



# Dublin International Study Centre

## Continuing Professional Development (CPD) Policy

## Contents

Crisis Management Policy.....	3
Section One: Introduction .....	3
Definitions .....	3
Section Two: Scope .....	4
Types of Crisis Events Covered.....	4
Section Three: Policy Principles .....	5
Preparedness .....	5
Rapid Response .....	5
Learner Protection .....	6
Continuous Improvement .....	6
Section Four: Roles and Responsibilities .....	7
The Crisis Management Team.....	7
Memberships and Roles.....	7
DISC Staff.....	8
DISC Learners.....	8
Section Five: Crisis Response Procedure .....	9
Step 1: Detection and Initial Report .....	9
Step 2: Assessment and Activation.....	9
Step 3: Immediate Actions .....	10
Step 4: Communication .....	10
Step 5: Ongoing Management .....	11
Step 6: Resolution and Recovery.....	11
Step 7: Debrief and Review.....	11
Section Six: Training and Awareness .....	12
Staff Training and Induction .....	12
Learner Induction and Engagement.....	13
Simulations and Drills.....	13
Communication and Visibility .....	13
Continuous Improvement in Training .....	14
Section Seven: Additional information .....	14
Confidentiality and Data Protection.....	14
Monitoring and Review .....	14
Related Documents .....	14
Document Control .....	15

## Continuing Professional Development (CPD) Policy

### Section One: Purpose

1. The purpose of this policy is to establish a clear, comprehensive, and structured framework for Continuing Professional Development (CPD) for all staff contributing to programmes at Dublin International Study Centre (DISC). CPD is recognised as a cornerstone of DISC's commitment to delivering high-quality, learner-centred education and is integral to fostering a culture of continuous improvement, innovation, and reflective practice.
2. This policy is designed to ensure that staff:
  - Remain professionally competent and current in their subject knowledge.
  - Apply effective, evidence-informed pedagogical approaches.
  - Respond to evolving learner needs, sectoral developments, and regulatory expectations.
  - Contribute to institutional quality assurance and academic integrity through professional growth.
3. The policy aligns with the following key frameworks and standards:
  - QQI Core Statutory Quality Assurance Guidelines.
  - Sectoral Norms in Further Education and Training (FET). Reflecting expectations across the FET sector, this policy supports structured upskilling, collaboration, peer learning, and reflective practice as part of a professional culture of excellence and innovation.
  - Global and Industry Expectations. CPD also ensures that staff remain conversant with contemporary practices, technologies, and subject-matter developments relevant to a globalised education environment. This responsiveness enhances graduate preparedness and maintains DISC's credibility as a forward-facing international institution.
4. By articulating clear expectations for CPD engagement, this policy ensures that staff development is not only supported but strategically aligned with DISC's quality assurance objectives, educational mission, and regulatory obligations.

### Section Two: Scope

5. This policy applies to all personnel directly or indirectly involved in the delivery and support of programmes at DISC, including:
  - Full-time and part-time academic staff: This includes all staff responsible for content delivery and assessment.
  - Support and mentoring staff: Staff who work with learners in a tutorial, mentoring,

or academic support capacity.

- Administrative and quality assurance staff: Those with responsibilities for programme coordination, learner services, and curriculum or assessment development.
6. The policy encompasses both staff who are permanently employed and those engaged on a temporary, sessional contract, or part-time basis. All staff are expected to demonstrate ongoing engagement with relevant CPD activities appropriate to their roles.

### Section Three: CPD Objectives

7. The CPD policy at DISC is designed to:
- Ensure that teaching quality, assessment practices, and learner support remain aligned with the appropriate QQI Level standards and validated programme outcomes.
  - Promote a culture of academic excellence, innovation, and reflective practice.
  - Enable staff to remain current with evolving pedagogical approaches, subject-specific knowledge, industry trends, and policy developments.
  - Support staff in developing competence with digital learning technologies, inclusive methodologies, and best practice in engaging diverse learners.
  - Facilitate professional growth, career development, and job satisfaction by recognising and investing in individual development needs.

### Section Four: Types of CPD Activities

8. DISC facilitates and encourages participation in a wide range of CPD activities, including:
- Accredited training and qualifications, including full awards and micro-credentials relevant to FET and subject areas.
  - Peer observation and feedback cycles to promote reflective teaching practices.
  - Participation in internal quality assurance or curriculum development initiatives.
  - Mandatory training, including induction, safeguarding, and inclusive education.
  - In-centre training, such as workshops on digital pedagogy, formative assessment, and learner engagement.
  - Attendance at external and internal webinars on relevant educational topics.

