



Policy on

Quality Assurance, Improvement and Enhancement

Policy Approved on

3 October 2022

Approved by

Senior Leadership Team

New College Durham is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people, as well as vulnerable adults, and expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment.

Policy Title	Quality Assurance, Improvement and Enhancement Policy
Document Owner	Head of Quality and Enhanced Learning
Policy Effective From	October 2022
Next Review Date	October 2027

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We review our policies regularly to update them and to ensure that they are accessible and fair to all. All policies are subject to equality impact assessments which are carried out to determine whether the policy has, or is likely to have, a different impact on those with protected characteristics. We are always keen to hear from anyone who wants to contribute to these impact assessments, and we welcome suggestions for improving the accessibility of fairness of this and all College policies.

To make suggestions or to see further information please contact:

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Equality Impact Assessed: July 2022

Accessibility Assessed: September 2022

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1. Rationale

The decision taken in 1999/2000 to operate with two quality assurance systems for Further and Higher Education at the College still holds. Thus there are separate procedures for provision subject to Further Education and Skills inspection (Ofsted) and provision subject to Higher Education Review (QAA); Higher Apprenticeship provision, whilst funded through the Skills Funding Agency, will operate within our Higher Education quality assurance system.

However, although in many cases the procedures are different, the two systems have common aims and principles (see Sections 2 and 3).

This revised policy statement and its associated procedures continues the development and response to the requirements and challenges laid down in the Education Inspection Framework and the UK Quality Code. There are **three overarching requirements to be met by the College**. These are:

- a. The College is required to **undertake an annual self-assessment to reflect on all aspects of its activity which affect the quality of students' experience, the standards achieved, and the continuing currency and relevance of the curriculum**. This self-assessment process has four key features:
 - i. to critically reflect on performance and feedback from students and other key stakeholders in order to identify strengths and areas for development;
 - ii. to measure progress in areas identified for improvement and towards achieving agreed targets;
 - iii. to compare the College's performance with that of the sector;
 - iv. to prioritise areas for development and strategies to deliver improvement.
- b. The College is required to **address the quality statements** within the **Education Inspection Framework (EIF)** and the **UK Quality Code for Higher Education**.

In the **Education Inspection Framework** these criteria are organised around **four key judgements**. These are:

- i. Quality of Education
- ii. Personal Development
- iii. Behaviours and Attitudes
- iv. Leadership and Management

The evaluation of performance in these four key judgements informs the College judgement on **Overall Effectiveness**.

In addition, the College is required to make further judgements around the types of provision offered within the College. These are defined in the EIF as:

- i. Education programmes for young people
- ii. Adult learning programmes
- iii. Apprenticeships
- iv. Traineeships
- v. Provision for learners with high needs

The College will take account of all types of provision within the scope of the EIF when making the four key judgements. Provision types will be evaluated where there are significant numbers of students, or a high level of funding, and where students who are deemed to be particularly vulnerable are enrolled.

In the **UK Quality Code for Higher Education** the College is required to meet expectations which are organised around **three parts and their associated chapters**. These are:

Part A: Setting and Maintaining Threshold Academic Standards

Part B: Assuring and Enhancing Academic Quality

Part C: Information about Higher Education Provision

- c. The College is requested to **support the inspection/review process** through the production of a **self-assessment report/self-evaluation document** (where applicable) to facilitate assessment of risk, monitoring of standards and planning for inspection/review.

Through this policy and its associated procedures (contained within the College Quality Manuals) each of the above requirements will be addressed as follows:

Annual Self-Assessment of all aspects of activity affecting the quality of students' experience, the standards achieved, and the continuing currency and relevance of the curriculum.

