



Grange Community College Further Education Teaching and Learning Policy

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1. Scope

This policy applies to all Further Education (FE) teachers and students in the college.

2. Rationale

The need for a formal policy was identified as a way of meeting the SOLAS reporting requirements. Grange Community College (GCC) Further Education sector aims to prepare students for life in a global, national, regional or local society by enabling them to realise their potential through a transformational learning experience.

Within this broad aim, GCC's purpose is to enable students from all nationalities, backgrounds and abilities to reach their maximum potential, academically and as individuals, achieving the best possible examination results, progressing to the best possible colleges of further education, universities and/or enter the world of work. GCC achieves this by delivering innovative programmes, outstanding teaching and learning and strives to transform the educational experience of every FE student.

3. Relationship to the College's Mission Statement

Grange Community College seeks to encourage FE students to develop their talents and reach their full potential by providing a balanced, challenging curriculum which fosters intellectual, emotional, personal and professional development in an inclusive environment.

4. Introduction

Teaching and learning should be planned, delivered, assessed, reviewed and followed-up in accordance with the values and principles outlined in this policy.

All members of the FE teaching staff must be registered with the Teaching Council and hold, or be in the process of attaining, the required teaching and subject qualifications as required by the Teaching Council. (See Further Education: General and Programme Requirements for the Accreditation of Teacher Education Qualifications, Teaching Council 2011).

5. Policy aim, expectations, principles and values

The aim of this policy is to outline the GCC approach to and expectations for teaching and learning in the FE sector of the college and the means by which it strives to achieve outstanding teaching and learning practices.

These expectations are underpinned by the following values

- FE teachers share and uphold the values and principles set out in this policy
- FE teachers undertake professional development enabling them to contribute to the provision of outstanding teaching and learning at the College
- FE students are encouraged to behave in a manner that facilitates their learning, development and progression.

College teaching and learning principles

A College approach to teaching and learning in the FE sector is underpinned by the following overarching principles:

- Teaching and learning should be a professional, positive, engaging and rewarding partnership between FE Students and teachers
- Teachers should ensure that their FE Students fully understand the learning objectives of their studies at every stage. In turn, FE Students should reflect on their own progress towards achieving their goals and share responsibility for their learning outcomes
- Teachers should develop the skills, confidence and motivation in students to become successful independent lifelong FE Students
- Teachers should approach teaching and learning with an open mind, actively seek new ways to motivate and engage FE Students and utilise the technologies and other resources available to them to enhance the teaching and learning experience

- Each and every learner should be provided with the opportunities, resources and support they need to fulfil their academic potential
- Teachers should be provided with the opportunities, resources, training and support they need to fulfil their teaching potential
- Teachers are encouraged to be reflective, assessing their own performance and development needs, and to work together to share best practice and support each other's development
- Teachers are involved and engage fully with the self-evaluation process
- Collaborative group work is used frequently. Where appropriate, teachers reverse FE Students' negative thinking about their own capabilities and enhance positive self-belief by encouraging open discussion about learning, learning strategies, effort and ability
- Teachers remember to apply the principle that FE Students' motivation and confidence are enhanced by respect and approval from others

6. College approach to teaching and learning in the FE sector

GCC defines its approach to teaching and learning based on its vision, context and key principles, as follows:

Planning and programme development

- Programmes that enable progression into higher education have been specially developed to meet the needs of the college student cohort
- Programme plans are in place for every programme and are reviewed and updated annually to reflect the changing needs and goals of students, changes to the academic landscape, and in response to College's self-evaluation processes
- Content and delivery is planned at every stage, from a programme plan or module assessment plan to an individual lesson level, to meet clearly defined learning objectives/outcomes
- Subject/module-specific planning takes the form of detailed schemes of work, which are adopted and updated by teachers individually throughout the delivery of each programme
- Teachers apply their experience and understanding of teaching and learning to plan lessons that engage and actively involve FE students
- Students with special educational needs or disabilities are referred to the Guidance Counsellor or the Head of Further Education (see FE student guidance and support plan)

Managing attendance and progress

- FE Teachers record attendance, , continuous assessment and feedback in their teacher diary for each FE student on an on-going basis, enabling access to all relevant information for student monitoring purposes

- The FE attendance officer identifies and addresses areas of concern in relation to attendance (please refer to the FE attendance policy attendance)

Programme Delivery

FE Teachers introduce and employ a variety of teaching and learning methods and resources, both inside and outside of the classroom, to enthuse, motivate, challenge and involve students, such as:

- Experiential learning
- Intelligent Questioning Techniques
- Practical activities
- Interactive seminar- and tutorial-style sessions
- Use of other interactive methods/resources
- Teacher-led lessons
- Use of a Virtual Learning Environment, a pilot for 2017/2018, google classroom is being trialled and other technology enhanced learning media
- Field trips and visits
- Invited speakers/experts
- Flipped classrooms
- Team teaching
- Case study-based group work
- Research-based assignments
- Assessment for learning strategies, where students are made aware of the learning objectives for each lesson to enable them to evaluate their own understanding and progress and identify when they need help or clarification. Learning objectives clearly distinguish the acquisition of subject knowledge from the development of learning and other skills
- Success criteria are clearly defined for the students by being clearly laid out on all assignment briefs, so that they know what they have to do in order to meet learning objectives and to achieve good assessment outcomes
- Lesson content is reinforced through homework, key tests and provision of learning resources available to students outside of lesson time

Providing feedback

- FE students receive regular and timely feedback on progress by FE teachers, on assessments in accordance with DDLETB/GCC assessment policies and procedures
- Feedback addresses progress regarding the acquisition of subject knowledge as well as the development of key skills relevant to the learning process

Supporting and developing college teaching and learning

The College teaching staff participate in Continuing Professional Development (CPD) programmes, which can be both subject-specific and general teaching and learning in nature. Training and development provision is based on college-wide and individual/group needs. The individual needs of teachers should be identified through self-evaluation.

