

# 5. Teaching and Learning Policies



## 5.1 Introduction

### 5.1.1 What is the purpose of this policy?

- This policy sets out CMIT's ethos, pedagogical approach, and commitment to maintaining and improving the quality of the teaching and learning at CMIT.
- This policy outlines the commitment to developing blended and/or fully online learning programmes that follow learner-centred principles and an evolving understanding of good practice in the provision of digital education, with a solid foundation in the principles of Universal Design for Learning (UDL).
- It also sets out the standards in relation to the provision, monitoring, and review of the quality of the learning experience provided by the college.
- It documents the pedagogical approach to the delivery of programmes.

### 5.1.2 To whom does this policy apply?

- This policy applies to all staff, tutors, and committee members of the college.
- The provision of a high-quality teaching and learning environment is central to the college's commitment to its learners and as such all members of the organisation are involved in its design, delivery, and ongoing monitoring.
- This policy also documents learner's responsibilities in relation to access, participation, and assessment.

### 5.1.3 Who is responsible for implementation?

- The Academic Director is responsible for coordinating and implementing the teaching and learning strategy within the college.
- The Programme Director is responsible for design, getting approval for and development of programmes.
- Employees, Faculty and Adjunct Faculty who are required to comply with this policy in the fulfilment of their roles.

## 5.2 Learner focus, ethos, and pedagogical approach

### 5.2.1 Blended learning delivery

- 90% of CMIT's programmes are delivered through a blended learning delivery model.
- As a dedicated blended learning provider with a proven record of accomplishment of delivering accredited blended learning programmes, the policies and procedures contained within document the pedagogical and academic considerations for successful delivery using a blended learning mode of provision.
- Blended learning is a flexible way of completing a programme of study, combining online video, self-directed learning, quizzes etc. with live classes, messaging, tutor support, and feedback to allow for an accessible learning style.
- CMIT use a range of technologies to host content in a Virtual Learning Environment which enables remote learner-tutor interaction including detailed feedback following each assessment.
- The Virtual Learning Environment provides custom resources, including course manuals, videos, quizzes, and live online classes/webinars.
- Programmes are identified and designed based on their suitability to be delivered via blended learning.

### 5.2.2 Learner Profile

- CMIT's focus is on providing accessible training and education to adult learners. CMIT places learners at the centre of programmes. Our mode of delivery is a flexible blended delivery approach which is targeted at adults returning to, or furthering, their education.
- We recognise that learning is undertaken on a voluntary, self-motivated basis and the primary motivations for our programmes are: (1) to enhance or acquire new skills for existing occupations, (2) to develop skills for new occupations, and (3) acquisition of skills for personal development.
- A documented typical learner profile is in place for each programme.
- Programme prerequisites and 'equipped to participate' statements are communicated in a clear and transparent manner to ensure that learners select appropriate courses which are matched to their knowledge, skills, and experience.
- Programme scheduling and delivery considers the diverse range of learner circumstances. For example, exams and webinars are held outside of business hours to facilitate learners in employment, and there is built-in flexibility in submission dates for assessments.

## CMIT's educational approach

- **Accessibility:** CMIT focuses on providing accessible training and education tailored for adult learners, emphasising flexible, blended learning approaches.
- **Learner-centric:** Programmes are designed with the learner at the centre, accommodating adults returning to or furthering their education.
- **Motivations for learning:** Programmes aim to enhance or acquire new skills for existing or new occupations, and for personal development.
- **Clear prerequisites:** Entry requirements and necessary skills are communicated transparently to ensure appropriate course selection.
- **Flexible scheduling:** Courses consider diverse learner circumstances, offering exams and webinars outside business hours and flexible assessment submission dates.

## Personal attributes for success

- **Self-motivation and discipline:** ability to manage time effectively and meet deadlines independently is crucial.
- **Digital literacy:** comfort with using computers, the internet, and digital tools like email and video conferencing platforms is essential.
- **Internet access and technology:** reliable internet access and suitable devices (e.g., laptop or tablet) are necessary for participating in online components.
- **Communication skills:** proficiency in both written and verbal communication is important for engaging in online discussions and correspondence.
- **Independent study:** capability to work independently and take initiative is vital for success in a blended learning environment.
- **Reading and research:** ability to read course materials, conduct research, and synthesise information from various sources is required.
- **Seeking support:** comfort in seeking support when needed, utilising available resources and support systems.
- **Flexibility and adaptability:** adaptability to different learning environments and flexibility with changing schedules are beneficial.
- **Support systems:** a supportive environment for study, free from distractions, and access to additional resources if needed.
- **Commitment and goals:** clear educational goals and a commitment to course requirements help maintain motivation.

## Considerations for the individual needs of learners

- **Blended learning delivery:** All programmes are delivered primarily through a blended learning model, which includes online video content, self-directed learning resources, live classes, and robust tutor support and feedback. At least 90% of our programmes utilise this blended model to ensure maximum flexibility and accessibility for part-time learners.
- **Learner-centred design:** Programmes are specifically identified and designed for blended learning to ensure they meet the educational and practical needs of part-time learners. Course materials, including manuals, videos, quizzes, and webinars, are

accessible 24/7 through our Virtual Learning Environment (VLE), accommodating various schedules and time commitments.

- **Accessibility and inclusivity:** Our VLE is equipped with assistive technologies to support learners with physical disabilities, mental health conditions, and cognitive learning differences. We are committed to removing physical, situational, and dispositional barriers to education by providing flexible scheduling of exams and deadlines and offering enrolment options that allow learners to start and pause their studies according to their personal needs.
- **Supportive learning environment:** Tutors are accessible for the duration of the programme to provide one-to-one interaction, reducing anxiety related to performance and assessments. Feedback on assessments is developmental and formative, aimed at encouraging learner growth and confidence.
- **Experiential and active learning:** Learning is experiential, involving real-world tasks, projects, and simulations that allow learners to apply theoretical knowledge. Active learning techniques are integrated into all courses to engage learners in discussion, problem-solving, and practical application, ensuring they can effectively transfer skills to their professional and personal lives.
- **Programme requirements and scheduling:** All programme prerequisites and learner profiles are clearly documented and communicated to ensure learners select courses that match their skills and experiences. Programmes are scheduled to consider the diverse circumstances of our learners, with essential components like exams and live webinars held outside of standard business hours.
- **Personal Learning Plans:** Each learner must develop a Personal Learning Plan at the commencement of their studies, identifying their goals and motivations. This plan includes a submission schedule for assessments, empowering learners to manage their study time effectively.

### 5.2.3 Removing barriers for learners

- We are committed to providing an accessible means for adult learners to access accredited further education, by allowing learners to take independent control of their studies.
- CMIT's delivery model removes many barriers commonly experienced by adults when accessing further education.
- Situational barriers such as time, availability of programmes, geographic constraints, impact on current employment, restricted enrolment dates etc. are alleviated by our method of delivery.
- Dispositional barriers, for example 'fear of failure,' are also reduced by our delivery methodology. Learners have direct access to their Tutor for the duration of their programme and receive formative developmental feedback following assessment submission. This one-to-one interaction reduces potential anxiety surrounding exams and of 'failure.'
- We offer built-in flexible timetabling and admissions which removes typical Institutional barriers.

- Resources, supports, and tutors interactions are designed to reduce any social or anxiety-based concerns that some learners may experience in a traditional classroom setting.

## 5.2.4 Accessibility

- CMIT's delivery model removes many 'access' barriers commonly experienced by adults when accessing further education – allowing learners to access programmes remotely, any time and at a flexible pace.
- Programmes provide a quality and meaningful learning experience which is both accredited and accessible.
- CMIT make use of innovative technologies to provide an accessible means of accessing accredited programmes to learners who may otherwise be unable to access further education.
- Individual barriers such as physical disabilities, mental health conditions and some cognitive learning conditions can be accommodated. The VLE (virtual learning environment) is compatible with assistive technologies to allow learners with specific additional needs engage and complete a programme of education with support technologies (e.g., screen readers).
- A checklist for content development is provided in Appendix 5c.

## 5.2.5 Developing a sense of belonging

Here are some ways CMIT develops a sense of belonging for learners:

- **Learner-centric approach:** CMIT places learners at the centre of its programs and focuses on providing accessible training and education tailored for adult learners.
- **Personalised support:** Each learner is assigned a dedicated programme tutor for the duration of their programme, ensuring personalised academic support and guidance. Tutors provide individualised formative feedback on all assessment tasks. A dedicated Student Support Team offers pastoral support to learners throughout their programme.
- **Clear communication:** Upon enrolment, learners receive a welcome message from their tutor. Learners are provided comprehensive support information and guidelines on using the CMIT eLearning site.
- **Interactive elements:** Live online classes/webinars provide opportunities for real-time interaction with tutors and peers. Discussion forums allow learners to engage with each other and tutors asynchronously.
- **Learner involvement:** A Learner Representative sits on the Academic Board. Learners are involved in programme reviews and quality assurance processes through feedback surveys.
- **Tailored learning experience:** Learners complete a Personal Learning Plan at the start of their programme to identify goals and motivations. The flexible blended delivery approach allows learners to study at their own pace.

