![QQI — Quality and Qualifications Ireland / Dearbhú Cáilíochta agus Cáilíochtaí Éireann]

Reengagement Panel Report

Assessment of Capacity and Approval of QA Procedures

Part 1 Details of provider

1.1 Applicant Provider

Registered Business/Trading Name:	Carlow College, St. Patrick's
Address:	College Street, Carlow, R93 A003
Date of Application:	
Date of resubmission of application:	
Date of evaluation:	
Date of site visit (if applicable):	17th June 2019
Date of recommendation to the Programmes and Awards Executive Committee:	

1.2 Profile of provider

Carlow College is a long-established provider of higher education which has been delivering programmes of education in various capacities since 1793.The College has been running QQI validated programmes since 2012 and its programmes were previously validated by HETAC and with the NCEA. The College currently has over 500 learners with the capacity to grow to 1000 learners. A central component of the College's mission is to provide access to education for those who may not typically have had access to education in underprivileged areas.

Programmes leading to QQI awards are in the disciplinary areas of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences and combine an emphasis on academic development with professional expertise. Current programmes include:

- BA in Arts and Humanities, Level 7;
- BA (Honours) in Arts and Humanities, Level 8;
- BA (Honours) in English and History, Level 8 (including an exit award of BA in English & History, Level 7);
- BA in Applied Social Studies (Professional Social Care), Level 7 with a one-year add-on BA (Honours) in Applied Social Studies (Professional Social Care), Level 8;
- BA (Honours) in Social, Political and Community Studies, Level 8 (including exit awards of Higher Certificate in Social, Political and Community Studies, level 6 and BA in Social, Political and Community Studies, level 7); and
- MA (Leadership in Therapeutic Child and Social Care), Level 9.

Part 2 Panel Membership

Name	Role of panel member	Organisation
Dr Joseph Ryan	Chairperson	CEO, Technological Higher Education Association (THEA)
Ruth Ní Bheoláin	Secretary/ Panel Member	Quality Assurance Officer, Hibernia College
Lorraine Lavery	Panel Member	Head of Educational Governance and Partnerships, Queens University Belfast.
Dr David Mc Carthy	Panel Member	Quality Assurance Officer, National College of Ireland

Part 3 Findings of the Panel

3.1 Summary Findings

The purpose of the re-engagement panel visit process is to evaluate the institutional capacity and quality assurance procedures of the provider against statutory QQI QA guidelines with a view to recommending a decision to QQI on whether the provider's QA procedures should be approved.

Based on the information provided via the application and accompanying documentation and particularly through engagement with staff at the site visit, the panel is satisfied that the College has demonstrated its continuing capacity to meet QQI criteria. The panel is additionally satisfied that the provider has demonstrated both the capacity and the willingness to make appropriate enhancements in the areas suggested by the panel.

The panel would like to commend the College's engagement with the panel during the site visit and in particular commends:

- The comprehensive review and re-structuring that had taken place with an authentically collaborative approach across the College community.
- The calibre of directors the College has appointed.
- The support provided to staff to engage in research, external engagement activities and ongoing professional development.
- The broad range of assessment methodology employed across the College.
- The College's obvious dedication to learner support which was evident throughout the day's panel discussions and in particular in discussions with the Head of Student Services.
- The College's approach to self-review and the extensive and authentic scope of collaboration it demonstrated in relation to the re-engagement process.

Subsequently, the panel recommends to QQI the approval of Carlow College's QA procedures.

3.2 Recommendation of the panel to Programmes and Awards Executive Committee of QQI

	Tick <u>one</u> as appropriate
Approve Carlow College draft QA procedures	X
Refuse approval of [the provider's – insert name] draft QA procedures **with mandatory changes** set out in Section 6.1 (If this recommendation is accepted by QQI, the provider may make a revised application within six months of the decision)	
Refuse to approve [the provider's – insert name] draft QA procedures	

Part 4 Evaluation of provider capacity

4.1 Legal and compliance requirements:

	Criteria	Yes/No/ Partially	Comments
4.1.1(a)	**Criterion:** Is the applicant an established Legal Entity who has Education and/or Training as a Principal Function?	Yes	Carlow College is an established legal entity with registered charity status.
4.1.2(a)	**Criterion:** Is the legal entity established in the European Union and does it have a substantial presence in Ireland?	Yes	Carlow College is a long-established entity with a presence in Ireland since 1793.
4.1.3(a)	**Criterion:** Are any dependencies, collaborations, obligations, parent organisations, and subsidiaries clearly specified?	Yes	A Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) is provided for a recently established collaboration.
4.1.4(a)	**Criterion:** Are any third-party relationships and partnerships compatible with the scope of access sought?	Yes	Placement components of programmes are subject to ongoing monitoring. Safe practice is ensured by College policies and a Practice Placement Advisory Committee is also in place.
4.1.5(a)	**Criterion:** Are the applicable regulations and legislation complied with in all jurisdictions where it operates?	Yes	Carlow College operates exclusively in Ireland and the organisation complies with all applicable regulations and legislation.
4.1.6(a)	**Criterion:** Is the applicant in good standing in the qualifications systems and education and training systems in any countries where it operates (or where its parents or subsidiaries operate) or enrols learners, or where it has arrangements with awarding bodies, quality assurance agencies, qualifications authorities, ministries of education and training, professional bodies and regulators.	Yes	Carlow College is in good standing within thequalifications systems and education and training systems in Ireland. According to QQI's records, the College has twelve currently validated programmes.

