

Policy Statement

The Accrington and Rossendale Quality Strategy supports the achievement of the College's Strategic plan, and is underpinned by the College's Core Values in order to fulfil our Vision and Mission.

Learners continue to be the College's first priority and an individualised approach is implemented throughout their journey at the College. The College intends to ensure learners choose the right course, are inducted and supported effectively, experience motivational and inspirational, high quality teaching, learning & assessment and their performance is assessed accurately and constructively. Learners are supported to progress to a positive destination, which may be employment, apprenticeships, further education or higher education.

Scope and Context

This strategy documents the College's quality framework, bringing together the wide ranging quality assurance and improvement processes to attain continuous improvement in learners' retention, achievement and progression and underlines the College's commitment to assuring and raising standards. The strategy is applicable to both Further Education and Higher Education programmes at the College and seeks to meet the requirements of the Common Inspection Framework and the UK Quality Code for Higher Education.

1. Quality Assurance

Quality assurance is putting systems in place to ensure that high standards are achieved and embedded. This is achieved through:

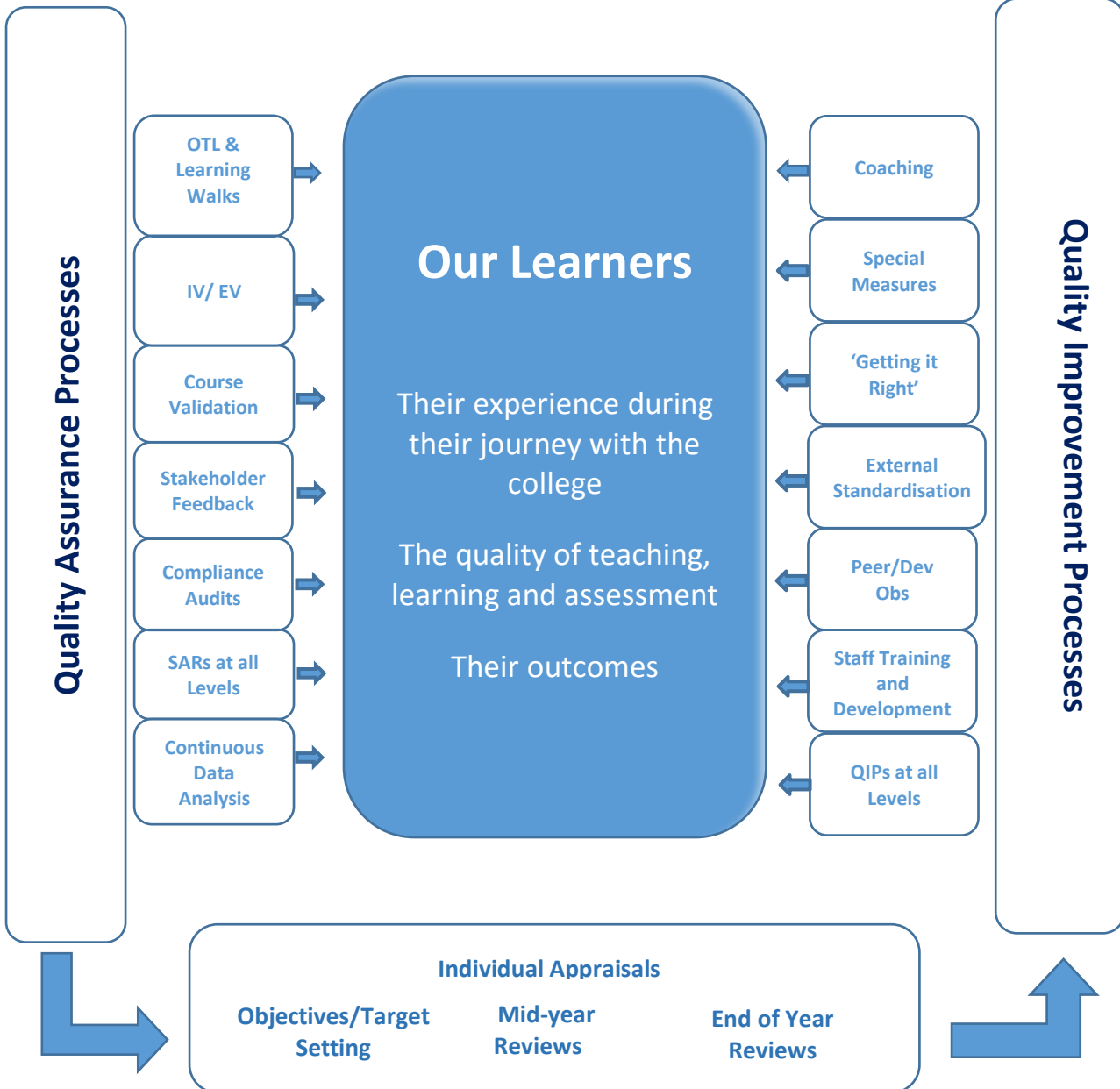
- key college procedures such as lesson observation
- key performance indicators
- benchmarking and target setting
- curriculum performance monitoring
- individual performance review and appraisal
- stakeholder feedback

