



Policy Title	Quality Assurance/ Enhancement Policy	Effective from	21 July 2022
Policy Reference	LOC/35	Review Date	20 July 2025
Author/reviewer	Sean Logue	Version no.	8
Director(s)	Sean Logue Imelda O'Connor O'Dea	Replaces version no.	7

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1.0 Introduction

'QUALITY ASSURANCE is *'the maintenance of a desired level of quality in a service or product, especially by means of attention to every stage of the process of delivery or production'*.¹

This Quality Assurance Policy provides a framework for and drives the quality assurance procedures operating in Logue & O'Connor Training and Consultancy Ltd. (LOC). It aims to reflect LOC's mission and values and relates closely to its relevant strategic management plans and operations.

We have committed ourselves to embracing an inclusive quality assurance culture. The quality assurance framework and policy documentation outlined in this policy clearly articulates the principles and procedures followed by LOC, in our quest to achieve and sustain the highest standards in further education and training.

LOC has committed to ensuring that quality assurance policy and procedures are in place to agree these with Pre-Hospital Emergency Care Council (PHECC). In designing quality assurance policies and procedures, we have drawn from QCI's publication, *Quality Assurance Guidelines and Criteria for Provider Access to Initial Validation of Programmes Leading to QCI Awards – Further Education and Training (2013)*. PHECC is responsible for pre-hospital emergency care standards.

We believe that the approach to QA should be simple, flexible and relatively easy to implement. We see ourselves not only as educators but as change agents who must take ownership of the QA process and its procedures, and make it an intrinsic part of our work.

In 2017 LOC initiated a process, agreed with PHECC, for the relevant organisational policy and procedures to be followed in initiating, developing, providing and reviewing educational programmes provided by us in collaboration with other institutions based in Ireland.

The procedures set out a new collaborative policy and procedures intended to safeguard QA of all educational programmes and training provided by us, and to safeguard learner and institutional interests, in compliance with PHECC's policy for collaborative programmes and awards.

¹ *Quality Assurance Guidelines and Criteria for Provider Access to Initial Validation of Programmes Leading to QCI Awards – Further Education and Training, Quality Qualifications Ireland (QCI), (2013)*

2.0 Education / Training Mission Statement

Our mission is to provide the highest standard of pre-hospital emergency care education and training and to do so in a reliable, efficient and professional manner. Our vision is to be recognised as a performance leader. This means we will achieve operational excellence through effective leadership, continuous quality improvement and strong customer satisfaction. As such, we will strive to protect, build and manage our reputation while providing a dynamic learning environment for course participants in pre-hospital care emergency education and training.

3.0 Quality Ethos, Values and Principles

The values underpinning the Logue & O'Connor (LOC) approach to education and training include those of civility, respect, engagement, dialogue and the promotion of an ethic of service.

The ethos and identity of LOC is embodied in a pedagogical approach based on participatory learning and critical thinking that seeks to empower learners. The ethos of LOC is reflected in all aspects of the life of the Company and can be characterised by professionalism, a friendly and caring environment and accessibility of staff and resources. LOC can be described as a healthy and vibrant, recognised educational institute, developing and refining its own niche as a service provider to a distinct group of learners. The profile of LOC's learners are mature persons engaged in work in public or private enterprises, adults returning to work, and community groups who require education and training pursuant to the Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Act 2005 and PHECC standards. The education and training provided by LOC is best described as capacity building for all learners.

4.0 Quality Assurance Objectives and Policy

4.1 LOC's Quality Objectives are:

- To maintain the highest possible standards in all aspects of its activities
- To ensure compliance with appropriate national and European standards of QA within higher education and training
- To maintain a process of QA throughout new and existing programmes, through regular review, evaluation and updating of QA policies.
- To explore specific areas of work related to QA, as identified in LOC's strategic plan 2016-2020
- To publicise LOC's QA policy among LOC stakeholders

5.0 LOC Further Education and Training (Functions and Operations)

The QA policy covers all aspects of LOC's functions and operations that impact on the standard and quality of its programmes. These functions and operations are:

5.1 Further Education and Training

LOC's teaching methodology lends itself to an adult learning and participatory format and is consistent with the principles of lifelong learning². LOC has developed a pedagogy and methodology that is learner-centred, values experience and is interactive and creative.

5.2 Research

LOC has made it a strategic priority to dedicate more staff time and energy to research, documentation and publication activities. LOC sees research as an opportunity to update the knowledge and skills of its staff and so benefit the Company as a whole, and to enable appropriate and useful learner engagement with the development of, and relationship between, theory and practice.

5.3 Learning Environment

It is the policy of LOC to foster an informal, friendly atmosphere based upon a philosophy of service and mutual respect. LOC emphasises dialogue, a pleasant learning environment and a community of mutual support for all learners.