- **Ongoing support:** Regular progress monitoring and outreach to learners who may be falling behind.
- **Inclusive policies:** A clear Reasonable Accommodation policy ensures learners with disabilities or additional needs are supported. An Extenuating Circumstances policy provides flexibility for learners facing unexpected difficulties.

## 5.2.6 Skills transfer

- 'Active learning' and 'Experiential learning' are central to programme design and delivery.
- Programmes and associated resources are designed specifically to enable the transfer of skills, competence, and knowledge through 'concrete learning,' 'reflective observation,' 'abstract conceptualisation' and 'active experimentation' (Kolb, 1984).
- CMIT measures skills transfer as a key indicator of the quality of the learning experience.

## 5.2.7 Pedagogical approach: Experiential learning

- 'Experiential learning' is central to our pedagogical approach. Experiential Learning Theory (ELT) is a model of learning for adult learners which is consistent with how adults naturally learn, grow, and develop (Kolb, 1984).
- The most widely used learning theory is Kolb's experiential learning cycle, which is comprised of four phases "concrete learning," "reflective observation," "abstract conceptualisation" and "active experimentation."
- **Concrete experience** – we provide learners with new experiences, or a reinterpretation of existing experiences through applied tasks, projects, simulations, and skills demonstrations. Programmes are designed to allow learners to make meaning from their experiences encountered in a real-world context.
- **Reflective observation of the new experience** – assessments require learners to reflect, analyse, and interpret concrete experiences and newly acquired knowledge and skills. Structured opportunities are provided for critical reflection to achieve new understanding. Formative feedback is also provided to allow for personal growth and development and for further reflection.
- **Abstract conceptualisation reflection** – assessments require learners to develop conclusions or innovative ideas from their experience. Programmes provide structured guided practice which facilitates reflection and evaluation, both of which are required in experiential learning.
- **Active experimentation** – programmes require learners to apply their newly acquired skills, e.g., by creating a website, a health and safety policy, running a team event etc.
- Experiential Learning aligns with the needs of our target learners. Adult learners have broad knowledge and experience and bring varied perspectives from which they can draw on when completing a programme of study.
- Experiential learning is particularly suited to adult learners as it allows them to integrate and apply academic skills to understanding practical experiences within their own personal context.

- Programmes and associated assessments are designed to engage and facilitate learners in direct experience and guided reflection with the aim of increasing knowledge and developing skills.

## 5.2.8 Active learning techniques

- Active learning is "a method of learning in which students are actively or experientially involved in the learning process and where there are different levels of active learning, depending on student involvement...students participate in active learning when they are doing something besides passively listening." (Bonwell and Eison, 1991).
- Learners are provided with information regarding Active Learning, its meaning, its value, and ways to engage in Active Learning.
- Learners are provided with materials and resources which require active participation including discussion, problem solving, practical application, observation, reflection, analysis, and evaluation.
- Course manuals are custom designed and make use of self-revision activities to encourage learners to apply theory in a practical context.
- Case studies are provided for learners as a means of linking theory to practice and creating simulated environments for learners to apply and test their knowledge and skills.
- Quizzes are provided for learners which enable summative self-revision and require learners to actively participate in reviewing their own progress.
- Learners are encouraged to engage in open dialogue with their programme tutor throughout their programme of study.
- Assessment briefs are designed to be practical in nature, often requiring the learner to carry out a task in the context of their own environment. This allows for meaningful application of learning as well as an opportunity to practice self-reflection and evaluation.
- Tutor-led live online classes create opportunities for active learning through their structured design which includes content delivery, synchronous activities with other learners, direct live interaction with the programme tutor and live question and answer sessions to allow learners interact with peers.
- Tutor recorded video is provided for learners. These videos are designed to complement the indicative content in the course manuals providing a further opportunity for learners to engage with the content.
- Technology is utilised to create a learning environment which is conducive to active learning. CMIT monitor, review, and assess changes and innovations in technology to identify areas for enhancement in this area.
- The principles of substitution in educational material selection provide a comprehensive framework for choosing resources that effectively represent real-world experiences or concepts in teaching. These principles emphasise five key elements: (1) authenticity, where materials must accurately mirror the actual concepts or objects being taught while preserving essential characteristics; (2) educational alignment, ensuring resources directly support specific learning objectives and curriculum requirements; (3) learner appropriateness, matching content to students' cognitive development, cultural context, and prior knowledge; (4) multi-modal

support, accommodating diverse learning styles through varied presentation methods; and (5) practical usability, requiring materials to be readily understood and effectively implemented by both educators and students. Together, these interconnected principles guide us in selecting substitute materials that maintain high educational value while being accessible, engaging, and effective for learning.

## 5.2.9 Clear learning outcomes

- All programmes have a clearly documented set of associated learning outcomes.
- In the case of a Major award, specific learning outcomes are documented for each module of the programme.
- Assessments are designed to measure the achievement of each learning outcome in the programme descriptor.
- Learners are provided with clear statements outlining the knowledge/skills required to participate in their chosen programme.
- Assessments, and associated rubrics, are devised to measure each learning outcome.

## 5.2.10 Personal Learning Plan

- A Personal Learning Plan is completed by each learner upon commencement of their programme of study.
- This plan requires learners to identify and list their personal goals and motivations for undertaking the programme. This engages the learner on a personal level and links the programme outcomes to their personal motivations.
- Learners must complete a planned submission schedule for their assessment work. This encourages learners to take responsibility for planning their study schedule.
- Learners are asked to provide background information which informs the programme tutor of the context of the learner's motivations and learning needs. This facilitates meaningful discussion between the learner and tutor.
- Learners are advised of the Reasonable Accommodation policy and procedures to ensure they are aware of how to engage with these services if required.

## 5.2.11 Directed and self-directed learning

- The ratio of directed and self-directed learning for each programme is consistent with the ranges outlined in the QQI Guidelines for Preparing Programme Descriptors for FET programmes leading to CAS awards guide.
- Programme descriptors and validation application documents clearly document the required directed and self-directed learning hours for programmes of study.

## 5.3 CMIT Virtual Learning Environment (VLE)

- CMIT delivers and maintains a VLE which is in keeping with the overall Teaching and Learning strategy and ethos of the college.
- The VLE provides and promotes a positive learning experience for all learners and encourages Active Learning.
- Detailed policies and procedures are in place to manage and oversee the quality of the VLE.

### 5.3.1 Minimum requirements

- **User-friendly interface:** Ensure the interface is intuitive and easy to navigate for users of all tech proficiencies.
- **Accessibility standards:** Comply with international accessibility standards, such as the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG), to accommodate users with disabilities.
- **Device compatibility:** The VLE should be fully functional on various devices including desktops, tablets, and smartphones.
- **Content management:** Facilitate easy uploading, updating, and management of course materials by instructors.
- **Multimedia support:** Support diverse content formats like text, video, audio, and interactive media to cater to different learning styles.
- **Assessment tools:** Incorporate tools for creating and managing assignments, quizzes, and exams, with support for different assessment types.
- **Communication tools:** Include tools such as forums, chat rooms, and direct messaging to facilitate communication among students and between students and faculty.
- **Notifications and alerts:** System should have facility to send timely notifications about course activities, deadlines, and institutional announcements.
- **Progress tracking:** Enable tracking of student progress to improve engagement.
- **Feedback mechanisms:** Allow students to provide feedback on courses and instructors, as well as a system for instructors to give feedback on student submissions.
- **Data security:** Ensure robust security protocols to protect sensitive educational data.
- **Privacy compliance:** Adhere to privacy laws and regulations applicable in the jurisdictions where the college operates, such as GDPR or similar.
- **Regular updates:** Regularly update the security measures to handle emerging security threats.
- **Third-party integrations:** Ensure compatibility with various educational tools and platforms for expanded functionalities.
- **Scalability:** The platform should be capable of scaling to accommodate growing numbers of users and courses without degradation in performance.