Findings

On review of the College's documentation, the panel found Carlow College to be fully compliant with legal and compliance requirements.

4.2   Resource, governance and structural requirements:

	Criteria	Yes/No/ Partially	Comments
4.2.1(a)	**Criterion:** Does the applicant have a sufficient resource base and is it stable and in good financial standing?	Yes	The following evidence was provided to the panel as part of the provider's submission: • 2018 signed accounts • Projections 2019 • Tax Clearance Certificate • Public liability cover • Revenue Confirmation of Charity Status
4.2.2(a)	**Criterion:** Does the applicant have a reasonable business case for sustainable provision?	Yes	Carlow College has focused its provision in Arts and Humanities. The College acknowledges challenges in relation to sustainable provision but demonstrated strategic action taken or to be taken in relation to this.
4.2.3(a)	**Criterion:** Are fit-for-purpose governance, management and decision making structures in place?	Yes	The following evidence was provided to the panel as part of the provider's submission: • Instrument of governance • Organogram • Quality Assurance Policy (section 4.1) • Quality Assurance Policy: Appendices 2-6)
4.2.4(a)	**Criterion:** Are there arrangements in place for providing required information to QQI?	Yes	Systems for providing required information to QQI are detailed throughout the QA policies and appendices.

Findings

On review of the College's documentation, the panel found Carlow College to be fully compliant with criteria in relation to resource, governance and structural requirements.

4.3   Programme development and provision requirements:

	Criteria	Yes/No/ Partially	Comments
4.3.1(a)	**Criterion:** Does the applicant have experience and a track record in providing education and training programmes?	Yes	Carlow College has experience in programme development, delivery, management and assessment in major programmes between levels 6 – 9 on the NFQ.
4.3.2(a)	**Criterion:** Does the applicant have a fit-for-purpose and stable complement of education and training staff?	Yes	The College has forty-one academic staff members divided into twenty-five full-time and sixteen part-time staff members. An organogram of College roles was provided and a delineation of responsibilities.
4.3.3(a)	**Criterion:** Does the applicant have the capacity to comply with the standard conditions for validation specified in Section 45(3) of the Qualifications and Quality Assurance (Education and Training) Act (2012) (the Act)?	Yes	Along with demonstrated capacity to comply with standards for validation, the following committees are in place to support work of the Academic Council: • Learner Resources • Teaching Learning and Assessment • Quality Assurance
4.3.4(a)	**Criterion:** Does the applicant have the fit-for-purpose premises, facilities and resources to meet the requirements of the provision proposed in place?	Yes	The College's application details fit-for-purpose resources which were confirmed at the site visit. There is also a dedicated Director of Operations, Facilities Manager and Learner Resource Committee.

4.3.5(a)	**Criterion:** Are there access, transfer and progression arrangements that meet QQI's criteria for approval in place?	Yes	There are published and clearly implemented regulations in relation to access, transfer and progression (Learner Admission, Progression and Recognition Policy).
4.3.6(a)	**Criterion:** Are structures and resources to underpin fair and consistent assessment of learners in place?	Partially	Some areas require development in relation to this criterion which are outlined in detail in Section 6.
4.3.7(a)	**Criterion:** Are arrangements for the protection of enrolled learners to meet the statutory obligations in place (where applicable)?	Yes	Learners who qualify for Free Fees are protected by the Department of Education and Skills. A sinking fund is maintained by the College to protect private fee-paying students.

Findings

On review of the College's documentation, the panel found Carlow College to be mostly compliant with criteria relation to programme development and provision.

Some in areas in relation to assessment processes were identified for enhancement; these are outlined in Section 7.

4.4 Overall findings in respect of provider capacity to provide sustainable education and training

The current president took over the position in 2015 in a challenging environment and initiated a 'listening exercise' which was conducted in November 2015. This was intended to consult with all staff across the College in relation to its strengths, challenges and opportunities which culminated in a distributed culture that was evident in both documentation received by the panel and in the various meetings with the panel during the re-engagement site visit. A number of areas were identified for development as a result of this exercise in relation to management and structure, College strategy, marketing and institutional identity, staff experience and culture and student experience. A number of new plans, structures and initiatives were subsequently put in place to address these areas including the development of a Strategy and Risk Management Plan (Strategic Plan 2017 – 2022), a revised governance structure, including a revised QA structure, programme boards and various committee structures outlined in the governance organogram and new functions in relation to operations, strategic development and teaching and learning.