5.4 Learner Welfare

LOC pays attention to the personal as well as the academic development of its learners and strives to ensure that all learners have a productive and enjoyable learning experience.

5.5 Assessment

LOC is determined to have an examination and assessment system (including the recognition of prior learning) which is fair, consistent and effective in measuring the extent to which learners achieve the relevant minimum intended programme learning outcomes. In the interests of transparency, LOC will ensure a Programme Assessment

² Lifelong learning is all about learning activity throughout life and has been defined by the European Commission as: "all learning activity undertaken throughout life, with the aim of improving knowledge, skills and competences within a personal, civic, social and/or employment-related perspective" (National Qualifications Authority of Ireland, 2002).

and Evaluation Strategy is prepared for every PHECC accredited programme and updated on an annual basis.

5.5.1 Programme Assessment and Evaluation Strategy

LOC annually reviews and evaluates course programmes with respect to customer satisfaction, learner outcomes and critical feedback in order to improve the quality of all programme delivery.

5.6 Facilities and Equipment

LOC has a commitment to the provision of adequate and appropriate resources to enable the goals of learners to be achieved and to enable QA procedures to be implemented satisfactorily. Our premises at **Unit 21, N17 Business Park, Galway Road, Tuam, Co. Galway** are accessible to wheelchair users.

5.7 Management and Administration

It is intended that this policy will facilitate a systematic approach to demonstrating and enhancing quality. It is important that the systems put in place to manage quality grow out of the active involvement of relevant stakeholders. The systems established in LOC lay out clearly where responsibility for quality lies. The Directors of LOC strive to create an environment conducive to participation, trust, teamwork, empowerment and pride in performance.

5.8 Partnership and Outreach Activities

LOC aims to develop and strengthen links with like-minded institutions in the Country. LOC is actively investigating and cultivating new relationships and network arrangements and constantly explores the possibilities for engaging in activities complementing its core teaching functions. Such projects are developed and added in a context where the priority focus on the core functions of LOC is maintained.

5.9 Human Resources

It is the policy of LOC to recruit, support and retain the staff required to ensure the delivery of a quality education and training service. LOC is committed to employing and maintaining a qualified, committed and competent staff geared towards the requirements of programme delivery and learner needs. It is the policy of LOC to review and update its Policies and Procedures every three years or where required, and copies of these are available to all staff and relevant stakeholders, where applicable.

5.10 Verifiable Data

LOC generates and collates all necessary data in order to monitor critical quality indicators, for example examination results, learner feedback and external examiners' reports.

5.11 Access, Transfer and Progression of Learners

LOC explicitly encourages applications to its programmes from mature learners. In particular, LOC's practice is consistent with the principles expressed by the National Qualifications Framework (NQF), i.e. that access be provided to those learners who have in the past had limited access to education and training programmes, including mature learners, people with disabilities and people from minority groups.

5.12 Protection of Enrolled Learners

In the event of LOC ceasing to provide a programme of education and training, LOC is fully committed to the protection of enrolled learners who have paid moneys to, or on whose behalf moneys have been paid to, LOC for that programme of education and training where:

- LOC does not provide the programme for any reason including by reason of insolvency or winding up, or;
- enrolled learners have begun but not completed the programme and LOC ceases to provide the programme before that programme is completed for any reason, including by reason of the insolvency or winding up of LOC.

5.13 Arrangements for the Protection of Enrolled Learners

If, for reasons as outlined in section 5.12, LOC will arrange for a full refund of all monies paid for that particular programme.

5.14 Programmes

One of the core functions of LOC is teaching, through providing the following programmes:

Programme	Award Type
Cardiac First Response	2-year Joint Certificate
First Aid Response	2-year Joint Certificate

LOC continues to develop its curriculum, mindful of the changing external context within which it operates. In order for LOC to be responsive to changes in the field of education, training and development, specific attention is given to issues of programme development.

LOC adheres to the Programme Learning Outcomes as set out by PHECC.

Other programmes are constantly evaluated and reviewed. LOC offers a number of non-accredited programmes, namely:

- Manual Handling
- Manual Handling and Patient Moving
- Introduction to Health and Safety in the Workplace
- Mental Health Awareness in the Workplace
- Workplace Wellbeing and Work Engagement
- DSE/VDU Instructor & Assessor Training

5.15 Public Information

It is the policy of LOC to ensure that accurate and reliable information is available to all learners (both those intending to undertake further education and training and those who are already doing so), to enable them to plan their learning on the basis of a clear understanding of the level (within the National Framework of Qualifications) of awards available and associated entry arrangements, as well as the content and learning outcomes, and learning and assessment methods used, for each programme. It is the policy of LOC, furthermore, to observe, that its use of images and messages on the LOC website, in programme brochures and other publicity documents, is congruent with our Social Media Policy.