## 5.3.2 Accessibility requirements

- **Compliance with WCAG 2.1:** Ensure the VLE meets at least the AA level of the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.1. This includes: (1) providing text alternatives for non-text content, (2) making functionality available from a keyboard, (3) creating content that can be presented in diverse ways without losing information or structure, and (4) making it easier for users to see and hear content.
- **Screen Reader Compatibility:** Ensure all parts of the VLE are fully navigable and usable with screen readers such as JAWS, NVDA, or Voiceover.
- **Keyboard Navigation:** Ensure the VLE is fully navigable using a keyboard alone, including access to all interactive elements.
- **Accessibility Testing:** Regularly test the VLE with users who have disabilities to identify and address usability issues.
- **Responsive Design:** Utilise responsive web design principles to ensure that the VLE is accessible and functional across a range of devices including desktops, laptops, tablets, and smartphones.
- **Cross-Device Functionality:** Test functionality across different operating systems such as Windows, macOS, iOS, and Android to ensure consistent user experiences.
- **Touchscreen Accessibility:** Ensure that all interactive elements are usable on touchscreen devices, with adequate touch targets and gesture support.
- **Browser Support:** Ensure that the VLE works seamlessly across the following web browsers: Google Chrome (latest two versions), Mozilla Firefox (latest two versions), Safari (latest two versions), and Microsoft Edge (latest two versions)
- **Browser Testing:** Regularly test the VLE in all supported browsers to identify and fix compatibility issues.
- A checklist for content development is provided in Appendix 5c.

## 5.3.3 Template Designs

The following template designs exist for:

- **Video content:** visual design, audio production, and video production configurations.
- **Live class content:** visual design, teaching formats, content formats.
- **VLE course page design:** visual design and layout.
- **Manuals:** visual design and production configurations.
- Assessment Feedback: layout design.
- **Emails:** welcome emails, registration emails, certification emails.

## 5.3.4 Content testing, review, and pre-publication checks

- **Subject matter expert review:** all content is reviewed by a qualified subject matter expert (SME) before going live. This ensures accuracy, alignment with learning outcomes, and relevance to the programme level.

- **Instructional design quality check:** content is checked for alignment with the CMIT learning model, accessibility standards, and consistency in tone, formatting, and structure.
- **Technical testing:** all interactive features (e.g., quizzes, videos, webinar tools) are tested in the live environment across multiple browsers and devices to ensure technical compatibility and usability.
- **Pre-delivery checks:** a final quality assurance check is carried out by the academic or programme team before the content is made accessible to learners. For live classes, a rehearsal or live technical check (including video, audio, slides, and platform functionality) is performed in advance of the session.
- **Pilot testing (where applicable):** new or revised content may be piloted with a small group of learners to gather usability feedback before full rollout.
- **Post-launch feedback loop:** after publication, learner feedback, tutor input, and data on learner performance are used to identify any issues or improvements required.

## 5.4 Live Online classes

### Scheduling

- A detailed schedule of live synchronous classes, including time, and duration, is devised in advance of each planned class. Classes are held outside of working hours in line with the needs of working learners.
- Learners are provided with the schedule well in advance, enabling them to plan their participation and make necessary arrangements.
- The annual webinar schedule is developed in June for the upcoming year; quarterly webinar creation is completed at the start of each quarter; course page notices with registration links are posted in Moodle in advance of each quarter; Moodle notifications are pre-scheduled to release one week before each webinar; and the Tech Support team is provided with the full quarterly schedule in advance.
- Input and feedback from learners regarding their preferred session times and scheduling preferences is sought. Their availability is considered, and needs are accommodated as much as possible. This involvement can contribute to higher learner engagement and satisfaction.

### Notifications to learners

- Moodle notifications are scheduled to automatically publish one week prior to each webinar. These notifications serve as reminders for participants and include key details such as the webinar title, date, time, and Teams access link. Notifications should be verified for accuracy and correct scheduling during the quarterly setup process, ensuring all participants receive timely alerts.

### Registration

- Learners are advised of online class dates and times, in their PLP and on their course page on the eLearning site.
- Learners must register in advance before attending a live class. Instruction is provided on the course page on the eLearning site.

### Content & Materials

- A uniform slide deck is to be created and used for all webinars.
- The final slide deck is to be stored in the shared drive folder and linked in the Staff Hub on Moodle for easy access.
- Updates to the slide deck design or content must be approved and version-controlled to maintain consistency across all webinars.

## Content structure and organisation

- Content is organised into manageable segments/easily digestible sections.
- A variety of teaching strategies, such as lectures, whole group activities, multimedia presentations, real-world examples, problem-solving exercises, case studies, quizzes, reflections and question and answer sessions are employed.
- A clear agenda and structure for each live session, ensuring an optimal use of time, is provided.
- Time is allocated for different activities, maintaining a balance between content delivery, discussions, and interactive exercises.
- Clear objectives are communicated for each session at the beginning, providing a roadmap for learners to follow.
- The schedule considers the complexity and depth of the topics being covered when allocating time for each session. Ensuring that sufficient time is allotted for content delivery, interactive activities, discussions, and assessments. Appendix 5a. sets out the standard timings for a two-hour class.
- Regular breaks are incorporated into the schedule to allow learners to rest, stretch, and recharge. Breaks also provide an opportunity for learners to process information and ask questions.
- While it is important to have a structured schedule, we also allow for unexpected circumstances or learner needs that may require adjustments, for example technical difficulties, or the need to spend more time on certain topics.

## Content testing, review, and pre-session checks

- All class content and session materials are reviewed in advance by a subject matter expert (SME) to ensure accuracy, relevance, and alignment with learning outcomes.
- A technical check of audio, video, slides, and platform functionality is carried out with CMIT staff prior to each session.
- The live platform is tested to ensure compatibility across devices and browsers.
- Tutors are provided with clear session plans and delivery guidance.
- Post-delivery feedback and learner responses are reviewed to inform any necessary updates.

## Collaboration tools

- Sessions are delivered in real-time, utilising collaborative tools and group activities during the sessions.
- A reliable and user-friendly video conferencing platform is utilised for seamless live sessions. The chosen video conferencing platform supports interactive features such as (1) screen sharing, (2) moderated chat, (3) recording, (4) forward scheduling of classes, (5) support ability to switch on/off audio/video for user types, (6) ability to playback video, (7) self-service registration, (8) authenticated access via password, (9) device and operating system agnostic, (10) protection of participant identity, (11) ability to pre-load and host slides etc, (12) auto generation of feedback forms to participant, and (13) ability to generate list of attendees.

- Sessions are led by a skilled tutor in the subject matter. Tutors are visible via live video. This humanises the learning experience and fosters a sense of connection making the session more engaging and conducive to active learning.
- For large classes (over 30 people), to reduce distractions, learners will not have the option to switch on their cameras during sessions.
- For smaller classes (under 30 participants) learners can be presented with the option to switch on their cameras during sessions.
- Participants can ask questions by submitting typed queries, during the session, and receive feedback as appropriate.

## Delivery Guidelines and Training

- Hosts should find a quiet and well-lit space for the training session.
- A neutral background or a virtual background should be used.
- Hosts must have a stable broadband connection and only use the headsets (with a microphone) provided by the college.
- Before the session begins, a sound/video check is undertaken with by Technical Support, remotely, to ensure that the session meets quality standards.

## Tutors

- Training: Delivered via a pre-recorded training video available to all tutors.
- Webinar Schedule: Tutor webinar schedules are to be announced on the Staff Hub on Moodle to ensure visibility and coordination.
- Supports and Resources: Tutors have access to a tutor guide, checklist, best practice videos, and a troubleshooting/FAQ document, all available through the Staff Hub on Moodle.
- Equipment Management: Original and backup equipment must be managed, issued, and maintained to ensure readiness for each session.

## Sound Checks

- All sound checks must be completed by 6:45 p.m. on the day of each webinar to confirm full functionality before the session begins.

## Technical Support during a live online class

- There is always a technical support person present during the live class.
- The technical support person continuously monitors the sound and video quality during the live class to ensure a smooth learning experience for all participants.
- They are responsible for quickly identifying and resolving any technical issues that may arise, such as audio or video delays, connectivity problems, or software glitches.
- The technical support person assists tutors to resolve technical issues and ensuring that the class runs smoothly.

- They proactively intervene to prevent technical issues from disrupting the class, such as adjusting audio or video settings, or providing guidance on using the online platform.
- The technical support person communicates with tutors to resolve issues, and coordinates with other technical staff as needed to ensure a seamless learning experience.
- All major technical issues should be logged via the IT issues form.

### **Ground rules**

- All sessions begin with an introduction and clear instructions for technical support.
- Expectations and ground rules are set at the beginning of each live session to foster a productive learning environment.
- Behavioural expectations, participation requirements, and etiquette guidelines for the live sessions are clearly communicated.
- Specific guidelines are set for (a) types of questions that are suitable for various times, (b) microphone etiquette/how to ask a question by raising hands, (c) respect for others' opinions, (d) and adherence to the session's purpose.

