



Policy Area 2: Effective Learning

Revised July 2017

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Learning and Teaching Policy

Introduction

This Policy provides a framework to support the development of the Curriculum, and within it the provision of effective learning and teaching. It details the nature and scope of the educational experiences and opportunities provided by Grafton College.

Learning in a College Context

A major priority has been to continue to raise the profile of the College in the local community by offering academic Business courses to school leavers and others with appropriate work experience. We also offer business training solutions to local employers. We are working on a range of initiatives to increase the number of enrolments from Europe and the local community.

Policy Aims

This Policy sets out the principles, aims and procedures for delivering the Curriculum. This is derived from the College strategy and vision focused on the provision of high quality learning and teaching. It reflects the College commitment to meet the expectations, needs and aspirations of each and every student. Our Curriculum is focused to offer a balanced range of business focused Modules, where outcomes are determined by the achievement of learning outcomes.

The Policy provides a framework for both academic and administrative staff, and covers the formal and informal learning opportunities provided for Grafton College students.

QAA and the UK Quality Code Context

In the provision of learning and in all other related areas the College is guided by the UK Quality Code. This specific Policy relates to a number of key sections of the Quality Code, each of which has its specific expectations.

Strategic Approaches

The Learning and Teaching Policy contributes to the achievement of the strategic objectives of the College, and at the same time provides guidelines in establishing effective operational practices in its implementation.

Policy objectives and Grafton College objectives

Curriculum planning is a strategic process that involves a review and evaluation of the current Curriculum, and within that a process to identify opportunities for enhancement. The Curriculum leaders' develop a vision of the future Curriculum. This will involve an evaluation of existing strengths and weaknesses, justification for change and what needs to happen to achieve the objectives.

The critical factors include providing a qualification that meets student and sector demand, interests and needs across local, national and international markets.

- Enable students to progress to higher qualifications on the ladder of lifelong learning.
- Offers opportunities to school and College leavers, particularly those with vocational qualifications who wish to study full-time or part-time.
- Offers opportunities to change careers or return to work.
- Attract employees seeking to enhance their education and skills.
- Design courses that give students a range of study options and delivery modes
- Embeds the College equality and diversity Policy

The Curriculum planning schedule maps out the journey to show how the College will identify, prioritise and organise the Curriculum.

The key activities and documents are:

- Academic Calendar;
- Course planners;
- Course Timetables;
- Systems and Resources;
- Review and adapt quality and tracking systems.

Review staff resources and capabilities

- Review all learning resources and acquire new material;
- Communication and Course Development;
- Consultation and communication with principal teaching staff.

Allocate responsibilities in each subject area for designing schemes, including assessment and grading records/tools.

- Consultation and review of proposed schemes of work and remedial action planning;
- Induction programmes developed to meet the needs of the expected student groups/individuals.
- Identification of staff training needs and plans to address these needs.

Accreditations and Approvals

The Open University validating a three-year full-time degree programme. To offer from September 2017 an Honours Degree (BA) in Business and Management.

Grafton College is not linked with any other awarding organisation.

The environment: The Learning Experience

The College is committed to improving and enhancing the learning experience. The aims of the learning experience enhancement objectives include to:

- enhance opportunities for the personal development of each student, both within and outside the Curriculum, to support their progression into employment, further study or to enhance their potential for career progression;
- improve physical learning and virtual learning spaces to enhance the students' learning experience;
- enhance the excellence of teaching through continued professional development;
- enhance practice and provide new opportunities contributing to improving retention, progression and attainment of students.

The basis for effective learning and teaching

The College, like other Higher Education providers, utilises the QAA guidelines on effective learning. This is that 'effective learning occurs when students are enabled to:

- engage actively in learning, and participate fully in the learning opportunities that are presented to them;
- understand their learning environment, its culture and resources;
- embrace the aims and expectations of their chosen programme of study;
- demonstrate understanding of, and an ability to reflect upon, the ways in which their skills and knowledge are developing;
- recognise and value their existing knowledge and skills, and build upon them;
- make effective and responsible use of advice, guidance and feedback from formative and summative assessment that is provided during their programme of study;
- avail themselves of the opportunities to acquire and develop learning skills;
- understand sound academic practice and behave with integrity;
- contextualise and apply their developing knowledge and skills to their wider experience and plans for the future;
- work together in an informal environment as well as in formal learning sessions;
- act responsibly in planning their use of the resources available to support learning, including the effective use of their own time in independent study;
- give constructive feedback on their perception of the quality of their learning experience;
- engage in monitoring and influencing the curriculum;
- show commitment to attaining the academic standards that have been defined for their programme of study.

