



Communications & Management Institute

Quality Assurance Procedures

HETAC

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Document History

Version	Date	Notes	Approved by:
1.1	15 July 2008	Second Release	J. O'Toole

About This Document

This document is formatted in three sections and nine appendices. Sections 1 – 3 discuss the quality aspects of the Institute with respect to HETAC Awards. The Appendices offer source material, sample forms and imbedded source document to better assess our submission. To view the imbedded documents, simply click the associated icon and the document will open in a new screen.

1 HISTORY OF CMI AND ITS PHILOSOPHY

John O'Toole BA, MA, established CMI as a trading name in April 2004. CMI is a short abbreviation for Communications & Management Institute. During John's time working in the educational sector, he identified a real demand for people to acquire professional qualifications. Solely focusing on delivering professional courses, CMI was established with a simple goal:

"To offer quality part-time education courses to those seeking to advance their skills and career in the workplace"

John identified that by offering qualifications, mainly in the fields of management and communications, CMI was in fact satisfying a growing need from employers to up skill their workforce.

CMI became a limited company in March 2006 and registered with the Company Registration Office as Communications and Management Institute Ltd. Since its humble beginnings, more and more organisations have sent their staff to attend CMI courses. CMI has, to date, delivered courses to over 1200 people and has built an excellent reputation with employers from the public sector to the top national and multi-national companies across a range of industries.

CMI's philosophy is to provide quality education and training courses which can be immediately applied and used by learners to accelerate knowledge and skills in the workplace.

1.1 Nature of Programmes Offered

CMI is divided into two divisions, education and training. The educational division has been delivering Diploma courses since 2004. The training division, on the other hand, offers day training programmes to companies and since 2004 has built an excellent reputation with HR Managers, Training Managers and Sales Managers from the public sector through to a range of multi-national and national companies.

The nature of the courses offered are mainly business orientated and are divided into two categories, Communications and Management. All courses are sub divided within these two categories and are focused primarily on accelerating the skills and knowledge of individuals. Current UK validated Diploma programmes offered within these two categories include:

Management	Communications
Management	Journalism and Media
Project Management	Sales and Advertising
Human Resources Management	Marketing and Public Relations

CMI Diploma programmes are from six to two years in duration.

1.2 Mission Statement

“The Communications and Management Institute values the importance of creating a life long learning environment that enables learners to realise their full potential.

We seek to promote dialogue and encourage confidence and ability amongst all our learners. Through quality and excellence in education, learners are empowered to apply what they have learned so that they can make a real contribution to the workplace of the future.

By this mission, the Communications and Management Institute seeks to raise the standard of communications and management skills and education."

The mission of CMI, as an independent private college, is to prepare students to become effective managers and communicators in a competitive and rapidly changing global business environment.

CMI interprets and spells out this mission, by its intention to provide the highest quality education and learning experience for learners while at the same time advancing the standard of communications and management skills of the participants. Staff and students are nurtured as individuals in a small college environment and are encouraged to achieve their full potential through quality education programmes, engagement and active participation.

1.3 Strategic Plan

The long -term plan is to develop the standard and quality of the courses designed and delivered through both divisions. CMI has succeeded in being profitable based on its strategic position and reputation with key decision makers in organisations.

Within the 2007/08 academic year it is intended to develop a quality assurance system which will raise the standard of the education division and the programmes offered.

In tandem with this objective, CMI will submit its Quality Assurance Procedures to HETAC for approval. Thereafter CMI will support the ongoing maintenance and development of an approved quality system that provides enhanced learning for students. Similar quality assurance procedures have been developed and submitted to FETAC for approval. It is believed that this strategic decision will help strengthen CMI's relationship with its stakeholders and assist in identifying new opportunities where individuals and organisations value quality programmes. Parallel with seeking agreement from HETAC on its Quality Assurance Procedures the Institute plans to submit part-time Level 8/9 programmes to HETAC for approval. These programmes will be the equivalent of level 8, Higher Diploma/Postgraduate programmes on the framework.

1.3.1 Market Niche

The education market is a competitive market made up of a mixture of state recognised and private colleges/institutes offering a wide range of courses. CMI's education division focuses solely on the adult education market and excludes itself from the post-leaving certificate market.

Due to the positioning of CMI in the marketplace and its close relationship with employers, 95% of students attending classes are in employment and only 5% of students at CMI are unemployed or are funded by FAS or a special scheme.

1.3.2 Age Range, Gender and Academic Standing of Learners

The age range of CMI's market is usually from 23 years old to 55 years old. Eighty percent of the students attending CMI courses are 25 to 35 years old. In general, there is a higher female than male ratio, attending CMI courses and typically the ratio is 60% female, 40% male students. 65% of adults doing CMI courses never completed a post leaving certificate/post A-level or equivalent course before. It may have been a number of years since they last completed a course.

Approximately 35% of adults doing CMI courses have previously completed a Diploma or Degree, or Masters Degree qualification. The majority tend to have completed a Diploma only.

It is also intended to establish a rigorous RPL system for any future programmes designed for approval with HETAC. This will be outlined in the Design of Programme document to follow after approval of Quality Assurance procedures.

1.4 Staffing

CMI currently has a panel of 25 associate lecturers. The majority have a minimum of a Masters Degree qualification and three lecturing staff are currently pursuing Doctorial degrees. In some cases, where there is significant work experience in the subject delivered, a relevant degree is deemed as sufficient. Each of CMI's lecturers works in and holds educational qualifications in the area they lecture. In cases where lecturers leave, because of personal or work circumstances, a pool of approved standby lecturers are ready to fill their place. Recruitment for new lecturers is carried out on a regular basis through a Recruitment agency and online agency.

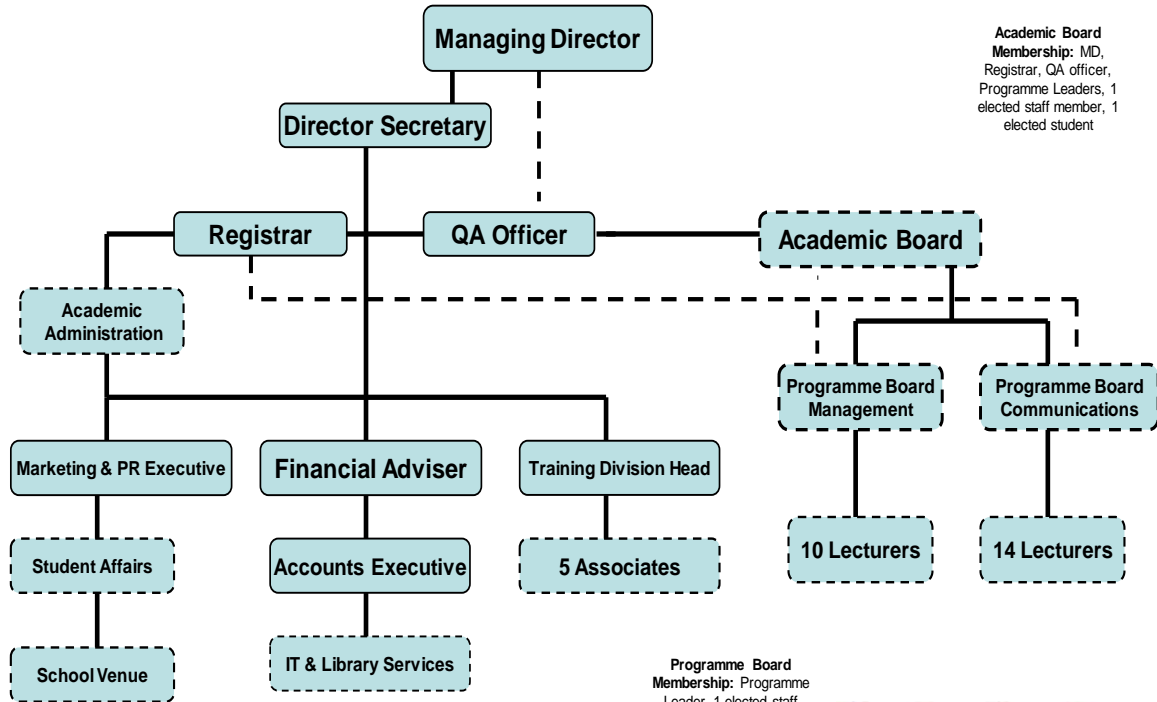
Full-time Staff Members		Associate Faculty and Support Staff	
1	Managing Director	25	Associates
1	Director/Company Secretary	1	Marketing
1	Registrar	1	IT/Online Library Support
2	Head of Programmes – (1 each for Communications Programme & Management Programme)	1	Quality Officer
1	Accounts Officer	1	Finance Advisor
1	Head of Training		