All current programmes have been recently re-validated with QQI. Overall, based on clear demonstration or reflective capacity and capacity to engage in change processes and strategic development, the panel was satisfied with the institutional capacity to provide sustainable education and training.

Part 5 Evaluation of draft QA Procedures submitted by Carlow College

The following is the panel's findings following evaluation of Carlow College quality assurance procedures against QQI's Core Statutory Quality Assurance Guidelines (April 2016). Sections 1-11 of the report follows the structure and referencing of the Core QA Guidelines.

1 GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT OF QUALITY

Panel Findings:

The executive governance of CCSP is vested in the Catholic Diocese of Kildare and Leighlin. The Governing Body and Property Trustees were established in 2016 following a review of the College's governance structure. These replaced what were previously known as the College Trustees which had been in place from the early days of the College. The College's institutional aim is "to engage and inspire learners through the quality of our transformational learning and teaching experiences" and this is systematically supported and reflected throughout the governance structure and quality assurance framework.

The Academic Council reports to the Governing Body, but has devolved responsibility to approve policies, practices and development activities which assured the panel that there is distinct separation of commercial and academic decision-making in the College.

In addition to documented risk management processes, there are multiple layers of decision-making processes that contribute to risk management. Pace of institutional change has presented challenges particularly in terms of human resourcing capacity but is being managed appropriately. Capacity presents an additional challenge in meeting the requirements of the college's comprehensive quality framework and the associated governance structure. The panel queried the amount of staff time that must be devoted to committee meetings and cross-membership of staff across multiple committees. Given the size of the college and its existing staffing, the panel recommends reviewing the quantity of dedicated committees and their memberships with a view to streamlining committee activities.

The Governing Body is built on external membership drawn from a wide range of external representatives with relevant experience and expertise. The College is to be commended on the calibre of directors it has appointed. There is a demonstrated trickle-down effect of this externality providing objectivity and a 'devil's advocate' position throughout the organisation. The president reports to the Governing Body on matters relating to governance and to the Property Trustees in relation to college buildings and land.

Further externality is provided by consultation with external stakeholders during programme review development processes, placement provision and through academics' active participation in external bodies and sectoral events relevant to their discipline and industry specialists. It is anticipated that future collaborative partnerships will provide additional externality. Students are actively represented and included in the governance structure.

The panel commends the comprehensive review and re-structuring that had taken place with an authentically collaborative approach across the college community.

> The panel commends both the College's approach to self-review and the extensive and authentic scope of collaboration it demonstrated in relation to the re-engagement process.

2   DOCUMENTED APPROACH TO QUALITY ASSURANCE

Panel Findings:

> The College's Quality Framework is comprehensive and has been developed in consultation with key stakeholders across the college. For each policy need identified, a working group of relevant stakeholders is convened for development. These working groups can comprise the QA Officer, staff (academic and non-academic), learners and external members where appropriate. Documents are further hosted on the staff VLE platform and the student VLE platform for a set period for consultation.
>
> QA documentation is accessible across multiple platforms including an A-Z directory on the website and on staff and student VLE platforms. Staff are inducted on relevant QA policies and procedures. The panel recommends that the College review its sign-posting of QA documentation for ease of accessibility.
>
> An integrated approach to QA was demonstrated to the panel we well as a sense of shared ownership of QA across the College.

3   PROGRAMMES OF EDUCATION AND TRAINING

Panel Findings:

> The College recently had programmes re-validated with scope for growth in student numbers. There are clear and dedicated policies and processes for continuous monitoring of resources. There are published and clearly implemented regulations in relation to access, transfer and progression (Learner Admission, Progression and Recognition Policy).
>
> Genuine reflection on challenges to programme delivery has occurred and these challenges are being strategically addressed by the College.
>
> New programme development is an integral component of strategy development. Proposals are invited from staff members and an analysis of prospective programmes is conducted. Interdisciplinarity is being promoted in new programmes with a focus on employability and transferrable skills being built into programme design.
>
> Feedback and programme data is generated via programme monitoring reports, organisational reports and staff/learner feedback mechanisms. The use of modular student feedback, currently dealt with at individual lecturer level, will be dealt with systematically at programme level as part of the College's development plan.
>
> The panel recommends that the College consider its approach to systematically gathering feedback and closing the loop with stakeholders as to how issues raised are addressed.

4   STAFF RECRUITMENT, MANAGEMENT AND DEVELOPMENT

Panel Findings:

There are clearly documented approaches to staff recruitment and ongoing management (i.e. Academic Workload Allocation Policy, Recruitment and Selection Policy, Procurement Policy).