Small and Large Groups

The learning experience is focused on large group (55 learners) teaching during lectures and workshops, although a range of activities disaggregates the group during each session. Alternatively, learning is delivered in small groups as part of the study programme. Staff have received training (CPD) in working in both contexts.

The Open University degree will provide a mix of lectures (55 students) and tutorials (12-14 students) in each module. All students will typically have 3 contact hours per week in each semesterised module, over a 15 week period. 45 contact hours within a notional 200 hours per 20 credit module.

Training and ongoing support

Higher-level skills

Learners on all programmes are encouraged to develop the following skills during their programme of study:

- Cognitive skills of critical thinking, analysis and synthesis;
- Effective problem solving and decision making using appropriate quantitative and qualitative skills, including identifying, formulating and solving business problems;
- Effective communication, oral and in writing, using a range of media widely used in business;
- Preparation and presentation of business reports;
- Numeric and quantitative skills including data analysis, interpretation and extrapolation; the use of models of business problems and phenomena;
- Effective use of communication and information technology for business applications;
- Effective self-management in terms of time, planning and behaviour, motivation, self-starting;
- Individual initiative and enterprise;
- Developing an appropriate learning style;
- Self-awareness, openness and sensitivity to diversity in terms of people, cultures, business and management issues;
- Effective performance within a team environment including leadership, team-building;
- Influencing and project-management skills;
- Interpersonal skills of effective listening, negotiating, persuading and presentation;
- Abilities to conduct research into business and management issues.

Student engagement in learning: Student Feedback

Student feedback is collected through a range of quantitative and qualitative questionnaires for students to complete, as well as individual tutorials with their tutors. The feedback tools invite students to reflect on the positive aspects of their learning experience, as well as proposing recommendations for change and improvements.

Feedback on the current programmes is collected through the following methods.

- Induction programme feedback and evaluation;
- End of unit feedback and evaluation;
- End of course feedback and evaluation;
- Learner tutorial and review session;
- Student voice;
- Student interviews – course related and those carried out by the welfare department.

Analysis of Student Feedback

Student feedback on all programmes is collated and analysed providing a focus for discussion during the year, and used when planning for the new academic year. It is also used to monitor the quality of delivery at the end of each term.

Communicating feedback to Students Feedback responses are fed back to Students through the College's Notice Board, via course tutors and via the Moodle.

Facilitating development and achievement

The College continues to develop and organise a programme of enrichment and extracurricular activities to enhance the learning experience. The activities will vary from term to term. Activities may include:

- Fitness First Talk;
- The Student Voice;
- Be Safe talk by our community police officer;
- Motivational speakers;
- Students discounts for sports and leisure membership;
- Student discounts for theatre visit;
- Guest Talk by Universal Student Tours;
- Dedicated sessions for progression opportunities.

Welfare, Information, Advice and Guidance

The College prides itself on providing student with academic and non-academic support before, during and after their studies. The College offers educational guidance and welfare support to ensure students are 'comfortable' and able to fully focus on their academic studies during their time at Grafton College.

Welfare provision is embedded throughout the Curriculum and across the College. Advice and guidance is available on the following aspects of student life and the Recruitment and Welfare Manager (asif@graftoncollege.com - Recruitment Manager) and (m.touseef@graftoncollege.com - Welfare Manager) can be seen by appointment:

Personal Support

- Safety and security; banking;
- College and local facilities, services and events;
- Medical and dental treatment options and insurance;
- Progression opportunities; Student employment;
- Local places of worship;
- Licensing laws;
- Personal matters, including financial hardship, culture shock and homesickness.

Curriculum Support

Information advice and guidance is embedded throughout the learner journey, ensuring support for the individual, from entry into learning through to completion and progression into employment or further learning.

