

QUALITY ASSURANCE HANDBOOK

Kimmage Development Studies Centre
Holy Ghost College
Kimmage Manor

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Section 1 Introduction

The Kimmage Development Studies Centre (KDSC) has committed itself to embracing an inclusive quality assurance culture. This Quality Assurance Handbook demonstrates this commitment. The quality assurance framework and policy documentation outlined in this handbook clearly articulates the principles and procedures followed by the KDSC, in its quest to achieve and sustain the highest standards in education and training.

The KDSC is required under the Qualifications (Education and Training) Act 1999 to ensure that quality assurance policy and procedures are in place and to agree these procedures with HETAC. In designing quality assurance policies and procedures, the KDSC has drawn from HETAC's publication, 'Guidelines and Criteria for Quality Assurance Procedures in Higher Education and Training' (2002).

In doing so, the KDSC believes that the approach to quality assurance should be simple, flexible and relatively easy to implement. The KDSC sees educators as change agents who must take ownership of the quality assurance process and its procedures, and make it an intrinsic part of their work.

Section 2 Mission and Ethos

2.1 Mission Statement

The mission of the KDSC is to promote critical thinking and action for justice, equality and the eradication of poverty in the world.

The KDSC pursues its mission through the provision of education and training activities which enable participants to engage critically with development issues and to work effectively for the holistic development of all, especially the most marginalised.

In this, the KDSC forms an inter cultural community encompassing people of different beliefs, experiences and backgrounds, seeing in this diversity a rich resource for the exchange of knowledge and experience. Within its educational activities and programmes, the KDSC seeks to provide a sound theoretical approach and practical skills training to the highest standards. In doing so, it is aware of the necessity to achieve a balance between specialisation and integration, between dialogue and direction, and between academic rigour and attentiveness to student needs.

2.2 Quality Ethos, Values and Principles

The values underpinning the approach to education at KDSC can be seen as those of respect, dialogue and the promotion of an ethic of service.

The ethos and identity of the KDSC is embodied in a pedagogical approach based on participatory learning and critical thinking that seeks to empower participants. The ethos of the KDSC is reflected in all aspects of the life of the institute and can be characterised by professionalism married with voluntary contributions, a friendly and caring environment and accessibility to staff and resources.

The physical location of the institute within the Congregation of the Holy Spirit and the substantive support from the congregation, contributes directly to this particular positive ethos.

The KDSC presents itself as a healthy and vibrant educational institute that has been able to develop and refine its own niche in terms of offering its services to a distinct group of participants. The majority of the KDSC's participants are mature participants engaged in development work. International participants are mainly development workers with government organisations, community based organisations and Non Governmental Organisations (NGO's). Irish based participants are typically returned development workers, development educators, community workers or people wishing to commence a career in development work. The education and training provided by the KDSC is described as capacity building for development practitioners.

Section 3 Quality Assurance Policy

3.1 Quality Objectives

The KDSC Quality Objectives are:

- To maintain a process of quality assurance throughout new and existing programmes through regular review, evaluation and up-date of quality assurance policies.
- To explore specific areas of work related to quality assurance as identified in KDSC strategic and operational plans 2004 - 2007, e.g., improving KDSC's wheelchair and other access facilities and up-dating marking guidelines in line with the HETAC learning outcomes framework.
- To publicise KDSC's quality assurance policy among DSC stakeholders.

3.2 Quality Assurance Policy

The Quality Assurance Policy provides a framework for and drives the quality assurance procedures operating in KDSC. It aims to reflect KDSC's mission and values and relate closely to the relevant strategic management plans and operations.

3.3 KDSC Functions and Operations

The quality assurance policy covers all aspects of KDSC's functions and operations that impact on the standard and quality of its programmes. These functions and operations are:

3.3.1 Teaching

The KDSC's teaching methodology lends itself to an adult learning, participatory format and is consistent with the principles of life long learning¹. The KDSC has developed a pedagogy and methodology which values experience, is interactive and creative, and which is highly appreciated by the programme participants.

¹ 'Lifelong learning is all about learning activity throughout life and has been defined by the European Commission as: "all learning activity undertaken throughout life, with the aim of improving knowledge, skills and competences within a personal, civic, social and/or employment-related perspective"' (National Qualifications Authority of Ireland, 2002).

3.3.2 Research

The KDSC has made it a strategic priority to dedicate more staff time and energies towards the task of research, documentation and publication. The KDSC sees research as providing an opportunity to update the knowledge of staff and thereby benefit the institute as a whole, and to enable appropriate and useful public engagements, with debates in development theory and practice.

3.3.3 Learning Environment

It is the policy of the KDSC to foster an informal, friendly atmosphere based upon a philosophy of service and mutual respect. The KDSC emphasises dialogue, a pleasant learning environment and a community of mutual support for all participants.

3.3.4 Participant Welfare

The KDSC pays attention to the personal as well as the academic development of its participants. Given the international composition of the participant body and the recognition that for many, their time at the KDSC will be their first experience of a foreign environment, the KDSC always strives to provide all participants with the necessary support.

3.3.5 Assessment

The KDSC is determined to have an examination and assessment system which is fair, consistent and effective in measuring the extent to which participants achieve the programme learning outcomes.

3.3.6 Facilities and Equipment

The KDSC has a commitment to the provision of the appropriate resources to enable the learning goals of the participants to be achieved. Currently not all parts of the building are accessible to wheelchair users.

3.3.7 Management and Administration

It is intended that the KDSC's Quality Assurance Handbook facilitates a systematic approach to demonstrating and enhancing quality. It is important that the systems put in place to manage quality grow out of the active involvement of relevant stakeholders.

