Civil Defence College

Recognised Institution

Quality Standards Review

On-Site Report

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1.0 Introduction

This report has been produced following the first review of the recognised institutions(RI) processes that support the design, deliver and review of the Pre-Hospital Emergency Care Council's (PHECC) approved courses. This is the first step in the quality improvement cycle as outlined in PHECC's Quality Review Framework. The result of this review provides both PHECC and the RI with baseline information which will inform continuous quality improvement, to be outlined in the institutions quality improvement plan. The review was carried out with the underlying principle of the RI "Saying what they do, doing what they say and proving it with verifiable documented evidence".

Figure 1: The QRF Building Blocks:

1.1 Institution Details

Name	Civil Defence
Profile	The Civil Defence College is the National Training Centre for Civil Defence. The College works with a wide range of national and international bodies to develop and deliver training, skills and expertise in a variety of fields. Training is modelled on two connected streams; one based at the College (central training) and the other within each Local Authority (local training). Civil Defence is a recognised institution since 2007.
PHECC courses being delivered	CFR Community Response CFR Community Instructor CFR Advanced CFR Advanced Instructor EFR – Emergency First Responder EMT – Emergency Medical Technician
Higher Education Affiliation	n/a
Address	Benamore, Roscrea, Co. Tipperary

1.2 Reports Details

Date of on-site visit	14/09/2015
Quality Review Panel (QRP)	
P Collins	QRP Chair
J Donaghy	QRP Member
P Dempsey	QRP Member
RI Representatives	
Roisin McGuire	College Principal
Eoin Costello	Instructor
Noel Carmody	Tutor and CDO
Fergus Byrne	Tutor and Assistant CDO
John Maguire	Assistant Tutor and Assistant CDO
Date of Council Approval	10th December 2015
Date of publication	

1.3 Scope of the Review

The review covered all aspects of the institution's activities associated with meeting the quality standards as outlined in the PHECC quality review framework. The Emergency Medical Technician (EMT) and Emergency First Response (EFR) courses were selected to provide context.

2.0 Review Findings

2.1 Meetings and Discussions

Type	Comments
Entry Meeting	The QRP met with two representatives on arrival. Following introductions, the panel chairperson outlined the agenda for the visit and the process that would be followed.
Staff Discussions	Several members joined the review discussions during the day and outlined their role and understanding of quality requirements. Members of staff also demonstrated the various IT systems and databases in use.
Learner Discussions	None
Exit Meeting	The QRP met with two representatives. The results of the review were summarised and agreed. The panel outlined the next steps in the process and the meeting was closed.

2.2 Observation of Facilities and Resources

Area	Comments
Facilities	The college is situated at the address stated above on a self-contained site. The building has four customised training rooms which includes a 90 seat lecture theatre. All training rooms are fully equipped with up to date ICT facilities. There is a canteen and students have Wi-Fi access and access to laptops if required. There is also a large additional area internally which is to be further developed as well as a large external area which is utilised for training activities. There is a large storage area on site.
Resources	There is a large storage room where all equipment is clearly labelled/marked and allocated as required.

2.3 Evidence Reviewed – Documents/IT

The records and systems listed below were reviewed and discussed throughout the on-site visit

- Volunteer Register – Training System
- Survey Monkey – Used for Evaluation
- Induction – Sign-in Sheets
- Organisational Chart
- Data Protection Policy
- Course Checklist
- Student IT Log-In
- Tutorial Records
- Course Development Policy
- RPL Policy and Flowchart
- Equality and Diversity Policy
- Equipment and maintenance Records
- Complaints Procedure
- Health and Safety Policy
- Child/Vulnerable Person Policy
- Student Log Book
- Lesson Plans
- Exam Policy and Procedures
- Daily Sign-in Sheets
- Appeals Policy and Procedure
- Application Policy
- Faculty List
- Faculty Records
- Code of Conduct Handbook

2.4 Quality Standards – Review

Section One: Organisational Structure and Management

Standards

> **1.1 Governance -** The Institution has clear lines of authority and engages a system of accountability for PHECC approved courses.
> **1.2 Management Systems and Organisational Processes -** The Institution can show that it has well documented organisational processes in place to meet the needs of all stakeholders.
> **1.3 Management Responsibility -** There is a clearly defined system in place showing who is responsible for ensuring the quality assurance of PHECC approved courses.
> **1.4 Self-Assessment, External Evaluation and Improvement Planning -** The Institution carries out internal assessment and engages in a quality improvement planning process (annually) which includes external evaluation.
> **1.5 Transparency and Accountability -** The institution conducts its activities in an open and transparent manner.
> **1.6 Administration –** Administration arrangements meet the needs of all stakeholder groups.
> **1.7 Financial Management -** The institution manages its finances in a responsible manner that meets the needs of all stakeholders.