1.5 Legal Structure of Organisation

CMI started trading as a Business name in April 2004. The trading name later changed to a limited legal entity. CMI, Communications and Management Institute Ltd registered with the company registration office and became a limited liability company in March 2006.

The Managing Director of CMI, John M. O'Toole BA, MA is executive Director of CMI and Maria Daly holds the position of non- executive director and serves as the Company Secretary.

1.6 Organisational Chart of CMI



Academic Board Membership: MD, Registrar, QA officer, Programme Leaders, 1 elected staff member, 1 elected student

Programme Board Membership: Programme Leader, 1 elected staff member, 1 elected student, Relevant Lecturing Staff



Organisational Chart

1.6.1 Roles and Responsibilities

Managing Director: The Managing Director is responsible for the overall strategic management, direction and operation of CMI. His duties include attending regular meetings with the Academic Board, Quality Officer and Head of Training and dealing with operational issues as they arise. The Managing director has a place on the Academic Board and is also involved in closely monitoring feedback and reports from key CMI personnel such as Finance, Registrar and Programme Leaders. He reports on finance matters to the financial advisor and Company Secretary.

Director Secretary: The Company secretary serves as a non-executive director of CMI and is not involved in the day to day running of the institute. Principle duties include monitoring and signing off end of year profit and loss accounts and contributing to the overall direction and management of CMI. She also participates in significant ceremonial events at CMI.

Academic Board: The Institute's Academic Board is responsible for overseeing CMI's Strategic Plan and academic programmes. The Academic Board meets regularly and reviews feedback from the Programme Board and QA officer.

The role of the Academic Board also includes the following duties; Examination Disciplinary Decisions, Programme Reviews, Periodic Reviews and Annual Monitoring Reports.

Membership of the Academic Board is: Managing Director of CMI, Registrar, Quality Officer, Programme Leader Management, Programme Leader Communications, One elected staff member and one elected learner.

Educational and training issues dealt with by the Academic Board are:

- Student affairs
- Assessments/examinations and associated disciplinary issues
- Programmatic Reviews
- Periodic Reviews/Annual Monitoring Reports
- New Student enrolments – admissions

- Course development & design

Programme Board: The design and delivery of the programme content is the responsibility of the Programme Board in consultation with the Programme Leader. Appropriate forms of assessment are also agreed by the programme board. The Programme Leader is chair of the programme board and is responsible for the overall quality management and delivery of a programme.

Head of Training: The head of training is responsible for the design, delivery and implementation of Corporate Training programmes to staff in public, private and semi-private organisations. The Head of Training is required to deliver training and also co-ordinate existing CMI associate trainers with the demands for training from companies. His role is to build relationships with key decisions makers such as HR Officers, Sales Managers, Financial directors and others responsible for training of staff in their organisation. Primarily the role is business development and management of training. This person reports directly to the Managing director of CMI and to the Academic Board.

Quality Officer: The QA Officer monitors and evaluates the effectiveness of the current QA system at CMI. Their role is to report directly to the Academic Board and Managing Director of CMI on matters such as quality, effectiveness of existing policies/procedures and design of new processes.

Programme Leader: The programme leader's role is to deal with the overall design and implementation of a programme and to efficiently deal with any matters that arise in relation to the programme.

The Programme Leader works closely with students and lecturers and is also involved in lecturing on the programme themselves. It is the responsibility of the Programme leader to integrate lecturers into a programme through induction and ongoing training/mentoring. They chair the programme board and co-ordinate all activities in relation to the programme. The programme leader in consultation with the programme board reports directly to the Academic Board. Programme Leaders shall be responsible to the Registrar for:

- The provision of accurate data on each student in accordance with the approved assessment regulations
- Regular and timely feedback in relation to programme reviews

It is their responsibility to produce a report and brief to the Academic Board on areas which require further action. (See Appendix 4 for a sample of the Programme Monitoring Report.)

Registrar: The registrar is involved in checking all QA procedures such as new programme design and submissions to HETAC. The Registrar organises a programme team to prepare a new programme submission and then organises an advisory panel to check the suitability of the course.

Following consultation between the programme leader and the Registrar, an advisory panel will be set up to assess the programme before sending it to HETAC for evaluation.

The Registrar maintains a file on each Programme review which is held normally every 5 years. The Registrar consults with the Peer review group nominated to assess the programme and will submit a copy of the self evaluation report for their consideration.

Financial Adviser: The Financial Adviser prepares detailed profit and loss accounts and a statement of accounts for CMI annually. Principle duties include: overview of the tax positions of CMI, submitting the taxes such as PAYE, Corporation Tax and so on and makes sure all tax liabilities and obligations are satisfied.

Accounts Co-ordinator: The accounts co-ordinator reports directly to the managing director of CMI and is responsible for the overall management of the accounting system at CMI. She prepares a set of annual accounts for the Financial Adviser.

Marketing: Responsible for managing marketing activities for CMI consistent with the allocated budget. Additionally holds the responsibility for the design and delivery of all advertising, marketing and public relations campaigns for CMI. This person reports directly to the managing director and consults with the registrar. They are also involved in student affairs and support the registrar.

IT/Librarian: CMI has invested in a student online system which allows students access to course notes, material, exam papers, journals and other reference material. The IT person is dedicated to making sure the overall access to course information is available to students. This role reports to the Registrar.

1.6.2 Online Library System

IT/Library Resources - Online Learning System

CMI has set up online access for all students to a full range of course notes, journals, subscription based websites and resources through an open source system. Access to several well known subscription based websites is offered to students. A small library housing key text books is also offered.

1.7 Governing Arrangements

The Board of Directors comprises of John O'Toole MA and Maria Daly. The Articles of Association set out the requirements for the convening and holding of board meetings, while the corporate governance requirements for registered companies, Companies (Auditing and Accounting) Act, 2003 ensures that regular meetings are held.

To satisfy requirements under Companies Acts, 1963-2003, written notice is provided including an agenda and all relevant documents to be considered at every two monthly meeting. All minutes of board meetings are kept in the register of minutes.

Meetings are attended by the Managing Director and by Director/Company Secretary. The purpose of each meeting at two monthly intervals is to review and monitor the financial position of CMI as well as its core educational and training activity.

1.7.1 Annual Return

The Companies Acts requires CMI to submit an annual return to the Companies Registration Office each year, which is signed by the directors. The annual return includes a balance sheet and profit and loss account as presented to the AGM in the year to which the accounts relate, as well as the auditors' and directors' reports on the balance sheet and profit and loss account.

