Dublin International Study Centre
Learning, Teaching, and Assessment (LTA) Policy

Contents

Learning, Teaching, and Assessment Policy

Section One: Introduction

1. This Learning, Teaching and Assessment (LTA) Policy outlines the framework upon which the approaches to teaching, learning and assessment are firmly based, locating the pedagogies, programme development and assessment   that underpins the delivery of the International Foundation Year (IFY) programme at DISC.

Section Two: Purpose and Scope

2. This LTA Policy outlines the framework upon which the approaches to teaching, learning and assessment are firmly based, locating the pedagogies, programme development and assessment   that underpins the delivery of the IFY programme at DISC. The policy is designed to support the achievement of learning outcomes aligned with Level 5 of the National Framework of Qualifications (NFQ). The strategic approach enables full compliance with:

    *   QQI Core Statutory Quality Assurance Guidelines (2016)

    *   QQI Assessment and Standards (Revised 2022)

    *   QQI Programme Validation Manual for FET Awards

    *   The English Language Education (ELE) Code of Practice for Providers of English Language Education

3. This policy applies to all staff, learners, and academic partners engaged in the design, planning, delivery, or evaluation of the IFY programme.

Section Three: Context

4. DISC operates within the strategic framework of the Qualifications and Quality Assurance (Education and Training) Act 2012. This framework underpins DISC's obligations in relation to QQI validation, monitoring, and review processes, and requires compliance with the Quality Assurance Standards for English Language Education (ELE) as published by QQI. The IFY programme is an intensive pathway designed to equip learners with the English language skills, academic competences, and foundations necessary to successfully progress to undergraduate study in Irish higher education.

5. The LTA framework is a key part of the wider approach to the design and assurance of the quality, teaching and assessment activities delivered to our learners. It also supports and reinforces Study Group Ireland's vision, purpose, and mission:

    *   For a better world through education.

- To increase learner engagement and success for Learning, Teaching, and Assessment.

- To be the leading strategic partner for universities by delivering value through global education solutions.

6. DISC's LTA Framework is designed to foster an inclusive and supportive learning environment for all learners. It provides guidance to DISC staff in actively engaging learners throughout their educational journey, equipping them for academic and professional success in a global context. Aligned with DISC's mission, the framework underpins the delivery of academic excellence through agile curriculum design and development, resulting in market-leading, flexible, and innovative in-person study programmes.

7. DISC's LTA Framework adopts a learner-centred design approach at the programme level, driving enhancement and innovation by actively listening to the learner voice, responding to feedback, and equipping learners with essential subject knowledge, English language competences, and academic skills. This empowers learners to become resilient, self-reliant, and successful within our partner institutions. Through its holistic and inclusive design, the framework fosters the development of diverse values and a global mindset, enabling learners to become proactive agents of change committed to creating a more equitable and sustainable future for all.

8. This framework provides guidance to academic staff in designing, delivering, and evaluating curricula across all NFQ Level 5 programmes at DISC. It draws from:

- QQI Core Statutory QA Guidelines (2016)

- QQI Assessment and Standards (2022)

- NFQ Level 5 descriptors

- Study Group's Observation in Learning and Teaching (OLT) policy

- DISC's Self-Evaluation Framework and Learning Development Plans

9. This framework aims to promote consistency, academic integrity, and enhancement of student learning experiences, ensuring compliance with internal and national quality assurance systems.

Section Four: Strategic Objectives

10. DISC's LTA strategy ensures:

- Delivery of learning outcomes aligned with NFQ Level 5 descriptors.

- Integration of QQI's core quality assurance principles.

- Compliance with QQI Assessment and Standards (2022).

- Implementation of the ELE Code, including learner protection, assessment integrity, and learner progression.

- Promotion of learner-centred, inclusive, and academically rigorous education.

Section Five: Pedagogical Approach

11. DISC's pedagogical framework prioritises the development of autonomous, independent, lifelong, and reflective learners who are prepared for academic success in Irish higher education institutions. The following pedagogical principles form the foundation of all programme delivery:

Pedagogical Principles

12. Key Pedagogical Principles that underpin the Curricula Design standards are listed below, with guidance on designing, leading, and supporting all modes of learning.