### **Active learning and engagement**

- The college strives to foster engaging and interactive sessions that facilitate active learning and participation.
- Learners are encouraged to actively participate by posing questions, engaging in discussions, and participating in polls or quizzes.
- Opportunities for learners to apply concepts, engage in critical thinking, and reflect on their understanding are created and activities that promote collaboration and engagement among learners during the live sessions are incorporated.
- Learners are encouraged to actively participate by sharing their thoughts, asking questions, and providing examples or insights related to the session content.

### **Sharing materials**

- Learners are provided with access to necessary materials, such as slides, handouts, or readings, after the live sessions.
- Materials are accessible and available in formats suitable for all learners (e.g., PDF, accessible documents).

### **Formative feedback**

- Opportunities for feedback and assessment to gauge learner understanding, through polls and quizzes are provided.
- Features such as polling, open-ended questions, or group discussions are utilised to gather feedback.
- Timely feedback is provided to learners, collectively, to reinforce their learning and address any misconceptions.

- Opportunities for learners to ask questions and allow for direct follow-up on a one-to-one basis by the tutor, are provided where necessary.

## Recording

- Sessions are recorded for quality assurance and staff training purposes.
- For privacy reasons classroom recordings are not published.
- Attendance at 80% of webinars is mandatory; therefore, to encourage attendance and participation in the live sessions, recordings are not available to learners who may have missed a session.

## Post-training feedback

- Learners are engaged with and asked to provide feedback regarding their experiences with the live sessions. This is done through an automatic survey following each session.
- Feedback on the session structure, content, and overall experience is gathered.
- Feedback received is analysed and any necessary adjustments to enhance the learning experience are made.

## Attendance Recording

- Attendance lists are downloaded following each live session and saved in the CMIT shared directory.
- Learner attendance is tracked to ensure compliance with any programme specific attendance requirements.

## 5.5 Face-to-face classes

### Scheduling

- Convenient times for learners are chosen, considering their professional and personal commitments. Evening or weekend sessions are usually most beneficial for working adults.
- Sessions are planned to balance intensity with retention, such as weekly classes lasting up to 2 hours. Overly long sessions are avoided to prevent fatigue.
- A regular schedule is maintained to build a routine and ensure that learners can plan around the sessions.

### Registration

- The registration process is simplified with clear instructions and online options. Microsoft Teams is used where pre-registration is necessary, otherwise in class registration will be completed.
- Confirmation emails and reminders are sent before sessions, including key information like date, time, and location.
- Contact details for technical support or questions about the registration process are provided to assist those who might face difficulties.

### Lesson Plans and content organisation

- Detailed lesson plans are created for each session, outlining objectives, activities, and materials needed.
- Lesson plans are shared with learners in advance to help them prepare and anticipate the structure of the session.
- Flexibility is built into lesson plans to allow for adjustments based on learner feedback and engagement levels during the session.
- A clear and logical progression of topics is developed to facilitate understanding and retention.
- A syllabus is used to outline objectives and key dates.
- Content is broken into manageable modules or units, each with specific learning outcomes.
- Content is ensured to be relevant to the learners' needs and goals, linking theory to real-world applications.

### Content testing, review, and pre-session checks

- The academic team reviews all lesson plans and materials to ensure accuracy, alignment with the syllabus, and suitability for the learner profile.
- Content is reviewed for clarity, pacing, and appropriateness of examples or activities.

- Teaching aids (e.g. slides, handouts) are reviewed for usability, accessibility, and accuracy.
- A short pre-delivery checklist is completed to confirm that all resources are available and functioning.
- Feedback collected from previous sessions is used to refine content before delivery.

### **Teaching aids**

- Various multimedia tools such as videos, slides, and interactive whiteboards are incorporated to enhance engagement and understanding.
- Handouts, worksheets, and other printed materials are provided for reference during and after the sessions.
- Tools like projectors, laptops, and tablets are used to support diverse teaching methods and interactive activities.
- All materials are shared on the VLE for use after the session.

### **Facilitating involvement/collaboration**

- Activities that encourage participation, such as group discussions, case studies, and role-playing exercises, are planned.
- Learners are organised into small groups for collaborative tasks, fostering peer learning and networking.
- A welcoming environment is created where learners feel comfortable sharing their thoughts and asking questions.

### **Ground rules**

- A respectful and inclusive atmosphere where all opinions are valued is established.
- Punctuality is encouraged to ensure sessions start and end on time, respecting everyone's schedules.
- Expectations for active participation are set, emphasising the importance of engagement for effective learning.

### **Active learning**

- Problem-solving activities that require critical thinking and application of knowledge are incorporated.
- Opportunities for learners to practice new skills in a controlled environment are provided.
- Learners are encouraged to reflect on their experiences and how new knowledge applies to their personal or professional lives.

### **Post-training feedback**

- Learners are engaged with and asked to provide feedback regarding their experiences with the live sessions. This is done through an automatic survey following each session.
- Feedback on the session structure, content, and overall experience is gathered.
- Feedback received is analysed and any necessary adjustments to enhance the learning experience are made.

## 5.6 Manuals

### Title, cover page, and table of contents

- A clear, descriptive title that accurately reflects the course content is used.
- The course name and date of publication is included on the cover page.
- The name of the college will be included in the cover page.
- A table of contents is included.

### Content design

- The content is presented in a logical sequence, guiding learners through learning outcomes using a building blocks approach where appropriate.
- Content flow aligns with assessment tasks. This structure allows learners to gradually build upon their knowledge and skills as they advance through the material. The alignment between content flow and assessment tasks fosters a symbiotic relationship, where each aspect reinforces the other.
- This seamless connection between the content and assessments ensures that learners receive comprehensive and relevant feedback, enabling them to gauge their progress and mastery of the subject matter accurately as they progress through content.
- The amount of content provided ensures that the learning outcomes are met. As a general guidance, manuals for level 4 are 50-80 pages long, for level 5 programmes are 80-110 pages long and for level 6 programmes are 100-150 pages long.

### Formatting and layout

- A consistent font (e.g., Segoe UI) and font size for the main text (e.g., 11 pt) is used.
- Ample white space is included to avoid cluttered layouts.
- To facilitate easy navigation and comprehension, headings and subheadings are used to logically organise the content. This hierarchical structure guides learners through various sections and topics, providing a clear roadmap for their learning journey.
- Pages are numbered and a header with the course title is used.
- To enhance readability and manage content effectively, the course manual is divided into distinct sections, each focusing on specific topics or learning objectives. Every section is treated as a separate document with its own cover page, making it easier for learners to locate relevant information and navigate directly to specific sections if needed.
- To provide a comprehensive and organised learning experience, each section features its own dedicated references or bibliography.

### Language and tone

- Manuals are written in a professional tone, while still maintaining readability and approachability.
- An active voice is used to make sentences clear and concise.

- Slang, jargon, and colloquial language that may be unclear to learners is avoided.
- Footnotes are used where additional explanation of concepts or ideas is required.

## **Inclusive language**

- Gender-neutral language is used to be inclusive of all learners.
- Care is taken to avoid cultural references and potential biases in examples and content.

## **Visuals, graphics, and tables**

- Relevant images, charts, graphs, and diagrams are included to enhance understanding.
- Visuals are of high quality and do not detract from the text.
- Captions or descriptions for images to aid learners with visual impairments are added.
- Tables are used to summarise and compare concepts.
- Tables are used to present organised information, especially for comparisons or data sets.
- Bulleted or numbered lists are used for step-by-step instructions or to list key points being made.

## **Examples and case studies**

- Real-world examples and case studies are provided to illustrate concepts and applications.
- Examples chosen are relevant to the learners' context, are contemporary, and relatable.
- Links to websites and other documents are provided on the course page for additional reading.

## **References and citations**

- All external sources are referenced using, provide proper citations and references.
- The APA citation style is followed throughout the manual.

## **Accessibility (Digital Accessibility for Educators)**

- The manual is accessible to all learners, including those with disabilities.
- Headings, subheadings, and other formatting elements are used to create a clear hierarchy.
- Use at least 11pt font size for body text (18pt recommended for PowerPoints). Use real text, not images of text (e.g., scanned PDFs).
- Maintain adequate line spacing (130%–150% of the font size).
- Alt text is added to images and provide closed captions for videos, if applicable.