- i. All College programmes are subject to these guidelines, except those for which the applicable policy is that of another Higher Education Institution or Validating Body.
- ii. Those cross-College activities and services which affect students are subject to these Guidelines. These include (but are not limited to) Learning Resources Services, Learner Support Services, Advice Support and Careers Services, Communications and External Liaison, Human Resources and Estates. The managers responsible for these services will liaise closely with Heads of School and the Head of Quality & Enhanced Learning to contribute to the College Self-Assessment Report and College Annual Report for HE, and in determining and agreeing strengths/areas for development/ improvement.
- iii. The four key features of the Self-Assessment process (section 1a above) are firmly embedded within the prescribed format for evaluating performance and determining agreed actions for improvement at Course, Curriculum/School and College levels.

The Quality Statements within the EIF/UK Quality Code for Higher Education

The College has established detailed Guidelines to structure the Self-Assessment/Annual Reporting process around groupings of quality statements for each of the key

judgements required by the Education Inspection Framework and expectations to be met under each part of the UK Quality Code for Higher Education. The purpose of this is to ensure consistency in composition and standardisation of judgements across Courses, Curriculum Areas/Schools and the overall College Self-Assessment Report/Annual Report.

The focus of Self-Assessment Reports at Course, Curriculum and College level are common and reflect the structure of published reports by Ofsted.

For Higher Education provision, the structure of the annual reports at Course, School and College level are common and are broadly aligned to the parts of UK Quality Code for Higher Education.

It should be emphasised that the Inspection/Review process is all about judging the College's continuing performance in raising standards and quality. Consequently, our commitment to quality assurance and improvement must be continuous and rigorous and in line with the agendas laid down in the Education Inspection Framework and UK Quality Code for Higher Education.

2. Aim

The main aim of this Policy and its associated procedures is to provide an effective and efficient means of assessing and improving standards of performance and quality of provision across the College, including the extent to which provision meets the needs of key stakeholders such as students, employers and parents/carers.

3. Student Entitlements

Under the terms of this policy all students at the College are entitled to:

- a. a curriculum that is ambitious, appropriately relevant to local and regional employment and training priorities, and designed to give students the knowledge and skills they need to succeed in life;
- b. receive qualifications that are awarded in line with the standards set of awarding bodies and in line with national performance levels;
- c. receive a high quality learning experience;
- d. play an active role in the assurance, improvement and enhancement of quality.

4. Student Responsibilities

This policy requires students to fully acknowledge and actively engage in fulfilling their responsibilities by:

- a. actively participate in all opportunities to provide their feedback;
- b. attend, where required, internal and external meetings to discuss performance;

- c. complete and submit assessment material on time;
- d. act on feedback received to develop;
- e. make a positive contribution in learning activities.

5. Teaching Staff Responsibilities

The policy requires teaching and support staff to ensure that they:

- a. meet the student entitlements outlined in section 3;
- b. promote and actively participate in all quality activities;
- c. work proactively with the quality team to supply evidence in line with quality activities;
- d. provide consistently good feedback that informs students of what they are doing well and what they need to do to improve.

6. College Management Responsibilities

The Vice Principal (Quality Enhancement & Digital Transformation) and the Head of Quality & Enhanced Learning have overall responsibility for ensuring that the quality systems and procedures are effective in assuring and improving standards and quality.

7. Standards by which the Success of this Policy can be Evaluated

This Policy and its implementation will be judged successful, or not, on the extent to which it contributes to:

- a. improving the academic standards and outcomes achieved by our students (or maintaining high standards where outstanding/exceptional performance exists);
- b. securing high levels of student satisfaction with the quality of their learning experience at College;
- c. fostering a positive staff commitment to quality improvement/ enhancement;
- d. achieving positive reports on the quality of provision from all the external bodies to whom the College is accountable.

8. Responsibility for Implementing this Policy

The implementation of this Policy and its associated Procedures is described in detail in the College Quality Manuals. Responsibility of the teaching staff and management are stated within each procedure in the Manuals.

9. Review of this Policy

The periodic review of this policy will take place within five years of this revision, November 2027, following the College procedure.