Learners receive a range of support through a combination of services and support activities:

- Comprehensive Induction programme prior to course delivery.
- Printed materials, such as, course handbooks and lecture notes.
- 24/7 access to the College website to submit email enquiries.
- Appointments with specialist staff, arranged outside the Curriculum timetable, wherever possible.
- Planned tutorial and review sessions
- Access to the Internal Verifier to discuss any concerns or issues.
- Access to a staffed learning resource centre and IT labs.
- Remote access to Grafton College Student learning portal – MOODLE
- Sign posting to other Institutions where needs cannot be met at Grafton College.
- Feedback and evaluation of own views on the quality of teaching and learning
- Published procedures and policies for special considerations and right of appeal
- Notice Boards populated with useful information displayed throughout the College
- Services explained during cross College induction session
- Academic study skills sessions designed to support achievement of the main aim qualification.

The learning environment

Library

The College has a highly specialised library. It is equipped with books, magazines and study material relevant to the courses offered. It also offers regularly updated course and self-study material, including audio material and books for examination preparation. Information material on progression and career options is available.

Modern IT Facilities

Students have access to state-of-the-art computer laboratories as well as a dedicated Internet browsing area. There are over 50 desktop computers for student use which all provide free high speed Internet access and up-to-date software required to support the Curriculum. All students also benefit from Wi-Fi hotspot zones, as well as black and white, colour and multifunction printers.

24/7 Online Learning Resource MOODLE

This facility allows students and staff to communicate outside the classroom. Assignments, study material, etc., can be uploaded to/downloaded from this online learning site. It also offers forum, database and wiki facilities. We have encouraged greater use of MOODLE across the Curriculum and plan further enhancements in the new academic year.

Retention and Progression Improvement

The objective of a year-on-year improvement in retention and progression rates can be achieved by appropriate course design, effective and efficient programme delivery, high quality formative and summative assessment, and regular programme review.

Academic Board End of Year Results Approval Process

Following the Curriculum Review Process the Academic Board will meet to discuss the success and achievement rates. The results approval process evaluates the College's performance and makes tactical decisions about operational matters:

- Analysis and approval of success and achievement data;
- Evaluation of end of year course reviews;
- Evaluation of final verification of assessment results;
- Review of the course offer and suitability for inclusion moving forward.

Course Design

The structure and content of all undergraduate programmes fit QAA approved Subject Benchmarks.

Course handbooks are designed with all programme details included. This includes programme structure; credit value; information about the awarding body; mandatory and optional Modules; key centre staff members involved in the delivery and management of resources at Grafton College.

The Module content is analysed and teaching material is prepared. The sequence and pattern of content delivery is planned and organised. Lesson plans and scheme of work are designed.

Assessment briefs of all Modules are prepared. The developed assessment briefs are verified by an experienced staff member (internal verifier) prior to external scrutiny. The sequencing and pattern of delivery of Modules are produced on a termly and yearly basis. Submission dates (both formative and summative) and submission procedures are planned.

Staff Development

Recruitment

The College supports professional standards in learning and teaching by ensuring that staff are appropriately qualified at appointment and through development opportunities that align with the College's strategic priorities. For academic posts, the College appoints those holding a master's degree in a relevant area. Additionally, the College has recruited staff with doctoral degrees. Some staff members are also working towards a doctoral degree which contributes in the provision of a quality learning experience to our students.

A number of staff have industrial and/or commercial experience. This allows them to bring a greater sense of reality to their teaching in the provision of case studies and/or real life illustrative examples.

New members of staff participate in the College Induction programme. The induction programme aims to integrate new staff into the organisation. It combines online support via Moodle and face-to-face sessions. Discussion during these sessions revolve around organisational background, College strategic developmental plans, course offered, student background summary, learning and teaching context, including consideration of the student learning environment. New members of academic staff are assigned a mentor who is a more experienced colleague and possesses appropriate knowledge and understanding of the vision and values of the College. The mentoring process continues for the duration of their first term, during which time they are welcome to seek clarification on any issue whenever needed.

Continuing Professional Development

The College enables staff to participate in a range of continuing professional development activities in order to enhance their knowledge, reflect upon and develop their practice, and contribute towards a fully inclusive institutional culture.