- Manuals are in PDF format which allows them to be printed and accessed across any device. PDFs are tagged and structured for accessibility. Word file option should include (i) Create bookmarks using Headings. (ii) Document structure tags for accessibility.
- Choose clear, readable fonts (e.g. Segoe, Raleway, Arial, Calibri, Proxima Nova) and avoid using only capital letters.
- Ensure sufficient contrast between text and background (minimum 4.5:1 ratio).
- Left-align text instead of justifying it to maintain consistent word spacing.
- Use built-in bullet points and numbering instead of manually inserting symbols.
- Structure tables properly with header rows and clear labels for easy navigation by screen readers.
- Avoid relying on colour alone to convey meaning; use text labels, patterns, or icons where needed.
- The Flesch Kincaid Grade score of 8-10 for Level 5 QQI or 10-12 for Level 6 QQI.
- A checklist for content development is provided in Appendix 5c.

## Copyright and permissions

- Copyright information and ownership of the course material is clearly stated.
- If any third-party content is used, the necessary permissions are obtained.

## Content testing, review, and pre-publication checks

- All manuals undergo SME review to ensure content accuracy, consistency with learning outcomes, and alignment with the assessment.
- Manuals are technically tested for compatibility (PDF tagging, accessibility tools, screen reader support).
- Where appropriate, manuals are piloted with a small group of learners to assess usability and comprehension.
- Revisions are completed before publication, and manuals are reviewed annually based on learner feedback and academic input.

## Continuous improvement

- **Feedback collection:** feedback is actively sought from learners, tutors, and other stakeholders on the eLearning manuals' content, structure, and usability.
- **Data analysis:** learner performance data, such as assessment results and completion rates, is analysed to identify areas that may need further clarification or enhancement.
- **Industry updates:** industry trends, best practices, and emerging technologies are kept abreast of to ensure the content remains current and up to date.
- **Learner surveys:** periodic surveys are conducted to gather insights into learners' preferences, needs, and satisfaction with the course materials.
- **Course evaluation:** the overall effectiveness of the course is regularly assessed by evaluating learning outcomes and its alignment with the course objectives.
- **Content relevance:** the relevance and significance of the content is regularly assessed to ensure it addresses current challenges and real-world scenarios.

- **Revision schedule:** a revision schedule is in place to ensure that the eLearning manuals are reviewed and updated at regular intervals.
- **Integration of case studies:** relevant case studies and real-world examples are included in the course material to make the content more practical and applicable.

## 5.7 Quizzes

### Purpose

- The purpose of quizzes is for learners to test their knowledge in a low-stakes context (i.e., learners' grades are unaffected by quiz results)
- Quizzes are used to assess learners' comprehension and grasp of the material covered in a specific unit or topic. They help gauge whether learners have effectively learned and retained the key concepts.
- Quizzes encourage active participation and engagement with the course material.
- Quizzes aid in enhancing learners' retention and recall of information.
- Quizzes can help identify common misconceptions or gaps in understanding among learners. This information assists in adjusting or amending course content to avoid confusion.
- Quizzes create a sense of accountability for learners to stay on top of the coursework. The desire to perform well on quizzes can motivate learners to engage more deeply with the content.
- Successful completion of quizzes can boost learner confidence and motivate them to continue engaging with the course content.

### Wording and language

- Each question is written in a clear, unambiguous manner and is related to the associated unit's content.
- Vague or overly complicated phrasing that may confuse learners are avoided.
- Clear and concise language is used in the questions and answer choices.
- Jargon or technical terms not covered in the associated unit is avoided.
- A professional and respectful tone is maintained throughout.

### Length

- Quizzes for units of each module are 10 questions long and quizzes for modules in a major award are 25 questions long.

### Question design

- Quizzes employ various question types, catering to different learning styles and cognitive skills. This accommodates a range of learners' abilities and preferences. Options include:
- **Multiple Choice:** Offers several options with one or more correct answers. Suitable for: Testing recall, comprehension, or recognition of specific information.
- **True/False:** Simple statement with a choice of true or false. Suitable for: Quick checks on information or to discern understanding of basic concepts.

- **Matching:** Requires learners to match a list of names or statements with another list. Suitable for: Vocabulary, historical dates, or any topic where pairing related items is beneficial.
- **Drag and drop:** Learners drag items to specific locations or onto target areas. Suitable for: Testing spatial understanding, sequence of events, categorising items, or associating terms with definitions.
- **Random short answer matching:** Randomly selects short-answer questions from a particular category and turns them into a matching question. Suitable for: Providing variability in assessments while reviewing multiple concepts.
- **Select missing word:** A sentence or paragraph with a dropdown menu to select the missing word. Suitable for: Vocabulary or concept recall within context.
- **Drag and drop into text:** Learners drag words or phrases into gaps in a text. Suitable for: Testing language comprehension, vocabulary in context, or process steps.

## Scoring and grading

- Quiz results are provided immediately following the submission of the final question.
- Quizzes provide immediate summative feedback to learners on their performance.
- Feedback helps learners identify their strengths and areas needing improvement, guiding their future study efforts.
- Each quiz's scoring criteria is clearly defined and if there are no penalties for incorrect answers.
- Quiz results are displayed in percentage terms.

## Content testing, review, and pre-publication checks

- Subject matter experts review all quiz questions to ensure alignment with the associated unit content and learning outcomes.
- Quizzes are proofread and checked for clarity, fairness, and language bias.
- All question types are tested in the VLE to ensure technical functionality (e.g., scoring, feedback, compatibility).
- A peer or internal review process is conducted with a small group to check for ambiguities or inconsistencies.
- Performance data and learner feedback are reviewed post-launch to inform ongoing quiz updates and improvements.

## Accessibility and inclusivity

- Alt text for images is provided to ensure accessibility for all learners.
- Gender-neutral language is used where possible and biases in question phrasing is avoided.
- There is sufficient spacing between questions and answer choices for readability.
- Bold or italics are used to emphasise important keywords or instructions.

## 5.8 Videos

### Content Design

- The content for all eLearning videos is devised using iSpring Suite. Videos entail text, images, voice over, and embedded video.
- Content is presented in a logical sequence and complements the sequence of material presented in the course manual.
- Each video begins with an introductory slide, outlining the topics which will be covered in the video.
- Each video concludes with a Key Takeaways slide that summarises the primary learning points covered in the session. This slide serves as a concise recap, reinforcing essential concepts and ensuring that learners retain the most valuable information. By highlighting the key insights, the takeaways slide helps learners consolidate their understanding and apply the knowledge effectively in real-world scenarios.
- A consistent theme and colour are used throughout the videos to maintain visual coherence.
- All title and closing slides contain the CMIT logo.
- A clear and readable font is used and a consistent font size for slide titles, headings, subheadings, and body text are used.
- Images and graphics that are used to enhance the visual appeal of the slides are of a high quality.
- The content included on the slides is kept concise and focused on key points. The amount of text used is limited and bullet points are used where possible to convey information.
- Key words and phrases are highlighted in a distinct colour to enhance them and make them stand out.
- Where possible and suitable, clickable objects, such as links to articles or other videos, are used.
- Animations and transitions are used sparingly to avoid distraction and enhance Learner engagement.

### Narration/Voiceover Recording

- All videos will include narration to enhance the learning experience. The voiceover will be human recorded, or AI generated. Every script is individually edited to ensure accuracy, clarity, and engagement.
- The narration is delivered in a clear and professional manner, ensuring it is well-paced and easy to follow. It is synchronised with the on-screen content and expands on the slide information to provide additional context, explanations, and insights that support learner comprehension

## Accessibility and Compatibility

- **Screen reader technology for video accessibility:** Screen reader technology is integrated with video content to enhance accessibility for individuals with visual impairments. This technology reads aloud the information displayed on the screen, including text and control elements within videos, ensuring that all viewers can access the content effectively.
- **Live caption for enhanced understanding:** Live Caption technology is employed to automatically generate captions for both recorded videos and live instructional classes. This feature is crucial for providing real-time, readable text of the spoken content, making videos more accessible to individuals who are deaf or hard of hearing, as well as benefiting those who prefer visual learning aids or are in noisy environments where listening is impaired.
- **Comprehensive compatibility testing:** Videos are meticulously tested across a variety of devices and web browsers to guarantee compatibility and smooth playback. This testing ensures that all users, regardless of their chosen hardware or software platforms, receive a consistent viewing experience. This approach addresses issues like varying screen sizes, operating system discrepancies, and browser-specific behaviours, promoting an inclusive environment for all viewers.
- A checklist for content development is provided in Appendix 5c.

## Copyright and permissions

- Copyright information and ownership of the course material is clearly stated.
- If any third-party content is used, the necessary permissions are obtained.