The systems established in KDSC lay out clearly where responsibility for quality lies. The KDSC management create an environment conducive to participation, trust, teamwork, empowerment and pride in performance.

3.3.8 Community Links and Outreach Activities

The KDSC aims to develop and strengthen links with like-minded institutions in the South and in the North². The KDSC will maintain existing alliances and will actively investigate and cultivate new relationships and network arrangements.

The KDSC constantly explores the possibilities for engaging in activities complementing its core functions of teaching. Such projects are developed and added in a context where the focus on the core functions of the KDSC is maintained as a priority.

3.3.9 Human Resources

It is the policy of the KDSC to recruit, support and retain the staff required to ensure the delivery of a quality education service. The KDSC is committed to employing a qualified, committed teaching staff, using facilitation and research methods geared towards the requirements of programme delivery and participants needs.

3.3.10 Verifiable Data

The KDSC will generate and collate all necessary data in order to monitor critical quality indicators, for example entry levels, continuous assessment results, examination results, completion rates, participant feedback, external examiners' reports and graduate destination data.

3.2.11 Access, Transfer and Progression of Participants

This institute explicitly encourages applications from mature participants to its programmes and operates a process for assessing existing qualifications (including those awarded outside of the State) and prior experiential learning. In this regard its policies of admission and transfer are in accordance with those expressed by the National Qualifications Authority of Ireland (NQAI), 'Policies, Actions and Procedures for the

² Where possible, we use the terms 'North' and 'South' rather than 'First World/Third World' or 'Developed World/Developing World', which imply inferiority and superiority. Though we recognise that no terms adequately reflect diverse geo-political, socio-cultural and economic realities, we use the term 'South' to refer to the countries of Africa, Asia and Latin America, and 'North' to refer to the countries of North America, the region of Europe, Japan, Australia and New Zealand.

Promotion and Facilitation of Access, Transfer and Progression for participants' (2003). In particular this institute is consistent with the principles expressed in the National Qualifications Framework (NQF), that access be provided to those participants who have in the past had limited access to education and training programmes including mature participants, people with disabilities and from minority groups, both at home and abroad.

It is also the policy of the institute to ensure that accurate and reliable information is available to all participants (both those intending to join the Development Studies programmes and those who have already joined), to enable them to plan their learning on the basis of a clear understanding of the awards available and associated entry arrangements, and transfer and progression routes

3.3.12 Programmes

The core function of the KDSC is teaching, through providing the following programmes:

- The BA Degree in Development Studies³.
- The Post Graduate Diploma in Development Studies.
- The MA Degree in Development Studies.

The KDSC will continue to develop its curriculum, mindful of changing needs and an increasingly flexible educational market. In order for the KDSC to be responsive to changes in the field of education and development, specific attention is given to issues of programme development. This requires that current programmes are constantly upgraded.

³The BA Degree in Development Studies is also delivered through an outreach programme run in association with Mellemfolkeligt Samverk Training Centre for Development Cooperation (MS-TCDC), located in Arusha, Tanzania. The KDSC takes overall responsibility for ensuring that the BA programme delivered in MS-TCDC is consistent with HETAC regulations and maintains academic standards of a high quality. The same high standards of quality assurance with regard to policies and procedures in programme design, programme quality assurance, assessment, programmatic evaluation, and mechanisms for implementing change, that are described in this handbook, are also applied to the BA Degree as delivered through MS-TCDC. Information on MS-TCDC's Organisational and Management Structure can be found in a separate document, included as Appendix 11 of this handbook. Details of administration procedures with respect to staff selection, employment terms and conditions, job descriptions, and staff appraisal in MS-TCDC, can be found in a separate 60 page 'Staff Manual 2005 and 2006', available on request from that Centre.

Section 4 Governance, Management and Human Resources

4.1 Board of Governors

The Board of the KDSC reflects the constituency it serves and the background of the centre. It consists of members drawn from the Congregation of the Holy Spirit, the Department of Foreign Affairs, other academic institutes, non-governmental development organisations and the community development sector.

The Board was established under a Constitution in 1990 and the role of Governors is therein described as:

'to ensure on behalf of the Trustees, namely, the Provincial Council for the time being of the Irish Province of the Congregation of the Holy Spirit, that the DSC operates effectively and according to its aim which is to continue the work of the Congregation for and with the poor and underprivileged mainly but not exclusively in the developing world.' (Art. 11.1, DSC Constitution).

The Board is chaired by either the Provincial of the Congregation of the Holy Spirit, or his nominee (a member of the Provincial Leadership Team). The Board is responsible for the appointment of a Director and other senior staff. While the Board delegates day-to-day management responsibilities to the Director of the KDSC, it reserves to itself the approval of all major changes to the overall policy and nature of the centre. The Board is responsible for the annual audited accounts and annual estimates and approves all future plans of the KDSC, including those of seeking academic accreditation for additional programmes.

Fig 1 on page 11 lays out the main lines of communication and reporting between the Board and staff of the KDSC.

4.2 Academic Council

The Academic Council consists of the Director of KDSC, the Deputy Director, the Registrar, Programme Coordinators and the Librarian. The purpose of this committee is to:

- Ensure that the participants receive equality of treatment and service in terms of programme provision and that this is maintained to the highest possible standards.
- Agree in advance the timetabling of respective schedules.
- See that procedures regarding assessment and examination are in harmony across all programmes, that appeals procedures are dealt with in a fair and transparent manner and that adequate communication concerning such is maintained between all staff and programme participants.
- Collaborate on matters of participant admission, to ensure consistency of approach and encourage efforts to promote the activities of the DSC.
- Agree upon procedures for dealing with matters of general misconduct, misbehaviour and academic misdemeanours.
- Act as a final committee of arbitration, or establish a Special Hearings Committee in cases of dispute between staff and participants and to hear disciplinary matters brought before it under set procedures.
- To review and approve new programme design.
- To review External Examiners Reports at the end of an academic year and identify action points where necessary.
- To review materials for publishing.

