# STAFF PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT POLICY

## POLICY STATEMENT:

The College has ambitions to be the best it possibly can and in doing so aims to ensure the development of staff through a robust Learning and Development Plan and policy to ensure the workforce of the College is its greatest asset.

There are three main overarching strategic aims within the HR strategy to support this;
- To attract and recruit the best people

To develop a staff body that delivers excellence
- To have staffing structure that supports the achievement of the College's strategic aims

## PROCEDURES:

### 1. Introduction

Staff Development is seen as a key factor which influences the quality of the service offered by the College. The staff are considered as this organisation's most important asset. The development of all staff is a vital element of the College's HR Strategy and as a consequence, encouragement is being made for a continuing programme of professional development for individual members of staff.

### 2. Definition

Staff Development can be defined as the identification of personal and professional needs of the individual member of staff and the devising of programmes to meet these needs within the framework of corporate objectives. Staff Development can take many forms and covers formal training, attending seminars and workshops, networking, job secondments, mentoring and coaching. It is an core component of managing talent and developing staff to take on more challenging roles at a higher level.

Staff Development seeks to support and assist in the achievement of objectives within the corporate structure. An essential part of management responsibility is to recognise the importance of staff motivation and career development at all levels.

Improvement Days are to provide teams with the opportunity to specifically work on improving practice, process and service and should not be confused with training, learning and development. Any training must fall outside of improvement days. A task or process should be identified in advance of the improvement day to enable staff to make the actual improvements on the day.

### 3. Aims

The broad aim of the staff development framework is to offer and support a range of activities which:-

3.1 enable staff to develop skills and expertise which will be relevant to their individual needs and can be incorporated into their practice;

3.2 respond to the particular needs and priorities of the organisation and its areas, sections and students/customers;

3.3 reflect the priorities of identified curriculum development within the area strategic plan;

3.4 accommodate and reflect national needs and priorities for staff development;

3.5 create access and equal opportunities responding to the expressed needs of all staff together with a recognition of the training needs of specific groups;

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3.6 include clearly identified and systematic procedures for short, medium and long term evaluation of provision and the effective dissemination of good practice.

## 4. Objectives

In order to achieve the aims listed, objectives must relate to the College's Strategic Plan and improvement plans. Each member of staff should know what is expected of them. The framework is reviewed annually to ensure current, workable and credible outcomes can be achieved. The objectives are to:-

4.1 actively support plans for staff development resulting from Staff Support and Development Reviews;

4.2 achieve the highest standard of professional excellence;

4.3 improve performance and to remedy weakness;

4.4 prepare for changing duties and responsibilities and, where applicable, to encourage new methods and techniques;

4.5 broaden experience and encourage career development;

4.6 improve and update existing qualifications, skills and knowledge;

4.7 enhance job satisfaction.

## 5. Priorities

The priorities for staff development will vary on an annual basis, and will largely reflect the progress towards targets in the Strategic Plan. Priority will be given to development opportunities which are essential for an individual to carry out their role, are legally required, provide good value for money and return on investment and are likely to significantly impact on the individual, division and college in a positive manner. The annual Learning and Development budget will be split across each site according to a 'per capita' arrangement, enabling College Principals to allocate funds according to their specific college needs. Input will be gained from the College Principals, Executive and HR when agreeing the needs for the following year.

## 6. Funding

Funding for Staff Development at College level is allocated to each College Principal with further cross college funding being managed by Professional Development. This budget is established on an annual basis as part of the annual planning process.

For Central Services, funding will be discussed and agreed at Wider Management Meetings.