6.0 Quality Assurance Procedures

6.1 Governance, Management and Human Resources

Logue and O'Connor Training and Consultancy Ltd was established in May 2013 and is formally registered as a Limited Company with the Companies Registration Office (CRO: 527006) since 02 May 2013. The company's offices and two large training rooms are located in Unit 33, N17 Business Park, Galway Road, Tuam, Co. Galway on the N17 corridor between Galway and Sligo and twenty minutes from Junction 19 on the M6 Motorway. There is wheelchair access to our premises and a disabled toilet in our premises. There are toilets and a spacious kitchen/dining area. All internal doors are newly-fitted fire safety doors. The premises are fire safety compliant. LOC has a completed written risk assessment and a safety statement pursuant to sections 19 and

20 of the Health, Safety and Welfare at Work Act 2005 and an up-to-date Health and Safety policy.

LOC delivers further education, training and consultation services to companies, businesses and organisations to ensure compliance with the Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Act 2005 and other relevant statutory provisions, as regulated by the Health and Safety Authority (HSA) and in line with PHECC standards.

LOC handles all areas of occupational safety and health, from developing accredited educational and training programmes to conducting safety audits, formulating and reviewing corporate policies and procedures, undertaking risk assessments and developing and updating safety statements.

6.2 Directors

Seán Logue has over twenty-five years' experience in health services management, eight of which have been in the area of compliance and regulation as an inspector with the Mental Health Commission and thirteen in education. He is a registered general nurse (RGN) and a registered psychiatric nurse (RPN). He has a Bachelor of Science degree (B.Sc.) in Health Services Management from Trinity College Dublin, a Master of Laws degree (LL.M.) in Mental Health Law, Policy and Practice from Northumbria University, Newcastle upon Tyne and a Master of Science degree (M.Sc.) in Occupational Safety and Health from University College Dublin. Sean is a Graduate Member of the Institution of Occupational Safety and Health (IOSH).

Seán will lead the development of the company's further education and training policies and procedures and will undertake to lead periodic review of these in collaboration with all stakeholders. Seán will also lead the development of the company's QA policies and procedures, internal monitoring, self-evaluation and improvement in respect of further education and training through collaboration with all stakeholders. He will maintain further educational and training standards to a high level, again through collaboration with all stakeholders.

Seán has a proven track record in education management from his previous work experience spanning ten years in the Health Service Executive (HSE) and the Department of Health Sciences, University College Cork (UCC).

Seán has worked in the area of nurse education for thirteen years. In 1998 he developed the clinical learning outcomes for the diploma in mental health nursing for St. John of God Hospital, Stillorgan which is affiliated to University College Dublin. He spent eight years as a member of the Clinical Practice Committee in the Department of Health Sciences, University College Cork and was the clinical lead on the UCC undergraduate mental health nurse training Curriculum Development Committee on behalf of the HSE-South Mental Health Services during the transition of nurse education and training from diploma level to Bachelor of Science (Hons) degree level. Seán's main role and function in this regard was to bridge the gap between theory and practice and

to promote and maintain an active clinical learning environment so as to ensure that current evidence-based practice was put into place in HSE clinical areas and was reflective of theory learned by students in UCC in respect of clinical learning outcomes for the first and second year of the undergraduate degree programme and clinical competencies for the third and final year of the undergraduate degree programme.

Imelda O'Connor O'Dea has many years experience in business. She has a proven track record in project management, having co-ordinated and managed the delivery of occupational safety and health change within high-risk work environments in a number of industrial/manufacturing settings. Imelda is based at our headquarters in Tuam, Co. Galway. She is responsible for the management of our training programmes and brings an individualised, area-specific approach to her methodology which is receiving strong positive responses from our rapidly expanding client list. Imelda recently successfully completed Emergency Medical Technician (EMT) training as accredited by the Pre-Hospital Emergency Care Council (PHECC). Imelda has also worked in London and Philadelphia. Her qualifications include:

Manual Handling Instructor

Manual Handling and Patient Moving Instructor

Training Delivery and Evaluation (Train the Trainer)