In addition to a strong quality assurance processes being in place, it is essential that sufficient time and attention is devoted to the development and continual evaluation of quality improvement strategies. As a college that aspires to be outstanding, whilst effective quality assurance procedures are critical to identify areas for improvement and help to target improvements, a significant amount of the quality related work takes the form of quality improvement initiatives such as the provision of a highly effective CPD programme for all staff.

FE QUALITY FRAMEWORK

College wide
Performance Monitoring

Curriculum Performance Monitoring - Performance Review Panels



HE QUALITY FRAMEWORK

College wide
Performance Monitoring

Strategic Annual Review of Higher Education

Quality Assurance Processes

HE Review of Teaching

External Examiner Reports

Internal & External Validation

Stakeholder Feedback (NSS & DLHE)

Academic Complaints & Appeals

Programme Annual Monitoring Review

Data Analysis (Non-continuation)

- Safeguard academic standards
- Assure the quality of the learning opportunities for our students
- Promote continuous and systematic improvement in HE provision
- Ensure the information about our HE is publicly available

Review and validation

Second Marking & Moderation

External Examiner support

HEI Link Tutor Support

HE Review of Teaching

Scholarly Activity and Development

Partner HEI SD & Conference

HEFCE/QAA risk based review & TEF

Quality Enhancement Processes

Individual Appraisals

Objectives/Target Setting

Mid-year Reviews

End of Year Reviews

2. Quality Management

The management and oversight of quality will be the responsibility of:

- The Board of Governors and the Curriculum and Quality Standards Committee
- Senior Leadership team
- Dean of HE
- Quality and Standards team
- Curriculum teams

The management and oversight of quality will be achieved through:

- Performance monitoring and improvement processes
- Quality control systems
- Responding to stakeholder feedback

Furthermore, in Higher Education (HE) the ultimate responsibility for monitoring and review rests with the degree awarding body. However, the college has unique agreement with each HEI with whom it works. This clarifies and sets out responsibilities for processes.

3. Performance Monitoring

Governors set the College's KPIs and associated quality improvement targets, approve the annual SAR and monitor performance against the QIP and other key action plans. The Governors maintain oversight and assurance of standards in HE through annual reporting of strategic monitoring and review and action plans.

The Governors' Curriculum and Quality Standards Committee will also review and monitor quality reports on the quality and standards of provision. The Committee scrutinises performance including learner attendance, retention, achievement, teaching and learning, progression and destinations, safeguarding, stakeholder feedback and learner recruitment. This informs Governors of the impact of quality improvement and assurance arrangements, and enables them to challenge and support to secure improvements in the quality of provision for learners.

The College's Senior Leadership team monitor the College's performance against the high level KPIs and associated quality improvement targets, produce the annual SAR and monitor performance against the QIP and other key action plans. A Performance data dashboard is reviewed weekly and swift corrective actions are instigated if performance shows any decline in year.

FE Curriculum team performance is scrutinised at half termly Performance Review Panels, chaired by the Vice Principal.

Particular attention is paid to the setting of realistic, but stretching improvement targets to continually drive up standards. All curriculum team quality improvement targets and actions are recorded via team QIPs. They are reviewed at each Performance Review Panel and updated termly.

Underperformance is addressed via prompt direct intervention to bring about swift improvements via the College's 'special measures' process, which may be initiated by one of a combination of the following:

- Evidence of poor teaching learning and assessment
- Declining attendance, retention and achievement
- High levels of learner dissatisfaction
- Underperformance against improvement targets

HE Curriculum team performance is scrutinised through twice yearly HE Curriculum & Standards Boards. Each programme is reviewed in line with the Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF) KPIs.

Self-Assessment

The College Self-Assessment Report (SAR) is produced annually and aligns fully to Ofsted's Common Inspection Framework. The College SAR is moderated internally with external representation from peer colleges and is used to inform the Quality Improvement Plan (QIP). The QIP is monitored closely to ensure that the targeted actions in place are effective in driving improvements swiftly. Curriculum team level SARs are also completed annually and result in individual QIPs which are monitored, reviewed and updated on a termly basis following scrutiny at the Curriculum Performance Review Panels.

In HE an annual schedule of monitoring reports at programme level is collated in a strategic annual review and evaluation of HE. This is reported to the Board of Governors at the Curriculum and Quality Standards Committee and ensures governance oversight.

