

**Quality Assurance Policy**

**City College Limited**

69 Steward Street

Birmingham

B18 7AF

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| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Title | Quality Assurance Policy | Department | Quality |
| Location | Sharepoint | Author | SS |
| Approved by SLT | Yes | Date | 5th of October 2020 |
| Last Review | January 2021 | Next Review | January 2022 |
| Version | Author | Issue date | Summery |
| V.1 | SS | January 2015 | First draft |
| V.2 | SS | January 2018 | Review |
| V.3 | PWA | May 2020 | Review |
| V.4 | PWA | January 2021 | Review |

**Key Person(s)**

**Managing Director**

**Associate Director for Quality and Partnerships**

**Higher Education Manager**

# Quality Assurance Policy

**Policy Statement**

City College strives to deliver the highest standard of teaching learning and assessment to each of its students. To achieve this, the College recognises the need for continual review and improved across all its systems and processes.

The overall aim of this policy is to promote, monitor and enhance the development of the teaching, learning and assessment throughout the College and with our stakeholders and partner organisations. We aim to continually raise levels of student enjoyment, engagement and achievement, and encouraging the drive towards outstanding teaching, learning and assessment throughout the College.

City College works with a number of stakeholders and partner organisations. Where students are enrolled with an external partner organisation, that partner organisation quality assurance policy will apply to that student journey, in terms of how their work is assessed and assured, complaints, grievances, applications for extensions and appeals.

# Quality of Teaching and Learning

City College recognises that hardworking and experienced academic staff members are one of our strongest assets and every effort will be made to recruit and retain high quality lecturers and further develop their teaching and assessment practice and professional specialist knowledge.

As part of the development of lecturers, the College will use three forms of observation.

* Developmental Observations – A planned observation of teaching and learning with written feedback provided.
* Themed Observations – Planned observations, between 5 and 20 minutes long, examining a College wide theme for example, Equality and Diversity or Questioning Techniques with verbal feedback provided.
* Walk Throughs – Unplanned, informal observations of around 10 minutes to assess student engagement.

All observations will be carried out in the spirt of continual professional development. The outcome of all observations of teaching, learning and assessment should be evaluated by the Programme Leads. All information is made available to Programme Leads to submit a report on the quality of teaching learning and assessment within their programmes. An update of this report is shared at each Programme Management Board

During the interview process, potential new lecturers are required to demonstrate their subject knowledge and teaching skills by way of presentation and carrying out a demonstration of teaching, learning and assessment skills in front of an interview panel or a panel of students.

New lecturers must receive a Developmental Observation in class during teaching hours at least once a month for their first three months of employment; Developmental Observations would usually be undertaken by the Programme Leader who will ultimately decide whether the lecturer is successful at the end of their probation period. Should the Programme Leader not be available, an alternative observer will be appointed from either the Senior Leadership Team or the Quality Team.

Written observation feedback from this process must then be shared and discussed with the lecturer in a one-to-one meeting within 5 working days of the observation. This allows the observer the opportunity to highlight good practice and for the lecturer to improve on any identified areas for development. Observation notes, and related targets must be added into the lecturer’s staff file, all notes are reviewed in subsequent meetings and at the time of appraisal.

Failure to improve on areas of concern that are highlighted during one-to-one meetings should lead to a first written warning. Continuous failure should lead to a second and final written warning. If after this there are still no signs of improvement, the lecturer’s appointment should be terminated for poor performance and failure to improve.

Lecturers who have completed their probationary period must receive a Developmental Observation at least once every year, this will continue to form part of the lecturer’s ongoing evaluation and professional development. Themed observations and walk throughs will continue in line with the College Quality Calendar. In the right environment, the quality of each staff member’s performance will improve over the time they spend with the College. The staff training programme aims to facilitate the achievement of institutional goals and to help staff achieve their personal goals.