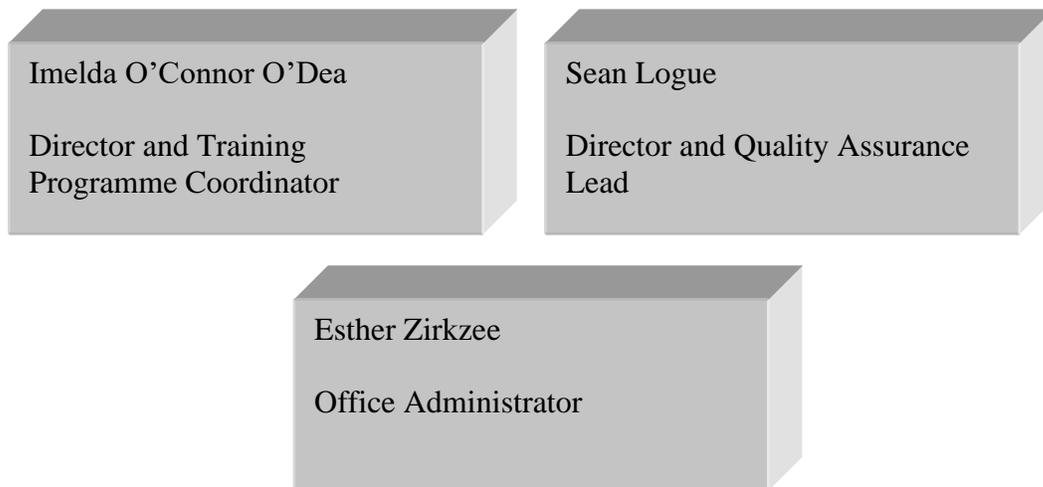
Pre Hospital Emergency Care Council (PHECC) Instructor

6.3 Management of Quality Assurance

Responsibility for the formulation of this QA policy and for maintaining and improving institutional quality in respect of the management of standards and the quality of courses delivered rests with the Directors of LOC. The Directors have delegated responsibility for the monitoring of QA policy and procedures to Seán Logue who will report collaboratively with his fellow Director, Imelda O'Connor O'Dea on quality matters.

The PHECC Quality Assurance Review (QAR) provides the opportunity for a regular overview of LOC's learning and teaching activity through LOC's own internal self-assessment and the provision of an external evaluation process for the management of LOC's educational and training standards in course delivery.

Logue & O'Connor Organisational flow chart



7.0 Staff Roles

The post holders listed below take responsibility for implementing and maintaining a QA culture within LOC. In addition to any academic duties in relation to the programmes at LOC, staff have the following responsibilities:

Seán Logue has specific responsibility for the strategic planning, direction and operation of the education and training programmes at LOC, and to this end:

- the formulation of new policy, and ensuring confirmation and compliance with policy objectives and with the relevant statutory provisions
- the promotion of the work of LOC at home and abroad
- the recruitment, employment and supervision of all staff
- the coordination of staff development

Imelda O'Connor O'Dea has specific responsibility for:

- Coordination of all learning programmes especially in terms of scheduling, timetabling and liaising with facilitators
- Coordinating academic planning and review meetings with facilitators during the year

- Planning, administration and allocation of funds and presentation of annual budgets and accounts
- Moderating of all programmes and final programme evaluations
- Overseeing the assessment arrangements for all programmes
- Coordinating curriculum development aspects of the programme with other facilitators
- Financial management and preparation of the annual budgets
- The coordination of the Information Technology services at LOC
- Programme Delivery: ensuring the programmes already developed under the programme are run efficiently and effectively for the learners concerned.
- Networking & Promotion: planning promotional and advertising campaigns, developing a network of teachers and increasing levels of participation in programmes.
- Programme & Strategic Development: exploring potential new programme areas
- Pursuing an accreditation process for existing programmes with a view to marketing them with academic certification in future.
- Management and Administrative Duties: These include development of systems for recruiting, responding to and maintaining potential and existing customers

Office Administrator Esther Zirkzee has specific responsibility for:

- Coordination of responses to all enquiries and applications to LOC
- Overseeing the process of admissions to all programmes and, in consultation with the Directors, determining annual intakes.
- Liaising with accreditation authorities, for example PHECC, regarding admissions, registration, examination and other procedures relating to learners, as well as matters pertaining to programmatic evaluations and institutional reviews.
- Liaising with all internal and external examiners concerning the preparation, supervision, assessment and final grading of all examinations and assignments.
- Maintenance of records relating to learner assessment
- Ensuring that each learner who has received an award is issued with an appropriate certificate
- Management of the LOC library and other information resources
- Maintaining all essential records
- Day to day bookkeeping and management of the cash and current accounts of LOC
- Administration of the payroll system and tax returns
- Dealing with payments, transfers and receipts and liaison with all learners regarding transactions
- Correspondence and communications with the public and with the overall maintenance of accurate data and records at LOC
- Reception duties

- Ensuring adequate stocks of stationary and office supplies

8.0 Human Resource Management

LOC regularly reviews the effectiveness of its human resource policies and procedures. Particularly in relation to the procedures for recruitment, selection, appointment, appraisal, support and development of staff involved at any level in the delivery or support of a programme.

8.1 Staff Selection and Appointment

LOC is an equal opportunities employer that operates in accordance with the Employment Equality Acts (1998 and 2004) and has a policy and procedures in relation to this.

