement

Where a student is deemed to have committed a major infringement, the Student Disciplinary Committee is authorised to impose any of the following penalties, either separately or in combination:

- The expulsion of the student from their programme. This decision must be forwarded to the CEO at EMT before being implemented. Such a decision must also be notified to the Department of Justice for visa purposes.
- The student may be suspended from the college for a stated period, or until any requirements laid down by the Student Disciplinary Committee have been sufficiently addressed.
- The student may be excluded from specific College facilities.
- The student may be removed from examinations or assessments for a specific period.
- An order for the reparation of any damage or loss caused to the college or any members of staff, students, or members of the public.
- The student may be denied an award, certificate, prize, or any other academic-related award.

## 9. INFORMATION AND DATA MANAGEMENT

### 9.1 Context

The College is aware of the quantity of data gathered over time regarding students and their learning activities, both operationally in terms of the running of the programme and at a more systematic level relating to ongoing monitoring and review of modules, learning, assessment, and student-LMS interactions. It is a priority for the College that, in collecting student and learning data, the rights of students and staff are protected, and data is used in a way that is fair, transparent, and always with the best of intentions to support students' academic progression via a positive student learning experience. Furthermore, the College commits that data is stored securely, only collected and used for the purpose for which it was intended, and its access is limited to those staff that need to access it to fulfil their College roles. In doing so it aims to comply with GDPR legislation (see section 9.7) and with QQI requirements<sup>79</sup> in the following aspects

- Various methods of collecting information are used as appropriate. Students and staff are involved in providing and analysing information and planning follow-up activities.
- The information gathered reflects the context and mission of the provider.
- Reliable information and data are available for informed decision-making and to ensure the providers know what is working well and what needs attention.
- Controls and structures are in place to generate named data/reports which are communicated to staff and management for self-monitoring and planning purposes.
- Appropriate quantitative and qualitative measures are identified which can be used as benchmarks or key performance indicators.
- The management information system enables necessary information to be stored and channelled to where it is needed when it is needed. It facilitates timely analysis in light of key performance indicators and objectives.

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<sup>79</sup> Statutory Quality Assurance Guidelines developed by QQI for use by all Providers (2016), section 8

- The information contained in the management information system is reviewed holistically from time to time to determine what additional insights are to be gleaned from it.
- Completion rates are collected, used, and made available to external quality reviewers.
- There is a policy for the establishment and maintenance of quality-related records that specify data retention periods.
- The information system is designed to enable compliance with data protection legislation. Obligations under data protection legislation are complied with. This includes the establishment of data access controls, data backup systems and ensuring learner information material makes clear what personal data will be collected, for what purpose and with whom it will be shared.

## 9.2 Roles and Responsibilities

This Programme Manager is responsible for student and learning data collection and systems in conjunction with the Data Protection Officer who will ensure that data is only collected, used, and stored for the purposes for which it has been intended. The Academic Director is responsible for institutional data collection and monitoring and for reporting such information to QQI together with data security assurance.

## 9.3 Guidelines

As a student-centred international education institution, the College always seeks to use data to improve the student learning experience and to improve learning effectiveness. In response to this increasing focus on the use of data to enhance the student experience and outcomes, the College has developed the following set of guidelines for the ethical use of learning analytics.

- Collection and use of data will always comply with GDPR legislation and related College data protection, retention, and security policies.
- Students are informed about how their data is collected, used, shared, and protected in advance via UDOC002 UniHaven Student Handbook Rev 2 and at

programme registration and induction. The data protection policies are also available on the College website.

- The College recognises the limitations of data analysis and the biases that may be contained therein and advise staff to take a holistic view of student learning and earning effectiveness and not to use data in a one-dimensional way when gauging student progress.
- The College will ensure that learning data is accurate, verified and analysed by academic staff familiar with the use of such data.
- The College will never react to individual records or apparent short-term trends without completing due diligence and without taking full consideration of wider impacts or consequences.
- This learning analytics policy will be kept under review on an ongoing basis.

#### 9.4 Learning Management System (LMS)

Claned, [www.claned.com](http://www.claned.com), is the College LMS. The College aims to comply with QQI requirements<sup>80</sup> concerning the use of its LMS (see also chapter 1, section 1.3.4) by assuring students that it is robust, comprehensive, and capable of

Maintaining secure learner records for current use and historical review.

Providing reports required for internal quality management and improvement.

Generating data required for, and compatible with, external regulatory, professional, or national systems as appropriate.

Generating statistical and other reports to meet internal and external information requirements, for example, on the QQI database of programmes and awards as prescribed by the legislation.

Ensuring that the database is maintained securely and that data relating to learner assessment is accurate and complete.

It was selected by the College for

Its user-friendliness for both students and staff.

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<sup>80</sup> Statutory Quality Assurance Guidelines developed by QQI for use by all Providers (2016), section 8.2



Its ability to enhance teaching and learning as opposed to just being used to share content.

Its ability to facilitate excellent interaction between students and Teachers.

Its ability to provide very specific student feedback to Teachers.

Its facilitation of student-to-student social interaction.

Its back end learning analytic automatic data analysis in the areas of

- Learning time and frequency feedback.
- Content learning difficulty feedback.
- Student interaction with the content via comments, questions etc.

The purpose of the College LMS is to share programme core content, to provide learning support content, to provide a means for students to contact Teachers online, to provide a means for students to leave questions for Teachers outside of hours that will be actioned in-hours, to facilitate formative assessment and to provide an interactive Teacher-student two-way feedback mechanism that supplements in-class learning and feedback.

## 9.5 Student Learning and Assessment Data

Learning analytics data will be collected as students engage with the programme and the LMS. This data, with the correct use as outlined in this policy, will be evaluated to maximise student engagement, learning effectiveness and academic progression, the latter both progression through the programme and progression to HEI partners. In this context, students should be assured that the analysis of their learning is designed to benefit them as learners and not something to be feared in any way.

### 9.5.1 Student Data Sources

Student learning data comes from a variety of sources, including the LMS. The sources from which student learning data is collected includes but is not limited to:

Summative and formative assessment grades and feedback whether in hard or soft copy stored on the College IT systems/servers or the LMS.

Exam broadsheets stored in hard copy.

