



ICHAS

Section 7 – Teaching, Learning & Assessment

Subject:	Policy on Teaching & Learning		
Applicable Standard	QQI	Core	Teaching and Learning
Date Approved by Board of Directors:			July 2019
Policy Version	1/2019	Date due for Revision	February 2024

CONTEXT

Teaching and Learning is the core activity of ICHAS, and it involves all activities – both formal and informal – that support or influence students’ development of knowledge, skills, competencies, attitudes, values and practices. It extends beyond academic activities to the communication processes that take place between the lecturer and the students, and the support processes which have been put in place within the College.

Consequently, the mission, vision and values, encapsulating the overall ethos of the college, facilitates and enables adult learners to achieve nationally and internationally recognised qualifications that are accessible, affordable, relevant to the needs of business, industry and the professions conducted in an educational environment based on collegiality, responsiveness, person-centeredness, reliability and inclusivity. In developing the Teaching and Learning Strategy the College has paid attention to the recommendations contained in the *National Strategy for Higher Education to 2030* which focused on providing or ensuring:

- An excellent teaching and learning experience, informed by up-to-date research and facilitated by a high-quality learning environment, with state-of-the-art learning resources, such as libraries, laboratories, and e-learning facilities
- An environment that is informed by research, scholarship and up-to-date practice and knowledge
- All teaching staff are both qualified and competent in teaching and learning, and should support ongoing development and improvement of their skills
- Clear routes of progression and transfer, as well as non-traditional entry routes
- Undergraduate and taught postgraduate programmes that develop the generic skills needed for effective engagement in society and in the workplace.
- Systems to capture feedback from students and use this feedback to inform institutional and programme management, as well as national policy.
- Comprehensive induction processes to prepare students better for their learning experience, so that they can engage with it more successfully

Curricular design is fundamental to delivering these objectives and the college prides itself in its commitment to academic excellence and Quality Assured programmes. It designs, delivers and monitors its programmes within 'best-practice' guidelines in order to prepare students to emerge from its programmes as more informed, fully rounded and competent graduates who are ready to take their place in professional practice or industry as well as members of society who can actively contribute to the wider social milieu.

In that context the College fully recognises the importance of stakeholder involvement and engagement and the value of collaborative engagement in terms of programme development, design and monitoring. The College is fortunate that many of its faculty are active practitioners in their fields of teaching and through them, we have been able to draw on the experience of practitioners who give generously of their expertise and knowledge.

Teaching and learning are supported by quality assurance policies and procedures that are independently agreed and monitored. That teaching and learning is designed to promote the discovery, synthesis and dissemination of academic and applied knowledge in the contexts of higher education, further education and continued professional development entirely informs the ethos and is critical to the overall vision of the College.

In practical terms, the College offers both full time and part time programmes using a combination of synchronous and asynchronous learning techniques to accommodate the different modes of learning that is provided and includes classroom-based teaching, tutorials, workshops, work-based learning, experiential learning. All modules have specific components of learning techniques depending on whether it is taken on a full time or part time basis.

The full-time programmes normally incorporates classroom-based teaching with workshops for skills-based components supported through the Learning Management System. The part time programmes focus on blended learning and the availability of flexible, accessible lectures for participants whilst also having a mixture of workshops and tutorials for skills-based components of modules. ICHAS is committed to its blended learning strategy which optimises and expands the College's current online student learning management system as a platform for the delivery of its part-time programmes.

The strategy is largely informed by current national and international best practice and is managed by the Vice President (Academic Affairs). Policies and procedures pertaining to ensuring the quality of Blended Learning are comprehensively outlined in Sections 3. However, this policy and associated procedures associated with Teaching, Learning & Assessment is organised around the four pillars of teaching and learning at ICHAS.