Principle P1: Equality, Diversity, and Inclusivity (EDI) principles are central to learning, teaching, and assessment, and the learner experience.

13. LTA strategies are developed to recognise each learner's academic needs based on the principles of (EDI) and strive towards equity of opportunity for all learners.

14. All learners receive holistic support to achieve their full academic potential as confident, independent learners who are able to navigate unfamiliar contexts and roles.

15. High levels of individual learner support and effective feedback strategies are built into the programme specification. All learning opportunities are designed to be inclusive and accessible as detailed in the Universal Design for Learning (UDL) framework. These guidelines can be applied to any subject to ensure that all learners can access and participate in meaningful, challenging learning opportunities'. In line with QQI's expectations for inclusion and the ELE Code's emphasis on accessibility, UDL principles are embedded in curriculum design and delivery. Teaching materials and assessments are designed to offer multiple means of representation, engagement, and expression to cater to diverse learner profiles. This ensures that no learner is disadvantaged due to language proficiency, learning style, or background, aligning with FET inclusive education frameworks.

16. Sufficient and appropriate support and resources are provided to meet all learners' needs.

17. Curriculum design actively supports the creation of a sense of community and common purpose and provides learners with opportunities to build positive relationships with their peers.

18. Individuals and diverse learning communities are respected and celebrated.

19. Diversity, intercultural learning, and social awareness opportunities are appropriately embedded within modules and learner experience enrichment activities, promoting

understanding, respect, and appreciation of other cultures. In recognition of the diverse international backgrounds of DISC's IFY learners, teaching practices at DISC are designed to actively promote intercultural awareness while fostering a safe, inclusive, and respectful learning environment. This commitment is embedded within the curriculum through the delivery of the Life, University and Intercultural Skills (LUIS) module, which is a core component of the IFY programme. The LUIS module equips learners with essential practical skills to support their academic, social, and personal development and wellbeing. Key areas of focus include cross-cultural understanding, social etiquette, independent living, time management, and mental health awareness. By addressing these areas, DISC enables learners to be well-prepared to adapt to life in a new socio-cultural context. Group activities and outings promote collaboration across cultures, and materials include global perspectives. This supports both the ELE Code (Section 4 – Learner Engagement) and QQI's commitment to respecting and embracing learner diversity.

20.   Learners are supported to develop a set of values and skills to operate successfully in diverse cultural environments.

21.   Learners are supported to feel a strong sense of belonging within the community, where they are provided with safe opportunities to discuss their opinions and to challenge stereotypical thinking, discrimination, and prejudice.

22.   Other Sources of Guidance:

- DISC's Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy

- DISC's Learner Behaviour Charter

- DISC's Safeguarding Policy

Principle P2: Learners are supported in becoming effective learners.

23.   Learners are supported to develop academic knowledge, skills and competences, to manage their timetables, prioritise work and independent study, and effectively engage with their learning. Learners are supported to develop academic integrity values by providing multiple opportunities for learners to further understand and practise academic integrity skills. (Please refer to further guidance in P5.). Teaching approaches integrate academic integrity from the outset, teaching learners how to reference correctly, avoid plagiarism, and uphold scholarly ethics. This practice supports QQI's Assessment and Standards and aligns with ELE requirements for transparent and fair academic conduct.

24.   Learners are supported to develop sufficiency and help-seeking strategies to become resilient, self-reliant, and successful.

25.   Clear guidance is provided to learners on how to access and use physical and digital tools and resources required for learning and assessment. (Please refer to further guidance in P1.). Digital tools such as the Virtual Learning Environment (VLE), Turnitin, Padlet, and interactive apps are used to support differentiation of delivery models. Online assessments, forums, and feedback systems ensure flexibility and transparency in learning, aligned with QQI's digital education expectations. Staff receive training in digital pedagogy to maintain consistent and effective delivery

standards.

26. Careful consideration is taken to ensure the learning resources learners receive are appropriate to the level, aligned with the intended learning outcomes and time allocated for study and enable students to engage fully with their modules and programme.