There is a strong staff culture across the College in all areas including staff who provide non-academic support e.g. staff in areas such as catering, housekeeping and groundskeeping who are all engrained members of the College Community (34 FT/PT non-academic support staff).

Across the College's academic staff, including part-time and fulltime staff, 70% of these have NFQ 10 qualifications. Academic staff are research active with up to 40% of their time dedicated to research activity and they demonstrated excellent external engagement methods.

Staff receive induction which includes detailed briefings on QA policies and procedures. There is an ongoing schedule for in-house continuing professional development which includes training relevant to areas of the QA framework. Staff are also afforded opportunities to seek CPD in line with a developing collaboration with an institute of technology.

The panel commends the support provided to staff to engage in research, external engagement activities and ongoing professional development.

5   TEACHING AND LEARNING

Panel Findings:

The College's policies in relation to assessment incorporate procedures and systems which allow for the security and integrity of the assessment processes.

A teaching, learning and assessment sub-group was specifically convened by the College to examine and review existing policies in relation to teaching, learning and assessment. Terms of reference for a permanent committee have been drafted by this group. Its remit will be to oversee and develop an implementation plan to facilitate the TLA strategy written in March 2018.

The College is well equipped with physical resources to support the delivery of programmes. Along with fully equipped lecture halls there is a library, IT lab, Student Centre, Social Learning Spaces, dining hall and tutorial rooms. Computer hardware was recently updated and is reviewed on a yearly basis for RAM to ensure effective functioning. Computer software is updated at a minimum yearly.

Students are additionally supported to bring their own devices for study and use in class. Lecturers are increasingly employing smart technology in the classroom alongside traditional pedagogic techniques. A 'Bring Your Own Device' Policy is currently under development

6   ASSESSMENT OF LEARNERS

Panel Findings:

A broad range of assessment methodology is employed across the College which is commended by the panel. Methods included reflective journals, activities on VLE, posters, wikis, group-work, presentation, learning logs, videos, guest-speakers, dissertation '3 days conference' where student work is presented in conference format.

The panel was satisfied on the day of the panel visit that the College has appropriate practice in relation to repeat arrangements, late submission and extenuating circumstances. To ensure transparency and consistency in these processes, the panel advises these be documented clearly within the College's assessment policies and related documentation for students.

While the panel is satisfied that there are effective procedures in place for the external moderation of assessments, to further ensure fairness and standardisation of assessment across and within programmes, it is advised that the provider develop and implement a formalised internal moderation process. This will allow for issues relating to discrepancies in the application of marking guidelines to be identified internally prior to referral of assessments to the External Examiner(s).

Given the context of the provider's scale and scope of HET provision, two particular models of internal moderation are fit-for-purpose:

1. **Blind Second Marking** (Dissertations & Single Assessments worth >= 10 ECTS)
   Separate copies of the assignment are marked independently and anonymously. Both markers record their marks and comments before conducting a standardisation meeting to determine a final mark.

2. **Seen Second Marking** (Assessments worth >= 15% of total module mark)
   Following marking by the Initial Assessor, a minimum of 3 assessments from each grade classification and all fails are marked by an Internal Examiner. A standardisation meeting is organised to discuss any discrepancies beyond an agreed percentage between the marks awarded by the Initial Assessor and the Internal Examiner.**"**

7   SUPPORT FOR LEARNERS

Panel Findings:

The College's ethos in relation to students is "Settle, stay, succeed". Student support is managed by the Head of Student Services. The Head of Student Services has access to best practice and peer support via Student Affairs Ireland and membership in the DAWN Network. The College currently has a ratio of 1:15 lecturers and this ratio is intended to be maintained notwithstanding ambition for additional growth in student numbers and is an integral component of student support. 42% of learners are mature learners, 80% are in receipt of grant support (i.e. SUSI Grants) and there is a 32:68 percentage divide between female and male learners. Undergraduate learners are eligible for the Free Fees Scheme and ESF Funding.

There is a Students' Union with sabbatical roles elected yearly and who are briefed on their roles. Class Reps are trained via the National Student Engagement Programme (NStEP) and the Students' Union is a member of the Union of Students, Ireland (USI). The College has a Learner Resource Committee and a dedicated Academic Resource Office (ARO) who provides academic support to students. Other student supports are provided through Counselling, Health, Chaplaincy and Careers Services. International students are supported by an International Officer. A Learner Retention Officer is being appointed who will have a specific role in identifying at-risk students. Reviewing sign-posting to services may form part of this role.