An annual report and accounts is issued which includes a statement on the extent to which the company has applied the principles of the Combined Code on Corporate Governance.

The directors at CMI take all reasonable steps to ensure that the company complies with its obligation to keep proper books of accounts, knowing that failure to do so is an offence under the Companies Acts. The two directors, John O'Toole MA and Maria Daly are the only shareholders of Communications and Management Institute Ltd.

1.7.2 Auditors

At each AGM, CMI appoints an auditor to hold office for the coming year. Currently the same auditor for 2007 tax year will be renewed for 2008 tax year.

1.8 Accommodation and Facilities

CMI delivers all its courses in its Harcourt rd, Dublin 2 training facility, Dame Street, D2 and Cashel Rd, Dublin 12. Each facility has staff offices, class rooms, toilets, white boards, tables, chairs, and equipment to deliver courses effectively. (*See the Learner's Handbook in Appendix 9 for more information.*) Exams are held in the RDS and Terenure College, Dublin 6. They are both purpose built exam halls which house up to 150 students in any one sitting. Special individual exam sittings are arranged at CMI's training facility located at Unit 14A, Cashel Business Centre, Cashel Rd, Dublin 12.

1.8.1 Library, IT Cultural and Sporting Amenities

CMI provides a library of core text books relating to each course at its training facility located at Cashel Road facility in Dublin. This library has been replaced by a paperless approach to accessing study materials such as books, notes, journals, articles and information web resources. CMI has invested in setting up online access to a full range of resources for students. Resources can be accessed via CMI's website, www.CMI-Ireland.com. Students simply insert their name and password and will have access to the full range of materials related to the course they are studying which include lecture notes, specialist journal and information websites, subscription based websites.

2 QUALITY ASSURANCE

2.1 Quality Assurance Policy

CMI's education and training programmes are subjected to rigorous and regular monitoring and review. The Institute is committed to self-study and peer review. The Academic Board are responsible for overseeing the monitoring and review process. The Institute through its Quality Assurance Policies and Procedures has a coherent framework for the provision and maintenance of a quality system of education and training.

2.2 Key Tenets of CMI's Quality Assurance Policy

Management – the Institute's Quality Assurance Procedures Manual details all the Quality Assurance Procedures facilitating a systematic approach to enhance quality arising from active involvement of relevant stakeholders and showing clear lines of authority where responsibility for quality lies. Senior management within the Institute have a particular responsibility to promote, foster and maintain a quality culture.

Communications – CMI strives to achieve high quality in all its activities concerned with the provision of education and training. This is achieved by an effective communication system throughout the organisation to ensure clarity and transparency in all matters relating to the adherence to and the implementation of the Institute's QAP. CMI will work and communicate with all relevant stakeholders to ensure the effectiveness of our quality assured procedures.

Transparency – CMI ensures that all relevant information is accessible to stakeholders. Information on programmes is accessible to learners and employers' (example: syllabi). Assessment requirements are made available in hard copy and electronically. See section on CMI Assessment policy in this document. Greater transparency will be accomplished by using the Institute's website to publish minutes, policy documents and procedures when adopted.

Teaching and Learner Support – CMI is committed to providing a stimulating learning and academic experience. Learners are exposed to different learning modes, lectures, tutorials, seminars and practical.

Human Resources – CMI recognises equality and identifies staff as an important resource within the organisation. It is Institute policy at all times to have a sufficient number of highly qualified and committed staff to support its mission. CMI aims to foster an ethos of commitment, endeavour and respect within its existing staff and teaching community. To consistently improve the quality of education provided, the Institute encourages and facilitates staff training through a staff development plan.

Programmes – CMI aims to provide a range of relevant part-time programmes of approved content and academic standard together with a systematic process for the monitoring, evaluation and continuous enhancement of these programmes. This is facilitated by placing quality criteria into new programmes, ongoing monitoring of existing programmes and 5-year review of all CMI's programme.

Learning – the management structure, the small size of the Institute and the nature of the education and training offered, all help to create a quality learning environment for learners. To facilitate opportunities for active learning CMI encourages the use of group and project work, reflective practice and the simulation of employment skills.

Learner Assessment – CMI is committed to have an assessment system which is fair, consistent and effective in measuring the extent to which learners achieve stated learning outcomes and that satisfies external national standards. This policy is a fundamental quality objective. It is CMI policy to ensure that learners are given sufficient information on assessment requirements. See [Procedures for the assessment of learners](#) for more information.

Learner Feedback – Student representatives will be included on all CMI programme boards. CMI strives to develop systematic methods for gathering learner feedback on its education and training programmes. Fair and transparent systems for processing re-checks, reviews, complaints and appeals are in place. (*See Appendix 2 for Procedures for Re-checks, Reviews and Appeals.*)

Student Admissions – the Institute has a diverse range of learners being admitted to new and existing part-time programmes. Reasonable accommodation is made to facilitate a diverse range of learners and to satisfy equality requirements. Information on equality admission requirements adopted by CMI is outlined in the programme submission document which follows later. CMI consistently responds to requests from the public sector and national and international companies to provide refresher courses and CPD programmes for their employees.

Research – CMI facilitates and encourages lecturing staff to engage in research. However since the programmes provided and delivered are part-time, opportunities for staff to engage in research are constrained as many of the lecturing staff are associate faculty.

Institute Environment – the Institute will strive to maintain and improve its premises, facilities and equipment to meet the needs of its existing and future learners. CMI will provide a forum whereby learners and staff can make suggestions about possible changes to their teaching and learning environment so that their responses can be recorded, evaluated and acted upon. (*See Appendix 8 for sample forms.*)

Verifiable Data – the Institute generates data on critical quality indicators such as, enrolments, continuous assessment, feedback surveys, programme board recommendations, examination results, periodic reviews, completion rates and extern examiners reports. It will collate, analyse and monitor these performance indicators. Minutes of programme boards, and periodic reviews will augment this data. The Quality Officer will report quarterly to the MD on this data. (*See Appendix 4 for a sample Programme Monitoring Report and Appendix 8 for Sample Forms.*)

Staff & Lecturers – Management and staff will be required to take personal responsibility for quality at CMI. CMI facilitates and encourages staff and associate lecturers to engage in promotion and maintenance of quality standards through ongoing training and inductions.

2.3 Quality Culture

The achievement of excellent quality programmes is a complex process involving the community of staff and students at CMI. The active co-operation of staff members acting as a team is necessary to promote a quality culture and the support and encouragement of the Institute's stakeholders helps to foster the goal of quality. The physical environment, well equipped class rooms, facilities, library, information technology, and student support services also contribute materially towards achieving academic excellence.

CMI recognises that ownership of quality systems and working practices must be shared among those directly involved. An indispensable element of quality is the desire to continually review work practices and procedures and so ensure that the aims and objectives of academic and training programmes are optimised with respect to the mission and strategy of the Institute. In the final analysis however, quality assurance is dependent on learners and staff members working in unison to the highest possible standard under the guidance of the Managing Director and with the support and encouragement of stakeholders and external agencies such as NQAI, HETAC & FETAC.

2.4 Promotion and Maintenance of Quality Assurance

CMI is conscious of its responsibility to promote a quality assurance ethos and to develop quality assurance procedures which can be implemented in the daily operations of the company. To ensure that a formal quality assurance procedure is promoted and maintained, CMI has appointed an independent quality assurance officer. It is the duty of the quality assurance officer to ensure that all Quality Assurance Procedures (QAPs) are documented and implemented by the staff.