27. Course related administrative information is clear, up-to-date, and easily accessible to learners.

28. Expectations around attendance and engagement including self-study are made clear; learners are aware of the attendance, engagement, and academic processes in place to support them.

29. Patterns of delivery, and assessments are communicated through a variety of modes to ensure students' understanding.

Principle P3: Pedagogical approaches are learner-centred and inclusive.

30. Approaches offer flexibility and actively engage learners in their learning and assessment journeys. Collaborative learning facilitates peer-to-peer interaction opportunities and fosters a sense of belonging and collegiality. Learners are encouraged to engage actively in the construction of knowledge through guided inquiry, discussion, collaborative projects, and problem-solving activities. Teaching strategies include case-based learning, simulations, and scenario analysis to enhance engagement and deepen conceptual understanding. These approaches support the QQI principle that learners are active participants in their education, where they are concurrently developing lifelong skills in critical thinking and communication along with learning content.

31. Digital technologies are used appropriately, playing a pivotal role in creating high quality learning and assessment experiences.

32. Learning platforms and environments facilitate a learner-centred approach.

33. Materials are of high quality and are appropriately informed by subject matter research.

34. Materials and activities utilise up-to-date theory and concepts and are appropriately informed by industry trends, and advancements in LTA.

35. Learning activities and formative assessments are well-develop and aligned with module and programme learning outcomes, providing opportunities for students to extend their knowledge.

36. Learning activities and formative assessments are inclusive, considering the needs of all learners. (Please refer to P1 & P5 for further guidance).

37. Ongoing support and guidance are provided to staff through CPD activities to ensure that teaching, learning, and assessments are delivered in alignment with the intended programme design and standards.

38. Data analysis drives improvement through the gathering and collation of feedback captured through a range of quantitative and qualitative methods, from learners, academic staff, outcomes data, industry experts, and external examiners. This is used to drive continuous improvement in all aspects of the LTA approach.

39. All teaching staff are given directed opportunities to reflect on their teaching practice through peer review, learner feedback, and performance reviews. This practice is guided by the latest pedagogical research, academic performance data, and learner needs, enable continuous improvement. This aligns with QQI guidelines on staff professional competence and engagement with scholarship in teaching.

40. All stakeholders are aware of the potential impact their feedback can have on enhancement and innovation.

Principle P5: Assessment and feedback methods are appropriate and varied.

41. Assessments (formative and summative) are designed to guide the learners through their learning journey and effectively signpost that journey.

42. Assessments are valid, transparent, fair, and reliable. Please refer to DISC's Academic Regulations for further information.

43. Processes for marking and moderation are clearly articulated and consistently operated by those involved in the assessment process.

44. Summative assessments are designed to evaluate achievement of learning in relation to the minimum intended module learning outcomes.

45. Formative assessments are designed to support the learning process through the provision of rich, focused feedback, and to prepare learners for summative assessments.

46. Assessments are designed to offer flexible formats where possible. (Please refer to P1 for further guidance.)

47. Assessments use a variety of appropriate pedagogical approaches such as, group assessment, peer-assessment, digital assessment, and self-assessment, empowering learners to develop lifelong learning skills.

48. Learners are provided with a range of assessment opportunities designed to be authentic and applicable to real-world scenarios.

49. Assessments are designed to support learners to develop academic integrity values avoiding academic misconduct (please refer to S1 and S4 for further guidance).

50. Learners are supported with assessment literacy enabling learners to gain a clear understanding of how assessment and feedback relate to intended learning outcomes.

51. Effective feedback and feedforward methods are essential; these methods are timely and constructive.

52. Learners are provided with a range of opportunities to actively engage with feedback.

53. Marking schemes are transparent and standardised; moderation and feedback protocols align with QQI guidelines.

Principle P6: A programme-level approach to design, delivery, assessment, feedback, and support is crucial for learner success.

54. The learner voice and feedback are fundamental to the programme and module design process. (Please refer to P4 for further guidance.)

55. Coordination across modules supports learners' well-being and enhances learner success.

56. A holistic approach to assessment facilitates the planning of authentic assessment opportunities while preventing over-assessment and guarding against replication. Streamlining the number of assessments enhances the overall learning experience for learners.