Programme handbooks are going to be developed further to include a dedicated section on QA outlining all the key policies and there is also a dedicated area on student gateway, which is the student VLE portal, for policies, relevant policies sign-posting. Specific workshops are provided to students during a structured induction and orientation programme on, amongst others, transitioning into college 'Surviving and thriving'. Opportunities are provided for socialising outside of alcohol-related activities organised by the SU Officer. There are documented procedures in relation to student appeals and complaints.

The panel commends the college's obvious dedication to learner support which was evident throughout the day's panel discussions and in particular in discussions with the Head of Student Services.

The panel recommends that the College build on a strong culture of face-to-face training and sign-posting to student services via e-mail by creating more formal materials and including sign-posting on the student gateway. It was also recommends that the College re-induct staff on learner supports on an ongoing basis.

8   INFORMATION AND DATA MANAGEMENT

Panel Findings:

The College has undertaken significant work to develop reliable information management strategies.

Investment in a new student record management system has provided a cloud-hosted system of data management which is allowing the college to progress from siloed data management to a centralised system. This is an area the College acknowledges needs further development but there is clear strategic development underway to develop data analytics and drive enhancement.

9 PUBLIC INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION

Panel Findings:

The panel considers that Carlow College's approach to public information is documented and fit-for-purpose. There are policies and procedures that ensure the information published is clear, accurate, objective, up to date and easily accessible.

All relevant programme and award information is made available to prospective and current learners via prospectuses and the College's website and any programme information published goes through internal checking procedures with relevant parties. The College further communicates with the public via social media including Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and YouTube.

The research profile of the College is actively promoted by the marketing team and a College Research Hub aims to centralise research activity to enhance the public profile of research activity.

The panel recommends that Carlow College continue to grow its public profile to communicate the great work that is being done by the College with a wider audience and enhance its public image.

10 OTHER PARTIES INVOLVED IN EDUCATION AND TRAINING (incl. Apprenticeships)

Panel Findings:

Carlow College has recently signed a Memorandum of Agreement which requires it to develop policies and procedures in relation to collaborative provision. The College has identified this need and plans to develop a *Collaborative and Inter-Institutional Partnerships Policy* for completion by the end of the 2019 / 2020 Academic Year.

11 SELF-EVALUATION, MONITORING AND REVIEW

Panel Findings:

The panel considers that Carlow College's self-evaluation, monitoring and review process is clearly documented and is fit-for-purpose.

The approach taken to self-evaluation, monitoring and review for the re-engagement process is summarised in the College's application and was clearly set out and explained in both a private meeting with the president, in the College's presentation to the panel and throughout the panel meetings. This was an extensively consultative and inclusive process and has culminated in a sense of shared ownership of QA and a recognition that a QA framework is never finished and will be continuously evolving over time.

The College has clearly documented processes in relation to internal self-monitoring, self-evaluation improvement and enhancement that coherently link to their external QA obligations to both the Education and Training Act, 2012, the European Standards and Guidelines (ESG) and QQI.

Along with a five-year programme review cycle with QQI, the College has introduced a mid-cycle review. The purpose of this process is to take stock of programmes, identify how previous recommendations from review processes are being implemented and to start discussions and development work early to inform rigorous external review.

The panel commends both the College's approach to self-review and on the extensive and authentic scope of collaboration it demonstrated in relation to the re-engagement process.

Evaluation of draft QA Procedures - Overall panel findings

The panel considers that the procedures submitted by Carlow College are fit-for-purpose and satisfy QQI requirements.

The panel advises QQI that it recommends approval of Carlow College's QA procedures for the proposed scope of provision.

Part 6   Mandatory Changes to QA Procedures and Specific Advice

6.1   Mandatory Changes

N/A

6.2   Specific Advice

- Given the size of the College and its existing staffing, the panel recommends reviewing the quantity of dedicated committees and their memberships with a view to streamlining committee activities.
- The panel recommends that the College review its sign-posting of QA documentation for ease of accessibility.
- The panel recommends the College consider its approach systematically to gathering feedback and closing the loop with stakeholders as to how issues raised are addressed.
- To further ensure fairness and standardisation of assessment across and within programmes, the panel advises that the provider develop and implement a formalised internal moderation process.
- The panel advises that processes in relation to repeat arrangements, late submission and extenuating circumstances be documented clearly within the College's assessment policies and related documentation for students to ensure transparency and consistency in these processes.
- The panel recommends that the College build on a strong culture of face-to-face training and sign-posting to student services via e-mail by creating more formal materials and including sign-posting on the student gateway. It is also recommends that the College re-induct staff into learner supports on an ongoing basis.
- The panel recommends that Carlow College continue to grow its public profile to communicate the great work that is being done by the College with a wider audience and enhance its public image.

Part 7   Proposed Approved Scope of Provision for this provider

NFQ Level(s) – min and max	Award Class(es)	Discipline areas
Levels 6- 9	Major	Arts and Humanities

Part 8   Approval by Chair of the Panel

This report of the panel is approved and submitted to QQI for its decision on the approval of the draft Quality Assurance Procedures of Carlow College.

