


Teaching and learning policy and principles		
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## Teaching and learning policy and principles

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**Revision History**

Revision	Date	Revision Description DCRT#	Originator
01b	23 March 2005	New Document	Diarmuid O'Callaghan
02	7 June 2005	Revisions based on recommendations at Academic Council meeting 4 May 2005 and subsequent input from Academic Council members	Diarmuid O'Callaghan
03	14 June 2005	Version approved by Academic Council 14 June 2005 and Governing Body 14 September 2005	Diarmuid O'Callaghan
04	1 August 2008	Title change of Director to President	Registrar

## **1. Purpose**

The purpose of this document is to outline Institute policy relating to teaching and learning and to document the essential principles underpinning delivery of high quality academic programmes at the Institute.

## **2. Scope**

This policy applies to all academic programmes offered at the Institute and is relevant to all staff, but in particular, academic staff.

## **3. Teaching and learning policy**

This policy states values, aspirations and aims relating to delivery of a high-quality student learning experience. It is the policy of the Institute to:

- Facilitate a high-quality learning experience for a diverse range of learners that will support lifelong learning and provide graduates with the knowledge and skills that they will require
- Create an environment in which learners can take responsibility for their own learning, and provide opportunities for active learning
- Encourage teaching and learning activities in keeping with the mission, vision and values of the Institute
- Value, support and recognise excellence in teaching by academic staff
- Facilitate learning by providing the academic support infrastructure and environment conducive to the provision of the highest standards in teaching and learning
- Encourage application of a diversity of teaching practices and methodologies to meet the needs of a wide range of students with a variety of abilities and competencies
- Provide a fair effective, transparent and consistent assessment of learners, as required to support the mission of the Institute
- Encourage transparency for academic processes and standards through publication of academic policies, programme learning outcomes and output of programme review processes
- Encourage learner involvement in relevant Institute committees, feedback, review exercises and appeal procedures
- Encourage staff involvement in information exchange, review exercises, feedback and communication with other staff and learners
- Facilitate evaluation of prior experiential learning as part of the admissions process
- Support access, transfer and progression opportunities for learners, to facilitate educational opportunity

#### **4. Teaching and learning principles**

The following principles underpin the teaching and learning policy:

1. Teaching that fosters active and reflective student learning is a core scholarly activity of the Institute
2. Teaching includes a variety of activities such as:
  - Lecture, laboratory, tutorial and field work and other instructional practices, including case-based learning, project-based learning, collaborative and co-operative learning, discovery learning and problem-based learning
  - The use of research activity to inform and enrich teaching and learning
  - The specification of appropriate learning outcomes, syllabi, and assessment strategies
  - The provision of timely and appropriate feedback
3. An ability to teach effectively is a prerequisite for academic employment at the Institute. The Institute is committed to provide support to staff in order to develop their expertise in teaching and learning.
4. Teaching and learning shall be informed by cultural inclusiveness and tolerance of diversity. The Institute will take into account all aspects of equality and learning inclusiveness especially learners with special needs and disabilities.
5. The importance attached to teaching and learning is demonstrated in Institute policy related to appointments, quality assurance processes and promotion policy.
6. Academic support services are an important part of the delivery process for teaching and learning and will provide appropriate and effective supportive learning environments to meet the needs of academic staff and students.

#### **5. Operational targets**

To help ensure success in the achievement of teaching and learning principles, the Institute is committed to:

##### Issues relevant to staff

- Recruit, develop and promote staff who, as a consequence of undertaking teaching at the highest level, are particularly effective in disseminating knowledge
- Encourage staff to play an increasingly active role in developing innovations in their teaching
- Create an infrastructure and environment conducive to the highest standards of teaching and learning and to develop the highest level of quality in teaching
- Recognise excellence in teaching

Issues relevant to students

- Take a student-centred approach to teaching and learning
- Develop independent learning and transferable skills in students, with the student taking responsibility for their own learning
- Recruit and retain students with a capacity to succeed from a wide variety of backgrounds
- Strive to remove unnecessary barriers to learning
- Encourage students to become competent learners so they are equipped to undertake lifelong learning and personal development
- Encourage seeking and consideration of feedback from students

**6. Implementation**

The following actions will underpin the achievement of the teaching and learning principles:

Responsibilities of the Institute:

- The Registrar will have an Institute-wide responsibility for academic affairs including teaching and learning functions, through the Institute's statutory Academic Council.
- The President will have responsibility for the integration of the principles into the appointment, probation, promotion, award policies and practices within the Institute, and establishment of standards and criteria against which teaching can be evaluated
- The Registrar will assist in the co-ordination of all support services and units related to teaching and learning in the Institute
- The Institute, through Heads of School and Head of Development will foster and develop the reputation for research and scholarship in undergraduate and postgraduate teaching and learning
- The Institute through relevant Heads of School and Heads of Department will promote the "lifelong learning" perspective in all teaching and learning activity by incorporating induction and mentoring programmes for staff
- The Institute will strengthen the support base for teaching and learning by ensuring the adequate supply of resources to support services relating to teaching.
- The Institute through relevant Heads of School and Heads of Department will encourage the development of communication structures between the support services and academic Departments and Schools
- The Institute through relevant Heads of School and Heads of Department will make appropriate provision to assist staff and students with special needs in their teaching and learning
- As far as resources permit, the Institute through the Access office will support students who have financial difficulties, which prevent them from learning effectively.

- The Institute through relevant Heads of School and Heads of Department will support quality enhancement through robust review and feedback, reflection and corrective actions

Responsibilities of the academic Departments:

- To systematically review all aspects of course design, delivery and assessment to agreed timeframe
- To formulate, agree and disseminate appropriate learning outcomes for courses
- To maintain the consistency between published course outlines and course delivery, explicit planned outcomes, and assessment and to systematically review and renew course design and all related aspects
- To identify staff training and development needs through participation in the Institute performance management and development system (PMDS) for staff
- To monitor academic standards of delivery
- To facilitate rotation of academic teaching load between staff as and when appropriate
- To support research and development in teaching and learning as an academic study
- To consider issues concerning teaching and learning at appropriate staff meetings
- To support staff in the development of approaches to teaching and course design, and the integration of teaching, learning and assessment through such activities as:
  - staff seminars
  - peer review and collaboration
  - staff mentoring schemes (where appropriate)
- To allocate teaching responsibilities in a timely manner, which reflect where possible the research activities of staff
- To work with support services to create effective learning environments.
- To demonstrate a high level of enthusiasm for teaching and learning and to transmit to students knowledge derived from research and scholarship
- To maintain communication and presentation skills of the highest order and to support students through adequate feedback
- To apply creativity and innovation to the organisation of teaching and learning activities in line with advances in pedagogy and educational technology and to adopt approaches which encourage active learning by the student
- To deliver fair, effective and consistent assessment of learners
- To engage in self-evaluation including peer review and evaluation and to encourage pro-active student involvement in this process

- To liaise with support services
- To communicate as appropriate with other stakeholders involved in course delivery, including support services and tutor demonstrators, if relevant
- To encourage student-staff communication within an academic context

Responsibilities of individual academic staff

- To be aware of, and maintain, professional relationships, behaviours and boundaries with colleagues and students
- To maintain professional standards and academic excellence consistent with the mission of the Institute
- To maintain personal professional expertise, skills and links, through professional development, including engagement with research activities and fostering of innovation, as appropriate
- To ensure professional standard of delivery of coursework in accordance with published timetables
- To maintain confidentiality as appropriate, particularly relating to examinations and personal knowledge gained about students as part of professional engagements
- To engage with extra-curricular activities consistent with the mission of the Institute, particularly for course development, professional research and development, and contribution to strategic objectives of the Institute
- To develop new expertise relating to course delivery consistent with National and International developments as appropriate

Responsibilities of individual students

- To recognise that, with the support of staff, they must become responsible for their own learning
- To fulfill all requirements, including attendance and assessment, for courses undertaken
- To accept the role of active participant in the teaching and learning process
- To avail of opportunities offered by the Institute to develop study and transferable skills
- To participate in, and support, exercises designed to evaluate course effectiveness
- To observe the student charter and other relevant regulations as published.
- To develop both course-related and transferable skills, including:
  - o Active learning, creativity and imagination
  - o Self-assessment
  - o Self-directed learning and information literacy

- Problem-solving and decision-making
- Critical thinking and analytic ability
- Writing skills, oral delivery, numeracy, ICT and second languages
- Teamwork
- Planning and project management

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