57. Planning ensures an appropriate balance of course content, delivery methods, independent study, assessment types, feedback, and support mechanisms.

58. LTA activities are constructively aligned with intended learning outcomes.

59. Assessment tasks are designed to reflect the module's learning outcomes thereby embedding inherent validity.

Principle P7: English language development is embedded within the curriculum and learner experience.

60. Learners are supported with the development of listening, speaking, reading, and writing skills to improve learners' language competence and to prepare learners with language knowledge, skills and competences for university and future careers.

61. English language development is integrated into all module design to maximise learner outcomes.

62. Learner experience enrichment activities, e.g.?? offer opportunities to enhance English language development.

Principle P8: Education for sustainable development is embedded within the curriculum and student experience.

63. Curriculum design provides opportunities for learners to explore wider global perspectives of their discipline. (Please refer to further guidance in P1 for this.)

64. The curriculum integrates sustainability topics into existing modules where appropriate, fostering interdisciplinary learning.

Principle P9: Education for sustainable development is embedded within the curriculum and learner experience.

65.   Curriculum design provides opportunities for students to explore the wider global perspectives of their discipline (please refer to further guidance in P1 for this).

66.   Students are supported to develop awareness of the connections and interdependence of economic, social, and environmental factors globally.

67.   Students are supported to develop skills, attributes, and values across all academic disciplines to strive for a more sustainable world.

68.   A holistic approach is taken to embed Study Group's vision for sustainable development and the United Nation's Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) goals into programmes through the subject-relevant learning environments, learning content, pedagogy, authentic assessments and learning outcomes.

69.   Students are actively involved in responsible decision-making and critical thinking activities to promote a global mindset for environmental and economic sustainability, and a just society for future generations.

70.   Student experience enrichment activities raise awareness of sustainability and offer opportunities for students to engage with sustainability issues.

Principle P10: Reflective practice, community-based initiatives, and scholarly activities are at the heart of DISC's approach to Learning, Teaching and Assessment.

71.   Effective and inclusive practice in learning and teaching is demonstrated through innovative academic professional development opportunities that are accessible to diverse populations and meet a variety of needs (please refer to P1 for further guidance).

72.   The academic community is supported through collaboration, sharing knowledge and expertise, engaging with external stakeholders to widen understanding, and by gaining professional recognition.

73.   A growth mindset and engagement with ongoing professional development are fundamental in delivering high quality learning experiences to the student population.

Promotion of Learner Autonomy and Self-Regulation

74.   Learning is scaffolded to gradually increase learner responsibility, from structured support in early stages to independent study and project work by the end of the programme. Learners are taught time management, academic research, and digital literacy as core elements of their academic development, fulfilling NFQ Level 5 expectations for learner competence and autonomy.

Section Six: Curriculum Design and Delivery

75. The IFY curriculum at DISC is designed to fulfil the requirements of QQI's validation and programme standards for Level 5 awards, offering clear progression to Level 7 and 8 undergraduate programmes. The curriculum is developed according to the following core principles:

- Outcome-Based Design: Aligned with NFQ Level 5 descriptors and QQI validation requirements.

- Coherence and Integration: Provides a sequential and integrated learning path.

- Learner-Centredness: Based on Universal Design of Learning (UDL) and ELE Code principles.

- Progression Focused: Prepares learners for Irish higher education entry requirements.

- Stakeholder Informed: Includes feedback from students, staff, UCD, and external examiners.

Curriculum Structure

76. The curriculum comprises three core pillars:

- Disciplinary Modules: subject-specific content in Science, Engineering, Business, and Humanities.

- Academic and Study Skills: development of academic writing, research, and critical thinking.

- Academic English Skills (AES): based on CEFR levels (B2–C1), in line with ELE Code Section 3.

Curriculum Delivery Models

77. Delivery is structured and inclusive, complying with QQI and ELE Code requirements:

1) Digital Learning

- VLE platforms (e.g., StudySmart) for content and engagement.

- Digital tools for collaboration and assessment (Turnitin, Padlet, Google Workspace).