The following steps are taken when recruiting for new or replacement positions:

- A selection committee is established, drawn from the staff and Directors.
- Advertisements concerning the position are placed in appropriate media, including the LOC website.
- Job specifications are sent to all who seek further information on the position.
- Applications received are acknowledged and the forms and curricula vitae received are then copied to all members of the Selection Committee.
- The Selection Committee meet in due course and either agree a shortlist of candidates for the position, or if no suitable candidates are agreed, recommend re-advertising of the position at a future date.
- When a shortlist is agreed, invitations are sent out to all candidates on the list advising them to attend for interview on a particular date and time.
- All unsuccessful applicants are informed in writing of the decision not to call them for interview at this stage.
- A panel comprised of one or both Directors and members of staff and at times, if appropriate for the post in question, an external person with expertise in a relevant area may be invited to join the interview panel.
- Following the interview process, the interview panel will make its recommendations in the form of a short list of suitable candidates to the Directors.
- Following the recommendations of the interview panel, the Directors will then either decide to award the post to the person deemed the most suitable candidate, or, in the event that the interview panel could not reach a decision in this regard, consider another process of recruitment.
- The successful and unsuccessful candidates are informed of the decision of the Board at the earliest possible time.

8.2 Employment Terms and Conditions

LOC ensures that all staff employment conditions are in accordance with the Terms of Employment (Information) Acts 1994 and 2001 and that all full-time and part-time employees of LOC are provided with clear contracts of employment containing their general rights and responsibilities along with specific job descriptions. While cognisant of the need to ensure full observation of contractual obligations by both employer and employee, LOC places great emphasis on fostering an atmosphere of appropriate informality, mutual support and respect amongst all staff, regardless of their role or status within the Company. Within such a culture of cooperation and understanding, all staff are enabled to contribute towards sustaining the overall flexible and friendly working environment. In this regard, LOC sees the need to continually review its systems of staff support and appraisal, including facilitating ongoing training and education for all employees, thereby ensuring that each and every member of staff is assured of the quality of esteem in which she/he is held. Such reviews take place annually, involving consultation with staff. All LOC Staff Policies and Procedures are available to all staff both in hardcopy and electronic (PDF) format. Full details of terms and conditions for LOC staff are provided in LOC Staff Policies and Procedures.

8.3 Staff Appraisal and Professional Development

To contribute towards achieving self-set goals, LOC wishes to ensure that all full-time and part time personnel undergo an annual performance review. The purpose of this exercise is to enable LOC to learn more about how individual staff feel about their jobs, to receive their ideas about possible improvements, to reflect upon further support, including training that may be needed, and ultimately, to determine how, as an organisation, it can improve performance.

In Stage 1 of the appraisal process, the staff member is requested to complete an appraisal form.

In Stage 2, this completed form is used as a basis for appraisal discussions with the Director.

The annual appraisal of both Directors is a peer review process conducted by the other Director.

It is the policy of LOC to encourage staff to update themselves professionally and academically in order to keep the content of and support for LOC education and training programmes up to date. Support is provided to staff who wish to attend training programmes or conferences that are relevant to their academic interests and professional upgrading. LOC has an active Continuous Professional Development policy for all staff.

8.4 Programme Design

The importance of programme design in terms of standards, quality and the means for quality enhancement cannot be overemphasised.

8.5 Programme Design Process

LOC's programme design process reflects the aim of responding effectively to learner needs by providing a thorough and rigorous foundation of subject material in the mandatory areas of each programme. Some training programmes are specifically tailored to meet the needs of a par while allowing for more flexibility and choice within elective subject areas. LOC's programme design recognises the dynamism of the discipline and the corresponding need to adapt and innovate programme content in order to remain relevant to the needs of learners. LOC is committed to the following principles when designing and delivering its existing and new programmes:

- Ensuring that the programme content reflects legal requirements where applicable.
- Ensuring that programme content reflects national and international trends
- Emphasising the importance of linking theory with practice and an appropriate balance between the two.
- Encouraging active and participatory learning.
- Recognising the prior experience and present learning needs of learners.
- Ensuring ongoing participant support from trainers and educators.
- Ensuring fair, consistent and standards-compliant assessment of learners.
- Providing prompt feedback to learners on assignments.
- Providing adequate time for learners to reflect on their learning.
- Upholding high expectations that learners will meet the required standards and attain set programme learning outcomes.
- Respecting diversity within ways of learning.
- Maintaining an atmosphere of civility, respect and trust between trainers, educators and learners.
- Ensuring that all programmes are inclusive in their approach.

8.6 Programme Design Methodology

LOC's programme design methodology requires the specification of:

- Programme Aims
- Overall Programme Learning Outcomes
- Programme Content / Curriculum and individual module learning outcomes/objectives
- Assessment Criteria

LOC has a policy and procedures on Education, Training and Methodologies.

8.7 Programme Aims

Programme aims are normally general in nature and reflect the overall purpose of the programme.