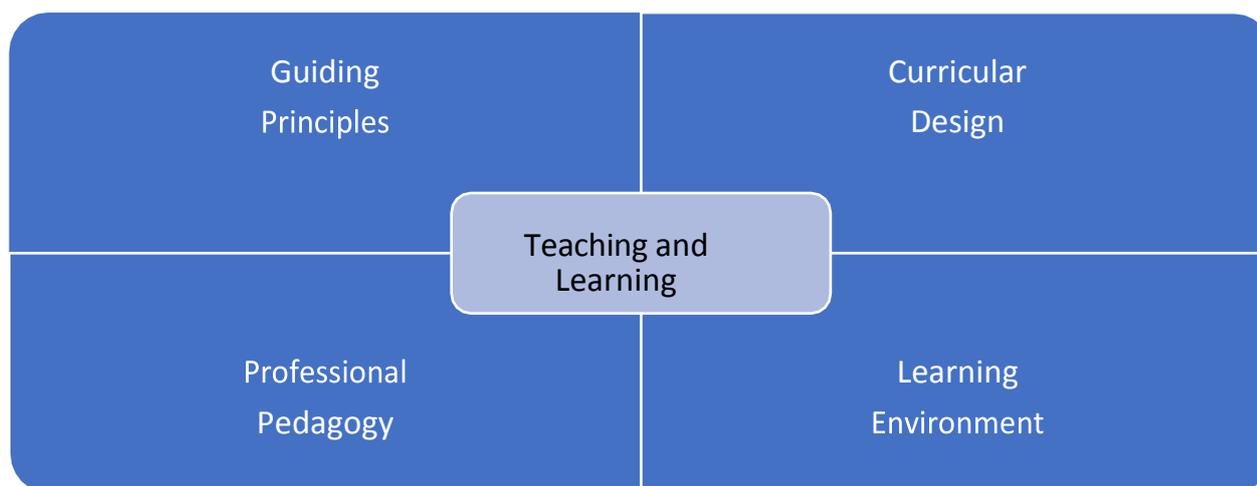


Figure 1 – Four Pillars of Teaching and Learning at ICHAS

POLICY STATEMENT

In developing a Teaching and Learning Strategy, ICHAS's objective is to continuously monitor and improve engagement, retention and achievement of students at the College by researching, promoting, and providing development and support through the effective use of both traditional and innovative educational methods, tools, and technologies. The College aims to enable students to reach their full potential through the provision of a supportive, vibrant and challenging learning environment and student experiences.

SCOPE

Applies To	Staff	Students	Both	
			•	•
Responsible for Implementation	Vice President (Academic Affairs)			
Responsible for Monitoring & Review	Vice President (Corporate Affairs)	Vice President (Academic Affairs)	Registrar	Quality Assurance & Enhancement Officer
			✓	✓

DEFINITIONS

The Guiding Principles For Teaching & Learning at ICHAS perceives education as a transformative process. Teaching and learning at ICHAS involves a parallel process where the attainment of learning through the acquisition of knowledge, competencies, and skills is facilitated through programmes of education and experiential preparation for professional practice where relevant.

The transformative process reaches a crucial stage when learners perceive that learning requires conceptual understanding through the connection of previous knowledge and experiences at which

point information becomes personally meaningful (Marton and Tsui, 2004). Consequently, the learner may realise that learning may have initiated a fundamental change in the self and his or her world view. This is facilitated by a constructivist and critical pedagogy – where knowledge is co-created and where theoretical modelling is subjected to the critique of real life fit and application. The facilitation of this process requires a shift from the provision of teaching to the production of student learning and the formation of an authentic learning centred college. In turn, the creation of a learner centred college requires knowledge of students' learning styles, the identification of obstacles to learning, and the development of teaching processes that foster personally meaningful learning, as outlined below (Stage et al, 1998).

According to Lea et al (2003), the learner centred approach to education as expressed in the literature may be précised into the following domains (Lea et al, 2003):

- The reliance on active rather than passive learning;
- An emphasis on deep learning and understanding;
- Increased responsibility and accountability on the part of the student;
- An increased sense of autonomy in the learner;
- An interdependence between teacher and learner;
- Mutual respect within the learner-teacher relationship;
- A reflexive approach to the teaching and learning process on the part of both the teacher and the learner.

Research findings also suggested that learner centred education could be integrated into an overlying theoretical context encompassing, humanist, agentic and cognitive elements. The humanist element involves gaining knowledge of the student as a unique individual, the agentic dimension focuses on student empowerment and the cognitive element focuses on each student in terms of their learning. Arguably, when these three combined elements are implemented then educational outcomes for students including those of disadvantaged groups might improve (Starkey, 2017).

Consideration of the theoretical and evidential base underpins student-centred learning at ICHAS where teaching and learning is envisaged through a matrix of guiding principles. The responsibility for learning is authentically shared by both the learner and the teacher through the engenderment of genuine autonomy and relationships based on mutual respect.

The college endeavours to create a supportive, inclusive and innovative teaching and learning environment where the learner is empowered to engage with curricular content with critical and analytical depth and to approach experiential opportunities in an integrative and reflective manner. To this end, the focus is on learning outcomes that are tailored collaboratively to the needs of the learner while firmly rooted in the broader social, economic and professional context.

ICHAS therefore seeks to overcome issues arising from traditional modes of teaching by balancing the learner and his or her needs with the lecturer's role. This approach has consequences for the design and adaptability of programmes, programme content and the reciprocal nature of the learning process. The formulation and design of learning outcomes is central to this process, establishing an alignment with programmatic content and assessment to what the learner knows, needs to know and can do on completion of the programme. There is also a need for consistency in

the learning environment so that students comprehend the purposes of the course of study and the develop the kind of responses to learning as outlined by Lea et al. (2003). Consistency between the learning environment and the attitudes and values that characterise professional standards and regulatory environments is also of crucial importance in the creation of a learner centred approach to education at ICHAS.