2.4.1 Communications Policy

CMI offer two-way communication at all times to learners, staff and stakeholders. This Policy plays a central part of CMI's mission to offer open and transparent communication in all its forms.

2.5 Academic Board

The Institute's Academic Board is responsible for overseeing CMI's Strategic Plan and the academic programmes. The Academic Board has two main functions:

- to assist the Board of Directors and in particular the programme leaders in the planning , co-ordination and development of the educational work of the Institute
- to protect, maintain and develop the standard and quality of courses provided by the Institute

Membership of the Academic Board:

- Managing Director of the CMI
- Registrar
- Quality Officer
- Programme Leader Management
- Programme Leader Communications
- One elected staff member
- One elected learner

The Academic Board plays an important role in developing and maintaining the Institute's quality assurance procedures. The MD Chairs the Academic Board and ensures that it meets at least three times each academic year. The Quality Officer verifies that the decisions and recommendations of the AB are communicated to the Programme Boards and implemented.

2.5.1 Monitoring

The main purpose of the annual monitoring of programmes is to:

- Allow the Academic Board an opportunity to identify and implement corrective measures and other modifications on an annual basis;
- Ensure that, where appropriate, CMI is in a position to take action to enhance the quality of its programmes.

Any of the issues discussed within the report form are drawn from the minutes of the Academic Board meetings, responses to feedback received, feedback from the external examiner reports, student and staff feedback.

An important function of the Academic Board is to request the Programme Board through the Registrar to implement recommendations included in Extern Examiners Reports. The Quality Officer verifies that the decisions and recommendations of the Academic Board are communicated to the Programme Board and duly implemented. In instances where action has not been taken the Quality Officer will report to the Academic Board as necessary.

2.5.2 Review Cycles

In addition to our annual review, we conduct a major review of all CMI programmes at least every five years. This is a broad-ranging review, where the focus is on strategic issues relating to the overall role and performance of the Institute. The CMI Review considers the organisation as a whole and it examines; its general position and performance, its range of activities and how these are carried out, the range and quality of its taught programmes, its research and staff development activities, its management procedures and quality enhancement systems, its links with external bodies and its external environment.

Central to the major review process is an internal audit report. This is a critical evaluation of CMI's activities and highlights the strengths and achievements while identifying specific areas for improvement. The procedures for a Major Review may include a preliminary meeting of

the Academic Board one month before the review event, to consider the documentation and request further documentation, where this is considered necessary.

2.5.3 Staff Responsibility

Management and staff will be required to take personal responsibility for quality at CMI. Each member of CMI staff will be required to become personally familiar with the quality policy and procedures as outlined in this document. To ensure staff, take ownership of the quality process and procedures, a period of Induction will take place for all new staff members.

2.5.4 Outside Interests

CMI will work with all relevant participants and awarding bodies to ensure the effectiveness of our quality assured policy procedures. Implementation of a Programme Monitoring report and also a five year review (as outlined above), will ensure expectations and demands from students are met.

2.6 Programme Boards

The Programme board is chaired by the Programme leader, made up of lecturers associated with the programme as well as two elected students with limited attendance rights. The Remit of the Programme Board is seen as threefold:

1. Operational control and performance monitoring
2. Student feedback
3. Programme planning and development

For the purpose of clarity and describing the functionality of Quality Assurance it is useful to outline them separately.

These three functions may be considered under the following three headings :

1. Operational Issues:

- Planning, organising and reviewing student induction
- Examination result analysis
- Response to External Examiner Reports
- Programme Content & Assessment
- Resource identification
- Student progress monitoring
- Documenting actions and decisions

Appendix 2 – Programme Monitoring Report is prepared for each year of each programme and submitted to the Programme Leader annually on or before 31 October. This report seeks information on:

- pass rates and retention
 - student feed back
 - external examiner's reports
 - suggested actions where appropriate
- ### 2. Student feedback:
- a. Soliciting student feedback via surveys/student representatives
 - b. Attrition/retention initiatives

c. Documenting actions and decisions

In respect of student feedback, the Programme Board is responsible for issuing formal feedback questionnaires to students prior to the end of the course, and ensuring that the Programme Leader is aware of the results of such questionnaires. (*See Appendix 8 for Sample Forms.*)

The Admissions office requests each student who formally withdraws from a programme to complete a student exit questionnaire. This provides the Institute with valuable information on possible reasons why students are leaving prematurely. The results of the survey are analysed and issued to Programme Boards for action.

3. Planning and Development:

- Programme changes and updates
- Module reviews, updates and introducing new modules
- Evaluation of the quality of facility/resource provision
- New programme development
- Monitoring student feedback
- Documenting actions and decisions

Course development is by definition an ongoing activity. It is included as an agenda item for the operational meetings, but occasionally "*single item agenda*" meetings dealing solely with course modifications are held. At certain times, for example when developing a new programme or on the occasion of a Programmatic Review, several course development meetings would be required over a relatively short timescale.

2.6.1 Frequency of Meetings

Normally there are three meetings held annually to deal with operational issues as well as an examination pre-board meeting. Student representatives are required to leave the meeting when matters pertaining to individual students are under discussion. The order of the agenda is arranged to facilitate the attendance of students. In practice it has proven useful to invite the students at a later time than the other members, usually to coincide with the last thirty minutes of the meeting.

A primary function for a Programme Board is that of Exam Performance Analysis and this task is normally carried out following the completion of a module or programme.

2.7 Quality Assurance Handbook

The impetus to formalise written policies and procedures was influenced in the main by HETAC and their policy document entitled "*Guidelines and Criteria for Quality Assurance Procedures in Higher Education and Training*" (2002). CMI's current list of procedures focuses on the quality assurance procedures detailed in Part B of the HETAC guidelines. These procedures are not written in stone; rather they are dynamic and are subject to enhancement, improvement and modification in the light of experience and practice.

All such procedures either new or modified must be channelled through the document controller who for the present is the Quality Officer. Any staff member may write a procedure and have it issued as a CMI procedure subject to agreement by individuals or bodies affected by it. The Institute is conscious of the danger of becoming paper bound and the general policy is that procedures should only be written to deal with activities which are causing difficulties through a lack of clarity. If something is working and there are no communications difficulties then no procedures are required. Likewise, in a situation where procedures have become redundant such procedures will be revoked.

3 QUALITY ASSURANCE PROCEDURES

3.1 Procedures for Design and Approval of New Programmes, Subjects and Modules

(a) New Programme Approval

3.1.1 Outline Approval

Programme Justification: Research on identifying ever changing needs of learners is carried out by the Programme Board and fed back to the Academic Board. Findings are documented annually and submitted to CMI Board of Management. These findings will determine whether some programmes should be ceased, new programmes introduced or a review of existing programmes carried out resulting in changes.

A new programme (normally part-time) may be proposed by an individual staff member, a group of staff members or a programme leader. The person proposing is to be described as the programme champion. The programme champion must present a new academic programme to the Academic Board for Outline Approval.

3.1.2 Programme design

After the Academic Board approves the development of a new programme, the Registrar will appoint a course team to prepare a course submission. The course team prepares a course document under the following headings:

- Programme title
- Entry requirements
- Non standard applicants
- Policy on intake
- Programme learning outcomes
- Semester format or year long structure
- Modules mandatory/elective
- Curriculum hours
- Module content
- Learning outcomes for each module
- Teaching methodology/delivery modes
- Learner assessment methods for each module
- Basic and recommended texts
- Relationship to other courses being provided
- Resources required such as, lecturing staff, support staff, library facilities, IT facilities and accommodation.
- Transfer and progression arrangements

3.1.3 Programme approval

When the programme board finalises the submission it sends it to the Registrar who will check that it conforms to the format set out in the HETAC document "*New Academic Programme Validation*", where Appendix 5 (V) sets out the format and the detail to be included in a programme submission.