4.3 Management Structure

Responsibility for the formulation of the quality assurance policy and for maintaining and improving institutional quality rests with KDSC management. Management has delegated responsibility for the design and implementation of the quality assurance policy and procedures to the Registrar. This person reports directly to management on quality matters.

Please see Figure 1 overleaf (page 11) which outlines the Governance and Management Structure of the Holy Ghost Institute.

4.4 Staff Roles

The post holders listed below take responsibility for implementing and maintaining a quality assurance culture within the KDSC. In addition to any academic duties in relation to the programmes at the KDSC, staff have the following responsibilities:

4.4.1 Director

The Director has specific responsibility for:

- The strategic planning, direction and operation of the education and training programmes at the institute and to this end;
- the formulation of new policy, and with the Board, ensuring confirmation and compliance with policy objectives,
- the planning, administration and allocation of funds and presentation of annual budgets and accounts to the Board,
- the promotion of the work of the institute at home and abroad,
- the recruitment, employment and supervision of all faculty and staff,
- the coordination of staff development.

4.4.2 Deputy Director

The Deputy Director has specific responsibility for:

- Coordination of all academic programmes especially in terms of scheduling, timetabling and liaising with lecturers.
- Coordinating academic planning and review meetings with lecturers during the year.
- Moderating of all programmes through coordination of Staff-Participant Committees and final programme evaluations.
- Overseeing the assessment arrangements for all programmes.
- Coordinating curriculum development aspects of the programme with other faculty members.
- Financial management, and (with the Director) preparation of the annual budgets.
- The coordination of the Information Technology services at the KDSC.
- Representing or acting on behalf of the Director as occasions demand.

4.4.3 Registrar

The Registrar has specific responsibility for:

- Coordination of responses to all enquiries and applications to the KDSC.
- Overseeing the process of admissions to all programmes and the consultation with other staff in determining annual intakes.
- Coordination of responses to applications for sponsorship and decisions made by general staff committees, and correspondence with sponsors such as Irish Aid regarding these.
- Liaising with the accreditation authorities, for example HETAC, regarding admissions, registration, examination and other procedures relating to participants.
- Liaising with all internal and external examiners concerning the preparation, supervision, assessment and final grading of all examinations and assignments.
- Preparation of annual broadsheets of results in all examinations and communication with all relevant parties concerning same.
- Coordination of all examination boards during the year.
- Advising all programme participants concerning their rights and responsibilities and coordinating matters of academic discipline.

4.4.4 MA Coordinator

The MA Coordinator has specific responsibility for:

- Overseeing the programme of study for all MA candidates (in consultation with the Deputy Director's role of Programme Coordinator).
- Assisting participants research planning and proposals.
- Coordinating supervision of all research theses with other lecturers and liaising with the on arrangements for internal and external grading;
- The presentation of additional programmes and seminars as required by the MA programme.
- Promoting academic research and scholarship generally and particularly, through the coordination of occasional papers.

4.4.5 Librarian

The Librarian has specific responsibility for:

- Management of the KDSC library and other information resources.
- Advising the management of the KDSC in terms of the ongoing development of the library facilities, including linkages to the Information Technology resources at the institute.
- Corresponding with counterparts in any institutes with which the KDSC has associations or partnerships, for example, MS-TCDC in Tanzania and sharing information on mutually relevant publications.
- Establishing and maintaining links with other libraries, resource centres and providers with similar areas of study and/or types of facilities as the KDSC.

4.4.6 Secretary

The Secretary has specific responsibility for:

- Assisting the Director with all communications especially with regard to confidential correspondence to staff members, Board members and others;
- Maintaining all essential records regarding the KDSC Board, Trustees, Personnel, and key stakeholders and clients of the KDSC.
- Day to day bookkeeping and management of the cash and current accounts of the KDSC.
- Administration of the payroll system and tax returns.

4.4.7 Administrative Assistant

The Administrative Assistant has specific responsibility for:

- Assisting the Registrar in particular and KDSC Management in general with all correspondence and communications with the public and with the overall maintenance of accurate data and records at the KDSC.

4.4.8 Information Technology Support Person

The IT Support Person has specific responsibility for:

- Configuration of the IT system and network for staff and participants of KDSC.
- Overall administration and maintenance of the server and network.
- Troubleshooting in terms of software and hardware problems as they occur.
- Advising the KDSC management in terms of ongoing development of the IT resources.

4.4.9 Catering Supervisor

The Catering Supervisor has specific responsibility for:

- The management and supervision of the catering facilities at the KDSC.
- The maintenance of standards of hygiene and cleanliness and good order of all catering equipment and facilities of the KDSC.

4.4.10 Accommodation Officer

The Accommodation Officer has specific responsibility for:

- Allocating accommodation for all programme participants and visiting lecturers from overseas.
- Liaising with various landladies/landlords and with participants to ensure quality of accommodation, and that transactions regarding various payments are made effectively and in good time.

4.4.11 Health and Welfare Officer

The Health and Welfare Officer has specific responsibility for:

- Advising all participants, particularly those from outside the state, regarding health matters.
- Administering a group health insurance scheme for all participants.
- Coordinating information on, and any assistance that may be required for, participants who suffer ill-health during the year.