Student attendance, completion and retention rates as recorded on the College IT systems/servers or the LMS by academic and student support staff.

Student recruitment and admissions data as recorded on the College IT systems/servers or the LMS by admissions staff, in particular evidence of previous learning before joining the programme student identification for assessments, and student unique IT system logins.

Student progression data is recorded on the College IT systems/servers or the LMS in terms of how many students progress to HEI partner degree programmes and which programmes these are plus feedback from the HEI partners about the College students.

The LMS that collects data such as

- Student LMS identification and logins.
- Student programme and module progression.
- Student feedback on the LMS content as questions, comments, and time spent on each piece of individual content they study.

### 9.5.2 Interventions

A range of interventions may take place in response to an analysis of the student data collected and analysed. The types of interventions and what they are intended to achieve are also documented in UDOC002 UniHaven Student Handbook Rev 2. These may include:

- Prompts or suggestions sent automatically to the student via email, SMS message or web/cloud notification to include Teacher or staff-entered prompts or automatic LMS prompts.
- Teachers contacting a student based on the data collected if it is considered that the student may benefit from additional learning or other support, for assessment feedback the Teacher wishes to share with the student in an online format, or where staff suspect student misconduct from the student behaviour to include general or academic misconduct. In this latter context, staff will follow up as per UPRO008 UniHaven Academic Misconduct Procedure Rev 1 or UPRO010 UniHaven Student Complaints and Disciplinary Procedure Rev 1 as relevant.

Online interventions, whether automated or human-mediated, will normally be recorded

and retained as per UPOL023 UniHaven Data Retention Policy Rev 1.

## 9.6 Institutional Data

QQI require a certain type of institutional data to be collected<sup>81</sup> as the College awarding body to facilitate institutional self-monitoring, programme and institutional review, programme validation and annual reporting – see chapter 12 for full details. Data typically fall under two headings that include but is not limited to the following examples:

- QA Data
  - College and programme objectives and plans.
  - Performance indicators.
  - Minutes of QA meetings.
  - Internal reports.
  - Follow up reports.
- Student Aggregate Data
  - Programme minimum and maximum student numbers.
  - Student profiles.
  - Student satisfaction survey results.
  - Student retention, completion and HEI progression data and HEI partner feedback.
  - Grade analysis.

## 9.7 Data Protection, Security and Retention

The College's approach to data collection, security, and retention and its LMS is designed to facilitate compliance with data protection legislation. This includes the establishment of sufficiently strong data access controls, data backup, data security and data retention and ensuring that the information the College provides to students via its policies and via UDOC002 UniHaven Student Handbook Rev 2 makes clear what personal data will be collected, for what purpose, and with whom it will be shared. The Academic Director has

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<sup>81</sup> Statutory Quality Assurance Guidelines developed by QQI for use by all Providers (2016)

overall responsibility for student data security as advised by the DPO. The College will adhere to GDPR legislation and where there is any conflict in policies, real or perceived, GDPR legislative requirements will take precedence. The exceptions to this statement occur when suspicions of child protection wrongdoing or criminal activity concerns have been raised and must be reported as per respective legislative requirements, in which case state bodies may be contacted with data shared.

See the following related policies and procedures that are relevant to the data protection and GDPR at the College:

- UPOL020 UniHaven Data Protection Policy Rev 1 – as the College’s overarching data protection policy to include what data is collected, from whom and for what purpose.
- UPOL023 UniHaven Data Retention Policy Rev 1 – that includes a records retention schedule outlining what type of data will be stored and for how long.
- UPOL024 UniHaven Data Security Policy Rev 1 – that outlined data security arrangements to include firewall, antivirus and automatic backups of all College cloud IT systems/servers and IT equipment. The LMS is cloud based and secured by the third-party provider’s own security, firewall, antivirus, and automatic backup processes.
- UPOL021 UniHaven Privacy Policy Rev 1 – to show the type of student data collected via the College website and social media channels.
- UPOL022 UniHaven Cookie Policy Rev 1 – to show the way student data is used on the College website in the form of Cookies.
- UPRO012 UniHaven Data Subject Access Request Procedure Rev 1 – that outlines how data subject access requests are dealt with.
- UPRO013 UniHaven Data Security Breach and Reporting Procedure Rev 1 – that outlines how the College reports data breaches under GDPR legislation.

## 10. PUBLIC INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION

### 10.1 Context

Public information refers to the information that the College communicates and publishes about its activities, including the programme and related services, about the College as a provider, about its quality assurance policies and procedures, and evaluation and findings from quality assurance evaluations. It excludes internal communications but includes communications such as email, social media, and marketing communications.

It is important that the College exerts appropriate levels of control of and sign off on all formal College communications in the areas of student communications, programme materials, QQI reports/correspondence and regulatory information. This is necessary to ensure that all publicly available information is communicated with accuracy, with clarity, is easily accessible, is up to date and that complies with regulatory requirements generally<sup>82</sup>.

### 10.2 Roles and Responsibilities

The Academic Director is tasked with the final signoff on all College communications that pertain to the programme under the direction of the AC. The Academic Director has ultimate responsibility for ensuring that clear and correct information is contained within all academic documents issued by the College and contained on the College website, LMS, and social media publications. The Academic Director will seek expert advice (legal etc.) where and when required. The Programme Manager has local responsibility for information related to his/her area and shall be considered the owner of this information. The Chief Revenue Officer is responsible for updating the College website and social media channels with all information supplied by the College staff past approval by the Academic Director. The full communications approval procedure is outlined in UPOL026

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<sup>82</sup> Statutory Quality Assurance Guidelines developed by QQI for use by all Providers (2016), section 9

UniHaven Communications Policy Rev 1 section 5.

The Academic Director also works with all College staff to agree on programme details annually after the completion of the annual programme review process for use for the following year's public information. Approval for changes to public information already published must be sought from the Academic Director before publication. Any changes will be reflected, as soon as possible, on the College website and in programme literature.

Agent programme and College communications are approved in advance by the Chief Revenue Officer and monitored on an ongoing basis by the Recruitment and Admissions Officer as per UPOL027 UniHaven Agent Policy Rev 1...see also chapter 11 (Other Parties Involved in Education and Training).

The Academic Director will also regularly check publicly published information to make sure it is accurate and has been properly approved.