Name: _

Date: 08 July 2019

Annexe 1: Documentation provided to the Panel in the course of the Evaluation

Academic Council Constitution	2.1b; CG1i
Academic Council Terms of Reference	2.1b; 2.2a; 2.2d; CG1b; CG1i; CG1n; CG3f; CG3i; CG4d; CG6g; CG7e; CG8b; CG11a; CG11b
Academic Workload Allocation Policy (Version 02, 2017)	2.3d; CG4b
Access Management Policy (Version 01, 2019)	CG6b; CG8c; CG8d; CG8e
Admissions Report Template	CG3e
Assistive Technology and Supports Policy (Version 02, 2014)	CG7c
Audit Committee Terms of Reference (Governing Body)	2.2e
CCSP Graduate Attributes	2.2c
CCSP Strategic Plan, 2017 – 2022	2.2c; 2.3f; CG5h
CCTV Policy (Version 01, 2019)	CG8c
Committee Terms of Reference	2.2a; 2.2b; CG1b; CG1h; CG1n; CG3f; CG7e; CG8b; CG11a; CG11b
Data Protection Policy (Version 03, 2018)	CG8d
DES Letter of Comfort Regarding Protection of Enrolled Learners	2.3b
Dignity and Respect Policy (Version 01, 2017)	CG5i
Draft Arts & Humanities Learner Handbook 2019 / 2020 (Example)	CG2a; CG2b
Draft English & History Programme Staff Handbook 2019 / 2020 (Example)	CG2a; CG2b; CG4e
Employee Benefits Handbook	CG4h; CG5g
English and History Schedule of Assessments (Example)	CG6d
Finance Committee Terms of Reference (Governing Body)	2.2e
Finance, Estates and Risk Committee Terms of Reference	2.2e; 2.3f
Implementation Committee Terms of Reference	CG1p
Implementation Plan April 2018 to September 2019 (Teaching, Learning and Assessment Strategy)	CG5a; CG5c; CG5h
Instrument of Governance	2.1a
Learner Admission, Progression and Recognition Policy (Version 03, 2019)	2.3a; CG5f; CG7b; CG7c
Learner Code of Conduct and Disciplinary Policy (Version 02, 2018)	CG5i

Learner Grievances and Complaints Policy (Version 02, 2019)	CG5c; CG5i
Learners with Disabilities and Specific Learning Needs Policy (Version 02, 2014)	CG5f; CG7c
Management Board Constitution	CG1i
Management Board Terms of Reference	2.2a; 2.2b; 2.2d; 2.2e; CG1b; CG1h; CG1i; CG1n; CG3f; CG7e; CG8b; CG11a; CG11b
Placement Learning Contract (Example)	CG6h
Programme Boards Terms of References	CG1b; CG1j; CG1n; CG3f; CG3i; CG4d; CG5b; CG5e; CG6g; CG7e; CG8b; CG11a; CG11b
Programmatic Review (2018) Recommendations Implementation Tasks and Plan	CG1p; CG11b
Progression and Retention Task Group Report and Recommendations	CG3e
Quality Assurance Policy (Version 03, 2019)	2.1a; 2.1b; 2.2b; 2.2c; 2.2d; 2.2e; 2.2f; 2.2g; 2.3a; 2.3c; CG1a; CG1a; CG1b; CG1f; CG1g; CG1h; CG1i; CG1j; CG1n; CG1o; CG1p; CG1q; CG1r; CG2a; CG2c; CG2e; CG2f; CG2g; CG3a; CG3b; CG3d; CG3e; CG3h; CG3i; CG3j; CG3k; CG4a; CG4b; CG4c; CG4d; CG4e; CG4h; CG5a; CG5b; CG5c; CG5e; CG5f; CG5g; CG5h; CG6a; CG6b; CG6c; CG6d; CG6f; CG6g; CG6h; CG7a; CG7c; CG7e; CG7f; CG8a; CG8b; CG8c; CG8d; CG8e; CG9a; CG9b; CG9c; CG10b; CG10c; CG10e; CG11a; CG11b; CG11c
Quality Assurance Policy: Appendices (Version 03, 2019)	2.1a; 2.1b; 2.1c; 2.1d; 2.2a; 2.2b; 2.2d; 2.2e; 2.2f; 2.2g; 2.2h; 2.3c; 2.3d; 2.3e; 2.3f; CG1a; CG1b; CG1c; CG1d; CG1f; CG1g; CG1h; CG1i; CG1j; CG1n; CG1o; CG1p; CG1q; CG1r; CG2a; CG2c; CG2e; CG2f; CG2g; CG3a; CG3b; CG3d; CG3e; CG3f; CG3g; CG3h; CG3i; CG3j; CG3k; CG4a; CG4b; CG4c; CG4d; CG4e; CG4g; CG4h; CG5b; CG5c; CG5e; CG5f; CG5g; CG5i; CG6a; CG6b; CG6c; CG6d; CG6e; CG6f; CG6g; CG6h; CG7a; CG7b; CG7c; CG7d; CG7e; CG7f; CG8a; CG8b; CG8c; CG8d; CG8e; CG9a; CG9b; CG9d; CG10a; CG10b; CG10c; CG10d; CG10e; CG11a; CG11b; CG11c
Recording of Lectures, Tutorials and Other Teaching Sessions Policy (Version 01, 2014)	CG5f; CG7c
Records Keeping Manual	CG1g; CG1n; CG8c
Regulations in Relation to Assessment and Standards (2018)	CG5c; CG5i; CG6b; CG6c; CG6d