4.5 Human Resource Management

The DSC regularly reviews the effectiveness of its human resource policies and procedures. Particularly in relation to the procedures for selection, appointment, appraisal, support and development of staff involved at any level in the delivery or support of a programme.

4.5.1 Staff Selection and Appointment

The KDSC is an Equal Opportunities Employer. The normal process for filling vacancies for academic posts can be seen in Appendix 1.

4.5.2 Employment Terms and Conditions

The KDSC ensures that all staff are employed under conditions in accordance with the Terms of Employment (Information) Acts 1994 and 2001 and that all full-time and part-time employees of the institute are provided with clear contracts of employment containing their general rights and responsibilities and with specific job descriptions detailing their particular roles and functions within the KDSC.

While cognisant of the need to see that all contractual obligations are fully observed by both employer and employee, the KDSC places great emphasis on fostering an atmosphere of appropriate informality, mutual support and respect amongst all staff, regardless of their role or status within the institute. Within such a culture of cooperation and understanding, all staff are enabled to make their individual contributions towards sustaining the overall flexible and friendly working environment.

In this regard, the KDSC sees the need to continually review its systems of staff support and appraisal, including the facilitation of ongoing training and education for all employees, and thereby ensure that each and every member of staff is assured of the quality of esteem in which she/he is held.

4.5.3 Staff Appraisal and Development

In order to achieve the goals set for it by the Board and Management, the KDSC wishes to ensure that all full-time and part-time personnel employed at the Centre are given the opportunity and time at the end of each year to reflect upon the skills, knowledge and attitudes each one brings to their respective roles within institute. Therefore a process has been initiated consisting of:

- A Self-Appraisal Questionnaire (Appendix 2), followed by
- A Staff Conversation.

The purpose of this exercise is to enable the DSC to learn more about how individual staff feel about their jobs, to receive their ideas about possible improvements, to reflect upon further support, including training that may be needed, and ultimately, to determine how as an organisation it can do things better.

It is the policy of the KDSC to encourage academic and other staff to update themselves professionally and academically in order to keep the content of and support for KDSC programmes up to date. Support is provided to academic staff who wish to pursue doctoral research and to attend training programmes or conferences that are relevant to their academic interests and professional upgrading. KDSC encourages and facilitates faculty members who wish to serve on the boards/committees of other organisations whose work would have an association and relevance for the studies conducted at KDSC.

Section 5 Programme Design

The importance of programme design in terms of standards, quality and the means for quality enhancement cannot be overemphasised.

5.1 Principles of Programme Design

The KDSC's programme design reflects the aim to respond more effectively to the needs of participants, by providing a thorough and rigorous foundation of subject material in the mandatory areas but then allowing for more flexibility and choice within elective subject areas. In such a broad and cross-disciplinary field as development studies, the KDSC's programme design recognises the dynamism of the area and correspondingly the need to adapt and innovate the subject matter accordingly, in order to remain relevant to the needs of development practitioners.

The KDSC is committed to the following principles when designing and delivering its existing and new programmes.

- Ensuring that programmes meet the philosophy of the institute and are related to its mission and strategic plan.
- Ensuring that programme content reflects international trends regarding development thinking and development studies.
- Emphasising the importance of linking theory with practice and an appropriate balance between the two.
- Encouraging active and participatory learning.
- Recognising the prior experience and present learning needs of participants.
- Ensuring ongoing participant support from academic staff.
- Providing prompt feedback to participants on assignments.
- Providing adequate time for participants to reflect on their learning.
- Upholding high expectations that participants will meet standards and attain set programme outcomes.
- Respecting diversity within ways of learning.
- Maintaining an atmosphere of respect and trust between academic staff and participants.
- Ensuring that all programmes are inclusive in their approach.

5.2 Programme Design Methodology

The KDSC's programme design requires the specification of:

- Programme Aims.
- Learning Outcomes.
- Assessment Criteria.

5.2.1 Programme Aims

Programme aims are normally general in nature and reflect the overall purpose of the programme.

Programme aims are often written in language such as:

'Improve understanding...'
'Offer a forum for exchange of ideas...'
'Enhance personal effectiveness...'
'Enhance skills...'
'Enhance awareness.. '
'To equip...'

5.2.3 Learning Outcomes

Learning outcomes will state what a participant is expected to know, understand and/or be able to demonstrate after completion of a process of learning. Learning outcomes are: an accurate representation of the programme content. Their standards correspond to the award level under the National Qualifications Framework and are achievable by the participants on the programme. Care is taken to ensure that learning outcomes are measurable wherever possible (Appendix 3: KDSC Learning Outcomes).

5.2.3 Assessment Criteria

Learning outcomes drive the assessment procedures; assessment is designed to assess the learning outcomes in as realistic a way as possible. The participant assessment procedures verify achievement of the learning outcomes.

5.3 Programme Quality Assurance

All of the KDSC's programmes are subject to rigorous internal and external quality control. The KDSC uses three methods for quality control to maintain proper academic standards. Together these mechanisms provide for a strong quality control of KDSC programmes.

- KDSC has developed an extensive internal quality control system. It does this through relying on feedback from participants, stakeholders and current lecturing staff. The main instruments for participative feedback are: evaluations, tracer studies and an annual staff-planning workshop. KDSC staff closely collaborate with each other for exchange of information and professional support to continuously develop their teaching and programme content.
- External Examiners are appointed by KDSC for quality control of individual subjects and participant assessments.
- HETAC examines and approves the programmes through a periodic programmatic evaluation every 5 years, and a Quality Assurance effectiveness review every 8 – 10 years.