## Content testing, review, and pre-publication checks

- Scripts and slides are reviewed by SMEs for accuracy and alignment with the course manual.
- iSpring videos are reviewed post-production to ensure voiceover synchronisation, visual clarity, and logical sequence.
- Videos are tested across devices and browsers to ensure compatibility and usability.
- Accessibility tools (e.g., screen reader compatibility, closed captions) are tested and confirmed.
- Feedback on published videos is reviewed regularly, and updates are made where required to ensure continued relevance and quality.

## 5.9 CMIT Digital Library

### Overview

- **Resource hub:** The library, as an integrated digital resource centre, is designed to augment and enrich the learning journey with additional reading to supplement course manuals, quizzes, and video. The library's design focuses on offering access to an array of learning materials directly relevant to learners' courses, enhancing their understanding of complex concepts.
- **Collection:** This comprehensive collection includes a range of e-books, journal articles, encompassing various subjects and disciplines, scholarly research papers, multimedia content, and other digital learning aids that cater to diverse learning preferences. Sources include materials licenced to CMIT (e.g. from the Institute of Leadership and Management) and open-source academic content (such as OpenStax).
- **Curated content:** The library content is curated for each CMIT course, rather than being general diverse resource where users must search for relevant content.
- **Features:** For users, key features include access on the course page, abstracts, download capability, categorisation of content and keyword search functionality.
- **Device compatibility:** The library is universally compatible, allowing learners to access resources on various devices including desktops, tablets, and smartphones.

### Updating

- **Usage monitoring:** Usage statistics are regularly monitored to assess resource popularity and effectiveness, guiding future library updates.
- **Regular content updates:** The content is updated regularly to maintain relevance with current educational trends and course curricula.
- **Course integration:** The library seamlessly integrates with Moodle courses, allowing Tutors to link specific resources directly to course content.
- **Tutor involvement:** Tutors are encouraged to contribute to the library content, ensuring ambitious standards of quality.
- **Learner feedback:** Learner feedback is obtained, and learners are encouraged to suggest new materials or updates to enhance the library content.

### Responsibility

- The Programmes Director has overall responsibility for the development and maintenance of the library, and will liaise with appropriate programme staff, Tutors, Course Authors, Academic Staff) to enhance it.

## 5.10 OER resources

### Overview

- Open Educational Resources (OER) are teaching, learning, and research materials that are freely available for use, adaptation, and redistribution. OER can significantly enhance the quality and accessibility of educational content. Some sources include:
- NDLR (National Digital Learning Resources): Ireland's national repository for OER.
- **European Schoolnet**: A network of European Ministries of Education, providing resources for schools.
- **OER Commons Europe**: A hub for open educational resources from across Europe.
- **OER Commons**: A comprehensive database of OER across subjects.
- **MIT OpenCourseWare**: Free course materials from MIT.
- **OpenStax**: Free, peer-reviewed, openly licenced textbooks.

### Evaluating OER

When assessing OER for use, we consider:

- Relevance: Does it align with the curriculum and learning outcomes?
- Accuracy: Is the content up-to-date and factually, correct?
- Quality: Is it well-structured, clear, and engaging?
- Accessibility: Does it meet web accessibility standards?
- Technical compatibility: Will it work with the institution's learning management system?
- Cultural appropriateness: Is it suitable for an Irish context?
- Licencing: Does the licence allow for the intended use and modifications?

### Acknowledging OER

- Proper attribution is crucial when using OER: (1) always provide credit to the original creator, (2) include the title of the work, (3) provide the URL where the work is hosted, and (4) indicate the type of licence it is under. Example attribution:
- "Introduction to Irish Literature" by Mary O'Brien, National University of Ireland, Galway (<https://example.com/oer/irish-lit>) is licenced under CC BY 4.0.

### Adapting OER

When adapting OER to fit the curriculum, will:

- Ensure the licence allows for adaptation.
- Contextualise content for Irish learners (e.g., using local examples, adjusting for Irish English).
- Adapt to suit the online learning format (e.g., breaking into smaller modules, adding interactive elements).
- Ensure adaptations maintain accessibility standards.
- Clearly mark and explain any changes.

- Align OER with specific learning outcomes in modules.
- Use OER to supplement existing materials, providing alternative explanations or perspectives.
- Incorporate OER into various aspects of courses: lectures, readings, assessments, and activities.
- Encourage students to engage critically with OER, comparing diverse sources.

## 5.11 The role of the Tutor

### 5.11.1 Academic support

- The learner's assigned tutor is their primary point of contact for academic support during their programme.
- Tutors provide support with course queries and assessment queries.
- Learners may contact tutors directly and the tutor will reply within one working day of receiving a learner query.
- Response times are monitored as part of the college's monthly audit.

### 5.11.2 Live classes

- Tutors deliver live classes in line with the college delivery guidelines, adhering to the best practice outlined by the college.
- Lesson plans are supplied along with the class content to the tutor prior to each live class.
- Tutors review the materials provided in advance of the live class.
- All live classes are supervised to provide support to the Tutor delivering and to the monitor the delivery.
- Training is provided to tutors as required in the delivery of live classes.
- Tutors will answer learner queries during the dedicated question and answer time scheduled.

### 5.11.3 Formative feedback

- Tutors provide individual formative feedback to learners following every assessment submission. Tutors provide feedback within the timeframes set by the college.
- Feedback is developmental and provides learners with an indication of their achievement.
- Formative feedback activities are opportunities to promote and measure student knowledge and skills.
- Formative feedback is ongoing and helps tutors to identify areas for development and how to improve. Areas for further learning may be outlined in tutor feedback.
- Tutor feedback is reviewed as part of the Internal Verification process and feedback is provided to each individual tutor following each certification cycle.

### 5.11.4 Assessment

- The learner's assigned tutor is their primary assessor.

- Tutor's review and assess learner work in line with the learning outcomes, grading criteria, and assessment policies of the college.
- Tutors participate in Teaching and Learning forums and complete cross moderation and assessment standardisation exercises as required.
- Tutors complete and submit all necessary assessment documentation. This is reviewed as part of the colleges monthly MIS audit.
- Tutor grading decisions are reviewed during the Internal Verification and External Authentication processes.
- Tutor grades are compared to national standards and individual feedback is provided to each individual tutor following each certification cycle.

## 5.11.5 Technical Support for Tutors

### During webinars

- A dedicated technical support staff member is present during each live online session, conducting pre-session equipment checks with tutors 15 minutes before the scheduled start time,
- This staff member continuously monitors audio and video quality throughout the session while managing participant access and permissions,
- They are responsible for addressing any technical issues in real-time without disrupting the flow of teaching, including providing backup support if the tutor experiences connection issues,
- Additional responsibilities include managing breakout room creation when needed and monitoring the chat for technical questions from participants.

### Feedback

- Technical support staff assist tutors with the management of digital feedback systems, including troubleshooting submission portal issues and maintaining the feedback interface in the Virtual Learning Environment,
- They help tutors set up and customise automated feedback templates while ensuring grade book synchronisation operates correctly,
- Support extends to the proper use of electronic tools and maintaining comprehensive audit trails of all feedback communications, and
- They regularly verify that feedback systems are functioning correctly and that tutors can access all necessary tools for providing timely and effective feedback to learners.

### AI/Plagiarism

- Technical support provides comprehensive guidance on using approved plagiarism detection software and interpreting similarity reports accurately,
- Staff assist tutors in managing false positives in AI detection and properly documenting suspected academic integrity violations,

- They ensure tutors have access to and understand how to utilise text-matching tools effectively,
- Support includes keeping tutors updated on emerging AI detection methods and maintaining best practices for digital assessment validation, and
- Regular updates are provided to tutors as new AI detection tools and features become available.

## **Support**

- A technical support helpdesk operates during office hours to provide immediate assistance to tutors encountering technical difficulties,
- Support includes remote desktop assistance when needed and management of backup systems for teaching materials,
- Staff monitor VLE issues during peak assessment periods and support mobile and tablet access to teaching resource, regular testing of all teaching platforms and tools ensures consistent performance and reliability and
- Technical documentation and guides are maintained and updated regularly to reflect current systems and procedures.

## **Professional Development**

- Regular training sessions are conducted on new educational technologies and emerging digital teaching tools,
- One-on-one coaching is available for specific technical tools, and staff maintain comprehensive technical skills documentation,
- Periodic workshops on emerging educational technologies are organised to keep tutors current with technological advancements, and
- A knowledge base of common technical solutions is maintained and regularly updated based on tutor feedback and frequent support requests.

## **Emergency Response**

- Clear procedures are established for handling technical emergencies during live sessions, including backup delivery methods if primary systems fail, emergency communication channels are maintained for immediate support, and alternative assessment submission protocols are in place, and data recovery procedures are documented and regularly tested to ensure lost work can be retrieved if necessary, and comprehensive contingency plans exist for major system outages, with clear steps for tutors to follow to minimise disruption to learning.