Following consultation between the Programme leader and the Registrar an external academic expert who is familiar with the evaluation process will be invited to review the programme before sending it to HETAC for evaluation.

1. Subsequent to the review, the Programme leader will be notified of the outcome at the end of the evaluation.
2. The outcome of the review visit will be considered by the programme board and the recommendations made will be incorporated into the submission before submitting the document to HETAC for validation.
3. Arising from a formal validation by a panel of assessors appointed by HETAC the Institute will implement any conditions or recommendation communicated to CMI in advance of commencing a new programme.
4. The Quality Officer as part of an annual audit will verify that the conditions and recommendations of the HETAC panel have been implemented.

(b) Validation of New Short Part-time Academic

Programme Leading to HETAC Special Award

3.1.4 Description of Part-time Programme

A part-time programme normally encompasses:

- Programmes of study less than 132 hours per year
- Programme with a minimum of 10 credits
- Programmes which were previously granted an Institute Certificate
- Courses which lead to awards from external Institutes or Associations (examples: ICM, Microsoft, Cisco, ECDL and others)
- Industry/commercial specific courses

It is necessary that these courses provide academic credit, at an appropriate level and comply with the Accumulation of Credits and Certification of Subjects Scheme (ACCS) and the European Credit Transfer System (ECTS). Excluded from this description are so-called "hobby" courses. These do not provide academic credit or any form of Institute or other certification.

3.1.5 Academic Process

A new part-time programme may be proposed by an individual staff member, a group of staff members or an external enthusiast or an external agency. The person proposing is described as the programme champion. Before presenting the programme to the Registrar for processing, the programme champion must normally seek the approval of the appropriate Programme Leader and should also seek the approval of the Academic Board for the proposal. The Registrar following consultation with the Managing Director and the Programme Leader from which the proposal originates will then invite an independent academic expert to review the proposed programme. The programme champion(s) should use a modified version of the format presented in Appendix 5 in preparing the submission.

3.1.6 Issues for Consideration by the External Academic

The external academic will assess the course under the following headings:

- Market demand
- Student profile/entry requirements
- Ability of the Institute to resource the course
- Support for the course (industry/business/community)
- Learning outcomes
- Course content
- Learning Modes
- Assessment strategies
- Duration
- Credits and equivalences

3.1.7 Outcome of Course Review

The Report with recommendations from the external academic will be sent to the Academic Board and thereafter will be considered by the Programme leader and programme board and the recommendations and suggestions will be incorporated into the programme.

3.1.8 HETAC

In advance of sending the programme to HETAC for external validation the Registrar will independently verify that the changes recommended have been responded to adequately.

3.2 Procedures for the assessment of learners

The Institute is determined to have an examination and assessment system which is fair, consistent and effective in measuring the extent to which learners achieve the stated learning outcomes. To protect the integrity of the grades learners must have available sufficient information on assessment requirements and all component elements of final grades. CMI makes sure all aspects of our assessment process is carried out on a step-by-step basis.

3.2.1 Principles & Purpose

The principles on which learner assessment is based are:

-
- Fairness - Care is taken to ensure that all students are treated equally while taking into account special needs and providing for mitigating circumstances.
- Consistency - An evenness and uniformity of treatment to each learner must be applied.
- Accountability - There are procedures for reviews, rechecks and appeals.
- Transparency - Types of assessment relevant to each programme is communicated in advance to learners.
- Feedback - The application of the various assessment methods is subject to continual feedback.

The purpose of these principles is to ensure that the Institute operates assessment methods that are fair and consistent and comply with standards determined by the Qualifications Act and:

- are effective in measuring the students' achievement of the learning outcomes
- provide feedback to the learner thus enabling the learner to improve performance
- contribute positively to the learning experience
- encourage creativity and originality in the achievement of the learning outcomes

3.2.2 Elements of Assessment

Consistent with these principles the following elements are to be evident in all assessment methods:

-
- Function of assessment
- Regular feedback, including how the learner can improve his/her work
- Assessment schedule outlining the weighting and calendar of assessments
- Details of when assessment results will be made known to the learner
- Criteria for assessment, including descriptors of expected standards of attainment for particular marking bands
- Guidance notes for each assessed activity
- Grading and marking conventions to be employed
- Assessment classifications for progression and final award
-

3.2.3 Assessment Process and Design

The Assessment process involves evaluating the learner achievement against the learning outcomes, knowledge, skill or competence set for each module. A successful learner that achieves a pass or greater in all required modules in a set timeframe will receive an award. The process of judging learner achievements and making the assessment decision is the responsibility of members of the results approval panel, programme leader and or, lecturers associated with the programme. Assessors will have the knowledge of the award specifications (learning outcomes) being assessed and will be proficient in CMI's assessment procedures.

The design and review of assessment methods is a responsibility of the Programme Board in consultation with the Registrar. Learner representatives are included at all stages of the design and review process. The rationale for a particular assessment method will be communicated to all learners.

3.2.4 Planning Assessment and Assessment Tools

The assessment for each module is planned in advance of commencement of each programme. Planning involves:

- a. Setting the range of specific learning outcomes to be assessed
- b. Choosing assessment tools; Assignment, Project, Skills demonstration, Examination
- c. Setting deadlines and timelines in advance of course commencement
- d. Deciding how marks are allocated and assessment criteria applied
- e. Assessment Plan Forms must be complete and signed off in advance of each programme commencement. (*See Appendix 8 for Sample Forms.*)

An assessment Tool is a valid and reliable way of assessing learner evidence for a range of learning outcomes. Reliable assessment tools currently most used by CMI are:

- Examination
- Assignment
- Project
- Skills demonstration

For an in depth description of Assessment tools, see Staff Handbook.

3.2.5 Information to Learners and Learner feedback

CMI has established a roadmap of instructions that describe how learners can participate in their assessment. CMI recognises that each student must be clear of their responsibilities. This is outlined in Learner Handbook and CMI Rules & Regulations Handbook in more detail. When the learner is fully informed of the assessment process and methods they can successfully participate and complete all programme assessments. All information relating to the Assessment requirements is made available to learners prior to undertaking module commencement. Before commencement of a programme, Learners have full access to:

- Award Specification (learning outcomes)
- Key dates and Deadlines for submission of assessments
- Assessment Tools
- RPL procedures
- Appeals Process

Assessment instruments are designed with learner feedback in mind. It should be evident to the learner why they obtained the mark/grade they did. It should also be clear to the learner how his/her grade could be improved. The feedback encourages learners to take responsibility for their own learning and promotes self-reflection.

The learner is made aware of when the assessment outcome will be made known.

The Programme Board will put in place mechanisms for informing students with poor continuous assessment marks. It is an Institute requirement that, in designing new programmes and in reviewing existing programmes, the rationale for the various assessment methods and the procedures for providing assessment feedback are continually re-examined.

3.2.6 Assessment Criteria

Assessment criteria is the criteria which will be used by the assessor when marking and judging the knowledge, skills and competence that a learner is required to achieve for particular grade bands and levels on the national framework.

All written work presented for assessment is evaluated firstly by a primary reader also known as an assessor who evaluates all of the work. All written work is assessed by another reader known as an internal examiner who provides a moderating opinion on samples of work from each of the bands of student performance.