5.4 Procedures for the Design and Validation of New Programmes

When designing new programmes, the KDSC is guided by the HETAC document '*Guidelines and Criteria for Quality Assurance in Higher Education and Training*' (2002), which includes a section on the design and approval of new programmes, subjects and modules. It states that:

'Procedures for the design and approval of new programmes, subjects and modules, should include clear and comprehensive provision for the presentation and structured consideration of evidence that the following issues have been sufficiently addressed':

The KDSC aims to answer the following questions, which HETAC have set, when designing new programmes:

- Philosophy, rationale and aims of the programme.
- Relevance of the programme to the mission and strategic plan of the provider.
- Learning outcomes for each subject and module.
- How the programme meets its stated objectives, particularly as regards intended learning outcomes.
- Methodology.
- Pedagogy relevant to the programmes.
- Relationship to other programmes offered by the provider.
- Possible work placement.

- Programme management arrangements.
- Relevance of the programme to International Development Work.
- Human resources implications of providing the programme.
- Information system resources needed for the programme.
- Impact of the programme on the physical resources and support facilities of the provider.
- Financial implications of offering the programme.
- Environmental scan of similar or related programmes offered by other providers.
- Participant demand for programmes.
- Consultation on the programme with relevant stakeholders and peers.
- Fair, consistent and standards-compliant assessment of participants on the programme.
- Provision, where required by law, for the protection of participants in the event of the provider ceasing to provide the programme.
- Satisfactory provision for participant access, transfer and progression in the context of the National Qualifications Framework.

A number of HETAC documents are critical to the design, institutional approval and HETAC validation of programmes. These documents include:

- Validation of New Programme Submission Document.
- Higher Education and Training Awards Council Awards Range and Criteria.
- HETAC Policies on Access, Transfer and Progression.
- HETAC Policy Document on Prior Experiential Learning.
- Programme Schedule Guidelines.
- Guidelines and Criteria for Quality Assurance Procedures in Higher Education and Training.

The Registrar ensures that each lecturer receives the most recent HETAC documents as they are released.

5.5 Subject Outline

For new and existing programmes, the lecturer must provide the Programme Coordinator/Registrar with an updated outline of the programme for each year. See Appendix 4 for typical format of KDSC subject outlines.

Section 6 Assessment

6.1 Assessment Procedures

Section 23(e) of the Qualifications (Education and Training) Act 1999, requires that the KDSC establishes procedures for the assessment of participants which are fair and consistent and comply with standards determined by the Council.

The procedures outlined below guide all staff with responsibilities for fair and consistent participant assessment. They ensure that the KDSC's assessment methods are effective in measuring the participants attainment of the learning outcomes and provide feedback to the participant enabling him/her to improve their performance.

6.1.1 Policies and Procedures – Participant Rights and Responsibilities Guidelines

To ensure that a very good standard and positive culture of learning is maintained, the KDSC clearly communicates a set of procedures which aim to protect all concerned from possible misunderstandings regarding their rights and responsibilities within the institute (Appendix 5).

6.1.2 Examination Arrangements

All examinations leading to HETAC accredited awards are subject to the exact procedures laid down in the HETAC 'Marks and Standards Handbook'. This handbook is available for reference by course participants in the KDSC library.

The Registrar has overall responsibility for the conduct of examinations and ensures:

- The proper conduct of examinations including invigilation.
- The maximum security in all matters pertaining to examination.
- That all examination entries are notified to the HETAC by the required date.
- That examination questions and marking schemes prepared by internal examiners are sent in good time for approval by External Examiners.
- That examination answer scripts are examined by Internal and External examiners and that results are made available for Examination Board meetings.
- That Examination Board meetings are held in accordance with Section A7 of Marks and Standards.
- Timely transmission of the recommendations of Boards of Examiners to HETAC.
- That candidates are provided with information relevant to them and with regard to the conduct and regulation of examinations.

6.1.3 Assessment Arrangements

All accredited programmes in the KDSC are assessed by a combination of continuous assessment and final 'closed book' examinations and/or final term papers. The relevant faculty staff decides the overall format for assessment, and the Programme Coordinator approves the methods used for individual subjects in consultation with external examiners.

The breakdown of marks between continuous and final assessment varies with the type of subject and the methodologies used in its delivery. For example, some subjects which contain substantial elements of skills training, may offer a greater proportion of marks through continuous assessment than other subjects which have less practical application.

Similarly, the type of assessment procedures used also reflects the nature of the subject and the methodology. In general, lecturers are encouraged to be innovative in their approach to assessment, resulting in the following formats being used; class presentations – individual and group, interviews, group exercises, multiple choice questionnaires, audio/video taped recordings, diaries of learning, end of module closed book examinations and term papers.

6.1.4 Internal Marking Standards

In order to ensure that there is consistency amongst staff in the grading of assignments all staff are requested to use the 'Marking Guidelines' (Appendix 6).

These guidelines aim to harmonise the approach to grading by agreeing basic principles for awarding different grades and indicating the type of feedback that may be appropriate. The guidelines are also furnished to participants at the beginning of each academic year as a learning tool to enable them to appreciate the marking requirements of the teaching staff and to better understand written comments on their papers.

6.1.5 Appointment of External Examiners

Since 2004, it has been the responsibility of KDSC, with the approval of HETAC, to appoint and manage External Examiners directly. External Examiners are generally drawn from other Higher Education institutions offering similar programmes or other academics and professionals with experience in the area of development. When a new External Examiner is required by the KDSC a short list of candidates is drawn up and discussed at a meeting of the Academic Council. An informal approach is then made to a suitable candidate. On their agreement they are sent a letter of appointment detailing External Examiners duties and current rate of remuneration. External Examiners generally serve for a period of three years. An annual External Examiners fee is paid to each examiner on

receipt of the External Examiners Report. External Examiners Reports are an important part of the Monitoring and Evaluation procedures within the institute (see point 7.1.6).

