



TITLE: *TEACHING AND LEARNING POLICY*

Effective Date	05 April 2017	Version	02
Approved By	Academic Council	Date Approved	05 April 2017
		Review Date	05 April 2020 <i>or as required</i>
Superseded or Obsolete Policy / Procedure(s)		Owner:	
Relevant Sections of the <i>Quality Assurance Handbook</i> (2011)		Office of the Registrar	

1. Purpose of Policy

The purpose of this document is to set out the *Teaching and Learning Policy* of Carlow College, St. Patrick's (hereafter Carlow College), which informs: (i) the educational practice in the College; (ii) ensures it is consistent with regulatory requirements applying; (iii) maintains the currency of practice with national and international developments; and (iv) secures the ongoing development of the College's learning environments.

The Policy is consistent with, and designed to support, the College's mission by ensuring the provision of quality educational programmes that support the achievement of student learning outcomes and enable access and educational progression for a diverse student population.

The key regulatory requirements relevant to this Policy are:

- the National Framework of Educational Qualifications (2003);
- the Framework for Qualifications of the European Higher Education Area (2005);
- the role and functioning of Quality and Qualifications Ireland as the degree awarding body for Carlow College.

This Policy updates the relevant sections in the College's *Quality Assurance Handbook* (2011).

2. Scope of Policy

Teaching and Learning is at the core of the institutional purpose of Carlow College. The provisions and application of this Policy is mandatory on all College personnel engaged with Teaching and Learning, whether in a direct or in a support capacity.

3. Policy Statement

3.1 An ethos that promotes learning and enquiry

We promote a learning culture that is inclusive in scope and attends to the support needs of the diversity of learners whom we seek to attract and whom we serve.

We work to develop and enhance a suite of flexible learning pathways, pedagogical methods, and a range of delivery modes so as to support learning across a diverse community.

Through our staff recruitment and staff development policies and practices we seek to ensure that:

- academic staff are appropriately qualified and experienced for the roles they fulfil;
- are actively engaged with their professional and disciplinary communities;
- are enabled to keep up to date with contemporary advances and research in their professions, academic disciplines;
- are supporting in utilising inclusive approaches to teaching, learning and assessment.

We work to develop and promote a capacity for learning autonomy on the part of learners over the course of their educational progression while providing adequate guidance and support to enable them to achieve the required learning outcomes effectively.¹

In our educational practice, we look to promote mutual respect in the learner-teacher relationship.²

To support this ethos, the College has an Advice and Information Officer and we maintain clear procedures for dealing with learner complaints. We seek to ensure that all learners are made aware of these procedures and their operation.³

3.2 Ongoing monitoring and evaluation

The College is committed to ongoing and progressive evaluation and monitoring of the quality and effectiveness of its teaching and learning:

- all programmes are evaluated at programme and module level on an annual basis in relation to curriculum content, teaching methodologies and methods, and student achievement of prescribed learning outcomes;
- external peer review is an element in the evaluation of all programmes offering certification. This review is separate and additional to the role of the external discipline examiner in the learner assessment process;
- feedback from learners and other stakeholders is collected and informs programme review and development.

¹ For more information on learner supports, please see *Quality Assurance Policy*, Section 4.7: Learner Supports.

² For more information on the promotion of mutual respect in learner-teacher relationship, see the *Learner Code of Conduct and Disciplinary Policy*; *Fitness to Continue in Study Policy*; and the *Teaching Code of Conduct*.

³ For more information, please see the *Learner Grievances and Complaints Policy*; *Learner Code of Conduct and Disciplinary Policy*; *Dignity and Respect Policy*; and *Equality Policy*.

- the oversights, framing and mechanisms for these evaluations are set at College level by the Office of the Registrar in consultation with Programme Leads and teaching faculty.⁴

3.3 National and international effective practice

The College works to ensure that in its Teaching and Learning practice it is informed by developments in pedagogical practice at third level, both nationally and internationally. To advance this purpose, the College has established a Teaching and Learning Committee with a brief to advance teaching and learning practice in the College (Appendix 2: *Terms of Reference of the Teaching, Learning and Assessment Committee*).

3.4 Maintaining and Developing the Learning Environment

The College recognises the importance of a learning environment that supports the achievement of both general and specific learning outcomes. The learning environment is multi-faceted and related to the general learning ethos promoted, the specific programmes offered by the College, the delivery, learning and assessment modes, learner accessibility to the built environment and to online resources used in the College.

The degree to which the learning environment is fit-for-purpose is reviewed annually by the Office of the Registrar, informed by the Teaching and Learning Committee, the Director of Operations, the Head of Student Services, the Library Committee, the IT Officer, Student representatives, and external programme reviews. The long-term development of the College's learning environment is addressed through the strategic planning process of the College.