8.8 Learning Outcomes

Learning outcomes will state what a participant is expected to know, understand and/or be able to demonstrate after completion of a process of learning. Learning outcomes reflect an accurate representation of the programme content. Their standards correspond to the award level under the National Qualifications Framework and are achievable by the learners on the programme. Care is taken to ensure that learning outcomes are measurable wherever possible.

8.9 Programme Content/Curriculum

Aims, learning outcomes, outline syllabus, required reading, programme credits, contact hours and assessment requirements are specified for each programme. These are reviewed on an annual basis.

8.10 Assessment Criteria

Learning outcomes drive the assessment procedures; assessment is designed to assess the learning outcomes in as realistic a way as possible. Assessment standards of each programme are based on the achievement by the learner of the minimum relevant learning outcomes (knowledge, skill and competence) pertinent to the level at which it is offered.

LOC ensures a Programme Assessment and Evaluation Strategy document is prepared in respect of each programme during the development stage and maintained thereafter. This strategy:

- Links a programme's assessment instruments to the minimum learning outcomes as well as intended module learning outcomes
- Describes and provides the rationale for a particular subject assessment exercise [in relation to the programme learning outcomes], as well as the criteria used for grading that assessment.
- Describes any special regulations pertaining to that programme (such as recognition of prior learning, exemption rules, pass by compensation, examination and attendance regulations, rights and responsibilities of learners, complaints and appeals processes)

- Describes the role of external examiners
- In order to ensure consistency in the grading of assignments, all lecturers are expected to follow LOC's Guidelines for Marking (**see 8.12.6 below**)
- Programme Assessment Strategies are updated on an annual basis and are communicated to learners and all involved in teaching and assessment, at the start of each academic year.

8.11 Programme Quality Assurance

All of LOC's programmes are subject to rigorous internal and external QA mechanisms. In addition to the development and observance of Programme Assessment and Evaluation Strategies, (**see 5.5.1 above**), LOC uses a number of additional methods for QA to maintain proper academic standards. Together these mechanisms provide for a strong QA of LOC programmes.

- LOC has developed an extensive internal QA system. This system relies on feedback from learners, stakeholders and current instructors. The main instruments for participative feedback are: evaluations and an annual staff planning workshop. LOC staff collaborate closely with each other for exchange of information and mutual professional support so as to continuously develop their teaching and programme content.
- External Examiners are appointed by LOC for QA of individual subjects and learner assessments.
- Quality is monitored by internal review and evaluation and by external evaluation of LOC's performance by PHECC

PHECC provides a Quality Assurance Review (QAR) which is a process of regular external overview of LOC's learning and teaching activity through LOC's own internal self-assessment and the provision of an external evaluation process for the management of LOC's educational and training standards in course delivery.

This review process provides an opportunity for stakeholders (i.e. learners, instructors, external instructors and Directors of LOC) to examine the value of the work that takes place in the institution and acknowledge the achievements of students, the learning environment and staff providing learning. Areas for improvement are identified and actions are planned, implemented and evaluated. Actions arising from the review process will be implemented in the short term and included in a Quality Improvement Plan (QIP)

The QAR is based on the principle of using existing documentation wherever possible, such as Learner Evaluation Questionnaires and External Examiner Reports, survey results, group feedback where necessary, action plans etc. The QAR has four distinctive features:

1. It is Logue & O'Connor (LOC) based
2. It is based on a process of self-assessment carried out by LOC itself
3. The use of external PHECC reviewers to ensure objectivity
4. The review evaluates a range of LOC activities, allowing for balanced recommendations to be made, to be included in the Quality Improvement Plan

8.12 Procedure for the Design and Validation of New Programmes

When designing new programmes, LOC is cognisant of the *QA Guidelines and Criteria for Provider Access to Initial Validation of Programmes Leading to QQI Awards – Further Education and Training (2013)*, which includes a section on the design and approval of new programmes, subjects and modules. It states that:

'Procedures for the design and approval of new programmes, subjects and modules, should include clear and comprehensive provision for the presentation and structured consideration of evidence that the following issues have been sufficiently addressed':

LOC aims to address the following issues when designing new programmes:

- Philosophy, rationale and aims of the programme.
- Learning outcomes for each programme.
- How the programme meets its stated objectives, particularly as regards intended learning outcomes.
- Methodology used.
- Relevance of the pedagogy to the programmes.
- Relationship to other programmes offered by the provider.
- Programme management arrangements.
- Information system resources needed for the programme.
- Impact of the programme on the physical resources and support facilities of LOC
- Financial implications of offering the programme.
- Environmental scan of similar or related programmes offered by other providers.
- Participant demand for programmes.
- Consultation on the programme with relevant stakeholders and peers.
- Fair, consistent and standards-compliant programme learner assessment.
- Provision, as required by law, for the protection of learners in the event of the provider ceasing to provide the programme.
- Satisfactory provision for participant access, transfer and progression in the context of the National Qualifications Framework.