6.1.6 Role of External Examiners

- External Examiners are required to ensure that each candidate's overall performance in the programme as a whole is properly assessed.
- External Examiners review a representative sample of examination material presented by the candidates.
- External Examiners are expected to attend at least one Examination Board Meeting in the year.
- When visiting an institution, the duties of the External Examiners are as follows;-
 - To review borderline cases and, if necessary, interview such candidates.
 - To agree with the respective Intern Examiner(s) the proposed final marks/grades for consideration by the appropriate Board of Examiners.
 - To attend appropriate meeting(s) of the Board of Examiners as required.
- External Examiners are required to submit to the Registrar of KDSC, a full report on the academic quality of the examinations reviewed and the comparability of standards to other third level institutions. A copy of this report is subsequently sent to HETAC.

A copy of the standard KDSC External Examiners Report is appended (Appendix 9).

6.1.7 Recognition of Prior Learning

For applicants who do not, on the basis of their existing academic qualifications, meet the normal entry requirements to a specified programme, the KDSC operates a process through which their prior experiential learning⁴ can be assessed, to determine whether they have attained the necessary standard of knowledge, skills and competencies required for entry/progression to studies at the Award Level in question.

In addition to completing a standard application form and providing references, such an applicant is asked to produce a portfolio in which they have an opportunity to elaborate on a number of areas related to learning outcomes from their previous studies, work experience and future work

⁴Prior Experiential learning or learning gained prior to enrolment on a programme is defined as knowledge and skills acquired through life, work experience and study, not formally attested through formal certification (HETAC Policy Document, April 2001).

plans (Appendix 10). As part of this portfolio they will be asked to submit a short qualifier essay on a topic relevant to the study area in question.

6.1.8 Transfer and Progression of participants

It is the policy of this institute to encourage and facilitate progression to a higher Award Level of those eligible participants, who having achieved an award at one Level within the National Qualifications Framework wish to continue with further studies in a similar or related field.

Completion of the Post Graduate Diploma in the Development Studies programme, permits direct progression to the MA Degree in Development Studies, provided that the participant has fulfilled satisfactory requirements in final examinations and has provided an acceptable research proposal for the MA.

Progression from the MA in Development Studies (Level 9) to Post Doctorate Level (Level 10) will be facilitated by this institute, bearing in mind the type of research planned, or, as in past instances, the institute will encourage transfer to another programme at that level held elsewhere.

Since there is not currently an award in this institute at Level 8 (Higher Honours Degree or Advanced Diploma Level), in exceptional cases, such as an outstanding result in final examinations, this institute will consider progression from the BA in Development Studies (Level 7) to the Post Graduate Diploma in Development Studies (Level 9), as provided for in the National Qualifications Framework.

The KDSC will also facilitate transfer of award holders to programmes leading to another award at the same level in a common or related field of study, run in other Higher Education Institutes, should a participant so desire to pursue such a route within the National Qualifications Framework.

6.1.9 HETAC ACCS Scheme

The KDSC facilitates lifelong learning through its facilitation of the above scheme run by HETAC. ACCS stands for the Accumulation of Credits and Certification of Subjects. This scheme allows participants to accumulate credit towards an award on a subject by subject basis. This means that participants can take one or two subjects of a programme in a particular year, rather than undertake the whole course at once.

Section 7 Monitoring and Evaluation

7.1 Procedures and Guidelines for Programme Monitoring

Ongoing monitoring of programmes is essential to ensure that quality and standards are being maintained.

KDSC monitors the success of its programmes:

- To ensure that programmes remain current and valid in the light of developing knowledge in the discipline and practice of its application.
- To evaluate the extent to which intended outcomes are being attained by participants.
- To evaluate the appropriateness of the curriculum and assessment in relation to the outcomes.

The KDSC has devised the following systems to provide feedback to the Coordinators and staff on the programmes throughout the year.

7.1.1 Staff-Participant Committees

The KDSC has established a structure of committees with a clear delineation of responsibilities. This ensures that each programme is monitored on an ongoing basis and deviations from intended outcomes are identified. It provides for participants a permanently open channel to express any suggestions for change or any concerns they may feel about the progress of the programme.

Committees consisting of staff representatives and representatives drawn from each class/group, meet formally each month in order to discuss matters primarily relating to programme work – facilitation and assignments. The staff representatives remain constant during each year, while the programme participants stand for one term only. Meetings of these committees are generally held before scheduled staff meetings, but may be called at any time if either party wishes. Furthermore, class representatives may approach the Programme Coordinator concerned directly if a matter is deemed sufficiently urgent.

7.1.2 Plenary Sessions

These consist of meetings between the Director or other senior staff, and the whole group of participants in each programme. At least two such sessions are scheduled each year and these provide an additional opportunity for participants to communicate directly with the Director concerning their progress on the programme.

7.1.3 Participant Profile and Numbers

The KDSC analyses participant composition in order to measure trends in participant intake over the years.

7.1.4 Examination Statistics

Examination statistics are gathered each year for inclusion in the Annual Report to the Board of Governors. Statistics are analysed to monitor overall participant performance and make comparisons with previous years intake.

7.1.5 Participant Evaluation of Programmes

Upon completion of the first term, the Programme Coordinator meets with each year/class and seeks their opinion on various facets of the programme, including programme curriculum by subject, standard of lecturing/facilitation, time tabling, adequacy of library and computer facilities and other general non-academic matters such as institutional environment.