3.2.7 Marking & Minimum Pass Mark

The minimum mark required for a pass in any subject/module shall be 50% of the maximum marks available for that subject. Assessors are required to mark and grade candidate evidence for each assessment technique/tool. CMI has devised a Grade Summary sheet which summarises the allocated marks for each form of agreed assessment in a transparent and reliable way. It illustrates;

- Marks for each assessment
- Sub total
- Total mark

The Grade Summary sheet will indicate the allocated percentage of marks for each form of assessment (examples: exam, skills demonstration). (*See Appendix 8 for Sample Forms.*) (*See Learner Handbook for Grades*)

3.2.8 Records & Receipting assessments/ late admissions

CMI will make sure that all assessment, documentation and verification records are made available for internal and external verification by way of an assessment record. (*See Appendix 8 for Sample Forms.*)

Receipting assessments is useful in motivating students to complete work on time. The Assessor who is normally a member of the exam board/results approval panel or Programme Board has in place a

procedure for the receipting of major assessments. Assessment evidence submitted by the learner is recorded as having been received usually by email or post.

Learners must retain a copy of submitted work where possible. A formal mechanism for considering requests for extensions to deadlines for major assessments is also provided. A clear policy for dealing with work that is submitted after the deadline is outlined in the *Learner Handbook and CMI Rules & Regulations Document*.

3.2.9 Compassionate Consideration & Repeat Assessments

Due to exceptional circumstances a learner can apply to defer the assessment. CMI will consider compassionate consideration where a learner has the following circumstances:

- A physical or emotional trauma during a period of 4 to 6 weeks previously
- A physical disability or incapacitating illness such as epilepsy, glandular fever or equivalent
- Recent bereavement of a close family member
- Severe Accident
- Domestic crisis
- Terminal illness of a close family member
- Other exceptional circumstances

3.2.10 Coordinated Planning

CMI has delegated responsibility for programme planning and assessment to:

- Programme Champion & Programme Leader
- QA Officer
- Programme Board made up of lecturers and Programme leader

Each of their roles is discussed in the sections below.

Programme Champion/Leader - The Programme Champion prepares the overall outline and detail of the programme and submits to either the Programme leader or the Academic Board.

QA Officer - The Quality Assurance Officer serves as the external auditor for CMI.

Programme Leader - At CMI, the Programme Leader is responsible for the overall programme design and structure. The programme leader is responsible for dealing with lecturers, marking schemes, examinations and assessments consistent with the programme. Additionally the Programme Leader establishes timetables for:

- Programme Assessments
- Integration Tables

The Programme assessments conducted for individual courses, defines the type of assessment as follows:

- Assignment
- Project
- Examination
- Skills demonstration
- Learner record
- Collection of work

Weighting values will be assigned to each type of assessment and deadlines will be set. The output from these timetables will be supplied to individual learners to review and recorded on an Integration Table.

Integration tables will be created jointly with the Programme leader and Programme board made up of lecturers. The output from these timetables will be posted to individual learners. (*See Appendix 8 for Sample Forms.*)

3.2.11 Examinations Disciplinary Committee

The Registrar will establish an Examinations Disciplinary Committee in the event of an alleged breach of the Institute's Examination Regulations. Read CMI Rules & Regulations document for detailed exam regulations. The membership of the committee will be:

- Registrar or nominee
- Extern Examiner or nominee
- Lecturer not directly involved with the alleged breach of examination regulations

The committee will consider the evidence and recommend a course of action.

The candidate may seek a review (and appeal) of the decision of the Exam Disciplinary Committee through the Institute's procedures on rechecks, reviews and appeals. The Rechecks, Reviews, and Appeals Procedures are outlined in the Student Handbook.

Where it is proven beyond a reasonable doubt that a learner has sought to gain an unfair advantage by cheating in more than one assessment, the normal minimum penalty is that all assessments at that particular level will be declared null and void. The Registrar will decide when and if the candidate can be re-assessed. The Institute reserves the right to also invoke disciplinary procedures. The Academic Board makes the ultimate decision in relation to Examination Disciplinary issues.

3.2.12 HETAC Marks and Standards

Regulations and procedures for assessment in CMI are in conformity with the Higher Education and Training Awards Council (HETAC) Marks and Standards document. Assessment regulations and procedures are reviewed annually by the Institute as part of the ongoing quality assurance procedures.

3.2.13 *Reasonable Accommodation*

CMI is committed to provide reasonable accommodation for all learners in particular persons covered under the nine grounds of equality legislation (example: learners with a disability).

An agreement between Academic Board and the Programme Board (programme leader and lecturers associated with each programme) is in place to make sure all learners are accommodated.

CMI is prepared to meet with any applicant learner who will need special accommodation/s to facilitate their successful completion of a course. A needs analysis form must be completed – link to needs analysis form.

Changes in assessment for a learner will be implemented by CMI without special permission from the awarding body. The following changes/adaptations will ensure that all learners are assessed on a fair basis and include:

- Modified assignments/ exams
- Readers
- Use of Sign language
- Personal assistants
- Rest periods
- Adaptive equipment/software
- Extra Time
- Use of laptop

3.2.14 *Responsibility for Assessment Procedures & Security*

The Registrar has overall responsibility for assessment procedures and ensures:

- The proper conduct of all assessment procedures
- The maximum security in all matters pertaining to assessment
- That all appropriate assessment and marking schemes are prepared by Programme lecturers
- That appropriate facilities and accommodation arrangements are made for candidates for assessment
- That appropriate assignment and exam scripts are examined by the Intern and Extern Examiners and the results for each candidate are made available for meetings of Exam Boards
- That accurate records in regard to continuous assessment are maintained and made available to Extern Examiners
- That proper arrangements are made for holding meetings of Exam Boards comprising Intern and Extern Examiners
- Candidates are provided with the information relevant to them with regard to the conduct and regulation of all assessment procedures

3.2.15 *Security*

Issues related to student confidentiality and providing protection for confidential student material is a paramount objective with the Registrar and CMI. All documents in relation to student information, personal details, tests, assignments, grades, exam papers, learner records are kept in secure storage and are not accessible to third parties unless permission has been given by CMI Management and the student. CMI complies with the Data Protection Act with regard to all student personal information.

3.2.16 *Duties of Internal Examiner*

Teaching staff of the College who exercise an assessment function shall be appointed by the Academic Board. To ensure fairness and validity of assessment CMI has established an:

Internal Examiner - An internal examiner, senior administrator at CMI, checks that CMI's assessment procedures are verified, by checking a sample of learner's assessment. It is the internal examiner role to check results are recorded, marks are calculated / totalled correctly and grades are assigned according to Awarding Body requirements. See Staff Handbook for list of grades. Based on their findings, he/she is expected to produce an internal verification report. A sample of assessment results are internally verified prior to being submitted to the external examiner for authentication. (*See Appendix 8 for Sample Forms.*)

3.2.17 *Duties of Extern Examiners:*

Extern Examiners are approved and appointed by HETAC to ensure adequacy of standards in all the academic processes undertaken by CMI. In particular, Extern Examiners should ensure that the appropriate standards with regard to grades of Pass, Merit and Distinction are applied. Extern Examiners also monitor the comparability of standards between other similar institutions and ensure that appropriate standards in the Institute assessments are maintained consistent with HETAC regulations.

Their role is to moderate assessments. Moderation is simply judging the marked evidence presented according to standards set in the Award Specification (learning outcomes). Critical points of judgement are applied within and at the borders of grade/bands. The sample, which should be drawn up on a basis agreed between the Programme Leader and the Extern, should include sufficient material to enable the Extern Examiner to form a judgement as to the appropriateness of the marking at all grades of classification.