### 10.3 Programme Information

The College aims to ensure that clear and accurate information is published about the programme on the College website and in UDOC001 UniHaven Programme Handbook Rev 2...see also chapter 4, section 4.5

- The programme name, i.e., Level 5 Certificate in International Foundation Studies, its module content, its minimum intended programme learning outcomes, its minimum intended module learning outcomes and how the programme will be assessed.
- Programme access, transfer, and progression information...see chapter 4, section 4.5.3.
- That the programme leads to the QQI Level 5 Specific Purpose Certificate in International Foundation Studies Award that is recognised on the NFQ...see chapter 7, section 7.5.

- Protection of Enrolled Learner (PEL) arrangements including refund procedures and programme cessation event information that may demand student refunds....see UPOL002 UniHaven Learner Protection Policy Rev 1.

Also, programme-related information will be communicated to staff internally via board and committee meeting minutes accessible on the College IT systems/servers with such information available to students via the LMS.

## 10.4 Regulatory Information

The College commits to publishing the following documents on its website as per QQI requirements<sup>83</sup>..see chapter 12 for Self-monitoring, Evaluation, and Review information.

- College policies, procedures, regulations, and guidelines form part of its QA system.
- Programme Validation Report.
- QQI Annual Quality Reports.
- Self-assessment Reports.
- Institutional Reviews.
- External Examiner Reports to include External Examiner name, report conclusions, and College actions.

## 10.5 Recruitment and Admissions Information

The College will provide the following information before enrolment in compliance with QQI's code of practice for international learners<sup>84</sup> - see also chapter 4, section 4.5:

- User-friendly accessible programme-related information to ensure that there is a full understanding of the information provided, including the start date.
  - Entry requirements including English language proficiency requirements.

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<sup>83</sup> Statutory Quality Assurance Guidelines developed by QQI for use by all Providers (2016), section 9.2

<sup>84</sup> Code of Practice for Provision of Programmes of Education and Training to International Learners (2015), sections 3.2 and 3.3

- MIPLOs, MIMLOs and FET Credits.
- Award name and NFQ Level.
- Access, Transfer and Progression.
- Protection of Enrolled Learners.
- Fees and refunds.
- Accurate information about the College premises, facilities, and technologies.
- Contact details for its Recruitment and Admissions Officer.
- Timely written response to any applicant who is refused admission as well as an outline of the College admissions appeals procedure.
- Attendance requirements and visa requirements that are relevant to entering and remaining in Ireland for study purposes and for maintaining enrolment on the programme, including sanctions where such requirements are not complied with. The latter may include expulsion for serious visa requirements breaches.
- How students who successfully complete the programme will progress to the relevant HEI partner and what is involved in doing so. As a pathway provider, the students will receive conditional offers from both the College and the pathway HEI partner pre-enrolment...see chapter 4, section 4.5.3.

### 10.5.1 Agents

The College will recruit and manage agents in compliance with QQI's code of practice for international learners<sup>85</sup> as described in chapter 4, section 4.5.2.2 and as outlined in full in UPOL027 UniHaven Agent Policy Rev 1.

### 10.5.2 Staff

The College's UPOL028 UniHaven Email, Social Media, and Marketing Communications Policy Rev 1 serve as a guide to staff as to how to externally send information in ways that are professional, accurate and, for social media, not confused with an individual's own social media communications. The contents of the above policy are also included in staff employment contracts.

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<sup>85</sup> Code of Practice for Provision of Programmes of Education and Training to International Learners (2015), sections 3.2.2



## 11. OTHER PARTIES INVOLVED IN EDUCATION AND TRAINING

### 11.1 Context

The College does not currently engage any other provider as a collaborative provider for the running of the programme in Ireland nor does it intend to run the QQI programme online or overseas. External collaborations are, therefore, limited to the HEI partners who accept students who successfully complete their studies with the College, external council/board/committee members, and overseas recruitment agents who help to recruit international students for study in Ireland. All such collaborations are referred to as external collaborations/collaborators as opposed to collaborative provision. The College intends to join bodies such as AHEAD<sup>86</sup>, National Teaching and Learning Forum<sup>87</sup>, and the Higher Education Colleges Association (HECA)<sup>88</sup>.

Consistent with national policy in Ireland, the College's programme is intended to promote mutual recognition and confidence in the learning outcomes attained by its students. Collaboration arrangements are organised with reputable individuals and/or bodies and are subject to the College's quality assurance procedures in line with the following QQI requirements:

- The quality assurance procedures include explicit criteria and procedures for the recruitment and engagement of external, independent, national, and international experts (where appropriate), including the selection and recruitment of expert panel members.
- These require a declaration by the external expert of any interests that could conflict or might appear to conflict, with the role or responsibilities proposed by the provider.

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<sup>86</sup> <https://www.ahead.ie/index>

<sup>87</sup> <https://www.teachingandlearning.ie/>

<sup>88</sup> <https://www.ahead.ie/>

- The names and affiliations of expert panellists, examiners and authenticators and other external experts associated with the provider are collated and monitored by the provider with their independence and expertise are reviewed each time a person is engaged<sup>89</sup>.

## 11.2 Roles and Responsibilities

The Academic Director under the auspices of AC is responsible for managing all academic collaborators that the College avails of to include External Examiners and External Members of boards and committees. This is done indirectly through the annual review of all boards and committees rather than as individual member reviews. The Academic Director also manages HEI partner relationships. The CEO is responsible for the appointment of the Independent Chair of AC under the auspices of the Board of Directors. All Agent and commercial collaborations are managed by the Chief Revenue Officer under the auspices of EMT.

## 11.3 Guidelines

The College is acutely aware of its responsibility for promoting, developing, and maintaining the academic reputation and high standing of Irish higher education and awards. In fulfilling this responsibility, it will apply, as a minimum, the same quality assurance standards to its work with its education collaborators as it does to the quality assurance of its internal academic provisions. The College general guidelines for working with external collaborators include the following:

- The establishment and approval of external collaborators are subject to appropriate academic, legal, and financial due diligence, and risk assessment as appropriate in the context of the nature of the collaboration.
- External collaborator relationships should be established and conducted in a spirit of collective ownership, mutual respect, trust, openness, and transparency.