The evaluation takes two forms:

- A group discussion, to assess overall group impressions.
- A written questionnaire, to offer individuals the opportunity to respond individually to the matters outlined.

Upon completion of the final term, a further evaluation is conducted with each year/class. A 'neutral evaluator' i.e. not drawn from the KDSC faculty, is enlisted to facilitate the session in order to build an atmosphere conducive to greater freedom of expression from the participants.

The findings of the evaluations are fed back to the relevant lecturers and other staff and further discussed at end of term staff meetings. The information gleaned from this process is fundamental to enhancement of the programme curriculum, the improvement of programme delivery and the maintenance of a coherent programme (Appendix 7).

7.1.6 External Examiners' Report

Copies of external examiners' reports are available for reference if required, and distributed to the relevant lecturers. External Examiners Reports are also discussed at an Academic Council meeting in September of each year and action points identified (see Point 4.2). The information from Extern Examiners Reports is fundamental to ensuring that the quality of the assessment and examination procedures within KDSC are

maintained and that academic standards are comparable to other third level institutions.

7.1.7 Graduate Tracer Survey and Kimmage Graduates' Association

The KDSC regularly seeks to update the information it has on the relevance and utility of its programmes through regular surveys of its former participants. The Graduate Tracer Survey conducted every five years seeks to assess the work situations and opinions of former graduates (Appendix 8).

The KDSC has also set up the Kimmage Graduates' Association. It is the intention that the association functions as a pool of resources for outreach activities, teaching at localised programmes or providing a source for monitoring and feedback on the application of KDSC teaching in the field.

7.2 Procedures and Guidelines for Programme Evaluation

Periodic formal evaluation is an important means of ensuring among other things; that (a) quality improvements are made to programmes and (b) programmes remain relevant to participant needs. Periodic formal evaluation contributes to the development of a quality culture in which all participants are aware of their respective roles and that actions are taken to address observed weaknesses in programmes.

The KDSC has the following procedures in place for the above purposes.

7.2.1 Internal Evaluation

An internal evaluation is conducted in accordance with established international best practice regarding internal evaluation in higher education and training institutions.

It takes place through the following forms:

1. An Annual Report to Board and Stakeholders.
2. A Periodic Programme Evaluation.
3. An Annual General Staff Meeting.
4. An Annual 'round table' meeting with the course board of MS-TCDC
5. An Interim Report to Board.

1. Annual Report

The KDSC reports to two of its key stakeholders, the Congregation of the Holy Spirit, and Irish Aid (the Development Cooperation Division of the Department of Foreign Affairs) on a regular and frequent basis. It does this through the meetings of the Board of Governors upon which members drawn from both organisations sit, and through the Annual Report submitted to the Board.

The Annual Report includes an assessment of:

- The academic programme recently concluded, including a breakdown of participant numbers and examination results.
- Any adjustments or innovations to the programme content since the previous report.
- Changes to personnel – both academic and support staff.
- Proposed changes to the forthcoming programme in terms of personnel, curriculum and use of facilities.
- Details of all other activities undertaken by KDSC staff during the year, especially those directly relevant to the goals of the Strategic Plan.

2. Periodic Programme Evaluation

This is conducted once every four to five years for the purposes of a KDSC programmatic revalidation by the accrediting body, HETAC. The programmatic evaluation applies to KDSC programmes delivered in both Kimmage Manor, as well as in the KDSC partner institute in Tanzania, MS-TCDC.

The internal phase of the periodic evaluation commences with an internal evaluation of the programme. This is conducted in accordance with established international best practice regarding internal evaluation in higher education and training institutions.

This internal phase of the periodic evaluation consists of a self-study undertaken by all academic staff involved in the programme, participant representatives, graduates of the programme and others with close involvement in the programme. This includes those involved in the provision of support services, such as the library and information services and counselling services. KDSC staff not directly involved in the programme(s) may also participate in the self-evaluation. Consultations with outside stakeholders and any necessary market research and review of research findings in the discipline concerned forms part of the self-study. Self-evaluation includes an assessment of the learning and an evaluation of the services related to the learning.

This self evaluation culminates in a Internal Evaluation Report, setting out the findings of the internal evaluation, including an evaluation of the programme, strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats. The KDSC

sends a copy of this internal, self-evaluation report to HETAC. The report is also reviewed by an External Evaluation review team as (see point 7.2.2) part of the Periodic Programme Evaluation process.

3. Annual General Staff Workshop

The Annual General Meeting of all Academic Staff of the KDSC takes place in the Summer period, i.e. after the end of one year's programme and before the commencement of a new one. The purpose of such meetings is:

- To review the programme just ended in terms of evaluations conducted at the KDSC and to assess the contributions of various staff members.
- To share with all staff any general plans regarding the overall programme.
- To clarify any changes to curriculum, examination or assessment procedures with regard to the accreditation authorities.
- To gather ideas and suggestions regarding improvements to the programme.
- To enable all who contribute to the work of the KDSC to meet one another and thus have a better understanding of the various lecturers and different disciplines that are employed each year.

4. Annual Round Table Meeting with the Development Studies course board of MS-TCDC.

Once a year, usually during the Summer period, i.e. after the end of one year's programme and before the commencement of a new one, a 'round table' meeting takes place between the academic council of KDSC and the Course Board of Kimmage's partner institute in Tanzania, MSTCDC (see Footnote on page 8). The purpose of such a meeting is:

- To review the BA programme just ended in terms of evaluations conducted at the DSC and MSTCDC and to assess the contributions of various lecturing staff in respective institutes.
- To ensure compatibility between the BA programme as delivered in KDSC and in MS-TCDC
- To clarify any changes to curriculum, examination or assessment procedures with regard to the accreditation authorities.
- To gather ideas and suggestions regarding improvements to the BA programme as delivered in KDSC and in MS-TCDC.
- To provide a forum for exchange between academic staff of MS-TCDC and KDSC and an opportunity to explore mutual areas of concern and potential for further collaboration.