Practice placements: Carlow College offers practice placement opportunities on a number of its programmes that involve working with children and vulnerable persons. Whether or not these placements are a core element of professional qualification, or more broadly offer opportunities to further professional development, learners who work with vulnerable persons or children are required to be Garda Vetted prior to commencing their practice placement.⁵ Learners are expected and required to conform to the code of ethics and conduct of relevant professional bodies, in addition to the College requirements. All learners are subject to the *Policy on Breach of Professional Conduct and Termination of Training for Students Undertaking Professional Training Programmes*.

4. Responsibility and Roles

The Office of the Registrar and Vice President for Academic Affairs holds responsibility for all matters, including Quality Assurance, in relation to Teaching and Learning. In this role, it is supported by the relevant College Committees, including the Teaching and Learning Committee. The Office reports to the President, the Academic Council and the Board of Governors.

5. Associated Documentation

1. Appendix 1: Teaching Code of Conduct
2. Appendix 2: Terms of Reference of the Teaching, Learning and Assessment Committee

⁴ For more information on programme monitoring and review, please see *Quality Assurance Policy*, Section 4.3.3: Programme Monitoring and Review.

⁵ For more information, please see the *Garda Vetting Policy*.

6. Monitoring and Review

The Teaching, Learning and Assessment Committee will monitor the implementation of the *Teaching and Learning Policy* annually and provide a report to the Vice President for Academic Affairs / Registrar. It will review the Policy at the direction of the Vice President for Academic Affairs / Registrar, but at a minimum of every three years and provide a report with recommendations to the Vice President for Academic Affairs / Registrar and the Academic Council.

Appendix 1: Teaching Code of Conduct



TEACHING CODE OF CONDUCT

The Core Values of Carlow College Teaching Staff:

The lecturing staff of Carlow College, St. Patrick's (hereafter Carlow College) is firmly committed to a holistic vision of education, which promotes the professional development of learners, including their aesthetic, intellectual, cultural, emotional, creative, moral, social, political, and spiritual development.

The lecturing staff of Carlow College see education as providing vital opportunities for the development of awareness and the appreciation of cultural values. They are always mindful of Irish, European and wider global contexts.

In executing their professional role, the lecturing staff of Carlow College demonstrate commitment to democracy, social justice, equality and inclusion. They encourage active citizenship and support learners in thinking critically about significant social issues. They do this through placing a value on and in accommodating diversity, as well as in responding appropriately.

The Objectives of the Code:

Carlow College's Teaching Code aims to clarify the ethics, as well as set out the core values, underpinning lecturers' practice. The Teaching Code aims to:

- set out clear standards of professional practice to which Carlow College lecturers are committed;
- assist in achieving and maintaining high standards of professional practice;
- encourage the lecturing staff to reflect on their professional practice;
- affirm the role of third level lecturers in the social, cultural and economic development of the country;
- support lecturers in their professional lives; and finally,
- attempt to promote collegiality within the lecturing profession.

The Teaching Code:

1. Lecturers should respect confidential information relating to colleagues, learners and families gained in the course of professional practice, unless the wellbeing of an individual, or a legal imperative, requires disclosure.
2. Lecturers should uphold the reputation and standing of the academic profession. They should act with honesty and integrity in all aspects of their work. They should avoid direct conflict between their private interests and their professional work.

3. Lecturers should engage in mutually respectful professional relationships with learners, colleagues, College management, co-professionals, and all in the Carlow College community. They should interact with each member of the College community in a way that does not discriminate and that promotes equality in relation to gender, marital status, family status, sexual orientation, religion, age, disability, race, ethnicity, membership of the Travelling Community, and socio-economic status.
4. Recognising the unique and privileged relationships that exist between Lecturers and the learners entrusted to their care, Lecturers should conduct these relationships in a way that is professional, respectful and appropriate.
5. Lecturers should not practise the profession while under the influence of any substance which impairs their ability or medical fitness.
6. Lecturers should provide complete and accurate information, alongside all relevant and authentic documents, with respect to their professional status, qualifications and experience. They should use only their own names in the course of their professional duties. They should provide complete and accurate information on any professional matter as requested by the College.

Appendix 2: Terms of Reference of the Teaching, Learning and Assessment Committee



