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Guidelines for Orientation and Induction of New and Continuing Learners

Supporting the arrival and orientation of new and continuing learners is an important activity in helping them settle into their studies and successfully progress through their academic programmes at Carlow College, St. Patrick's. Arrival and orientation takes place over a short period of time and assists learners with finding their way around college, beginning the process of meeting new people and making friends, and settling into academic life. Induction takes place over a longer period of time and is viewed as a process, rather than a single event, that supports learners to become embedded into college life and study.

Orientation and induction activities should support and inform learners as they progress in, through and out of each stage of their academic programme. Although the academic imperative is at the heart of the process, it should not operate in isolation from other college functions which offer support-related guidance and advice. Consequently, a holistic approach is adopted where the orientation and induction of new and continuing learners is a collaborative initiative led by the Head of Student Services between senior management, academic staff, student support services, existing learners and the Students' Union.

Orientation and Induction of New Learners:

- New learners attend a one-week comprehensive orientation programme in the week prior to the commencement of programme lectures. The purpose of this week is to provide learners with essential 'need to know' information about the College's structures, procedures and services which will assist them in their first weeks of study and enable them to settle into college life.
- The orientation programme of activities seeks to ensure a balance between academic, practical and social orientation while acknowledging the diversity of learner lives and commitments.
- The orientation programme consists of the following:

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- Welcome address by the President, Vice-President for Academic Affairs and Registrar, and Programme Directors.
 - Completion of the registration process and opportunities to resolve administrative queries.
 - Academic orientation and programme induction by Programme Director and Academic Advisor.
 - Opportunities for learners to meet their class group and learners in advanced stages of their chosen programme.
 - Introductory lectures in two compulsory modules which begin to familiarise learners with academic expectations and the role of the lecturer at higher education.
 - Opportunities to participate in social events such as lunches, coffee mornings, tours and informal activities with college staff, other learners and Students' Union.
 - Information Technology sessions to introduce college IT systems to new learners.
 - Library tours and introductory talks to orientate learners to library and information services.
 - Introduction to the academic, personal and careers support services through targeted workshops on transitions, future career and life plans, and assistive technology and inclusive learning for school leavers, mature learners and learners with disabilities/learning differences.
- Learners are provided with an induction pack of essential information which they can refer to in the weeks after orientation. This also includes details of further academic and social induction activities scheduled to take place during term one.
 - Learners have an opportunity to provide feedback on their experiences through an anonymous online 'settling-in survey' which informs the development of the orientation and induction process.

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Re-orientation of Continuing Learners

- Continuing learners in stages two, three and four of their programme attend a re-orientation day in the week prior to the commencement of programme lectures.
- Each academic stage brings a different set of rules, regulations, skills and expectations. Re-orientation takes place at the start of each new academic stage and its purpose is to engage with learners as they progress through their academic programme.
- Re-orientation provides an opportunity to inform learners of any institutional changes that have taken place and set out expectations for the new academic level. It also reminds learners of the academic and personal supports available and allows learners to reflect on the supports they may need in order to successfully progress.
- The re-orientation day consists of the following:
 - Welcome back academic orientation and programme induction by Programme Director and Academic Advisor.
 - Completion of the registration process and opportunities to resolve administrative queries.
 - Opportunities for learners to socialise with their class group and learners in advanced stages of their chosen programme.
 - Information Technology sessions to re-familiarise learners with college IT systems and any changes that have been introduced.
 - Careers and employability workshop to support their programme level.
 - Opportunities to engage with student support services.
- Learners are provided with details of further academic and social induction activities scheduled to take place during term one.