Section 8: Applied Social Studies (Professional Social Care) (Example)	CG3d; CG5e; CG6h
Section 8: Social, Political and Community Studies Programme Review Report (Example)	CG3b; CG5h; CG6d
Sections 1 – 7: Citizenship and Community Studies Programme Review Report (Example)	CG3g; CG3h
Sickness Absence Management Policy (Version 01, 2017)	2.3e; CG4e
Strategic Development Committee Terms of Reference	2.2f
Teaching and Learning Policy (Version 02, 2017)	CG5a
Teaching, Learning and Assessment Committee Terms of Reference	2.3f; CG1j; CG5g; CG6g
Teaching, Learning and Assessment Strategy, 2018 - 2023	2.3f; CG5a; CG5c; CG5g; CG5h; CG6d
College Policies (A – Z)	CG2a
Data Protection at CCSP	CG8d
Staff Gateway (Password protected: CCQQI) The Staff Gateway contains every policy, and its associated document(s), at CCSP. It also contains other key documents concerning our quality assurance framework.	CG2a
Quality Assurance at CCSP	CG2a; CG2e; CG9c

Annexe 2:   Provider staff met in the course of the Evaluation

Name   Role/Position

Name	Role/Position
Fr Conn Ó Maoldhomhnaigh	President
Dr Thomas Mc Grath	VP for Academic Affairs and Registrar
Dr Andrew O'Regan	Assistant Registrar for Strategic Development
Dr Margaret Murphy	Assistant Registrar for Academic Affairs
Dr Eric Derr	QA Officer/ International Officer
Eddie Deegan	Director of Operations
Helen Maher	Strategic Project and Collaborative Engagement
Lisa Fortune	Head of Learner Services
Fiona McGuill	President's Office, notetaker
Dr Simon Workman	Programme Director (PD), English & History
Dr John McHugh	PD, Applied Social Studies (Professional Social Care)
Helen Maher	PD, Social, Political and Community Studies
Dr Eoghan Smith	PD, Arts & Humanities
Damien Mc Lellan	Lecturer / Course Leader, MA (Leadership in Therapeutic Child & Social Care)
Dr Lucy Bennett	Lecturer
Dr Ida Milne	Lecturer
Carolyn Glynn	IT Officer
Bernie Deasy	Data Protection Officer
Karen Delaney	Admissions
Barbara O'Neill	Marketing Manager
Margaret Hegarty	Digital & Marketing Project Manager

Quality and Qualifications Ireland (QQI),
26/27 Denzille Lane,
Dublin 2, D02 P266
Ireland

31 July 2019

Dear Walter,

Thank you for the Report of the Panel in respect of Carlow College, St. Patrick's Re-engagement application. Enclosed is our response to the Panel's Findings and the Specific Advice detailed.

As College President I would like to thank the panel members for their professional and collegiate approach during the site visit.

I would also like to thank the staff of QQI for their guidance throughout this process which was a great benefit to the College.

Yours faithfully,

Fr Conn Ó Maoldhomhnaigh

College President

Carlow College - Coláiste Ceatharlach Established - 1782 - Bunaithe

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Summary of Panel Findings and Commendations

The panel would like to commend the College's engagement with the panel during the site visit and in particular commends:

- The comprehensive review and re-structuring that had taken place with an authentically collaborative approach across the College community.

- The calibre of directors the College has appointed.

- The support provided to staff to engage in research, external engagement activities and ongoing professional development.

- The broad range of assessment methodology employed across the College.

- The College's obvious dedication to learner support which was evident throughout the day's panel discussions and in particular in discussions with the Head of Student Services.

- The College's approach to self-review and the extensive and authentic scope of collaboration it demonstrated in relation to the re-engagement process.