All the staff members at Grafton College are encouraged to take responsibility of their own continuous development. Grafton College deems it necessary for staff members to equip themselves with necessary skills and knowledge. The purpose is not only to enrich their current capabilities but also to prepare them for potential roles and responsibilities. Skills and knowledge acquired in this way is expected to contribute to the continued success of the organization.

There are formal and informal ways available to staff at the College to achieve the objectives. Formal ways include attending an organised training event or workshop, or working towards a formal qualification delivered by an external provider. Informal ways include peer-to-peer learning opportunities, engaging in discussions, attending meetings, etc.

The College maintains a Continuous Professional Development (CPD) log for the teaching staff when informed about the developmental activities they have undertaken.

The performance appraisal, class observation, peer observation, internal verifications of assessments, student feedback, self-initiated requests/self-identification of developmental need etc. are part of the mechanism which identifies the developmental needs of the staff.

A number of staff members have upgraded their skills by acquiring formal qualifications.

Evaluation

There are number of ways to evaluate the Curriculum planning activities and performance at Grafton College, such as programme reviews, class observations, and peer observations, internal verifications of the assessors and students feedback.

Monitoring, review and continuous improvement

Programme review will apply separately to all courses:

- Review of all subject programmes to ensure that they are current and valid in light of changes and development of national standards.
- Evaluate how the learning outcomes are being attained and suitability of delivery and assessment methods. Do these methods continue to be fit for purpose and effective?
- Analyse and take account of internal and external views of examiners and verifiers in programme reviews.
- Ensure student and staff views are evaluated and considered.
- Identify and disseminate good practice within and across subject areas and programmes.

All recommendations and actions are used to correct deficiencies and to improve the delivery of the programme.

The Module Review is a process that reflects on the delivery of teaching and learning of a specific unit/module. In doing this the programme team will:

- Review and evaluate student achievement and assessment instruments against the unit aim and learning outcomes.
- Take account of student performance, formative feedback and observations of the teaching and assessment staff.
- Review how the Unit meets the overall programme objectives and consider if, still suitable for inclusion in future programmes.
- Identify good practice in teaching and learning and disseminate in future review meetings.

Classroom Observation and Peer Observation

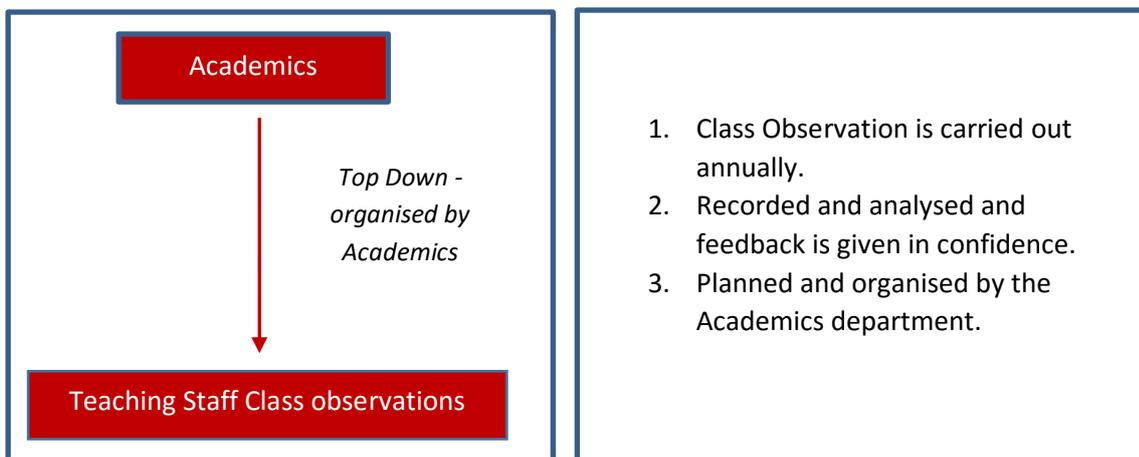
All teaching staff on all the programmes are observed in the classroom once in an academic year. The senior member of the academic management undertakes the observation activity, which is considered part of appraisal and is quite separate from peer observation. The observation activity is analysed, feedback is shared with the relevant lecturer in private and action plan is agreed. If the observation highlights some shortcomings, then another observation is organised for that particular lecture in the same or following term.