City College academic staff are required to evidence appropriate initial academic or professional qualifications for their subject area(s) and sustain expertise in accordance with descriptor two of the UK Professional Standards Framework (UKPSF). Academic staff who do not hold a professional teaching qualification equivalent to a Postgraduate Certificate in Higher Education (PGCHE, sometimes also called the Postgraduate Certificate in Teaching in Higher Education, Postgraduate Certificate in Teaching and Learning in Higher Education, or Postgraduate Certificate in Academic Practice.) must attain Fellowship Status with the HEA within six months of commencing their employment.

## Staff Training and Development

All new staff must undergo a period of induction which should allow the new staff member to get familiar with the College and have the opportunity to meet all the current staff.

* The Higher Education Manager is responsible for the training of the Academic staff.
* The Director of Operations is responsible for the training of the administrative staff.
* The Managing Director is responsible for the training of Senior Management.

All staff are expected to complete and record at least 30 hours of continual professional development each academic year. The College will plan activities from time to time such as;

* Standardisation meetings
* Observations
* Formal training opportunities
* Certificated programmes

In addition to the opportunities the College provides, all staff are encouraged to pursue their own activities, ensuring they keep up with industry standards and expectations and develop as professionals. The City College Record of Development (appendix A) should be used to record all activity; it is the duty of the staff member to record the session in the log. During appraisal meetings, staff should be are asked to analyse their own professional development with reference to any activity undertaken. The personal City College Record of Development of all staff are also used to evaluate the staff training programme.

All academic staff are expected to maintain a record of development to provide assurance of learning. As a minimum, all academic staff must complete at least 30 hours of development or scholarly activity each year which has the potential to either:

* Create or affirm knowledge and/or expertise of the staff member’s subject or discipline.
* Develop or enhance understanding of a subject or discipline.
* Develop or enhance pedagogy for teaching, learning or assessment.

For any activity to be classed as ‘scholarly’, it must be shared with peers, disseminated across the institution or beyond to enhance the student experience. Scholarly activities may include but are not limited to;

* Conference papers/presentations
* Funding bids
* Disseminating research finding
* Consulting work
* Working with a business organisation (other than as a consultant)
* Maintenance of teaching certifications (i.e. HEA Fellowship)
* Attending professional workshops/seminars
* Maintenance of professional certifications
* Article(s) published in professionally oriented publication

All City College Records of Development are to be shared with the staff member’s line manager and the Associate Director for Quality and Partnerships.

## Student Voice

Student involvement is critical to the success of the quality assurance and quality improvement process. Student involvement could be in the form of verbal or written feedback, formal student surveys, or consultations with staff or stakeholders.

Information about each programme (i.e. awarding body, programme structure, syllabus, entry requirements, duration, assessment criteria etc.) is made available to students and prospective students via various mediums including; the College website, the student handbook and the pre-enrolment interview. Student views and feedback may be used to enhance and improve this documentation. Any student views used will be anonymised.

Students are asked to evaluate all resources provided for them and the quality of their programmes at key points during the academic cycle. This feedback is analysed by the Associate Director for Quality and Partnerships, and a copy shared with the Senior Leadership Team at the earliest opportunity for review. The Higher Education Manager is expected to take the initiative in improving the quality of written material with the support of the Quality Team, using their professional skills and experience. An overall assessment of student voice activities and any developments undertaken are reported during the next nearest Programme Management Board by the Programme Lead.

Programme work and summative assessment results are monitored according to external standards. A yearly review of this data, and termly reviews of assessment test results, helps the College to develop future strategies for raising achievement.

Each student group has at least two student representatives. Student representatives can discuss student concerns with the academic input provided by the College during either the terms Student Representative meetings, Programme Management Boards, the Oversight Committee or the Annual Student Representative Committee Meeting.

At the end of their year, the Student Representatives are presented with a summary of actions taken by the College in response to student feedback. The Student Representatives then prepare their annual report which assesses the functionality of the feedback system, together with recommendations for improvement. The annual report of the outgoing Student Representatives is presented to their successors at the beginning of the following year.