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<sup>89</sup> Statutory Quality Assurance Guidelines developed by QQI for use by all Providers (2016), section 10.3

- Overseas collaborations should accommodate cultural and local differences having due regard for ethical considerations, including respecting the rights of students, staff, and partners.
- Collaborative relationships should incorporate flexibility and allow for continuous dialogue and interaction among the partners, to facilitate evolution and development in response to challenges posed by a dynamic national and international higher education environment.
- A formal written agreement is required.
- The College expects that all external collaborators will affirm their individual and collective responsibility to uphold College academic standards and quality assurance.

## 11.4 Collaborators

### 11.4.1 HEI Partners

Students who successfully complete the programme and who meet HEI entry and visa requirements will progress to HEI partner institutions. The College will perform its due diligence on its academic, legal, and financial standing to ensure that it is satisfied that the HEI partner does not present an undue risk to the College. The risks and opportunities attaching to working in collaboration with such HEI partners will be assessed and decided on at EMT meetings in the context of the College's strategic priorities as would any significant new business proposal on the proposal from AC in an academic context and the Chief Revenue Officer in a commercial context. Such risk will be scrutinised using UPOL003 UniHaven Risk Management Policy Rev 1...see also chapter 2, section 2.6. The CEO approves all HEI collaborators at EMT with the Academic Director involved in EMT discussions that lead to such approvals.

A Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) and, if an MoU is not needed, a Memorandum of Agreement (MoA) or Agency Agreement will be necessary to outline the duties, responsibilities, and non-responsibilities of each party in written agreement form including, but not limited to, conditional offer issue, confidentiality, data protection, academic standards for progression, and financial terms...see UDOC011 UniHaven

Memorandum of Agreement Rev 1. Such agreements must be signed by both parties before any formal programme or pathway advertisement, student recruitment, or programme delivery covered by such collaborations shall begin. Due diligence will be undertaken concerning the HEI's financial, legal, regulatory and educational standing in the country in which it operates. Annual reviews with HEI partners will be conducted via the HEI Partner Review Committee – see chapter 2, section 2.3.2.7 for terms of reference – with findings fed into the annual review process as outlined in chapter 12, section 12.3.5.

#### 11.4.2 External Board/Committee Members

The following guidelines should apply to the selection and appointment of external members onto all College boards and committees. Any staff member can complete UFORM021 UniHaven External Examiner/Member Nomination Form Rev 1 by stating how a nominee meets the selection criteria. External members of any board must have

- Academic qualifications and/or professional expertise appropriate to the role they will fill.
- For Programme Board (see chapter 2, section 2.3.2.1), at least 5 years of relevant business or academic experience is needed depending on whether the member's area of expertise needs to be business or academic.
- For the Independent Chair of AC role, at least 10 years of academic experience is needed. See chapter 2, section 2.3.1.1 for the full requirements for the Independent Chair of AC role.
- For External Examiners, at least 3 years of relevant examining experience is needed ...see chapter 7, section 7.5.5.2 for full criteria.
- A willingness to arbitrate on or adjudicate on problem cases.
- A willingness to respond quickly to requests for information.
- A statement made via UDOC010 UniHaven External Examiner/Member Agreement Rev 1 confirming that no conflict of interest applies.

A period of appointment of not more than three years is envisaged for external appointments. The re-appointment of external appointees who have completed a three-year term will be considered by the College in exceptional cases only. If an external appointee must withdraw their services during the three years of appointment due to

professional or personal reasons, we will identify and appoint a suitable replacement promptly. A completed and signed UFORM021 UniHaven External Examiner/Member Nomination Form Rev 1 and UDOC010 UniHaven External Examiner/Member Agreement Rev 1 must each be provided. Nominee credentials are then assessed at AC. All appointments are approved by the Academic Director under the auspices of AC before taking up the respective roles.

#### 11.4.3 Recruitment Agents

The securing and approval of agreed services from overseas recruitment agents is the responsibility of the Chief Revenue Officer under the auspices of EMT. In all cases, a background check of such agents is necessary, and a written agency agreement must be signed by the College and the respective recruitment agent outlining areas such as commercial terms, confidentiality and mutual responsibilities before any recruitment activity begins. See UPOL027 UniHaven Agent Policy Rev 1 for full guidelines and chapter 4, section 4.5.2.2 for summary information on the selection, management, and review of Agents.

#### 11.4.4 Annual Monitoring and Review

Annual monitoring and review of all collaborative arrangements will be undertaken as part of the annual review cycle. HEI partner reviews will take place via the respective HEI Partner Review Committees...see chapter 2, section 2.3.2.7. All review findings will feed into the Annual Quality Report for QQI...see also chapter 12, section 12.3.4.

## 12. SELF-EVALUATION, MONITORING AND REVIEW

### 12.1 Context

The purpose of internal review, self-evaluation and monitoring is to provide the adequate internal mechanisms necessary for ensuring the quality of provision and the maintenance of the highest academic standards at the College. This self-evaluation, monitoring and review approach forms an important part of the College quality assurance system that will inform the ongoing cycle of continuous improvement. Internal reviews, self-evaluation and monitoring policy and procedures are formal processes that are carried out at regular intervals and are used as inputs into future external reviews.

The College has primary responsibility for the quality of the provision of the programme, the implementation and evaluation of QA procedures and their ongoing enhancement. This is supported via routine monitoring by QQI. Routine monitoring is designed to assist the College in demonstrating the effective implementation of its QA procedures, supporting public confidence. Monitoring in this context in line with QQI requirements<sup>90</sup> includes:

- Provider-owned internal review, self-evaluation, and monitoring.
- Internal self-monitoring.
- Self-evaluation, improvement, and enhancement.
- Provider-owned quality assurance engages with external quality assurance. Annual evaluation of the College's governance and quality assurance infrastructure is completed through the production of an Annual Quality Report (AQR)<sup>91</sup>.

This is in line with the QQI quality framework below<sup>92</sup>.