3.2.18 *Extern Examiner's Reports*

The Extern Examiner is required to submit to HETAC, in accordance with the regulations in Marks and Standards, a full report on the

assessments and materials examined. A copy of the External Examiners report to be sent to the Director of the Institute.

3.2.19 Meeting of the Exam Board

The Exam Board also known as the *Results Approval Panel* for each programme meets at the end of each academic year. It is comprised of the Intern and Extern examiners. The Managing Director shall be the Chair of the Board. All decisions by the Exam Board shall be made by consensus. Where an examiner disagrees with a decision such a disagreement shall be recorded on the Exam Broadsheet. The proceedings and deliberations of the Exam Board are strictly confidential; under no circumstances should any person attending such a meeting disclose to any other person a decision of the Board or any document, information or opinion considered, conveyed or expressed at the meeting.

3.2.20 Continuous Assessment Marks & Award Type

Where a candidate who has failed in a significant proportion of continuous assessment tests, or who has been awarded such low marks for continuous assessment that a pass in the overall assessment is unlikely, the Academic Director shall advise the candidate of this situation in good time to enable the candidate to take appropriate action.

3.2.21 Protection for Learners

At CMI we offer programmes that last longer than three months and are delivered on a commercial and profit making basis. We realise that offering programmes this long requires a process that protects the learner from the effects of ceasing a programme before its completion. CMI complies with Section 43 of the Qualifications (Education and Training) Act 1999 and will put in place specific arrangements in the unlikely event a programme would cease.

The CMI framework for protection for learners is based on a 3-step approach:

1. In the unlikely event of a programme having to cease, we will have written confirmation from two other education providers that they will carry on a similar programme into which the learner can transfer.
2. If this arrangement, for some reason, is not possible, we will attempt to source another similar programme for the learner.
3. If either steps 1 and 2 are not successful, a system has been put in place to refund the monies paid to learners in part or in full.

The evidence of the above arrangements is outlined in Appendix 6 of this manual. It is also communicated to students prior to entering a course of study at CMI. This is described in *Learner's Handbook in Appendix 9*.

3.3 Ongoing Monitoring of Programmes

3.3.1 Introduction

This section deals with the quality assurance systems that are in place to continuously monitor programmes at CMI. It details the operational aspects that ensure:

- Programmes remain current and reflect developing knowledge and the requirements of the economy and society.
- Data pertaining to course objectives are available to relevant lecturers such that the extent to which these objectives are being met can be measured.
- The curriculum and associated assessment are congruent to both the learner and to the programme objectives.

3.3.2 Current Process

Programmes are monitored and reviewed by the respective Programme Leader and the Programme Board on a regular basis to ensure:

- Quality standards are being maintained and that the programme remains relevant in terms of evolving knowledge, skills and competence level
- Learning outcomes are being met

This review process includes feedback from the learner and the programme lecturers. Programme review is the responsibility of the Programme Leader in the first instance reporting to the Registrar. Review of modules is the responsibility of module lecturers who report to the Programme Leader.

3.3.3 Programme Boards

A Programme Board will be established for each academic programme. The task of the Programme Board will be to provide regular ongoing systematic monitoring of programme quality by those most closely involved in the delivery of the programme including academic staff and learners.

Each Programme Board meets at least once per term and receives current data on the programme's operation. The proceedings must be recorded and circulated to the teaching staff. Unresolved issues should be referred to the Registrar for attention.

3.3.3.1 Programme Leaders

Programme Leaders shall be responsible to the Registrar for:

- Providing accurate data on each student in accordance with the approved assessment regulations
- Regular and timely feedback in relation to programme reviews
- Regular consultation with module lecturers regarding student progress
- Advising the module/programme leaders to ensure that all students are assessed fairly in relation to the learning outcomes of modules
- Advising the module lecturers on matters of policy and good practice in assessment
- Ensuring that external examiners receive relevant examination data in good time and so enable them to carry out their responsibilities satisfactorily
- Advising on amendments to existing modules or proposals for new modules following consultation with learners and lecturers.

3.3.4 Programme monitoring report

CMI proposes to introduce a new annual report to help capture, monitor and control key information and data in relation to each year of each programme in the Institute. The report to be known as a Programme Monitoring Report is prepared for each year of each programme and submitted to the Registrar annually on or before 30th September. This report seeks information on:

- pass rates and retention
- student feed back
- external examiners reports and
- suggested actions where appropriate

3.3.5 Learner & Staff feedback

All students will have an opportunity to evaluate their learning experience in a variety of ways through end-of-year reviews, learner representation on programme committees, specific feedback forms on various aspects of the programme such as teaching inputs, tutorials and seminar programmes.

At the end of every semester, CMI courses and facilities are evaluated by students in the form of a questionnaire. Once the questionnaires are returned to CMI or are completed online follow-up meetings are held between programme leader and lecturer(s). Feedback from lecturers and students is monitored by the programme leader and fed back to Academic Board. This two-way feedback process is designed to help evaluate the effectiveness of the course programme, lecturer(s) and facilities. In cases, where feedback highlights action required, modifications or alterations will be made where necessary. Learner & Staff Feedback is received by way of staff and student Feedback forms. (*See Appendix 8 for Sample Forms.*)

3.4 Regular Periodic Evaluation of Programmes

3.4.1 Introduction

A Programmatic Review is the main instrument proposed to be used in CMI for evaluating Programmes at regular intervals. One of its main aims is to provide an opportunity for the Institute to assess its progress comprehensively over the previous five years and to set down proposals and plans for future developments. It is most importantly a self-evaluation process. The Programmatic Review is a self-monitoring quality-assurance activity carried out by a Peer Review Group in consultation with HETAC. The review process includes production of documentation by the Institute and formal evaluations by internal and external review panels. The overall process is controlled by the Registrar.

3.4.2 Scope and Membership of Programmatic Review Group

A Programmatic Review is an evaluation of each of the programmes delivered by the Institute. Such a review is normally carried out at least once every 5 years, and all programmes in the Institute are evaluated at the same point in time. However, the procedures in this document also apply when a single programme is being evaluated and are also applicable whenever the Institute or HETAC consider it necessary to carry out a review.

The Programmatic Review is carried out by a *Peer Review Group*.

3.4.3 Purpose

Our periodic programme evaluation:

- Improves the quality of the programmes
- Ensures programmes remain current and continue to offer a valuable educational experience to the learner
- Ensures that both academic and personal needs of the learner are satisfied
- Takes cognisance of the National Framework of Qualifications and implements the procedures of the NQAI in relation to access, transfer and progression
- Complies with all the requirements of HETAC

3.4.4 Programmatic Review (PR)

The Programmatic Review comprises:

- a self-evaluation of the programme(s)
- a plan for the subsequent five years
- a revised programme document

It entails a group of external experts considering the evidence of the self-evaluation and conducting their own assessment of the revised programme document and plan.

In reviewing a programme the focus is on the effectiveness of the programme in meeting its stated aims and also on the success of the learner in reaching the intended learning outcomes. The accumulation of the data from the annual monitoring process is fundamental to the self-evaluation.

3.4.5 Aims of Programmatic Review

1. Review of the continuing validity of a programme's aims and the associated learning outcomes
2. Serves mainly an evaluation of quality and flexibility of response to changing needs
3. Represents a review of the development of a programme over the previous five years, with particular regard to the achievement and improvement of educational quality

Proposed new courses are not evaluated through the PR mechanism but are assessed separately in accordance with the Institute's internal procedures for the design and validation of new programmes.