Where possible, the College will fund applications that it supports based on the following guidance – subject to funds being available:

1. If the qualification is identified on the job specification, it will be fully funded
2. If the qualification, course or seminar is identified as a College or organisational priority, it will be fully funded.
3. If the qualification, course or seminar is beneficial to the individual and the organisation in the long term, the College will contribute 60% with the individual paying a 40% contribution.
   If the staff member agrees to partially pay for the course, then the cost would be spread over a set period of time (no longer than 1 year) with the college paying the full fees upfront so the remaining part would operate through a staff loan scheme ( interest free) and be reclaimed through pay.
4. If the qualification is relevant to the role, but not necessary for the role it will not be funded, but salary sacrifice can be considered. It should be noted that HMRC rules apply and this training request would need to satisfy HMRC rules. Details about salary sacrifice for training can be obtained from HR

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In cases 2 and 3 these will be funded/part-funded by the College where budget allows. Each College has a set professional development budget and will endeavour to invest in staff where ever possible but there will be times where funds are not sufficient and applications will need to be made again in the next academic year.

In all cases, if the college is paying course fees in excess of £1,000, then staff would be expected to sign a training agreement and agree to pay back the course fees if they leave the college within one year of completing the training or if they do not complete the course.

There is an obligation for staff attending training to cascade this as appropriate.

## 7. Practice of Staff Development

The practice falls into the following sequence of steps:

7.1 Application process

Application - once a development need has been identified, the individual is expected to complete a Staff Development Form (SD1), clearly identifying the development need, strategic priority, cost and proposed impact. They will also be asked to report on how they intend to use and dissmenate what they have learned. The application must be supported by the line manager who will add a supporting statement and ensure that the rationale for the development is robust

Once the form is received by the Learning and Development Co-ordinator, it will be submitted to the relevant bi-weekly College Resources Committee for a decision as to whether the College will support the application and / or fund it. The committee will have six main options
a) fully fund the request – this will apply to courses that have already been identified on the annual training plan or fit within the strategic criteria. The request must provide value for money, return on investment and be essential for a member of staff to carry out their role.
b) partially fund the request - this will apply to courses that fit within the strategic criteria, provide value for money, return on investment and would be useful but not essential for a member of staff to carry out their role. Where this is the case, it should then be put forward to the College Resources Committee for consideration
c) not fund the request but support it by other means i.e. time out to for study - this will apply to courses that would be useful but not essential for a member of staff to carry out their role – reasonable time out is at the discretion of the line manager
d) defer decision to a later date – this would be if more information was needed or it was felt the course was necessary but not urgent to complete within the current academic year
e) not support the application – this would apply to requests that do not fit any of the above criteria
f) Suggest that an application for funding through the salary sacrifice scheme may be available

7.2 Communication

The Learning and Development Co-ordinator will communicate the decision from the College Resources Committee and the Head of HR will communicate decisions from the Wider Management Committee, to the individual and their line manager. If deferred or a decision is made to not support the training, a clear rationale will also be given. The line manager should then discuss this and explain the decision to the individual. Where appropriate, the Learning and Development Co-ordinator will book the training, event or other learning activity.

7.3 Delivery Activities

A range of opportunities and activities, will be provided, such as in-house training programme, qualifications (internally and externally), professional up-dating, work experience and short courses.

7.4. Monitoring and Evaluation
The process of monitoring and evaluation are central to issues of quality control of staff development programmes. The College will assess the efficiency and effectiveness of programmes through a systematic approach to data and information collection on which sound judgements will be made for future improvements.

Both monitoring and evaluation are continuous, formative and/or summative.

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**8. Contractual Qualifications**

Staff newly appointed into roles within the organisation, or new to the organisation may be expected to undertake a qualification as part of the requriements of the offer.

This qualification will be identified on the job specification and it will be made clear both at interview and in the formal job offer that it is an expectation that this qualification is undertaken outside of working hours. A timescale will also be discussed and agreed. The College will support any such qualifications as in point 6 above, subject to affordability.

**9. Responsibility for staff development**

Overall responsibility for Staff Development rests with the Principal, as Chief Executive. The general responsibility for promotion, implementation and evaluation of Staff Development is delegated to the Deputy Principal assisted by the Head of Professional Development and Head of HR. More specific responsibility for the development/training of members of staff lies with line managers.

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