## 5.12 Teaching Workload Management

- The purpose of this policy is to establish a fair and effective workload model for teaching staff. This model recognises the unique demands of blended and online education, including preparation time and the need for flexible teaching methods. This policy applies to all teaching staff involved in delivering blended and online courses, including full-time and part-time faculty.
- These procedures are to ensure staff workload is balanced, transparent, and supports the achievement of high-quality teaching and learning outcomes.
- Workload Components:
  - **Direct teaching hours:** Time spent in actual teaching, including live lectures, live online lectures, and real-time interactions with learners.
  - **Preparation and development time:** Time spent preparing for live classes (note that all materials, videos, manuals, presentations, etc are prepared in advance by the college team).
  - **Assessment and feedback:** Time allocated for creating assessments, grading, and providing constructive feedback to learners. Learner interactions are included as part of the assessment payment.
  - **Professional development:** Time set aside for staff training, workshops, and other activities aimed at enhancing teaching skills and knowledge specific to online education.
- **Flexible learning support:** The policy supports the substitution of traditional teaching methods with appropriate online synchronous and asynchronous engagements. For instance: Synchronous: Webinars, live Q&A sessions, real-time discussions. Asynchronous: Recorded lectures, interactive modules, discussion boards, and self-paced activities.
- **Measurement and monitoring:** Workload is quantified not just by contact hours but by a holistic view of all activities essential to effective teaching and learning. Each staff member will maintain a record documenting all activities (assessments marked, time spent teaching), which will be reviewed monthly by the Academic Director. Adjustments to workload allocations will be made based on these reviews to ensure fairness and effectiveness.
- **Implementation:** This policy will be communicated to all relevant staff through an initial training session and included in the staff procedures manual.
- **Review and feedback:** The policy will be subject to an annual review to adapt to the evolving needs of online education and feedback from staff. Staff are encouraged to provide feedback on the workload model through surveys and during staff meetings to continuously refine and improve the policy.
- Example of Practical Application of Model in Appendix 5b.

## 5.13 Learner responsibilities

### 5.13.1 Outlining the requirements to participate

- An existing skill, knowledge or competence may be required before commencing a CMIT programme. These are called 'pre-requisites' and are clearly outlined for each programme on our website.
- 'Equipped to participate' statements outline the knowledge, skills, and competence a learner requires to participate in a programme with CMIT.
- These competencies are published on our website for all learners.
- The 'Equipped to Participate' statements include information on: accessing the specific entry requirements for programmes, required fluency for both level 5 and level 6 in generic skills such as literacy / numeracy / interpersonal skills, information on learning effort for programmes according to their credit value and the 'notional learning effort' that is required, details on the independent learning skills required, details of language skills required, details of resources required (e.g. working knowledge of computers, access to a word processing application), details of the specific supports available, PC and software requirements to access programmes.

### 5.13.2 Statement of Learner's responsibility

- Upon enrolment, learners agree to CMIT Terms and Conditions.
- These terms and conditions are sent to all learners upon enrolment and before commencing a programme.
- These conditions include a statement of learner responsibility which is reproduced here:
- "Learners agree to adhere to CMIT's policies and procedures while undertaking their programme. In particular Learners should make themselves aware of the following policies: Teaching and Learning Policies, Assessment Policies, Learner Supports and the Learner Journey.
- Assessments must be completed to the required standard to receive an award/certificate. Learners may be requested to re-submit their assessments if their work does not meet the required standard. This may impact the learner's ability to complete the course within the specified time frame. Where a learner fails to meet the assessment criteria, following more than 2 resubmissions of their work, this may result in a 'Fail' grade.
- All students' submitted assessment work must be their own original work. Students must read and adhere to the Academic Conduct policy as described in the CMIT Assessment Policies.
- CMIT uses software to determine plagiarism in students work. The college has a strict policy in relation to plagiarism, and if plagiarism is established, the penalties, which may be applied in whole or in part, include resubmission of work (where the maximum grade awarded is a pass) or exclusion from the programme.

- The cost of third-party examinations is not included in Course Fees unless specifically stated on this website. There is no cost for sitting the allocated QQI exam, however, if a learner fails to sit their allocated exam, a re-sit fee of eur40 will be payable.
- CMIT is not responsible for storing assessment documents or submitted files, where the allocated course time has expired and the learner has not completed all coursework, or where they have fully completed all assessments and have been certified for their course. It is the learner's responsibility to keep a copy of their work.
- Learners agree to CMIT's Policy on the use of online messaging as described in the CMIT Information and Data Management Policy."

### 5.13.3 Academic Integrity

- We recognise that the basis of maintaining academic integrity is built on trust and a shared set of values and behaviours.
- Academic integrity is the commitment to, and demonstration of, honest and moral behaviour in an academic setting. It assumes that all interactions between the college and learners are approached with honesty. This includes all documentation and information submitted to the college for academic purposes.
- The onus for demonstrating academic integrity lies with the learner and we expect that all learners will take responsibility for their own academic integrity and engage honestly and truthfully during their studies.
- All learners enrolling on a programme of study with the college agree to the Terms and Conditions of enrolment which include the acceptance of the colleges terms and conditions in relation to the appropriate use of college resources, and adherence to the Academic conduct policy.
- Learners are expected to: use any information provided to them in an appropriate manner according to copyright and privacy legislation, acknowledge all sources of information used in completing assessment work, not present the work of others as their own, conduct research in an ethical manner in line with the college Academic conduct policy and act in an honest and ethical manner throughout their academic endeavours with the college.
- With continued changes and development in digital and online interactions we expect that learners will continue to maintain academic integrity and always adhere to the college Academic conduct policy.
- Engaging with other learners on social media platforms to gain an unfair advantage in an assessment (for example through the reproduction and sharing of unpublished exam information / questions, sending, or sharing assessment work produced by another learner for the purpose of its use by another learner) is an example of breaching the college Academic conduct policy and any cases where this has been deemed to have taken place would be dealt with in accordance with this policy.
- The use of online assessment generators i.e., essay mills is another example of breaching the college Academic conduct policy. This represents attempting to pass off the work of another person as their own.
- Learners are encouraged to be aware of the various situations which may present themselves during their studies and to always protect their own academic integrity by refusing to engage with any instances which may breach the college polices on same.

- Questions or queries in relation to academic integrity can be directed to the Academic Director at any time and will be dealt with in an open and fair manner.

## 5.13.4 Online Etiquette and Cyberbullying Policy

CMIT is committed to maintaining a respectful, professional, and inclusive online learning and working environment. This policy outlines the expectations for online interactions across all CMIT platforms, including email, discussion forums, messaging systems, virtual classrooms, and social media.

### Online Etiquette

All learners and staff are expected to engage respectfully and professionally in all CMIT-managed online spaces, including email, messaging systems, discussion forums, virtual classrooms, and social media.

- General conduct
  - Treat all individuals with courtesy and respect.
  - Use professional and polite language; avoid offensive, aggressive, or discriminatory comments.
  - Respect diverse perspectives, experiences, and cultural differences.
  - Avoid personal attacks, sarcasm, or inflammatory comments.
- Email and messaging
  - Use clear, relevant subject lines and keep messages concise.
  - Use formal greetings and closings in communication with staff, tutors, and fellow learners.
  - Allow 1 working days for responses. Avoid repeated follow-ups unless the matter is urgent.
  - Do not send unsolicited messages, chain emails, or spam.
- Discussion forums and virtual classrooms
  - Stay on-topic and avoid disrupting discussions with unrelated posts.
  - Review prior contributions before posting to avoid repetition.
  - Avoid using all caps (seen as shouting).
  - Provide constructive feedback and encourage peer participation.
- Privacy and confidentiality
  - Do not share personal or sensitive information about yourself or others in public forums.
  - Respect the privacy of tutors, staff, and other learners.
  - Do not distribute course content, assignments, or assessments without permission.
- Use of social media

- When discussing CMIT-related topics online, maintain a respectful and professional tone.
- Do not post defamatory, misleading, or harmful comments about CMIT, staff, or learners.
- CMIT reserves the right to act on social media conduct that negatively impacts the learning environment.

## Cyberbullying

Cyberbullying is the use of digital technology to harass, threaten, or harm another person. It is prohibited and will be treated as a serious breach of conduct.