2) Cross-Disciplinary Integration

- Language and academic modules reinforce core disciplinary learning.

- Project-based learning and interlinked assignments enhance skill development.

3) Inclusive and Supportive Pedagogy

- Materials and assessments are UDL-aligned.

- Learners receive transparent schedules and accessible formats.

Quality Assurance in Curriculum Design

78. Curriculum development is embedded in DISC's Quality Assurance (QA) Framework, ensuring alignment with QQI standards:

- Validation & Review: In line with QQI Programme Validation Manual.

- Module Review: Conducted annually with staff, External Examiners, Learners, and Deputy Director of Curriculum and Progression input.

- Student Feedback: Systematically collected and analysed.

- External Examiners: Validate the quality and comparability of assessments.

ELE Code Compliance in Curriculum Delivery

79. The IFY programme adheres to ELE Code requirements, including:

- Learner Protection: Clear documentation of programme aims and delivery.

- Language Support: CEFR-aligned and embedded in curriculum.

- Assessment Integrity: Use of rubrics, Turnitin, and moderation protocols.

Section Seven: Assessment Principles

80. DISC's assessment practices are grounded in the principles outlined in QQI's *Assessment and Standards* and reflect best practices in Further Education and Training (FET). All assessments are designed to promote effective learning and ensure the integrity and fairness of the learner experience. The following principles underpin all assessment activities within the International Foundation Year (IFY) programme:

- **Alignment with Validated Programme Learning Outcomes**

  Every assessment is mapped explicitly to the programme's intended learning outcomes (LOs) as validated by QQI. Assessment instruments are reviewed regularly to ensure they continue to measure the knowledge, skills, and competencies as defined at NFQ Level 5.

- **Fairness, Transparency, and Reliability**

  Assessments are designed to be equitable and inclusive, offering all learners an equal opportunity to demonstrate their achievement. Assessment criteria, marking schemes, and grading rubrics are clearly communicated in advance and applied

consistently. Internal quality assurance procedures support reliable and unbiased grading.

- **Authenticity and Academic Integrity**

  Assessment tasks are constructed to reflect real-world contexts and encourage original work. DISC fosters a culture of academic honesty by providing learners with ongoing education on academic integrity and the consequences of plagiarism. A range of tools and methods are used to detect and deter academic misconduct.

- **Diversity of Assessment Methods**

  A varied assessment strategy is employed, incorporating both formative and summative approaches. This includes written assignments, examinations, oral presentations, group projects, and practical demonstrations. The use of diverse methods ensures that learners with different strengths and learning styles are supported.

- **Internal Verification and External Examination**

  All summative assessments are subject to rigorous internal verification, ensuring alignment with programme specifications and marking consistency. External Examiners, appointed in line with QQI and DISC QA procedures, provide independent oversight and validation of assessment outcomes, contributing to continuous quality improvement.

- **Feedback for Learning**

  Both formative and summative assessments include timely, constructive feedback that supports learner development. Feedback is designed to guide learners in recognising their strengths, identifying areas for improvement, and planning subsequent learning.

- **Learner-Centred Progression**

  Assessment is used as a tool for guiding and supporting learner progression. Transparent procedures are in place for assessment submission, grading, rechecks, and appeals. These processes are communicated clearly to learners and comply fully with the Education and Learning Environment (ELE) Code.

Section Eight: Digital Learning Integration

81. DISC is committed to the effective integration of digital learning in line with UDL principles, QQI statutory guidelines, and the ELE Code. Digital learning is employed not as a stand-alone solution, but as a strategic enhancer of the learner experience, supporting teaching, learning, and assessment in inclusive and pedagogically sound ways.

    - **Equitable Access to Learning Resources**

      Digital tools are utilised to ensure all learners, regardless of ability or background,

have equitable access to programme materials. This includes the provision of accessible formats, adaptive technologies, and alternative delivery methods in line with UDL and ELE standards.