## Additional Learning Support

The College provides additional support to students whose English language and Maths skills require improvement and to those students with weaker IT skills or who have identified specific learning difficulties or disabilities. The Student Support Workers (SSW) will also help students who need academic help in completion of their work.

Academic certificates or statements of additional learning needs will usually determine whether a student requires learning support, although the assessment of the students’ abilities is also determined at the interview stage, through the assessment test and students are actively encouraged to self-disclose any additional learning needs. Lecturers are encouraged to make continuous, informal assessments as the programme progresses and are expected to provide a diverse range of learning support resources.

Students receiving learning support are expected to evaluate their support classes via the plethora of Student Voice opportunities they are also asked to evaluate the effectiveness of the programme as a strategy for raising achievement.

## Monitoring Student Progress

In addition to continuous, diagnostic assessment of students through the observation and student voice processes, the College timetables tutorial sessions and formative assessments in order to track the progress of students. The responsibility for recording and tracking of students is ultimately that of the Higher Education Manager supported by the Programme Leads, Lecturers and SSWs. Tracking of all students is reported by the Higher Education Manager to the Senior Leadership Team (SLT).

Underperforming students will meet with the lecturer or the relevant Programme Leader for a progress meeting. Meetings examine progress using the results from formative assessment activities and then set and review targets by means of personal action plans. These action plans are noted in the student’s file. Student monitoring and progress is reported to the SLT.

Students are encouraged to meet their targets, and their progress in this respect forms the basis of review and discussion at their next progress meeting. The implications of not meeting targets should be made clear to each student. This could include non-progression and academic failure. Both targets and the implications of not meeting targets will be provided, in writing for each student.

**Assessment Strategy**

The purpose of any assessment must be to enable students to demonstrate their ability to meet an intended learning outcome, unit or programme and that they have achieved the required standards. All learning outcomes must be assessed at least once and no more than twice. Each unit descriptor clearly indicates the number and type of assessment components expected within a given assignment brief.

Devising summative assessment assignment briefs is the responsibility of the unit assessor supported by the Programme Lead. Programme Leads may develop assignment briefs themselves, in turn supported by the Higher Education Manager. When devising all summative and formative assessments, assessors should take into consideration the following.

* Formative and summative assessments must take into consideration the diversity of the student groups and effectively reflect and represent that diversity.
* Formative assessment will not replicate any summative activity.
* The sequence of assessments will be methodical and support the programme pedagogy.
* Teaching and learning will support the process of assessment.
* Summative assessment will be rigorous but will not overburden the student with activity outside of the programme outcomes.

Within all assessments, students will be expected to demonstrate an ability in written communication appropriate to higher education. Assessments which require skills such as critical evaluation, reflective practice, synthesis and analysis should be given consideration ensuring assessments are not lengthy.

The needs of disabled students should be anticipated when all assessment activities and assignment briefs are being designed. Considerations to students with disabilities and learning difficulties will be considered along with any other protected characteristic. Efforts will be made to vary the assessment methods as appropriate, bearing in mind the intended learning outcomes and the need to assess each student on equal terms without disadvantaging any students. If an alternative assessment method is required that only applies to students with a disability or learning difficulty, the variation must be approved by the internal verifier.

As a part of the assessment strategy the Higher Education Manager will create an annual assessment schedule. All assessment submission dates will be scheduled to allow for marking, internal verification and the collation of results to take place prior to the Assessment Board (see below). Schedules will also allow teams to plan assessment requirements using information from the student voice and representatives to schedule student workload and deadline bunching. The assessment schedule will be published within the Programme Handbook and the Programme Specification. During the academic year, unforeseen events can alter the original scheduling of the assessments. Should this occur, changes to the schedule are effectively communicated to students.