Through peer observation, teachers get feedback on their teaching. Teachers ask a colleague to attend one of their teaching sessions and afterwards both the observer and the

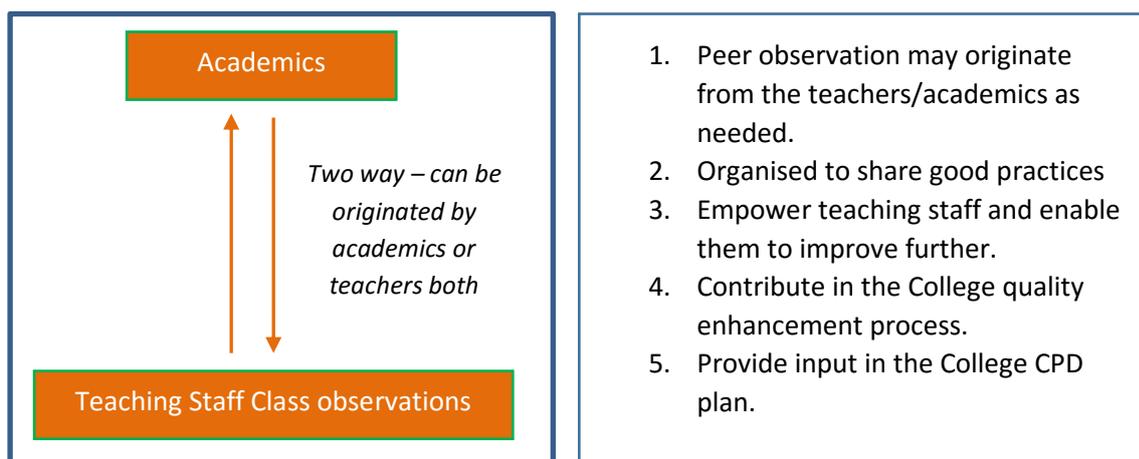
observed discuss it. The peer observer can provide feedback on what went well and suggest changes that might improve the teaching session. The person observed can also ask for feedback on specific areas.

The Policy states that the aim of peer observation of teaching is to enhance teaching quality by encouraging reflection on practice. The intention here is to help maintain and improve standards by spreading good practice, encouraging exchange of views and providing opportunities for staff to learn about and discuss new or alternative teaching approaches. A further purpose of peer observation of teaching is to enhance the professional development of teaching staff through reflection, constructive feedback and participation in training associated with the process.

Class Observation



Peer Observation



Quality Assurance

Our approach to quality assurance is focused and effective. We believe that quality is about how we build our expertise and capacity to improve, and using those developments to enhance the quality of the student learning experience. All our quality systems reflect relevant aspects of the UK Quality Code.

At the end of each academic year Grafton College reviews the Curriculum in line with national and local trends in higher education. The outcome of this review determines how the Curriculum is shaped and delivered in the following year. We thus ensure a fit for purpose learning environment, which puts the student at the centre of everything we do.

Our learning and teaching strategy will consider and ensure that we:

- Devise and review teaching and learning plans which address key issues and identify future development needs, including: teaching and learning objectives, personal development planning, systems review and development, student and staff feedback, assessment methods, inclusiveness, added value and use of ICT.
- Enhance the quality of teaching and learning by continuous monitoring of the provision and standards, through evaluation of staff, student and stakeholder feedback.
- Maintain the College diverse approach that values equality of opportunity in the quality of our teaching and learning.
- Develop and implement rigorous review and feedback mechanisms that support progression and track student progress, retention and achievement.
- Maintain a Curriculum that meets student, employer, local, national and international needs.
- Have adequate resources in place for students and staff to manage their workload effectively.

Quality assurance is a continuous cycle of self- assessment and target setting for new and interesting challenges to help us make improvements, and enhance the provision.