- **Formative Feedback through VLE and Digital Tools**

  VLEs such as StudySmart are central platforms for delivering timely and meaningful formative feedback. Instructors use digital tools (e.g., Turnitin, annotated rubrics, automated quizzes, forums) to provide learners with multiple opportunities for feedback, supporting reflection, self-assessment, and improvement over time. This enhances transparency and learner engagement with assessment criteria.

- **Digital Literacy Skill Development**

  The integration of digital learning fosters essential digital literacy skills aligned with Level 5 NFQ standards and current workforce expectations. Learners are supported in using communication platforms, collaborative tools (e.g., Google Workspace, Microsoft 365), and discipline-specific technologies. Digital competency is embedded within learning outcomes where appropriate and scaffolded through structured learning activities.

- **Secure Online Assessment and Communication Platforms**

  Online assessment is delivered through secure, authenticated platforms that protect academic integrity and learner data. Technologies are selected based on reliability, accessibility, and compliance with data protection regulations (e.g., GDPR). Communication between learners and educators is facilitated through professional, monitored channels that promote safe, respectful, and effective interaction.

82. Digital learning is regularly reviewed to ensure alignment with QQI's expectations for blended and online learning environments. Ongoing staff training and learner orientation are provided to ensure confidence and competence in the use of digital tools, contributing to a coherent and supportive digital learning culture at DISC.

Section Nine: Student Support and Progression

83. DISC is committed to providing comprehensive and structured learner support that fosters academic success and smooth progression into higher education.

84. Academic support is central to DISC's teaching and learning approach. Learners benefit from structured Academic English Skills (AES) module, targeted subject tutorials, and ongoing support from academic staff. Individual academic coaching is available where necessary. Emphasis is placed on the development of core academic competencies—critical reading, academic writing, referencing, research skills, and digital literacy—essential for success at NFQ Level 5 and in future higher education studies.

85. DISC delivers a multi-stage induction programme designed to ensure learners are well prepared for the academic and cultural transition into the Irish higher education

context. This includes:

- A pre-induction phase (remote), providing key information and initial academic expectations.

- A comprehensive on-site week-long induction, covering VLE, assessment procedures, academic standards, wellbeing support, and campus orientation.

- A long-form induction programme, continuing into the academic term with weekly afternoon sessions. These refresher workshops include topics such as academic integrity, time management, digital tools, and referencing, reinforcing good academic habits throughout the early stages of the programme.

86. Academic progress is closely monitored through the use of the DISC Intervention Strategy, this includes a log that is a live tracking document updated weekly by the academic staff. This log is reviewed during weekly pathway meetings, where academic and support staff collaboratively identify learners who may be underperforming or at risk. Once a learner is flagged, an individual academic support plan is developed, which may include additional tutorials, one-to-one meetings, tailored learning resources, or scheduled progress check-ins. This structured monitoring ensures timely and responsive interventions that promote retention and progression while maintaining confidentiality and ethical standards.

Section Ten: Quality Assurance and Enhancement

87. DISC's LTA strategy is fully embedded within its broader Quality Assurance Framework and is informed by QQI's Core Statutory Quality Assurance Guidelines, the ELE Code, and relevant FET sector standards. DISC ensures that the delivery, monitoring, and continuous enhancement of academic programmes are underpinned by a commitment to learner-centred quality and institutional accountability.

Alignment and Review

88. The LTA strategy is regularly reviewed to maintain alignment with:

- QQI Core QA Guidelines, particularly in relation to programme design, assessment integrity, learner engagement, and institutional governance.

- FET Teaching and Assessment Standards, ensuring that learning and assessment approaches reflect best practice in adult and further education.

- The ELE Code, with a focus on ethical, transparent, and inclusive learning environments for all learners, particularly international students.

89. These reviews are guided by internal QA processes and informed by feedback from stakeholders including students, staff, external examiners, and progression partners.

Monitoring and Quality Assurance Mechanisms

90.   Quality assurance of teaching, learning, and assessment is supported by the following monitoring mechanisms:

- **Programme and Module Evaluation**

    Regular evaluation of modules and programmes enables academic coherence, relevance, and alignment with learning outcomes. Learner feedback, teaching reflections, and assessment performance are reviewed each term and used to inform curriculum development and pedagogical improvement.