Additional support is available individually to staff through regular meetings with peers, including the Head of Further Education, Deputy Principal and Principal. The DDLETB organise CPD events such as the Technology Enhanced Learning (TEL) conference which has taken place over the last two academic years or the Team Teaching session which took place in GCC for all teachers both FE and 2nd level in October 2017.

Learner support and development

The College supports learner development through ensuring each lesson has a focus on skills as well as subject knowledge acquisition.

College services such as

- Assessment support
- Guidance Counselling
- FE student council
- Higher Education Authority fund for students, which aims to ensure that students feel personally supported and have the networks and activities in place to make college life enjoyable, which in turn helps them to become independent, motivated FE Students capable of fulfilling their academic potential.
- This year we are piloting the use of a VLE, Google classroom with a group of FE students. It is anticipated that this VLE or another suitable substitute, will be rolled out for all FE students during the next academic year
- Study skills
- Block days given to allocate work experience.

The role of self-evaluation

Self-evaluation plays a key role in making meaningful and beneficial changes to our teaching and learning provision.

Summarised below are the main on-going internal self-evaluation activities that work in parallel with FE sector of the college to support and inform teaching and learning practices:

- Programme evaluation – key programme parameters are measured to assess programme performance and identify areas for development work. SOLAS as the national funders of Further Education together with Department of Education (DES) review our provision through the Funding Allocation Request

and Reporting database (FARR) and The National Course Calendar (NCC)

- Soliciting student feedback – student opinion and feedback is surveyed both during and at the end of their programme of study. GCC has an active FE student council, representative of all programmes on offer in the college.
- Soliciting staff feedback – FE teachers are encouraged to provide feedback on GCC's policies and practices, and any other area of concern or where it is felt beneficial changes could be made.

7. College expectations of FE students and teachers

In order that our vision and principles are upheld and teaching and learning practices are carried out in accordance with our defined approach, GCC has the following expectations of FE students and teachers:

Students are expected to:

- Actively participate in and reflect upon their own learning and share responsibility for their progress and outcomes
- Strive to become independent FE Students
- Behave in a way that allows them and others to learn - listen when requested; allow others to speak and support them in expressing their views and ideas
- Demonstrate diligence, enthusiasm and a genuine interest in their studies
- Attend all classes and advise the college in advance for any planned absence
- Arrive on time for lessons and other events associated with their studies, and bring with them any requested materials and equipment
- Ensure that they have access to learning resources they are responsible for sourcing
- Prepare for examinations and assessments to the best of their ability
- Adhere to all internal and external regulations regarding conduct in examinations
- Be co-operative and willing to participate in different approaches to teaching and learning
- Be prepared to study additional modules as required by university offers
- Interact with fellow students and teachers to promote collective learning
- Provide feedback on their learning experiences by completing student surveys
- Treat learning resources, facilities and materials belonging to the college with respect
- Respect the diversity of cultures and backgrounds of fellow students and staff
- Also refer to the FE student code of conduct

Expectations of FE teachers

- Understand and uphold key teaching and learning visions, principles and approach
- Be familiar with all college policies and procedures and apply them consistently and fairly

- Be helpful, approachable and supportive, and investigate and understand their students' needs
- Model the behaviour that they expect from their students
- Treat all FE students in a manner that reflects the independent and responsible FE Students they are supporting them to become
- Be informed about the FE students they teach, understand their goals and work with them to set challenging learning targets
- Ensure that their subject and curriculum knowledge is up to date and that they keep abreast of key developments in the Irish context
- Plan their lessons to meet the varying needs and backgrounds of their students
- Clearly communicate and define to the students the intended learning outcomes for each lesson
- Build students' confidence and ability to engage actively in their learning through varied teaching and learning practices, listening to their ideas and positively affirming their contributions
- Differentiate classroom and homework activities to develop different skills and maintain motivation and engagement
- Mark work and provide constructive feedback in accordance with relevant assessment policies and procedures
- Promote independent learning, students' responsibilities within the learning process, and student self-reflection and progress monitoring
- Participate in CPD and peer support activities and share best practice with colleagues
- Be positive and supportive in their attitude to fellow members of staff:

8. GCC FE policies relating to teaching and learning practices

- FE Teaching and Learning policy
- FE student induction policy
- FE student admission and appeals policies
- FE student Attendance Policy
- FE student guidance and support plan
- Fe student code of conduct
- Teaching Council Code of Conduct
- DDLETB/GCC Quality Assurance Agreement with QQI
- GCC/ITEC QA agreement

9. Ratification and Communication

The finalised draft will be ratified by the Board of Management in the 2017/2018 academic year.

This policy will be published on the website for current staff and a copy will be available in the policies folder in the principal's office.

Monitoring the Implementation of the Plan

The Principal in conjunction with the Policy Steering Committee will be responsible for ensuring the monitoring of this policy.

Review and Evaluation of the Plan

The initial review will take place after two years or sooner, if it is deemed necessary by the staff.

Implementation Date:

This policy will come into effect after being signed by the Board of Management

Signed: Date:

Chairperson of Board of Management