City College is dedicated to assuring the standards of assessment for each programme delivered are consistent, transparent and in accordance with the requirements of the awarding bodies. Work being assessed must serve the stated Learning Outcomes of the programmes offered and facilitate the student to achieve the stated qualification. The ensure this, the College maintains an Internal Verification Policy. Internal verification is a process undertaken to ensure that:

* An appropriately structured sample of assessor work from all programmes, sites and teams is verified.
* Assessment and grading are consistent and fair across the programme.
* Assessment instruments (assignments) are fit for purpose - i.e. they enable the student to produce evidence which meets the grading criteria.
* Assessment decisions accurately judge student work (evidence) against the unit Assessment Criteria.
* Feedback provided supports the development of each student.
* Ensure that all centre assessment instruments are verified as fit for purpose.

Assessment feedback and provisional grades will be returned to students within a maximum of 20 working days from the hand-in date. If in exceptional cases this cannot be achieved, changes to the schedule are effectively communicated to students by the Higher Education Manager.

**Extenuating Circumstances**

Students who submit assessments up to 14 days after the set deadline, without formal approval through the extension and deferral process as outlined in the Extenuating Circumstances Policy, will be capped at pass. If an assessment is submitted beyond 14 days without formal approval through the extension and deferral process described in the Extenuating Circumstances Policy, the work will receive a mark of No Submission (NS)

Assessment components submitted by the deadline that do not achieve pass threshold or assessment components not submitted at all, will be subject to Reassessment Opportunity by the Assessment Board (see below) which will decide whether:

* Coursework will be accepted in a revised form capped at pass.
* A new assignment brief with no cap will be set with a deadline prior to subsequent Assessment Board.
* A request for unit resit with/or without attendance is made without a cap.
* An application to apply compensation is made.

Any student has the right to draw to the attention of the College any personal extenuating circumstances which impair their ability to undertake an assessment, and request either an extension (short term) or deferral (longer term) of the assessment. Requests for extension or deferral on grounds of extenuating circumstances may only be made using the procedure described in the Extenuating Circumstances Policy. No request for extension of deferral shall be considered after the deadline for submission or examination date has passed unless there are valid and exceptional reasons (such as physical incapacity due to a serious accident).

**Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL)**

RPL is an assessment process that enables achievement through the recognition of prior competence using a range of strategies to validate evidence. This means that it may be possible for students to submit evidence of prior achievement (i.e. from previous higher education or training programme) to be used to accredit part of a unit, or a complete unit. Evidence submitted for RPL must be:

Authentic - Evidence must reflect the student experience or activities

* Current – The student must be able to demonstrate recent evidence of competence supported by knowledge and understanding.
* Valid - Evidence must match the Awarding Body criteria at the correct level for the qualification required.
* Sufficient – The amount of evidence must be sufficient to demonstrate competence on more than one occasion and in a variety of techniques and skills.

An application for RPL follows the below three step process of enquiry, application and decision.

Enquiry

A student enquires about RPL and is provided with advice and guidance from the Programme Lead before choosing to submit evidence of RPL. The Programme Lead should ensure students understand the evidential requirements, timescales and appeals process as well as what opportunities for learning they may not be taking part in.

Application

The student prepares their claim in writing, submitting the appropriate evidence and a portfolio, if appropriate. Evidence may include outline unit content from previous units studied and copies of previous transcripts, award certificates and Higher Education Achievement Reports. In some cases a meeting with the student may be required to explore their claim before a decision can be reached.

Decision

The claim is considered by the Higher Education Manager and the relevant Programme lead. Decisions will be based on consideration of the unit learning outcomes and the ability to cross reference those outcomes with the evidence supplied. Students will be informed of the decision in a timely manner so as not to compromise the student’s ability to complete the assignment brief should the evidence not be accepted.

Appeals

Students have the right to appeal any decision made within City College. Students wishing to appeal a decision relating to RPL should refer to the City College Appeals Policy and Procedure

**External Examination**

In addition to City College’s quality checks an External Examiner (EE) is appointed by Pearson to assess standards achieved by students and examine the management of the programme ensuring it meets comparable levels nationally. The College cannot make any awards without an EE participating in the assessment process. Their role is to ensure College awards are comparable in standard to awards granted by Universities and other Colleges. They confirm that awards comply with national threshold standards in subjects and check that the assessment system is fair.