Equality of opportunities in the Curriculum

We offer a learning framework which promotes equal opportunities for those who have special needs arising from race, gender, religion, disability or learning disability. Therefore, in adhering to this philosophy, we intend to make the following provisions through its course delivery:

- Learners will be made aware of the precise requirements for the qualification on entry and again during the induction programme. Registration of students does not occur until after induction, therefore Learners will not be penalised if they decide to opt out of the course.
- Learning by a range of methods, including plans for open- and blended-learning will be made available to suit a wide range of individual needs.
- No upper or lower age limits will be specified for assessment and award of a qualification, other than restrictions imposed by the awarding body.
- Any learner with special needs will be strongly encouraged to pursue Modules of competence in which they have a reasonable chance of attaining the required standard. The assessment staff will support those who require assistance in obtaining appropriate learning opportunities and assistance.
- Any discriminatory or unfair behaviour displayed by learners towards other learners or staff will not be tolerated. Such behaviour may result in the learner being asked to leave the course and, if relevant their employer being informed.
- Curriculum delivery and learning materials will not discriminate against any person or group.

Students with Disabilities and Special Considerations

We view disability as a sensitive issue and appreciate the many barriers which hinder the progress of disabled people. The College makes every possible effort to remove these barriers.

Physical Disability: The College is fully accessible for wheelchair users with assistance. While we aim to provide access to all and make all reasonable adjustments, our courses or facilities may not be suitable for everyone. In these cases we will give impartial advice about other Colleges and Learning Institutes.

Visual and Audible Impairment: The College aims to make all reasonable adjustments to the environment. In some cases, an application can be made to the awarding body, proposing alternative assessment methods and/or a request for specifically adapted learning resources.

Learning Difficulties: The most common type of learning difficulty that we encounter is dyslexia. The College will give impartial advice about external agencies and organisations, who can offer additional support to help learners be successful. In some cases, an application for adaptations and special considerations can be made to the awarding body.

The Healthy Student

Strategies the College will operate to achieve its objectives are:

Induction

- The Induction process covers health, safety, equal opportunities, and expectations of behaviour, discipline and consequences of inappropriate behaviour.
- Students and staff will have access to key policies and receive a clear message about the College culture and expectations.
- Induction materials are suitably adapted to guide and support teaching sessions.
- Students are given a guided tour of the College and shown important locations, i.e., first aid station, notice boards, fire exits and assembly meeting point etc.
- Students complete an Induction checklist to confirm that they have attended and received all relevant information.

Expectations of Behaviour

- A clear message of the College's expectations of student's behaviour is prominently displayed throughout the College and on the College website.
- We ensure that students fully understand that inappropriate behaviour will be challenged with clearly laid out consequences.
- Through tutorials, reviews and confidential meetings with the Recruitment and Welfare Manager, we ensure students can express and report concerns about inappropriate behaviour.
- We encourage students to express their views and contribute to ways of improving how the College manages its expectations of behaviour.

Anti-Bullying/Harassment Policy

- We ensure that clear messages are sent to all students, that any form of harassment, bullying and discrimination will not be accepted, and if proven will lead to disciplinary action.
- We ensure staff are aware of the policies relating to harassment, and that the management provide support for staff to deal effectively with these issues.

Personal Safety

We build crime prevention and personal safety awareness into the curriculum, aspects of which are often delivered by the community police officer.

Staff Training and Support

- We produce appropriate support materials to deliver sessions.
- We review training needs of staff and include relevant training as identified within the annual programme.
- We provide update sessions to ensure that staff have an in depth knowledge and understanding of relevant policies and procedures.

Policy Review

The Learning and Teaching Policy is kept under annual review by the Academic Board and the Senior Management Team. The Policy will be updated in accordance with the development plan and reviewed annually during the Learning and Teaching Policy planning phase.

This Policy area reflects and embodies:

UK Quality Code Chapter B3: Learning and teaching

UK Quality Code Chapter B4: Enabling student development and achievement Quality

UK Quality Code Chapter B5: Student engagement

Freedom of Information Act

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Curriculum Planning Activity Map

Curriculum Planning Activities

Post Evaluation Review/re-adjustments

- Strategic objectives of Curriculum Policy**
1. Provision of effective learning experience to the students across all the programmes.
 2. Improving student's performance and results through effective course design, delivery and academic support on all programmes.
 3. Improving student retention ratio and enabling conditions for progression to the degree programmes.
 4. Developing staff skills and competencies by identifying their developmental needs.