Terms of Reference **Teaching, Learning and Assessment Committee**

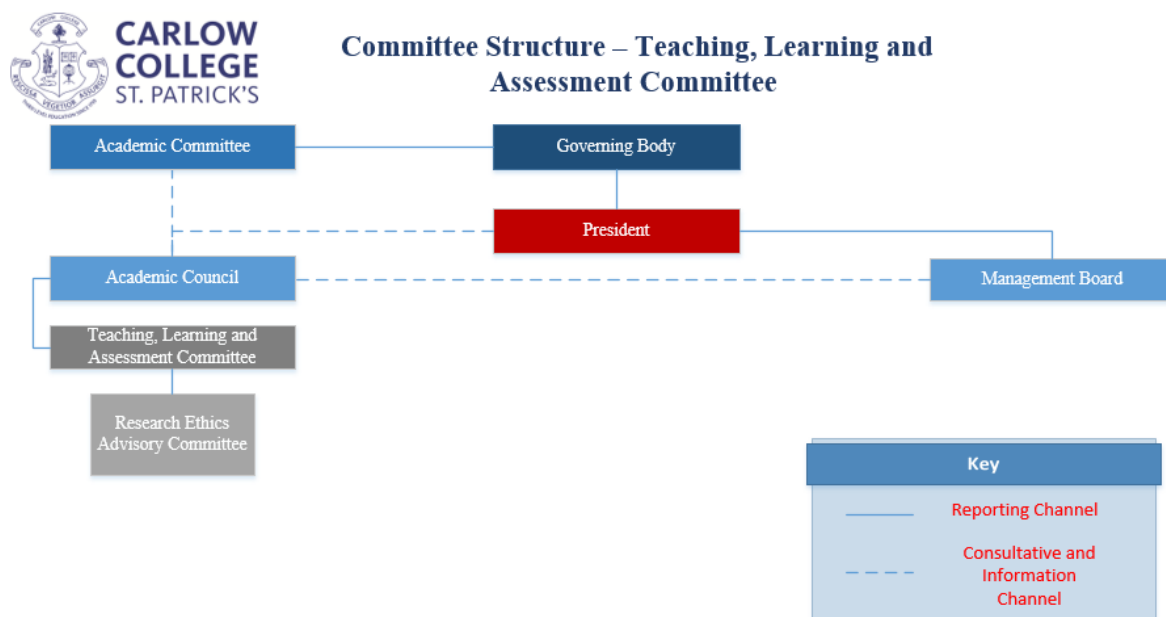
Section 1: Remit

Teaching and Learning is at the core of the institutional purpose of Carlow College, St. Patrick's. The importance of teaching and learning was recognised, and prioritised, in the *National Strategy for Higher Education to 2030* (2011) and the establishment and work of the *National Forum for the Enhancement of Teaching and Learning in Higher Education*. The role of the Teaching, Learning and Assessment Committee is to articulate, develop, and promote teaching and learning practice in the College consistent with best national and international practice and in-line with the strategic goals of the College.

Section 2: Membership

Function	Mode of Selection
Teaching, Learning and Assessment Lead, Chair	<i>Ex Officio</i> (must be appointed and will have <i>Ex Officio</i> status on Academic Council)
Assistant Registrar for Academic Affairs	<i>Ex Officio</i>
Assistant Registrar for Strategic Development	<i>Ex Officio</i>
Programme Directors	<i>Ex Officio</i>
Academic staff member	Nominated by the Committee
Academic staff member	Nominated by the Committee
Library Representative	<i>Ex Officio</i>
IT Officer	<i>Ex Officio</i>
Director of Operations	<i>Ex Officio</i>
Learner representative	Nominated by the Committee
Quality Assurance Officer	<i>Ex Officio</i>
Research Ethics Advisory Committee Chair	<i>Ex Officio</i>

Section 3: Reporting Structure



The Teaching, Learning and Assessment Committee is a sub-committee of Academic Council and the Teaching, Learning and Assessment Lead has *ex officio* status on Academic Council. Moreover, the Teaching, Learning and Assessment Lead directly reports to the Office of the Registrar and leads all teaching and learning initiatives in the College. As Chair of the Teaching, Learning and Assessment Committee, the Lead informs other relevant College committees and staff members of its deliberations. The Research Ethics Advisory Committee is a sub-committee and has a reporting channel to the Teaching, Learning and Assessment Committee.

Section 4: Terms of Reference

The Teaching, Learning and Assessment Committee is tasked with:

- to develop the decision-making process within the committee;
- to develop and maintain: a process for recording/archiving minutes, actions taken and reports for self-monitoring activities;
- the development and oversight of the Teaching and Learning Strategy of the College;
- informing and being informed by the strategic planning process of the College;
- the oversight and development of educational practice;
- ensuring teaching and learning practice is consistent with regulatory requirements applying;
- maintaining and developing the currency of practice in line with national and international advances in pedagogical practice at third level;
- securing the ongoing development of the College's learning environments in support of teaching and learning practice and goals;

- supporting academic staff in reviewing and developing their own pedagogical practice;
- promoting a range of delivery modes consistent with institutional and programmatic educational goals;
- promoting a range of assessment practices, including the use of assessment for formative and summative purposes consistent with institutional and programmatic educational goals;
- articulating desired graduate attributes for Carlow College, St. Patricks (in relation to levels 7, 8, and 9);
- informing and supporting the professional development of staff relative to teaching and learning practice.

Section 5: Frequency of Meetings

The Committee shall meet monthly September through July; or otherwise at the discretion of the Committee.