The College will invite an EE to each Assessment Board, EEs are not obliged to attend. After assessment results, have been agreed at an Assessment Board, EEs are required to submit a written report, which is then sent to the College and is available for students to view on the Virtual Learning Environment (VLE). Each report will cover key areas including comments about the academic standards and student performance, delivery and support and unit assessment. The purpose of the report is to assure that programmes are of an appropriate standard and to offer guidance to programme teams on any changes to the programme including any future developments.

EE reports are discussed at the relevant SLT meeting and the termly Programme Management Board. It is the responsibility of the board to consider any good practices, any issues raised and to determine an appropriate course of action. Student representatives who are members of a Programme Management Board will see the reports and will be able to participate in the discussions. Programme Leads will also use the report as an important part of the quality improvement process during their one to one Programme Lead meetings with the Higher Education Manager.

**Assessment Boards**

All City College programmes will have at least two Assessment Boards in each academic year, to:

* To maintain oversight of the accuracy of reporting academic achievement and ensure that arrangements for assessment are rigorous, consistent, and fair.
* To reach conclusions relating to student progress and advise on cases where students fail to either progress or achieve certification.
* To ensure data accuracy
* To consider and advise on cases where students fail to either progress or achieve certification.
* To monitor the implementation of action planning for at risk students
* To record any good practices which had positive impact on teaching, learning and student success.

Assessment Boards shall be responsible for determining the outcome of all assessments that contribute to the granting of an award. The oversight and management of Assessment Boards is the responsibility of the Associate Director for Quality and Partnerships. Prior to all Assessment Boards, the Programme Lead should complete the Programme Team Report (Appendix B)

All unit staff involved in summative assessment should attend the Assessment Board. Where a valid reason prevents attendance all unit results should be signed off by unit staff and presented to the Programme Lead in good time and notification of apologies for absence to be recorded.

If any member of an Assessment Board is aware of any potential conflict of interest, for example being a relative or friend of a student under consideration, this must be declared and recorded in the minutes in accordance with the City College Conflict of Interest Policy. The person involved shall not take part in the Assessment Board.

To be awarded a Higher National Certificates, students must have completed 120 credits at Level 4 and achieved at least a Pass in 105 of those credits. Students may progress carrying forward a maximum of 30 credits.

To be awarded a Higher National Diploma, a student must have completed units equivalent to 120 credits at Level 5 and achieved at least a Pass in 105 of those credits. Plus, have completed 120 credits at Level 4 and achieved at least a Pass in 105 of those credits.

The Assessment Board has the authority to record ‘Apply Compensation’. Higher National Programmes allow students to be awarded programme achievement if they have attempted but not achieved a Pass in one of 15 credit unit if they have completed and passed the remaining units. Any unit confirmed for Apply Compensation will appear as U grade on the student’s notification of performance that is issued with the certificate.

Once all grades have been agreed and recorded, a date should be set for a further Reassessment Board to consider the outcomes of referred work.

Students will be required to achieve the minimum Pass threshold on any reassessment and the subsequent grade will be capped at Pass. Normally, students will have a maximum of one reassessment opportunity to redeem initial failure in a unit. Students who fail to meet the Pass threshold criteria on their reassessment will be required to retake the complete unit and complete a new assignment brief, with or without attendance. Reassessment with attendance may require the student to pay additional fees.

**Academic Freedom**

City College strives to deliver the highest standard of teaching learning and assessment to each of its students. The College believes in the basic principle of freedom of speech as defined in Article 10 of the Human Rights Act 1998, protecting the rights of staff and students to hold their own opinions and to express them freely without interference providing those expressions do not compromise the safety of others. This includes the right to express views aloud through.

* Published articles, books or leaflets
* Television or radio broadcasting
* Works of art
* The internet and social media

All staff and students will be made aware that joining the City College community involves obligations and responsibilities which are consistent with common principles of freedom of speech and freedom of expression within the law. The College believes that both freedom of speech and expression within the law is an important principle to promote student curiosity. The College also recognises the need to ensure that staff and students have freedom, within the law, to question and test knowledge, and put forward new ideas that might be controversial or unpopular.