- Examples
  - Sending abusive or threatening messages via email or platform messaging.
  - Posting defamatory or offensive content about an individual online.
  - Impersonating someone with the intent to harm.
  - Sharing personal or confidential information about someone without consent.
  - Repeated unwanted contact or digital harassment.
  - Excluding someone deliberately from online groups or platforms.
  - Using social media to spread rumours or misinformation.
  - Cyberbullying may take place at any time and can have serious impacts on a person's mental health, reputation, and ability to participate in education or work.
- Reporting
  - Reports of cyberbullying can be made to the Student Support Team or Academic Director via email at [info@cmit.ie](mailto:info@cmit.ie).
  - Reports will be acknowledged within 1 working day and investigated thoroughly and confidentially.
  - All reports must include as much detail as possible: nature of the incident, date/time, screenshots or messages (if available), and names of those involved. Investigations will involve a review of the evidence, discussions with those involved, and, where necessary, consultation with platform administrators.
- Consequences
  - Where cyberbullying is found to have occurred, one or more of the following outcomes may apply: (1) formal warning and/or written apology, (2) temporary suspension of access to CMIT platforms, (3) removal from a course or programme (in serious or repeated cases), or (4) involvement of external authorities if the incident violates Irish law (e.g. harassment, defamation).
- Support

- CMIT is committed to supporting anyone affected by cyberbullying. Support may include: (1) confidential one-to-one support from the Student Support Team, (2) additional pastoral care or flexibility with deadlines if distress has impacted academic progress, and (3) referral to counselling or support organisations if requested.

## 5.14 Enhancing Teaching and Learning

### 5.14.1 Teaching and learning staff

- Robust people management policies and procedures are in place to ensure that suitability qualified staff are in place to deliver a quality learning experience.
- Continuous development in both academic and pastoral areas will be provided to all staff to maintain a quality and consistent approach to teaching and learning.
- Fair and consistent assessment is maintained through robust policies and procedures. Methods such as tutor standardisation, cross moderation of marking, regular feedback and benchmarking against national standards are carried out to support this.
- Staff are engaged and involved in reviewing and improving teaching and learning. This includes both scheduled activities such as programme review in addition to ad hoc activities such as continuous improvement and corrective action.

### 5.14.2 Learners

- Learners have an opportunity to provide feedback on all areas of their experience including the teaching and learning experience. This feedback will be reviewed and considered in the context of improving the quality of the learning experience.
- The college is committed to recruiting learners with the prerequisite skills required to be successful in their course of study.
- Learners will be supported in developing active learning skills and engaging effectively with resources designed to promote independent learning skills.
- Learners are provided with clear and documented policies and procedures for submitting complaints on any aspect of their learning experience and learner appeals.

### 5.14.3 Monitoring and review

- The quality of the learning experience is monitored and reviewed across all areas of delivery.
- Key metrics are gathered and reported on to inform on the attainment of learning objectives.
- Periodic programme reviews are scheduled and completed in line with the policies and procedures outlined.
- Outside of formal Programme Reviews, materials are monitored and reviewed on a continuing basis to ensure changes to relevant legislation, technology, advancement in best practice etc. are updated in a timely manner.

## 5.15 Copyright

### 5.15.1 Copyright and permissions

- Copyright information and ownership of the course material is clearly stated.
- All original course materials, including but not limited to manuals, videos, quizzes, assessments, and multimedia resources created by the college's faculty and staff are the property of the college. The college holds the copyright to these original materials, and they cannot be reproduced, distributed, or used without the express written permission of the college.
- Copyright notices must be prominently displayed on all course materials to inform users of the college's ownership.

### 5.15.2 Third-Party Content

- The college recognises that incorporating some third-party content (e.g. journal articles, images, videos) can enhance the educational experience for students.
- If any third-party content is used, a contract will be in place.
- All third-party content used must be properly attributed with the correct citation, link, or credit to the original source.
- The college will not use third-party content that is prohibited from educational or non-commercial use.

### 5.15.3 Compliance and Enforcement

- The Programme Director is responsible for overseeing copyright compliance.
- Periodic audits will be conducted to ensure compliance with copyright laws and licencing agreements.
- Violations of this policy may result in disciplinary action for faculty/staff or academic penalties for students.
- The college reserves the right to remove any course materials or resources that infringe on copyrights.

## Appendix 5a: Live Webinar Schedule (2 hours)

This generic schedule serves as a reference guide to ensure consistency and standardisation in conducting live synchronous sessions. Following these procedures helps the college to deliver engaging and informative sessions that meet the needs of learners.

Time	Activity	Content slide count	Details
19.00-19.10	Sound Check & Welcome	6 slides	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Perform a sound check to ensure audio clarity and troubleshoot any technical issues.</li> <li>Welcome learners to the live session, setting a positive and inclusive tone.</li> </ul>
19.10-19.40	Lecture 1	15 slides	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Cover the topic, or concept, in-depth.</li> <li>Pause periodically to allow for questions, from the learners.</li> <li>1 interactive tool (e.g., quiz, reflection, assessment task - to be used during this session).</li> </ul>
19.40-19.50	Break	n/a	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provide a short break for learners to stretch, refresh, or take care of any immediate needs.</li> </ul>
19.50-20.20	Lecture 2	15 slides	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Cover the topic, or concept, in-depth.</li> <li>Pause periodically to allow for questions, from the learners.</li> <li>1 interactive tool (e.g., quiz, reflection, assessment task - to be used during this session).</li> </ul>
20.20-20.30	Break	n/a	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Allow for another short break, providing learners with time to rest, re-energise, or attend to personal matters.</li> </ul>
20.30-20.45	Assessment Discussion	Varies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Engage learners in a discussion related to assessments, providing guidance, tips, or examples.</li> <li>Address questions and clarify assessment requirements or expectations.</li> </ul>
20.45-20.55	General Q&A	n/a	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Answer broad questions and concerns raised by learners.</li> </ul>
20.55-21.00	Details of next webinar	1 slide	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Share details on how to find details for the next webinar</li> </ul>

# Appendix 5b: Teaching Workload Model

## Teaching Activities Workload

(1) All teaching materials, including slides, activities, and session plans, are provided by the college, (2) average preparation time of 2 hours per for tutors to review provided materials and prepare for delivery, and (3) for classes exceeding 30 learners, an average additional 0.5-hour preparation.

## Assessment and Support Workload

(1) average assessment marking is 20 minutes per submission, including review, feedback, and documentation, (2) on average, 4 hours per week per 25 learners for learner support, including responding to queries and monitoring progress, and (3) an additional hour of support time per 10 learners above the base group of 25.

## Administrative Requirements

(1) average weekly administrative time of 2 hours covers team meetings, record keeping, quality assurance, and professional development, (2) Professional development requires a minimum of 2 hours per month, (3) Total weekly hours should not exceed 15 hours per tutor. Standard Weekly (25 learners):

- (1) Teaching delivery: 2 hours
- (2) Materials review/preparation: 2 hours
- (3) Learner support: 4 hours
- (4) Assessment marking: 5 hours (15 assessments)
- (5) Administrative tasks: 2 hours

Total: 15 hours

## Quality Assurance

(1) Monthly workload reviews ensure teaching quality and sustainable work patterns, (2) College provides technical support during live sessions and administrative support for routine tasks, and (3) Regular check-ins monitor workload manageability and teaching standards.

# Appendix 5c: Content Development - Accessibility Checklist

## For all course content

- Use clear, simple language.
- Structure with headings (Heading 2, Heading 3, etc.).
- Do not rely on colour alone to convey meaning.
- Ensure sufficient colour contrast.

## For images:

- Add descriptive alt text.
- Avoid images of text where possible.

## For videos:

- Provide closed captions.
- Include a transcript.
- Ensure audio is clear.

## For Moodle quizzes and exams:

- Use clear, concise wording.
- Add alt text to images.
- Test with keyboard only.
- Avoid time limits unless necessary (e.g. for exams)
- Offer extensions where necessary.

## For Word documents:

- Use heading styles (Heading 1, 2, 3).
- Add alt text to images.
- Use accessible tables (with headers).
- Do not use floating text boxes.
- Ensure sufficient colour contrast.

## For PDFs:

- Export as tagged PDFs from Word.
- Check reading order in Acrobat.
- Add alt text in the PDF.

- Run Acrobat's Accessibility Checker.

**For iSpring content:**

- Add captions to video.
- Check keyboard navigation.
- Avoid flashing or blinking elements.
- Provide text equivalents for visual content.

**For course prospectus:**

- Use clear, simple language.
- Test with keyboard only.
- Ensure sufficient colour contrast.

**For feedback forms:**

- Use clear, simple language.
- Test with keyboard only.
- Ensure sufficient colour contrast.

**For website content:**

- Use clear, simple language.
- Test with keyboard only.
- Ensure sufficient colour contrast.
- Ensure all hyperlinks are screen reader friendly.