- **Student Satisfaction Surveys and Focus Groups**

    DISC gathers learner feedback through structured student satisfaction surveys and facilitated focus groups at key stages in the academic cycle. These mechanisms offer learners a platform to reflect on their experiences, raise concerns, and contribute to quality enhancement efforts. Findings are reported to the Academic Board and used in shaping staff development and programme delivery.

- **External Examiner Reports and Validation Feedback**

    Independent oversight is maintained through the use of External Examiners, who review assessment processes, grading standards, and programme outcomes. Their annual reports provide critical insights into the integrity of assessment and the learner experience. Recommendations from external examiner reports, QQI validations, and revalidation feedback are integrated into continuous improvement planning.

- **Continuous Professional Development (CPD)**

    DISC maintains a proactive CPD strategy to ensure academic staff are supported in reflective teaching practices and remain current with pedagogical innovations. CPD activities are informed by learner feedback, internal reviews, and sectoral developments, and may include workshops on digital learning, UDL, academic integrity, feedback and assessment strategies, and intercultural pedagogy.

Commitment to Continuous Improvement

91.   Quality enhancement is viewed as an ongoing, institution-wide process at DISC. All improvements are tracked through the centre's QA Action Plan, with responsibilities assigned and progress monitored by the QA Committee. The integration of LTA strategy into QA processes ensures that improvements are not only reactive but also proactive, strategic, and aligned with DISC's mission to prepare learners effectively for progression to higher education.

Section Eleven: Stakeholder Engagement

92. DISC recognises that meaningful and systematic engagement with stakeholders is essential to maintaining academic quality, relevance, and responsiveness across its programmes. Stakeholder input informs curriculum development, teaching practices, assessment standards, and learner support structures.

93. Stakeholder contributions are sourced through a range of formal and informal mechanisms, including:

- **Students via the Staff-Student Liaison Committee (SSLC)**

    The SSLC provides a structured forum for learner feedback and active student participation in quality enhancement. Class representatives meet with academic and administrative staff at scheduled intervals to raise concerns, suggest improvements, and contribute to institutional planning. Feedback from the SSLC is documented and actioned, with responses communicated back to the wider student body, reinforcing transparency and learner agency.

- **Academic and Administrative Staff**

    Teaching and support staff are directly engaged through regular programme meetings, pathway team discussions, and staff development sessions. Their frontline experience contributes to the continuous improvement of pedagogy, learner engagement strategies, assessment design, and programme delivery. Staff also participate in annual programme reviews and module evaluations.

- **External Examiners and Subject Specialists**

    External academic expertise plays a key role in benchmarking DISC's assessment practices against national and international standards. External Examiners provide impartial evaluations of assessment processes, grading consistency, and academic outcomes. Subject specialists may also be consulted during curriculum design, validation processes, or when reviewing emerging trends in disciplinary content.

- **Partner Institutions (e.g., University College Dublin)**

    DISC works collaboratively with progression partners to ensure the IFY programme equips learners with the skills and knowledge required for successful transition into higher education. Partner institutions may contribute to curriculum alignment, academic skill development strategies, and shared quality assurance dialogue, helping to ensure coherence and relevance in the learner journey.

- **QQI and Relevant FET Sector Bodies**

    Engagement with QQI and FET sector bodies ensures that DISC remains compliant with statutory requirements and aligned with sectoral best practices. Participation in forums, consultations, and external reviews supports DISC's capacity for reflection, benchmarking, and forward planning.

94. Stakeholder engagement at DISC is guided by principles of inclusivity, mutual respect, and transparency. It contributes directly to the ongoing enhancement of the learning experience and ensures that DISC remains responsive to the evolving needs of learners, staff, and the wider educational context.

Section Twelve: Review and Dissemination

95.   This policy is reviewed every two years by the Curriculum and Progression Committee in consultation with the Academic Board. Updates respond to:

- Revisions in QQI and ELE regulations.

- Outcomes of internal and external quality reviews.

- Stakeholder input and emerging sectoral practices.

96.   The policy is published via the DISC VLE, Quality Assurance Manual, and shared with staff at induction and CPD events.

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