8.12.1 Subject Outline

For new and existing programmes, the instructor must provide the Programme Coordinator with an updated outline of the programme for each year.

8.12.2 Assessment and Examination procedures

LOC has established procedures for the assessment of learners which are fair and consistent and comply with standards determined by certifying bodies e.g. PHECC and QQI. In this regard, LOC is cognisant of the following principles, guidelines and sectoral conventions set out by **QQI Assessment and Standards, Revised 2013**.

8.12.3 Policies and Procedures – Participant Rights and Responsibilities Guidelines

To ensure that a good standard and positive culture of learning is maintained, LOC clearly communicates a set of procedures to protect all concerned from possible misunderstandings regarding their rights and responsibilities within the Company.

These Rights and Responsibilities include such areas as:

- General code of conduct
- Examination regulations
- Attendance requirements
- Review, Re-checks and Appeals procedures
- Disciplinary and Complaints procedures

8.12.4 Examination Arrangements

All examinations leading to accredited awards are subject to the Sectoral Conventions and protocols as set out by PHECC.

8.12.5 Assessment Arrangements

All accredited programmes in LOC are assessed by a combination of continuous assessment and final 'closed book' examinations.

8.12.6 Internal Marking Standards

In order to ensure that there is consistency amongst staff in the marking of assignments all staff are requested to use the Marking Guidelines set by the relevant certification bodies. These guidelines aim to harmonise the approach to marking by agreeing basic principles for awarding different marks and indicating the type of feedback that may be

appropriate as set out by PHECC. The guidelines are also furnished to learners at the beginning of each programme as a learning tool to enable them to appreciate the marking requirements of the instructors and to better understand written comments on their papers.

8.12.7 Appointment of External Examiners

External Examining is an essential part of the LOC QA process and an important means of ensuring public confidence in its academic qualifications. It will be the responsibility of LOC, with the approval of relevant certification bodies such as PHECC, IOSH and QQI etc, to appoint and manage External Examiners directly. External Examiners are generally drawn from other Higher Education institutions offering similar programmes or other instructors and professionals with experience in the area of development. When a new External Examiner is required by LOC, a shortlist of candidates is drawn up. An informal approach is then made to a suitable candidate. On their agreement they are emailed specifications and details of the relevant programme and current rate of remuneration, which both parties must agree. LOC ensures that External Examiners are fully familiar with LOC's mission and ethos, the relevant programme learning outcomes, programme schedules, and programme assessment strategies (which include the marking system and how awards are classified). An annual External Examiners fee is paid to each examiner on receipt of the External Examiners Report. External Examiners Reports are an important part of the Monitoring and Evaluation procedures within LOC (see point 8.12.8 below).

8.12.8 Role and Responsibilities of External Examiners

- External Examiners review Programme Assessment Strategies and individual programme outlines to ensure that the content, learning outcomes and proposed assessment methods are consistent and relevant.
- External Examiners review all summative programme assignment and exam papers before they are finalised, checking that they are of a standard appropriate to the learning outcomes of the programme, and the overall programme.
- External Examiners are required to ensure that each candidate's overall performance in the programme as a whole is properly and fairly assessed.
- External Examiners review a representative sample of examination material presented by the candidates.
- When visiting an institution, the duties of the External Examiners are as follows;-
 - To review borderline cases and, if necessary, interview such candidates.
 - To reach agreement with the respective Internal Examiner(s) on the proposed final marks.
- External Examiners are required to submit to LOC, a report on the academic quality of the examinations reviewed and the comparability of standards to other such institutions. A copy of this report is subsequently available to all relevant certification bodies.

It should be noted that in determining the above policy and procedures in regard to External Examining, LOC is cognisant of the consultation document issued by **HETAC in 2009, entitled Effective Practice Guidelines for External Examining.**

8.12.9 Remediation

Errors by participants are noted and recorded. An opportunity to analyse errors by course participants also enhances learning, e.g. at exactly what point an error occurred. The trainer identifies the precise area where the participant either made an error or can improve their level of competence in the specific skill.

Through error analysis, the participant is encouraged to undertake the skill once again and correct the error. Error analysis involves observing the participant's level of skill performance in a safe environment.

Error analysis helps the participant develop logical and sequential steps while undertaking the skill in a safe environment.

Each new learning skill builds on the previous learning and these are intertwined in enhancing learning to a higher level.

Learning is achieved by breaking down the overall task into simple sub-skills to proficiency level until the participant is proficient with the overall task which comprises the combination of skills.

9.0 Monitoring and Evaluation

9.1 Procedure and Guidelines for Programme Monitoring

Ongoing monitoring of programmes is essential to ensure that quality and standards are being maintained.