3.4.6 Objectives of Programmatic Review

1. To analyse the effectiveness and the efficiency of each of the courses approved.
2. To review the development of the course having regard to the views of education interests, employers, professional bodies,
3. To evaluate the physical facilities provided by the Institute for the provision of the course.
4. To review the Institute's research activities and projections in the area of study under review.
5. To evaluate the Institute's projections and plan for the succeeding five years in specific areas.
6. To detail how the deficiencies in the programme will be addressed in the proposed revisions to the programme.
7. To develop a revised programme document that takes cognisance of the views of the relevant stakeholders.

3.4.7 Subject Matter for a Self-evaluation Report

The self-evaluation report provides information under the following headings in respect of the approved programmes:

- The Institute's academic processes used to carry out the self-study
- Quality Assurance Procedures relating especially to teaching and learning
- Student throughput, enrolment and assessment statistics for the previous five years must be provided per course.
- A brief description of the development of each course, highlighting any changes implemented or proposed, must be provided. In addition this section must include the HETAC Approved Course Schedule in operation at the time of the previous review together with course schedules being proposed as part of the current PR.
- The report of the previous External Expert Group or new course evaluation group where applicable must also be appended.
- The procedures in place for the assessment of learners. The assessment of learners will be examined in terms of whether they are:
 - fair and consistent and comply with standards determined by HETAC
 - effective in measuring the students' attainment of the intended learning outcomes,
 - contribute to the total learning experience, and
 - encourage creativity and originality in demonstrating achievement of the intended learning outcomes
- Employment and further studies where available
- National and international transfers

Review of teaching facilities - A description of the most significant changes since the last Review.

Deployment and development of academic staff - Detail of staff appointments over the previous five years, of projections for the succeeding five years and of staff deployment within the Institute. Curricula vitae (CV) of staff appointed, since the previous programme review, in addition to significant changes to existing staff curricula vitae. Include details of training and development undertaken by staff also. *(See sample HR Training Plan Forms – Appendix 8)*

Links with relevant employers and the wider community - The purpose of this section is to establish the extent to which the Institute is actively engaged in monitoring developments in the world of work and the wider community to maintain a high degree of relevance in its courses and in its research activity.

Research - Include relevant postgraduate research carried out by students in the previous five years together with the plans for the next five years where applicable.

Course delivery methodologies - Include information in relation to teaching, such as plans to consider new types of educational technology, teaching strategies and methodologies.

Adult and continuing education - Include information in relation to the provision which has evolved in the Institute over the previous five years.

Development Plan - Include plans for likely new programmes during the succeeding five years.

Programme Submission - Incorporate revised aims and learning outcomes, revised course schedule, revised syllabi, and an updated assessment plan presented in the prescribed format for each programme.

3.4.8 Stages in the Development of a Self Evaluation Report

The Registrar is responsible for devising a plan for undertaking self-evaluation including an appropriate time-frame.

- The self evaluation must begin by the start of year 4 (of the five year cycle). The Registrar will present quarterly progress reports to the Managing Director and the Academic Board until the Programmatic Review is successfully completed.
- The draft self-evaluation report must be prepared in accordance with best international practice and relevant HETAC procedures and guidelines.
- The draft self-evaluation report must be submitted to the Registrar and the Academic Board, no later than September 1st of year 5 (of the five year cycle).

3.4.9 Programmatic Review – the Peer Review Group (PRG)

At least two weeks in advance of a meeting of the Peer Review Group with the staff of the Institute, the Registrar will send each member a copy of the self evaluation report and the accompanying documentation for their consideration. The PRG will examine and evaluate the self-evaluation report in the context of a detailed agenda agreed with the Institute. To address issues in the agenda, scheduled meetings will take place between the Peer Review Group and the Managing Director, the Registrar, the Programme Leaders, a selection of lecturers and student representatives

Following these meetings the PRG will compile an agreed interim report and will forward it to the Managing Director and Registrar.

The revised submission will be put on the agenda of the Academic Board for approval. The Registrar will bring any relevant matters to the attention of the Board such as requirements of HETAC, information on resources, etc.

The Registrar will submit to the final agreed report to HETAC as approved by the Academic Board and in due course Certificates of Course Approval will issue from HETAC extending their approval usually for a period of 5 years.

The Registrar will maintain a file on each Programmatic Review. Following approval by HETAC, he/she will prepare a submission for final Board approval to implement the agreed changes.

The Registrar will review adherence to conditions of approval until the first cohort of learners have completed the amended programmes.

On an annual basis, independently, an external professional academic will verify that all the conditions and recommendations made by the PRG have been implemented. He/she will submit a report to the Managing Director following the audit.

3.5 Evaluation of Premises, Facilities and Equipment

CMI operates from two facilities located at Dublin 2 and Dublin 12. Periodically all the facilities are examined and audited to ensure that they are fit for purpose. Where sub-standard lecture rooms, facilities or equipment are discovered or reported by students or staff to the Registrar, she/he reports immediately in writing to the Managing Director who has responsibility for property management.

Corrective action is then taken to remedy the deficiency. An external professional academic independently carries out a review of Accommodation, Facilities and Equipment annually and reports to the MD on its quality and appropriateness.

3.6 Evaluating Services related to Programmes of Higher Education and Training

Students attending programmes in CMI have access to all on campus facilities including a small library, computer laboratory and canteen.

The Managing Director has overall responsibility for ensuring that all support services for the Institute's educational programmes are reviewed annually. This responsibility is devolved to the Registrar and through her/him to the various Programme Boards. A student feedback questionnaire is administered to all students at the end of each semester to assess the adequacy of the library and IT service. The results of this survey are made known to the Registrar for action where necessary. A staff feedback questionnaire is returned every three months to the registrar. Staff and Student Feedback forms monitor the following facilities offered by CMI:

- Library, information and computing services
- Administration
- Premises
- External and Internal Communication to all stakeholders

The Registrar ensures that each Programme Board collects and collates feedback on the various services and reports to the Managing Director who ensures an annual audit of the service provision is carried out.

The library and IT services are especially important for the delivery of quality programmes and special care is taken in the audit to ensure that these two services are adequate.

3.7 Evaluating the Effectiveness of Quality Assurance Procedures

3.7.1 Introduction

The procedures in place in the Institute to evaluate the effectiveness of its quality procedures can be described as internal and external and this section will outline the Institute's systems for evaluating its quality assurance processes and procedures.

3.7.2 Internal Mechanisms

Internally, periodic reviews take place in the Institute at the time of Programme Reviews and the evaluation of new programmes. A series of mechanisms such as meetings of programme boards and review of surveys are used to provide regular feedback to staff on issues relating to the quality of courses and programmes. An example of an initiative to improve the quality and effectiveness of programmes throughout the Institute is the introduction of a Programme Monitoring Report which documents significant issues which may have arisen during the previous academic year concerning the outcome of a programme.

Institutionally the Registrar is responsible for "*promoting and maintaining good academic standards and procedures in all its activities*" and this responsibility is discharged in the main by the Programme Boards. The Programme Boards together with the Academic Board monitor the quality assurance procedures operating in the Institute. While the Registrar has "*overall responsibility for the development and implementation of policies*" the Quality Officer has responsibility for monitoring quality assurance within the Institute.

3.7.3 External Mechanisms

External reviews of CMI's procedures and work practices are also carried out periodically.

External monitoring processes used by the Institute to review quality assurance include:

- The involvement of external experts in the evaluation of all new programmes irrespective of level or mode of delivery. This process is addressed at section 3.1
- The involvement of external examiners in the examination process. This process is addressed at 3.2
- A Programmatic Peer Review comprises external experts evaluating programmes at regular intervals and the follow up audit of the implementation of recommendations. This process is described in 3.4.

END OF QA DOCUMENT