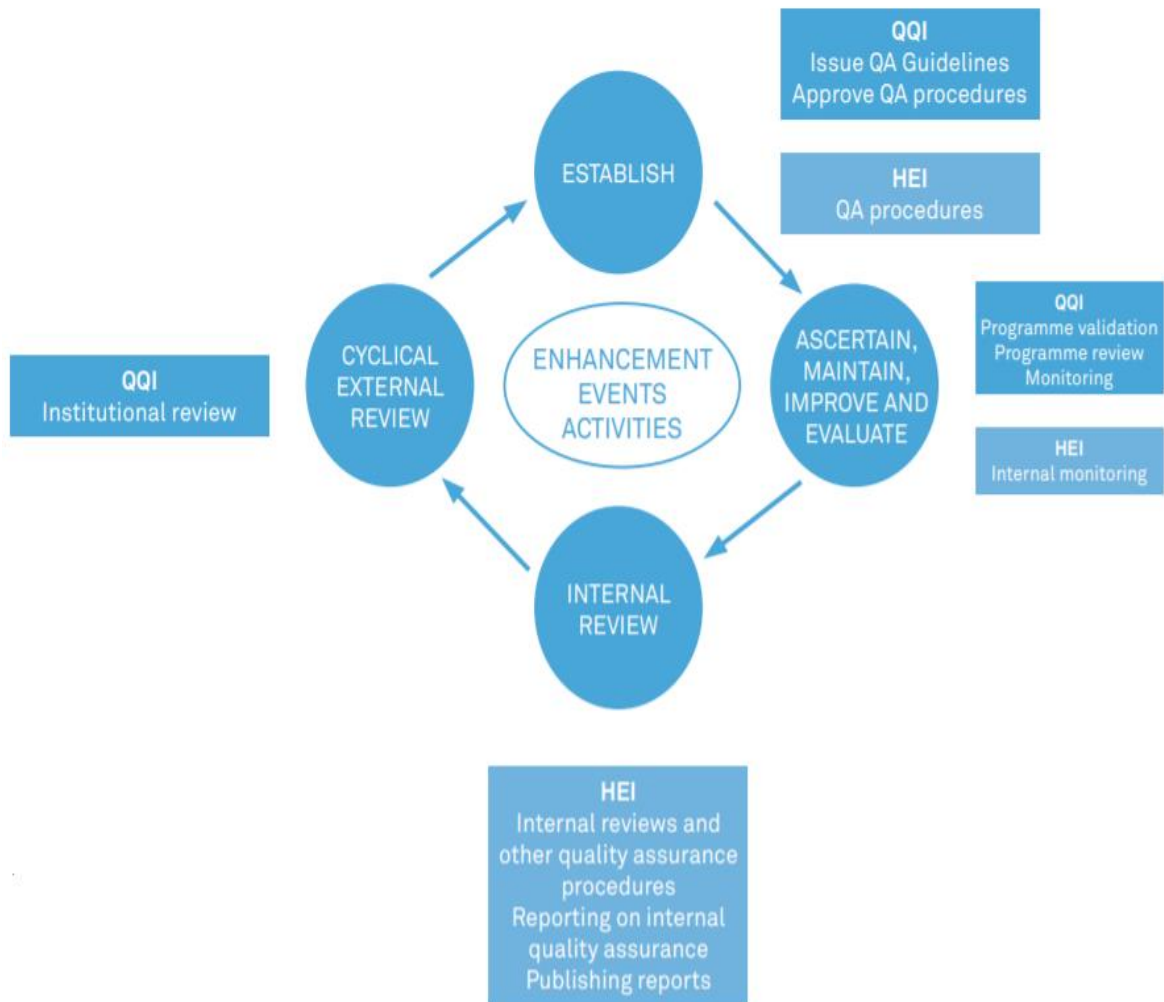
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<sup>90</sup> Statutory Quality Assurance Guidelines developed by QQI for use by all Providers (2016), section 11

<sup>91</sup> <https://www.qqi.ie/Articles/Pages/Annual-Institutional-Quality-Report.aspx>

<sup>92</sup> Policy for Cyclical Review of Higher Education Institutions (2016)

Figure 2: Quality framework for voluntary providers



(Source: *Policy for Cyclical Review of Higher Education Institutions*, QQI, 2016, p.4)

Figure 12.1 Cyclical Review of HEIs

## 12.2 Roles and Responsibilities

It will be the responsibility of the Programme Manager under the auspices of Programme Board to ensure that the programme is being sufficiently monitored, evaluated, and reviewed in ways that inform ongoing programme development and at frequencies that assure the College itself, QQI, stakeholders and students that a continuous improvement ethos is at the centre of the College’s approach to QA. The Academic Director is responsible for ensuring that policies are developed and maintained, that they remain fit

for purpose, that they remain in compliance with QQI guidelines, that they are updated as per agreed timetables, and that they are being implemented as intended. In the latter context, the Academic Director will inspect a sample of policies each year to check for the correct implementation and bring the findings to AC as part of the annual QA/QQI review and reporting process. It is the responsibility of the Chief Revenue Officer to perform annual reviews of Agents to include auditing their use of College information and how they promote the programme generally to applicants and their families. The Academic Director will also approve and regularly monitor external communications.

### 12.3 Review Processes

The College has established quality assurance procedures, systems, and processes for obtaining feedback from internal and external sources to further improve and maintain the quality of education that it provides. This policy outlines five types of monitoring and review mechanisms that are also included in UPOL030 UniHaven Self-Evaluation, Monitoring, and Review Policy Rev 1, namely:

- Programme Monitoring and Review.
- QA Reviews.
- Student Reviews.
- Auditing Processes.
- External Collaborator Monitoring and Review.

#### 12.3.1 Programme Monitoring and Review

Programme monitoring and review is undertaken as per QQI requirements<sup>93</sup> and as described in UPOL005 UniHaven Programme Review and Development Policy Rev 2 is taken as an opportunity to:

- Ensure that the programme remains appropriate and creates a supportive and effective learning environment.
- Ensure that the programme achieves the objectives set for it.

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<sup>93</sup> Policy for Cyclical Review of Higher Education Institutions (2016)



- Review the student workload, student progression and completion rates benchmarked against competitors.
- Review the effectiveness of assessment policy and procedures.
- Review the physical premises and facilities including but not limited to classroom sizes, library and IT, science/media laboratory facilities etc.
- Update programme content, delivery modes, teaching and learning methods, learning supports and resources, and information provided to students.
- Review quality assurance arrangements that are specific to the programme.
- Review blended learning and assessment aspects.