LOC monitors the success of its programmes:

- To ensure that programmes remain current and valid in the light of developing knowledge in the discipline and practice of its application.
- To evaluate the extent to which intended outcomes/objectives are being attained by learners.
- To evaluate the appropriateness of the curriculum and assessment in relation to the outcomes/objectives.

9.2 Examination Statistics

Examination statistics may be gathered, where applicable, each year for inclusion in the LOC Annual Report. Statistics are analysed to monitor overall learner performance and make comparisons with previous year's intakes.

9.3 Learner Evaluation of Programmes

Upon completion of the programme, the Instructor provides a written Learner Evaluation Questionnaire to offer learners the opportunity to supply written feedback on programme content, programme delivery, curriculum, any ideas for improvement, facilities etc.

The findings of the evaluations are fed back to the relevant instructors and other staff and further discussed by Directors. The information gleaned from this process is fundamental to enhancement of the programme curricula, the improvement of programme delivery and the maintenance of a coherent programme.

9.4 External Examiners' Reports

Copies of external examiners' reports are maintained by LOC. External Examiners' Reports are also discussed at the AGM meeting in May of each year and action points identified. The information from External Examiners' Reports is fundamental to ensuring that the quality of the assessment and examination procedures within LOC are maintained and that academic standards are comparable to other similar type institutions.

9.5 Procedures and Guidelines for Programme Evaluation

Periodic formal evaluation is an important means of ensuring among other things; that (a) quality improvements are made to programmes and (b) programmes remain relevant to participant needs. Periodic formal evaluation contributes to the development of a quality culture in which all learners are aware of their respective roles and that actions are taken to address observed weaknesses in programmes. LOC has the following procedures in place for the above purposes.

9.6 Internal Evaluation

LOC's internal evaluation takes place through the following processes:

- A Periodic Programme Evaluation.
- Annual General Meeting.

9.7 Annual Report

The Annual Report includes an assessment of:

- Academic programmes recently concluded, including a breakdown of participant numbers and examination results.
- Any adjustments or innovations to the programme content since the previous report, including content deemed mandatory by the relevant certification bodies such as PHECC, IOSH and QQI or the introduction of new Regulations transposed from EU Directives.
- Changes to personnel – both academic and support staff.
- Proposed changes to the forthcoming programme in terms of personnel, curriculum and use of facilities.
- Details of all other activities undertaken by LOC staff during the year, especially those directly relevant to the goals of the Strategic Plan.

9.8 Periodic Programme Evaluation

This is conducted once every four to five years for the purposes of internal evaluation of the programmes offered by LOC.

This internal phase of the periodic evaluation consists of a self-study undertaken by all instructors involved in the programme and others with close involvement in the programme. This includes those involved in the provision of support services, such as the library. LOC staff not directly involved in programme delivery may also participate in the self-evaluation. Consultations with outside stakeholders, market research as appropriate, and a review of research findings in the relevant discipline form part of the self-study. Self-evaluation includes an assessment of the learning and an evaluation of the services related to the learning. This self-evaluation culminates in an Internal Evaluation Report, setting out the findings of the internal evaluation, including an evaluation of the programmes strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats.

9.9 Annual General Meeting

The Annual General Meeting of LOC takes place in May of each year. The purpose of such meetings includes:

- To review completed programmes conducted by LOC and to assess the contributions of various staff members.
- To share with all staff any general plans regarding the overall delivery of programmes.

- To clarify any changes to curriculum, examination or assessment procedures with regard to the accreditation authorities.
- To gather ideas and suggestions regarding improvements to the programme.

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9.10 External Evaluation

The external evaluation element is a process of co-operation, consultation and advice between the independent experts from outside and the relevant internal stakeholders. LOC uses the following procedures for external evaluation:

- Learner Evaluation Reports
- External Examiner Reports

9.11 Managing and Implementing Change

LOC has a formal procedure for considering and acting upon the findings of the internal evaluation and the external evaluation, together with a formal procedure for monitoring the implementation of the changes adopted as a result of the findings.

Programme monitoring is undertaken by the Directors of LOC, principally through monthly meetings. In addition, feedback is sought from the instructors through regular meetings.

An internal programme review is held after the AGM in May, at which the staff are provided with a summary of the evaluation findings. Suggestions for change and improvement are discussed, along with programme planning for the forthcoming academic year.

POLICY HISTORY			
Version number	Date from	Date to	Signature
1	01 May 2014	30 April 2015	

2	01 May 2015	30 April 2016	<i>Séan Logue</i>
3	01 May 2016	30 April 2017	<i>Séan Logue</i>
4	07 March 2017	06 March 2018	<i>Séan Logue</i>
5	01 February 2019	29 February 2020	<i>Séan Logue</i>
6	01 March 2020	31 October 2020	<i>Séan Logue</i>
7	01 November 2020	31 October 2023	<i>Séan Logue</i>
8	21 July 2022	20 July 2025	<i>Séan Logue</i>