Stakeholder Feedback

Surveys with key stakeholders (learners, employers, staff and community partners) are carried out each year and where available compared to national or peer college/HEI benchmarks. Results of these surveys inform actions to improve the overall provision. Supplementing are a range of 'learner voice' activities including focus groups and corridor councils where students are actively encouraged to express their views and take part in the key college decision making processes which impact on their experience. The College also has a system in place for logging and monitoring complaints/ compliments called 'Getting it Right'. Complaints are viewed as opportunities for improvement and the process is made available to all learners during induction. The College responds to all complaints/ compliments within 15 working days and trend are monitored and reported on at SLT and Governing body level.

The HE complaints procedure about academic standards or appeals ensures the college meets the requirement of the Office of Independent Adjudicators (OIA).

Compliance Audits

The college has an annual cycle where quality audits are scheduled through the academic year. They cover a range of activity including assessment, IV, target setting and tracking of learner progress and are carried out by the Quality and Standards team and Heads of Faculty.

5. Quality Improvement

Teaching, Learning and Assessment

A strategy is in place for TLA and has five key objectives:

- To promote high expectations and aspirations for learners through the setting and realizing of challenging targets for learner achievement and progress
- To use teaching approaches, pedagogies and assessment techniques which recognise and promote challenge and bring about achievement
- To develop learner knowledge and skills which are fostering independence, are transferable and enhances employment opportunities.
- To provide a supportive environment, where Teaching, Learning and Assessment is recognised, valued and rewarded.
- To promote and disseminate effective innovations in the pedagogy of Teaching, Learning and Assessment that embraces e-learning techniques, differentiation, British values, equality and diversity, employability, Maths, English and Safeguarding.

The operating model which underpins the strategy is reviewed and updated annually following evaluation of internal and external feedback. The format and criteria for the observation of teaching and learning reflects the requirements of the Common Inspection Framework and the 2014 Professional Standard for Teachers and Trainers

in England. The observation of HE provision takes into account the Professional Standards for Teaching in HE Framework.

The procedures are supportive and based firmly on the College's commitment to continuous improvement with action planning to address any identified issues, forming an essential part of the feedback process. Observations are carried out by the Quality Improvement Team who are drawn from the Teacher Education Team. In addition to the graded observations, regular developmental observations are a feature in all curriculum areas and staffs are encouraged to explore new and innovative teaching and learning strategies through the College's CPD programme and sharing of good practice. Observations in HE are called 'Reviews' and are undertaken by senior lecturing staff and are graded and announced.

Staff are required to achieve a 'good' or 'outstanding' grade during an observation. Teachers who achieve a 'requires improvement' or inadequate grade are supported through a coaching and mentoring programme underpinned by a rigorous action plan, then re-observed within a three week period.

As part of the College's Digital Strategy, a key area of continued development is the use of digital learning technologies in teaching, learning and assessment. The College's Learning Technology Unit (LTU) will support the roll out of a SOLA (Scheduled Online Learning and Assessment) initiative for 16/17. This is a tried and tested model that has proved beneficial in a number of partner colleges in improving outcomes and demonstrates the College's continued commitment in using technology to enhance teaching, learning, assessment and the overall student experience providing digital skills and improving employment chances. The College is also a Lancashire Centre of Excellence in partnership with Risal and Microsoft for digital skills. The centre is providing a state-of-the-art learning space equipped with the latest Microsoft technologies. It enhances teaching and learning and enables students to develop the digital literacy skills needed to meet current and future workforce demands. A team of teaching staff will qualify as Microsoft Educators (MSEs) in February 2017.

The College sets learners challenging targets whilst continually raising high but realistic expectations. Study Programme tutors use the 'Minimum Target Grade' to inform discussion and agreement of the learner's 'Target Grade' which is then recorded manually by the learner in their e-ILP. From 2016/17 graded level 2 qualifications will have a 'minimum target grade' calculated from the learner's entry points and an agreed target grade will be set and recorded during discussions with personal tutors. Ungraded qualifications at level 1 and 2 will have individualised targets set that are subject-specific and relate to the learners' progression and career aspirations such as employability skills or specific maths/English targets.

The appraisal for teaching staff focusses on 8 key headings linked to the role of a 'Professional Practitioner' which have the greatest impact on learner success. These include; session observation grade / walkabout; learner feedback, attainment, attendance, progression, achievement, management of assessment and CPD.

Equality and Diversity

Accrington & Rossendale College is committed to the active pursuit of an equality and diversity policy which addresses the need and right of everyone in College to be treated with respect and dignity, in an environment in which a diversity of backgrounds and experience is valued.

The College monitors and seeks to close any achievement gaps that may exist between groups of learners with different backgrounds.