Regular programme monitoring provides information for periodic programme review. The information collected is analysed and the programme adapted to ensure it is up to date. Revised programme specifications are published as per UPOL026 UniHaven Communications Policy Rev 1.

Data and feedback are collected through the following mechanisms:

- External Examiner Reports...see section 7.5.5.5.
- Staff feedback via staff management and interaction...see chapter 5, section 5.3, and through staff representation at the various College boards and committees...see chapter 2, sections 2.3.
- Student teaching surveys...see chapter 8, section 8.4.9.
- Student Representative meetings...see chapter 8, section 8.4.8.
- Alumni surveys...see chapter 8, section 8.5.
- Admissions data...see chapter 9, section 9.5.
- Assessment trends and analysis...see chapter 9, sections 9.5 and 9.6.
- Student progression to HEI partner programmes... see chapter 9, section 9.6.

Delivery and effectiveness of programmes are monitored in the first instance through Programme Board, which take place at least 2 times per semester times per academic year and are chaired by the Programme Manager. AC takes recommendations from Programme Board meetings as part of its overall oversight of programme delivery to ensure

consistency of approach in teaching, learning and assessment. The Annual Programme Report is sent to AC and feeds into the College Annual Quality Report that the College is committed to providing to QQI as an independent provider.

#### 12.3.1.1 Permitted Changes and Updates to QQI Accredited Programmes

As per QQI requirements, there are limits as to what may be changed before a modified programme must be submitted to QQI for validation as a new programme<sup>94</sup>. An extensive (i.e., very substantial) change to a programme is one that effectively results in a new programme that must be validated as such. Examples of extensive change would be:

- Undermining anything essential to support the original validation decision.
- Elimination of any core intended programme learning outcomes.
- A change in the pre-requisite learning requirements for a given programme.

Changes that cannot be made to QQI validated programmes within validation include, but are not limited, to:

- Entry requirements.
- Programme learning outcomes.
- Programme title.
- NFQ level and award.
- FET credits.

#### 12.3.2 QA Review

AC meets at least four times a year to review policy, programmes, updates to QA policies and procedures see chapter 2, section 2.3.1.3 for full terms of reference. Significant changes to QA policies and procedures are referred to QQI. The College will publish QA evaluation reports on its website as per UPOL026 UniHaven Communications Policy Rev 1, to include:

- QQI Re-Engagement Report.

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<sup>94</sup> QQI Policies and Criteria for Validation of Programmes of Education and Training (2017), section 8

- Programme Review Reports.
- On-going Internal Reviews.
- QQI Annual Quality Reports.

The College is committed to annual reporting of quality assurance activities to QQI as an independent provider.

### 12.3.3 Student Review

An annual review of student services and associated activities will be completed by the Student Support Officer in conjunction with the Programme Manager to include...see also chapter 9, sections 9.5 and 9.6 for student and institutional data sources

- Programme progression data regarding the degree to which students are progressing to their chosen HEI degree programme (the Programme Manager will deal with in-programme progression).
- Student registration status, attendance, deferrals, and withdrawals data to identify any issues that lead to student absence from the programme for significant intervals or permanently.
- Activity engagement data...using student surveys to uncover their satisfaction with student support activities.
- Student satisfaction data...from student satisfaction surveys to uncover how well they believe they have been cared for while studying in the College with an emphasis on the non-academic supports provided.

Student Review Reports are drafted and sent to AC for review and action as part of the annual programme review process.

### 12.3.4 QA Auditing Processes

The Academic Director is responsible for ensuring that policies are developed and maintained, that they remain fit for purpose, that they remain in compliance with QQI guidelines, that they are updated as per agreed timetables, and that they are being

implemented as intended. In the latter context, the Academic Director will inspect a sample of policies each year to check for the correct implementation and bring the findings to AC as part of the annual QA/QQI review and reporting process.

#### 12.3.5 External Collaborator Monitoring and Review

Annual monitoring and review of all collaborative arrangements will be undertaken as part of the annual review cycle...see also chapter 11, section 11.3.4. HEI partner reviews will take place via the respective HEI Partner Review Committees...see chapter 2, section 2.3.2.7. All review findings will feed into that leads to the production of the Annual Quality Report for QQI.

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## APPENDICES

### 1.1 References

The QAM is informed by the following references that are also listed in Appendix 1.1.

- QQI Provider References
  - Statutory Quality Assurance Guidelines developed by QQI for use by all Providers (2016).
  - Statutory Quality Assurance Guidelines developed by QQI for Independent/Private Providers coming to QQI on a Voluntary Basis (2016).
  - QQI HET Core Validation Policy and Criteria Revised (2013).
  - QQI Policies and Criteria for the Validation of Programmes of Education and Training (2017).
  - Guidelines for Preparing Programme Descriptors for Further Education and Training Programmes Leading to QQI CAS Awards (Revised October 2013).
  - National Framework of Qualifications  
[https://www.qqi.ie/Articles/Pages/National-Framework-of-Qualifications-\(NFQ\).aspx](https://www.qqi.ie/Articles/Pages/National-Framework-of-Qualifications-(NFQ).aspx).
  - QQI Awards Standards for Pre-Higher Education Foundation Awards for International Students (2015).
- Student Admission and Recruitment References
  - QQI Code of Practice for Provision of Programmes of Education and Training to International Students (2015).
  - Policy and Criteria for Access, Transfer and Progression in Relation to Students for Providers of Further and Higher Education and Training (NQAI 2003, re-stated by QQI 2015).
  - Protection of Enrolled Learners (PEL): Protocols for the Implementation of Part 6 of the 2012 Act Guidelines for Providers.
  - NQAI's Principles and Operational Guidelines for the Recognition of Prior Learning in Further and Higher Education and Training (2005)