The College maintains an Academic Freedom Policy to promote, monitor and enhance equality of opportunity and inclusion throughout the College, with our stakeholders and partner organisations, raising levels of student enjoyment, engagement, achievement and enrichment. The Academic Freedom Policy aims are.

* To foster good relations between staff and students.
* To ensure staff and students have the opportunity to question and test received wisdom.
* To ensure staff and students are free to put forward new ideas and controversial or unpopular opinions without placing themselves in jeopardy of losing their jobs or privileges they may have within the College.

**Programme Management Boards**

The Programme Management Board (PMB) reports on the development, planning, design and implementation of the academic subject, sharing the outcomes with student representatives and SLT. The PMB is responsible for monitoring teaching, learning and assessment strategies, and quality assurance processes. It manages the relationships with relevant partner institutions, external examiners and students. The main aims of the PMB are to.

* To be responsible for the maintenance of the academic standards of awards and the quality of the student experience.
* To inform and consider the annual Self-Assessment Report and monitor progress in relation to the Quality Improvement Plan (QIP)
* To consider reports from partner organisations, stakeholders and External Examiners and develop programmes accordingly.
* To consider feedback from students including, Student Surveys, consultations, complaints, comments and complements
* To monitor the recruitment and admission of students
* To monitor students’ progress and achievement including any work placements

Each City College programme will have its own, termly PMB. Membership of the board will include all Programme delivery staff, student representatives and the Managing Director. Each PMB is chaired by the Associate Director for Quality and Partnerships. At least one week prior to PMB, the Programme Lead will submit a Programme Management Board Data Report (Appendix C)

**Related policies**

This policy needs to be read in conjunction with other policies including:

* Internal Verification Policy
* Safeguarding and Prevent Policy
* Academic Misconduct Policy and Procedure
* Staff Development Policy
* Health and Safety Policy
* Equality and Diversity Policy
* Whistleblowing Policy
* Complaints Procedure
* Appeals Procedure
* Governance Code
* Academic Freedom Policy

**Appendix** **A**



**City College Record of Development**

**Staff name**

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Date of activity** | **Provider** | **Hours undertaken** | **Title or brief description of activity** | **Impact of activity** |
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**Appendix B**



**Programme Team Report**

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Course title** | **Course code** | **Assessor** | **Programme Lead** | **Date** |
|  |  |  |  |  |

**The assessor should include all unit number. Students Unit Achievement should be clearly marked as either NS (no submission), RO (reassessment opportunity), P (pass), M (merit), D (distinction), C (apply compensation), APL (apply prior learning)**

**Student Outcome should be clearly marked as either A (award), P (progress), W (withdrawn), BL (break in learning), RO (reassessment opportunity), F (fail year), UC (claim unit credit)**

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| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Student number** | **Student name** | **Unit** | **Unit** | **Unit** | **Unit** | **Unit** |  | **Unit** | **Unit** | **Unit** | **Outcome** |
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| --- | --- | --- |
| Assessor | Signature | Date |
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| Programme Lead | Signature | Date |
|  |  |  |
| Higher Education Manager | Signature | Date |
|  |  |  |

**Appendix C**



**Programme Management Board Data Report**

**City College Limited**

69 Steward Street

Birmingham

B18 7AF

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Course title** | **Course code** | **Assessor** | **Programme Lead** | **Date** |
|  |  |  |  |  |
|  |  | **Student Support** | **Student Rep(s)** |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |

**Course data**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Group** | **Starts** | **Retention** | **Attendance** | **Expected Submission** | **Actual Submission** | **Predicted Success** |
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**Student Voice**

**Induction Survey Key Charts** (highest scores, areas for concern etc)

**End of Course Survey Key Charts** (highest scores, areas for concern and overall satisfaction)

**Key Findings from Student Consultations (dialogue)**

**Key Findings from Observations of TLA (dialogue)**