5. Interim Reports

During the course of each academic year, the Director issues interim reports to the Board of Governors. The purpose of these briefing documents is to update the Board on latest developments within the KDSC and its programme of activities, and it serves to provide a continuity of information between the various Board meetings during each year, the Annual Report, and the Strategic Plan. Typically the content of the interim reports includes information on the intake of participants, progress they make during the programme, various new activities being planned or embarked upon by KDSC, staffing changes and developments.

7.2.2 External Evaluation

The external evaluation element is a process of co-operation, consultation and advice between the independent experts from outside and the relevant internal stakeholders.

The KDSC use the following procedures for external evaluation:

1. Irish Aid Review

As a recipient of public funding from Irish Aid (formerly Development Cooperation Ireland), KDSC undergoes External Review by a team of consultants at least once every three to five years.

The most recent external review was conducted in May 2002 and the scope and focus of this evaluation included but was not necessarily limited to:

- A thorough assessment of the value and relevance of the KDSC programmes and other services to development generally and to the Irish Aid programme specifically.
- An examination of the extent to which the programmes at KDSC have kept abreast of development thinking.
- An examination of KDSC within the landscape of development studies and related studies in Ireland.

The review team interviewed the Director, staff, the Board of the KDSC, representatives from the Congregation of the Holy Spirit, a cross section of the participants attending each of the relevant three programmes and relevant staff in Irish Aid.

The review team consisted of external consultants with experience in development education and training and knowledge of strategic management issues. A member of the Evaluation and Audit Unit of Irish Aid was also available as a resource person to the team.

2. External Review Team Report as part of the Periodic Programme Evaluation

Following the internal evaluation, (see point 7.2.1) the KDSC arranges to have an external evaluation conducted by a group of experts from outside the institute. The KDSC's most recent External Evaluation report was conducted in 2003.

The external group reviews the Internal Evaluation Report and conducts its own evaluation of the programme(s). This process will culminate in an External Evaluation Report setting out the findings of the external evaluation review group. The KDSC then has the opportunity to comment on the final draft of the External Evaluation report. The KDSC forwards a copy of the final report to HETAC for consideration. HETAC can make recommendations to KDSC arising from the Internal Evaluation report, the External Evaluation Report or both. This can result in a revalidation of existing programmes.

7.2.3. Information to and from Stakeholders

Information to and from stakeholders is required for openness and transparency and involves:

- Participant Evaluation Reports.
- Reports to Board of Management and Trustees.
- Reporting to principle core funders and participant sponsoring agencies.
- Staff-Participant committees.
- KDSC Newsletter, Graduate Tracer Survey and Kimmage Graduates Association.
- Stakeholder Analysis:

KDSC seeks to update the information it has on the relevance and utility of its programmes through consulting with its key stakeholders. This is done every four years as part of the strategic planning process undertaken by the KDSC and as part of its Irish Aid Review and Periodic Programme evaluation.

7.3 Mechanisms for Implementing Change

The KDSC has a formal procedure for considering and acting upon the findings of the internal evaluation and the external evaluation, together with a formal procedure for monitoring the implementation of the changes adopted as a result of the findings.

In terms of programme monitoring, this is undertaken by the Programme Coordinator, principally through bi-monthly meetings with representatives on the staff-participant committees. In addition, feedback is sought from the lecturers through regular meetings.

An internal programme review is held after the Examination Board meeting in June, at which the staff are provided with a summary of the group evaluation findings and copies of the individual feedback sheets on their programme. Any areas seeking remedy or suggestions that have been made for improvement are discussed at this meeting as well as programme planning for the new year. This is a useful forum and

exchange for all lecturers in which they are also afforded an opportunity to give feedback by completing an evaluation form.

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Appendix 1: Procedures and Guidelines for Filling Vacancies

- A selection committee is established, drawn from the Academic Council and possibly the Board of Governors.
- Advertisements concerning the position are placed in appropriate media, including the DSC website.
- Job specifications are sent to all who seek further information on the position.
- Applications received are acknowledged and the forms and curricula vitae received are then copied to all members of the Selection Committee.
- The Selection Committee meet in due course and either agree a shortlist of candidates for the position, or if no suitable candidates are agreed, to recommend re-advertising of the position at a future date.
- When a shortlist is agreed, invitations are sent out to all candidates on the list advising them to attend for interview on a particular date and time.
- All unsuccessful applicants are informed of the decision not to call them for interview at this stage.
- A Panel comprised of the Director, another member of the Academic Council, and one or two members of the Board of Governors conduct the interviews, and possibly, if it is seen as warranted for the post in question, by an invited external person with expertise in a relevant area.
- Following the interview process, the Interview Panel will make its recommendations to the Board of Governors. Following the recommendations of the Interview Panel, the Board will then either decide to award the post to the most suitably qualified candidate, or, in the event that the Interview Panel could not reach a decision in this regard, to consider another process of recruitment.
- The successful and unsuccessful candidates are informed of the decision of the Board at the earliest possible time.

Non-academic positions may be recruited for in a similar way, depending upon the level of the qualifications required. Less senior positions within the DSC may be advertised and appointments made following interviews by two or more staff from the senior management of the Centre.

Appendix 2: Staff Appraisal Questionnaire