- Teaching, Learning and Assessment References
  - <https://www.teachingandlearning.ie/...the> National Forum
  - [http://www.iheqn.ie/fileupload/File/IHEQN\\_Guidelines\\_Collaborative\\_Provision\\_FINAL\\_21May13\\_55218605.pdf](http://www.iheqn.ie/fileupload/File/IHEQN_Guidelines_Collaborative_Provision_FINAL_21May13_55218605.pdf)
  - [Expanding our Understanding of Assessment and Feedback in Irish Higher Education - National Forum for the Enhancement of Teaching and Learning in Higher Education](#)
  - QQI Effective Practice Guidelines for External Examining Revised February (2015).
  - QQI Statutory Quality Assurance Guidelines for Providers of Blended Learning Programmes (2018).
  - Quality Assuring Assessment Guidelines for Providers Revised 2013 (Version 2 - revised 2018).
- QQI Self-Evaluation Monitoring and Review References
  - QQI Policy on Monitoring (2014).
  - QQI Policy for Cyclical Review of Higher Education Institutions (2016).
  - QQI Policy on Quality Assurance Guidelines (2016).
- Quality Assurance Legislative References
  - Qualifications and Quality Assurance (Education and Training) (Amendment) Act 2019 (the 2019 Amendment Act).
  - Companies Act (2014)
- Data Protection References
  - The Data Protection Acts 1988 and 2003 (as amended).
  - Data Protection Legislation including Article 5 guidelines on (GDPR) General Privacy Data Regulations.
  - A Guide for Data Controllers – Data Protection Commissioner
  - Data Protection Regulation 2018  
<https://www.dataprotection.ie/docs/GDPR/1623.htm> .

- European Communities (Electronic Communications Networks and Services) (Privacy and Electronic Communications) Regulations 2011 (S.I. No. 336 of 2011).
- Data Protection Commissioner ([www.dataprotection.ie](http://www.dataprotection.ie)).
- A Guide for Data Controllers (Office of the Data Protection Commissioner) [http://www.dataprotection.ie/docs/a\\_guide\\_for\\_data\\_controllers/696.htm](http://www.dataprotection.ie/docs/a_guide_for_data_controllers/696.htm) .
- Personal Data Security Breach Code of Practice (29 July 2011) [http://www.dataprotection.ie/docs/Data\\_Security\\_Breach\\_Code\\_of\\_Practice/1082.htm](http://www.dataprotection.ie/docs/Data_Security_Breach_Code_of_Practice/1082.htm) .
- Child Protection references
  - Children First Act 2015.
  - Children First: National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children 2017.
  - The Child Care Act 1991.
  - The Children Act 2001.
  - The National Vetting Bureau (Children and Vulnerable Persons) Act 2012.
- Staff and Agent References
  - Employment (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 2018:
  - Minimum Notice and Terms of Employment Acts 1973–2005.
  - Industrial Relations (Amendment) Act 2015.
  - Organisation of Working Time Act 1997.
  - Organisation of Working Time (Records) (Prescribed Form and Exemptions) Regulations 2001.
  - Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Act 2005 (as amended): replaced the provisions of the Safety, Health and Welfare Act 1989.
  - The Employment Equality Acts 1998–2015, Equal Status Acts, 2000 to 2004.
  - Equality (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 2015.
  - The Criminal Justice (Spent Convictions and Certain Disclosures) Act 2015.
  - Protection of Employees (Part-Time Work) Act 2001

- Protection of Employees (Fixed-Term Work) Act 2003.
- Protected Disclosures Act, 2014
- Cara Charter - <https://caracentre.ie/sport-inclusion-disability-charter/>.

## 1.2 Policies and Procedures

### College Policies (UPOLs)

QA Policy	UPOL001
Learner Protection Policy	UPOL002
Risk Management Policy	UPOL003
Policy-on-Policy Policy	UPOL004
Programme Review and Development Policy	UPOL005
Access, Transfer and Progression Policy	UPOL006
Student Recruitment and Admissions Policy	UPOL007
Fees & Refunds Policy	UPOL008
Staff Recruitment and Selection Policy	UPOL009
Staff Learning and Development Policy	UPOL010
Academic Staff Workload Allocation Policy	UPOL011
Garda Vetting Policy	UPOL012
Teaching and Learning Policy	UPOL013
Blended Learning Policy	UPOL014



Assessment and Awards Policy	UPOL015
External Examining Policy	UPOL016
Student Support Policy	UPOL017
Learner Disability Policy	UPOL018
Child Protection Policy	UPOL019
Data Protection Policy	UPOL020
Privacy Policy	UPOL021
Cookie Policy	UPOL022
Data Retention Policy	UPOL023
Data Security Policy	UPOL024
Learning Analytics Policy	UPOL025
Communications Policy	UPOL026
Agent Policy	UPOL027
Email, Social Media and Marketing Policy	UPOL028
Collaborations and External Appointments Policy	UPOL029
Self-Evaluation, Monitoring and Review Policy	UPOL030
Protected Disclosures Policy	UPOL031

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## College Procedures (UPROs)

Garda Vetting Procedure	UPRO001
Student Registration and Induction Procedure	UPRO002
Performance Management Procedure	UPRO003
Fire Alarm and Emergency Procedure	UPRO004
Pandemic Case Handling Procedure	UPRO005
Pandemic Return to Work Procedure	UPRO006
Assessment Procedure	UPRO007
Academic Misconduct Procedure	UPRO008
External Examiners and Members Selection Procedure	UPRO009
Student Complaints and Disciplinary Procedure	UPRO010
Attendance Monitoring Procedure	UPRO011
Data Subject Access Request Procedure	UPRO012
Data Security Breach and Reporting Procedure	UPRO013

## 1.3 Forms

### College Forms (UFORMs)

Offer Letter of Employment	UFORM001
New Employee Details Form	UFORM002
Employee Handbook Acceptance Form	UFORM003
Interview Assessment Form	UFORM004
Pandemic Return to Work Form	UFORM005
Student Application Form	UFORM006
Student Withdrawal Form	UFORM007
Admissions Appeal Form	UFORM008
Student Deferral Form	UFORM009
Student Complaints Form	UFORM010
Garda Vetting Form	UFORM011
Risk Register	UFORM012
Assessment Appeals Request Form	UFORM013
Correction of Error Form	UFORM014
Evidence of Disability Form	UFORM015
Agent Application Form	UFORM016
Staff Performance Review Meeting Form	UFORM017
Learning and Development Request Form	UFORM018
Leave Request Form	UFORM019
Academic Misconduct Form	UFORM020
External Examiner/ Member Nomination Form	UFORM021