- Participation in professional conferences and events, including QQI conferences.

## Section Five: CPD Requirements and Expectations

9. To ensure the ongoing enhancement of teaching quality, learner support, and institutional effectiveness, DISC sets out clear and structured requirements for CPD for all academic and support staff involved in the delivery of the International Foundation Year (IFY) programme.

### Minimum CPD Commitment

10. All academic and support staff are expected to complete a minimum of 5–10 hours of CPD per academic year. This may include a combination of structured learning, reflective practice, and applied development activities.

### Relevance and Purpose

11. CPD activities must be clearly aligned with the staff member's professional role, disciplinary expertise, and the learning needs of the students. Where appropriate, CPD should also promote cross-departmental and cross-disciplinary collaboration to enhance shared practice and institutional development.
12. Recommended areas of CPD engagement include, but are not limited to:
  - Inclusive and differentiated teaching strategies.
  - Assessment design and feedback literacy.
  - Digital pedagogy, learning technologies, and relevant technical advancements for teaching, administration, and learner support.
  - Student wellbeing, safeguarding, and intercultural competence.
  - Quality assurance and regulatory compliance (e.g. QQI, ELE Code of Practice);
  - Cross-departmental collaboration to enhance integrated approaches to learning and operations.
  - Professional development opportunities for administrative staff to strengthen operational effectiveness, student services, and compliance.
  - Responsiveness to emerging priorities and evolving needs of learners, staff, and stakeholders in line with sectoral guidance.

### Formats and Flexibility

13. Staff are encouraged to engage in a broad range of CPD formats, including but not

limited to:

- Formal training sessions (e.g. webinars, workshops, certified courses).
- Peer observation, mentoring, and collaborative inquiry.
- Conference attendance and professional network engagement.
- Research and scholarly reading.
- Reflective practice, action research, and innovation in teaching.
- Participation in institutional working groups or curriculum reviews.

### **CPD Logging and Review**

14. Each staff member is expected to maintain a CPD log or professional development portfolio, documenting activities, reflections, and impact on practice.
15. This requirement is communicated clearly to all staff during induction, ensuring that everyone understands their responsibility to track and evidence their professional development from the outset. Staff are also reminded in a timely manner ahead of the annual review process to ensure their records are up to date and ready for discussion.
16. To create and maintain this log or portfolio, staff should:
  - Record each CPD activity undertaken, including date, type of activity, provider (if relevant), and duration.
  - Include a brief description of the content or learning outcomes.
  - Reflect on how the activity has informed or improved their practice, including specific examples where possible.
  - Identify any follow-up actions or further learning needs arising from the activity.
17. CPD logs should be reviewed annually as part of the Individual Contribution Development (ICD) process with a line manager or designated reviewer.
18. Staff are encouraged to identify future development goals and align these with DISC's strategic and programme-level priorities.

### **Institutional Support and Recognition**

19. To support meaningful engagement, DISC will curate and circulate a list of recommended CPD opportunities twice annually, at the beginning of each academic term (September and January). The Deputy Director of Student Experiences is responsible for compiling this CPD list, which will then be circulated to all staff via email by the Head of Quality on these occasions.
20. All CPD activities from previous years are archived in a shared CPD folder, which staff can access via the internal shared drive. This archive enables staff to review past opportunities and plan their own professional development in line with institutional

priorities and personal goals.

21. Where appropriate, participation in CPD may inform:
  - Workload allocation.
  - Eligibility for additional responsibilities (e.g. mentoring, academic leadership).
  - Consideration for internal promotion or recognition schemes.

## Section Six: Quality Assurance and Policy Review

22. The CPD Policy is an integral component of DISC's overarching quality assurance framework and is subject to regular monitoring and review to ensure it remains fit-for-purpose and aligned with sectoral expectations.
23. The Head of Quality, in collaboration with the academic leadership team, will:
  - Evaluate the effectiveness of CPD engagement across the centre based on staff feedback, learner outcomes, and internal review data.
  - Monitor CPD trends and identify professional development needs across programmes.
  - Incorporate findings from QQI reviews, FET programme evaluations, and national developments in education and training into policy updates.
  - Ensure that CPD practices remain aligned with QQI's evolving guidelines, particularly as they relate to professional competence, teaching standards, and programme quality.
24. This policy will be reviewed biennially, or earlier where changes in QQI regulations, FET sector priorities, or DISC strategic goals necessitate an update.

## Document Control

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