In accordance with its statutory duty, the College publishes information annually detailing its work relating to equality and diversity and the progress made towards the achievement of its agreed equality objectives.

Whilst comprehensive arrangements are in place to promote equality and diversity within the classroom the College continues to prioritise the embedding of equality and diversity within teaching and learning.

Accountability Structure

All staff must:

- take part in college training and professional development in order to drive up standard Quality Strategy
- follow college policies and procedures relating to their work.

Senior Managers must:

- lead the drive to communicate and achieve the College's Strategic aims and objectives in response to internal and external demands.
- reflect the ambition to provide outstanding education and training
- manage the annual quality cycle in their areas
- validate and contribute to the college's SAR and QIP, and ensure all improvement plans are properly monitored
- monitor their managers' compliance with quality issues
- oversee the standard of staff performance in their area, ensuring appropriate staff development is in place, and under performance interventions to support improvement are implemented swiftly
- respond promptly to feedback regarding their provision, providing reinforcement regarding positive feedback and initiating and monitoring responses to negative feedback
- oversee the maintenance of up-to-date college policies, strategies and procedures, and ensure that all their managers and staff comply with them.

Head of Faculty must:

- Contribute to the achievement of the Colleges strategic aims and objectives by leading the drive to continuously improve standards in their area
- reflect the ambition to provide outstanding education and training
- be fully engaged in the performance monitoring and review process, setting challenging improvement targets for their areas.
- develop high quality curriculum SARs and QIPs
- oversee the standard of staff performance in their area, ensuring appropriate staff development is in place, and under performance interventions to support improvement are implemented swiftly
- monitor their managers' compliance with quality issues robustly
- contribute to the development and review college policies and associated procedures, guidelines and strategies
- ensuring that policies and associated procedures, guidelines and strategies are embedded across their areas

Deputy HoFs are responsible for:

- the continuous improvement of their curriculum teams to contribute to the achievement of the Colleges strategic aims and objectives
- ensuring that all members of their delivery teams, both teaching and support, understand and are actively working towards their performance improvement targets such as retention, attendance, achievement and progression
- ensuring that monitoring of performance improvement targets and quality improvement occurs through regular team meetings
- contributing to the development of high quality curriculum SARs and QIPs working alongside their Head of Faculty
- managing staff performance in their curriculum teams, ensuring full engagement in staff development activity and close monitoring and support of underperformance.
- monitoring individual compliance with quality issues robustly
- ensuring that policies and associated procedures, guidelines and strategies are followed across all their curriculum teams.

Delivery Staff are responsible for:

- delivering good or better teaching, learning and assessment for all their learners.
- reviewing their individual learner's progress ensuring all learners meet or exceed their target grades.
- identifying learners 'at risk' swiftly working closely with the learning support team to put in place interventions to get them back on track.
- reviewing learner feedback and responding appropriately
- contributing to the production of their team SAR and QIP to ensure the continuous improvement of their own curriculum area.
- ensuring that they are compliant with all internal and external quality assurance requirements.
- understanding and actively working towards, their performance improvement targets such as retention, attendance, achievement and progression
- maintaining current course files and ensuring adherence to assessment requirements
- undertaking appropriate development and training with the intention of driving up standards.

The Quality Team is responsible for:

- promoting and championing quality improvement with all staff to achieve a continuous improvement culture
- leading on the planning, organisation and implementation of effective quality improvement systems, process and procedures to support an improvement in standards in TLA
- monitoring and evaluating the impact of all quality improvement activities within the Quality Framework
- contributing to the OTL process
- obtaining and disseminating best practice from the sector to inform improvements to the Colleges Quality Framework
- supporting in the development and production of the College Self -Assessment Report and QIP
- developing procedures to evaluate the effectiveness of teaching and learning and customer satisfaction
- supporting delivery teams to develop QIPs to achieve excellence and address identified weaknesses.
- supporting curriculum teams with validation and external verification
- undertaking audits for areas requiring qualitative evidence to support quality judgements
- providing support and training in areas of weakness
- providing advice and guidance to management on all aspects of the quality agenda
- reporting on the college's quality performance
- ensuring that sub-contracted provision is covered by quality assurance procedures which are proportionate to risk
- preparing and supporting the college in responding to the review and audit processes of external inspectorates and agencies
- ensuring that relevant policies and associated procedures, guidelines and strategies are embedded across the provision

Service area teams are responsible for:

- ensuring that the quality of service to external and internal customers complies with the college's standards
- ensuring that staff are facilitated, supported and assisted in the achievement of their quality objectives
- ensuring that monitoring and evaluation of these services takes place at regular team meetings and that action planning is used to effect quality improvements
- ensuring that policies and associated procedures, guidelines and strategies are followed across all their areas