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Personal Data Breach Report Form	UFORM022
Refund Request Form	UFORM023
Extenuating Circumstances Application Form	UFORM024
Agent Referee Check Form	UFORM025
Data Subject Access Request Form	UFORM026
External Examiner's Report Form	UFORM027

## 1.4 Handbooks and Codes

### College Documents (UDOCs)

Programme Handbook	UDOC001
Student Handbook	UDOC002
Agent Handbook	UDOC003
Health and Safety Statement	UDOC004
Code of Ethics	UDOC005
Supplier Code of Conduct	UDOC006
Employee Handbook	UDOC007
Student Charter	UDOC008
Agent Agreement	UDOC009
External Examiner/Member Agreement	UDOC010
Memorandum of Agreement	UDOC011
Teaching, Learning and Assessment Strategy	UDOC012

## 1.5 Glossary

- Academic Misconduct - For the purposes of the QAM academic misconduct includes plagiarism, collusion, and cheating...separately defined below.
- Applicant - an individual applying to become a student at UniHaven.
- Approved Programme Schedule - This document is agreed at validation or review and sets out the assessment conditions, these will include pass mark, module component breakdown, module weightings with award calculation and any special regulations for the programme. Approved Programme Schedules are used in conjunction with, and do not supersede these regulations.
- Assessment Strategy - A short statement, prepared at validation, describing the strategy used to determine if a candidate has achieved the learning that outcomes should be available for each module /module assessed. The strategy includes the alignment of the assessment instrument used to the learning outcome measured (constructive alignment).
- Award Level - A level on the NFQ describing the level of knowledge, skill, and competence relevant to the programme as described in the programme standards and level indicators.
- Awards Standards - Awards standards describe standards of knowledge, skill, or competence to be acquired, and where appropriate, demonstrated, by a Student before an award may be made. These may be specific to a discipline area or generic by level of award.
- Borderline - Where a candidate is within a certain range of an award classification borderline - normally +/- 1%.
- Broadsheet - the formal record of marks as presented to an Exam Board.
- Broadsheet template - the LMS electronic broadsheet, populated with registered students and award calculations as per the appropriate Marks and Standards.
- Cheating - Acting dishonestly to gain an advantage in an examination. Examples include, referring to notes, communicating with others during the examination, impersonation at an examination, wrongly obtaining secure assessment material, behaving in any way such as to undermine the integrity of the Assessment Process.

- Collusion – an act of collaborating with someone else on an assessment exercise which is intended to be wholly the candidate's own work, or act of assisting someone else to commit plagiarism.
- Core Module - A required module on a programme irrespective of the pathway stream being studied.
- Exam Board - The formal board convened at the completion of a stage to review the overall profile of students and make recommendations to AC regarding progression or awards. External Examiner(s) are present.
- Extenuating are exceptional and serious circumstances which are outside of the student's control, normally unforeseeable and unpreventable which cause the student to perform less well in coursework or examinations than might have been expected based on other work, fail to meet submission deadlines, or fail to attend an examination.
- External Examiner - An External Examiner is an independent expert who is a member of the broader community of practice within the programme's field of learning and whose accomplishments attest to his/her likelihood of having the authority necessary to fulfil the responsibilities of the role.
- Higher Education Institution (HEI) – a HEI, a technological HEI, an institute of technology, or a private college that operates at third level. All such institutions can accept students who successfully complete our programmes onto their own degree programmes.
- Internal Assessor's Meeting - The meeting of all internal assessors at the completion of a stage. To review the overall profile of students, to ensure the broadsheet is complete and accurate, and to make recommendations for progression or awards in preparation for the Exam Board.
- Learning Management System (LMS) - The college learning platform where student resources, content, learning analytics and academic data is loaded, stored, and used for student monitoring, feedback and learning improvement.
- Learning Outcome - A statement of what a student is expected to know, understand and/or be able to demonstrate after completion of a process of learning.

- **Module** - A discrete element of an academic programme, with a set of defined learning outcomes and an assessment schedule. A module can be described by its level and volume (expressed in credits). A module may comprise individual components for assessment; these should be agreed at validation and reflected in the broadsheets. A programme is made up of a series of modules arranged in progressive stages and set at appropriate levels of the framework.
- **Module Component** - A discrete element of a module, aligned to specific learning outcomes, for which marks are awarded (individually or cumulatively) and represented on the awards broadsheet. A module should comprise no more than three components on a broadsheet. When a component has been passed it should not be subject to reassessment as the student has successfully demonstrated achievement of the learning outcomes.
- **Pathway Stream Module** - A module pre-selected by the Academic Council from a prescribed list of modules for inclusion within a set of modules that are relevant to a specific pathway stream. Students will study the required number of pathway stream modules as advised by the College.
- **Plagiarism** - Presenting someone else's work or ideas as the candidate's own, with or without their consent, by incorporating it into their work without full acknowledgement.
- **Progression** - A candidate has achieved the required learning outcomes for a stage of a programme and may progress to the next stage. The term progression may also be used to monitor students progressing to HEI when their UniHaven programme is complete.
- **Reasonable Accommodation** - Ensures the college has the processes in place to meet individual needs and enable full access and participation for all students with specific needs or where exceptional mitigating circumstances temporarily prevent them participating in academic and/or assessment processes.
- **Repeat** - This usually applies to a student who is required to repeat a full stage of a programme.
- **Resit** - Where an element of a module such as an examination is re-attempted. The marks for all other components are carried forward.



- Retake - The full module is retaken including attendance and all coursework. Previous marks awarded for components are not carried forward.
- Retention - A term used to measure the percentage of students who progress within a programme and continue to the next stage.
- Stage - stages of a programme are separated by barriers to progression such as a set of terminal examinations. The final stage of a programme is called the award stage where all modules contribute to the final award.
- Student - a registered student of UniHaven.
- Teacher - A member of College academic staff, responsible for teaching and assessment in their relevant subject/module area. They are responsible for ensuring the agreed assessment strategy is applied, that assessment instruments are aligned with the learning outcomes, and that the assessment process complies with agreed UniHaven policies and processes. The Teacher works with the Programme Manager to recommend student marks to the Exam Board.
- Teaching, Learning and Assessment Strategy – how Teaching, Learning and Assessment Policies are implemented.
- Validation - In this context validation refers to the validation of the foundation pathway programme for delivery by the College and to be awarded by QQI.