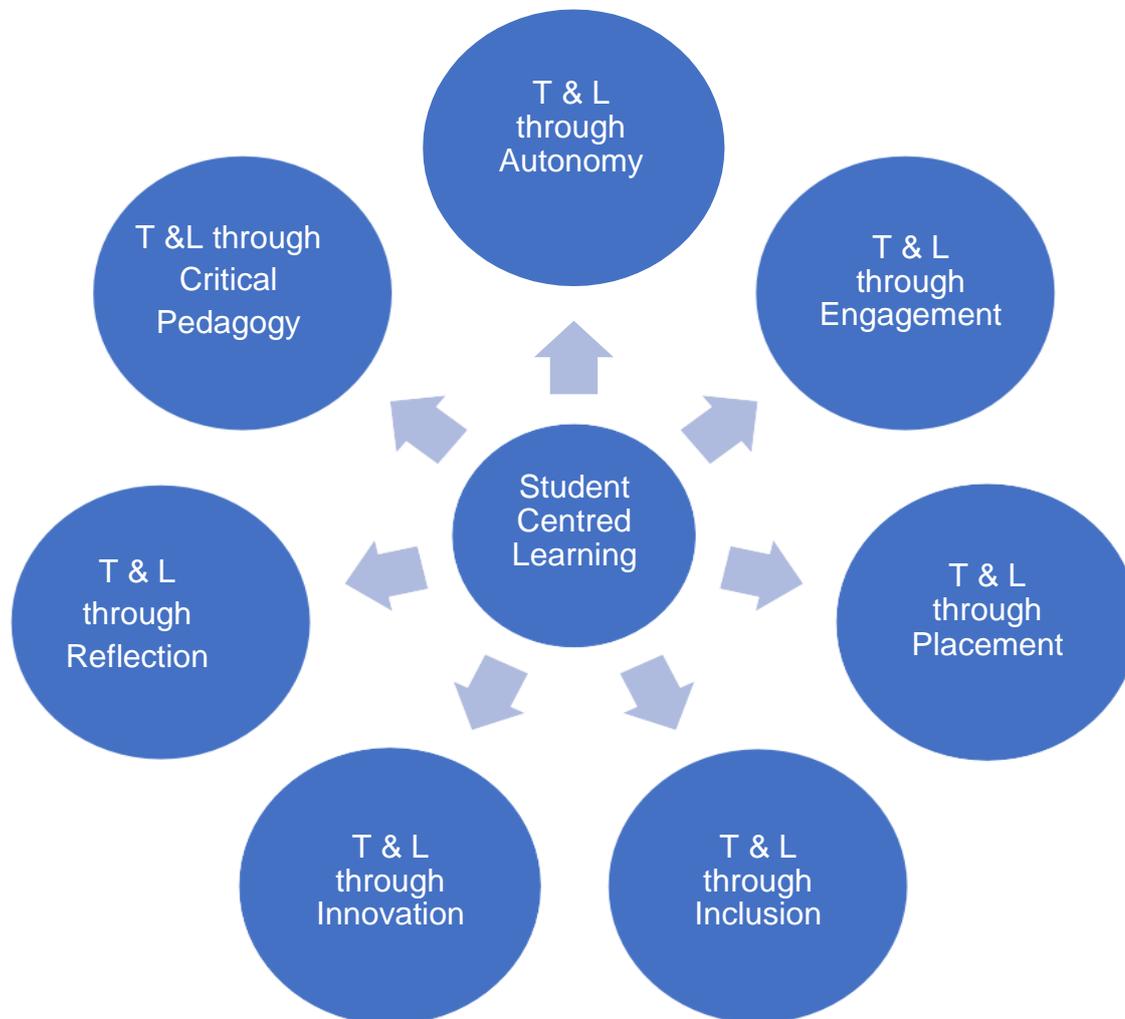


Figure 2 --Teaching and Learning at ICHAS – Guiding Principles

Delivering on a Principled Approach to Teaching and Learning

The college Teaching and Learning policy position is based on the previously stated pillars of teaching and learning at ICHAS. Because teaching and learning is the core activity in the College detailed procedural and documentary content is dispersed throughout the other policies and procedures.

RELEVANT GUIDELINES/ POLICIES INFORMING THIS POLICY

- Assessment and Standards (QQI, Revised 2013)
- QQI (Revised, 2013) Quality Assuring Assessment Guidelines for Providers
- Common Awards System Restatement of Policy and Guidelines (2014)
- Green Paper on Assessment of Learners and Learning (Draft 2018)
- European Standards & Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher

Education Area (ENQA, 2015)

- Effective Practice Guideline for External Examining (QQI, 2015)
- HET Core Validation Policy and Criteria (2013)
- The International Center for Academic Integrity (2012). The Fundamental Values of Academic Integrity (2nd Edition)
- European Network for Academic Integrity (2018) Glossary for Academic Integrity Report
- Quality and Qualifications Ireland (2016) Statutory Quality Assurance Guidelines Developed by QQI for use by all Providers
- European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ENQA) et al (2015) Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG).
- Quality and Qualifications Ireland (2016) Sector Specific Statutory Quality Assurance Guidelines Developed by QQI For Independent/Private Providers Coming To QQI On A Voluntary Basis
- Government of Ireland (2012) Qualifications & Quality Assurance (Education and Training Act).

Linked Policies or Procedures

Linked Policies	Policy on Work Based Learning Policy on Assessment of Learner Policy on Marking, Grading and Certification in Assessment
Linked Procedures	Procedures associated with Teaching & Learning Procedures associated with Work Based Learning Procedures associated with Assessment of Learner Procedures associated with Marking, Grading and Certification in Assessment