Carlow College, St. Patrick's Response to the Panel's Commendations:

Carlow College welcomes the Panel's Report as it is further affirmation that we are maintaining and developing a learner-centred third-level institution that is delivering on our mission, predicated on our values: 'to educate, engage and inspire our learners through the provision of transformational learning and teaching experiences'. Moreover, this report and commendations are an endorsement of the quality assurance framework at Carlow College and assures internal and external stakeholders that we are exceeding both national and international quality assurance standards. Carlow College is particularly pleased in the Panel's commendation regarding our 'obvious dedication to learner support'. This positively confirms one of our core institutional values of friendliness and service, a commitment 'to maintain a hospitable, learner-centred environment that recognises each learner's individual learning journey, and that promotes, values and supports their personal, social and cultural development'.

The re-engagement process was a rewarding process for our institution and provided Carlow College the opportunity to showcase our quality assurance framework to a high-calibre external panel of experts. Carlow College thanks the Panel for their diligent review of our application, the professionalism they showed during the site visit and the recommendations they have made to enhance our quality assurance framework.

Carlow College, St. Patrick's Response to the Panel Recommendations

1. Given the size of the College and its existing staffing, the panel recommends reviewing the quantity of dedicated committees and their memberships with a view to streamlining committee activities.

Carlow College has made significant strides in developing a robust fit-for-purpose quality structure and will continue to review, on an annual basis, the quantity of dedicated committees and their memberships. In particular, a working group was established by Management Board to review our organisational structures to ensure that they are fit-for-purpose; this review, which will include a review of committee activities and staff consultation, is scheduled to be completed during the 2019 / 2020 Academic Year.

2. The panel recommends that the College review its sign-posting of QA documentation for ease of accessibility.

Carlow College is committed to empowering all stakeholders to participate in the development, maintenance and improvement of a robust and fit-for-purpose quality assurance system. The Quality Assurance Officer is working closely with HR, Programme Directors and the Head of Student Services to raise awareness of QA documentation and improve its accessibility. For example, the College is updating all handbooks and programme literature to include a quality assurance section and is hiring a Learner Information and Retention Officer (August 2019).

3. The panel recommends the College consider its approach systematically to gathering feedback and closing the loop with stakeholders as to how issues raised are addressed.

The College notes and accepts the Panel's recommendation and is currently reviewing its systematic approach to gathering feedback from all stakeholders including learners, lecturers, administration and other staff and external agencies. Programme Directors will play a key role in ensuring that the collection of feedback is regular and systematic across the programmes. The recently introduced Student Record Management System will greatly assist in this exercise.

The College's Programme and Cross-Programme Monitoring Reports provide a mechanism to identify themes and trends arising from survey data and to document actions taken. The College will also work closely with the Students' Union officers and class representatives to make sure that responses to learner feedback are communicated back to learners. The recent appointment of a Learner Information and Retention Officer offers an additional channel of communication with which to close the feedback loop (August 2019).

4. To further ensure fairness and standardisation of assessment across and within programmes, the panel advises that the provider develop and implement a formalised internal moderation process.

The College notes and accepts the Panel's advice on this issue and the Teaching, Learning and Assessment Committee will develop and implement internal moderation for all of our academic programmes.

5. The panel advises that processes in relation to repeat arrangements, late submission and extenuating circumstances be documented clearly within the College's assessment policies and related documentation for students to ensure transparency and consistency in these processes.

The College welcomes and accepts the Panel's advice on this issue. The College's assessment regulations are under active review following the recent adoption of a semesterised system and expansion of assessment instruments. The procedures around continuous assessment (including repeat arrangements, late submissions and extenuating circumstances) are being updated by the Teaching, Learning and Assessment Committee and will be presented for approval by the Academic Council early in the 2019-20 Academic Year. Once approved, these processes will be communicated to learners via the College website, VLE and other means.

6. The panel recommends that the College build on a strong culture of face-to-face training and sign-posting to student services via e-mail by creating more formal materials and including signposting on the student gateway. It is also recommends that the College re-induct staff into learner supports on an ongoing basis.

The College welcomes the Panel's commendation on our dedication to learner supports. In addition to a strong culture of face-to-face training and sign-posting to Student Services via email, learners are advised of the supports and services available through learner handbooks, induction folders, service information leaflets, electronic noticeboards and through the Academic Help Desk in the P.J. Brophy Library. The Learner Resources Committee will continue to develop and review the ways in which the College communicates information to learners; including better utilisation of the Student Gateway and Moodle VLEs.

At present, College staff are inducted on learner supports each August as part of Programme Board Meetings. To strengthen our approach, information on learner supports will be included in staff induction packs and as part of our on-going CPD Programme.

7. The panel recommends that Carlow College continue to grow its public profile to communicate the great work that is being done by the College with a wider audience and enhance its public image.

The College welcomes the Panel's acknowledgement of the great work being done at Carlow College. Through the use of strategic marketing and public relations we will continue to increase the public profile of the College and enhance its public image both locally and nationally.