QRP Findings

- The organisational chart reflects the overall structure of the organisation and the reporting lines for operational activities within the RI. Plans to update the chart will clearly identify the individual responsible for the quality assurance of PHECC approved courses. The discussion revealed a process is in place for internal course approval ensuring a separation of those who design courses and those who approve them. However, there is no documented evidence of this process taking place. Courses are submitted to PHECC as per guidelines. Discussions took place about the results approval process and current self-evaluation activities. The RI representatives outlined activities such as monthly meetings which take place informally and are not currently documented.

- RI representatives stated in their self-assessment report that an annual business plan is in place and that instructors and support staff have clearly defined roles and responsibilities through the civil service performance management development system. This was available to view. The RI has a named Freedom of Information (FOI) officer and a data protection policy and associated procedures in place. There is a mix of computer and paper based information on students and faculty. This information is centrally controlled and access is limited to authorised personnel. Quantitative measures are being introduced to capture

relevant information to inform practice. PHECC certification is carried out according to guidelines.

- During discussions the RI representatives indicated that the college principal has overall responsibility for the quality assurance of PHECC approved courses. This is currently not evident from the organisational chart or documented. Information regarding responsibility for QA is communicated to students and faculty at induction and there was documented evidence to support this communication. RI representatives also indicated in their self-assessment report that this policy is to be reviewed and updated in 2015.

- RI representatives outlined some of the tools they use to gather feedback from stakeholders including survey monkey. During discussions they also indicated that course reviews take place and regular meetings occur where areas for improvement are discussed. However, this is currently an informal process and no documentation was available for review. RI representatives displayed a clear understanding and commitment to self-assessment and evaluation. Representatives indicated that the informal process outlined will be documented and become a formal process which will include all stakeholders.

- Potential students are given comprehensive information on PHECC approved courses through various channels at local and national level. Once an individual is a member of the civil defence there is also information available on the college website, through a student portal, to inform students of the courses available. Students are directed to contact the RI for further information. Course information is also available to students in their student pack at the beginning of their course. Course reports are limited to courses carried out in the college. This has been identified by the college as an area for improvement and will be developed to include a course report for every course carried out nationally.

- The RI has a full time administrator and three clerical officers who carry out all administrative activities in support of PHECC approved courses. A course administration checklist is in use and a comprehensive IT system is utilised to ensure records are accurate and up to date for students and faculty. Hard copies of relevant information are also maintained and securely stored. Procedures are documented and implemented for course administration tasks.

- The RI is fully compliant with all relevant financial requirements and PHECC has verified this prior to the on-site review.

Section Two: The Learning Environment

Standards

2.1 Education and Training Mission Statement - The Mission of the Institution is appropriately focused with education and training as a core activity.

2.2 Communication with Students and Other Stakeholders - Two way communication systems are in place between faculty, students and other stakeholders as appropriate.

2.3 Course Access, Transfer and Progression - Course information in clear, access is fair and consistent, with recognition of prior learning, as appropriate.

2.4 Equality and Diversity - There is a commitment to the provision of equal opportunities for students and faculty in compliance with relevant equality legislation.

2.5 Complaints and Appeals - Complaints and Appeals Processes are open, transparent and accessible to students and other stakeholders.

2.6 Training Infrastructure - Courses are carried in an appropriate learning environment, sufficiently resourced in order to deliver training to the highest standards.

2.7 Health and Safety - A safe and healthy environment exists in the institution.

2.8 Social Environment - A positive, encouraging, safe, challenging and caring environment is provided for faculty and learners.

QRP Findings

- The RI demonstrates its commitment to quality training through its mission statement which is visible in the RI building and on relevant documentation. All stakeholders are made aware of the mission statement and its implications for training activities.

- The RI outlined and showed evidence of a range of methods utilised to communicate with students and associated stakeholders, including a student log in to the website, survey monkey to collect data, tutors allocated to student groups for contact outside normal hours, one to one student/tutor meetings etc. The discussion indicated that along with the formal engagement regular informal communication takes place with all stakeholders. The RI has indicated that they intend to formalise some of these informal contacts in the future. There was also evidence provided that showed feedback form host organisations (where applicable) by way of a student log book.

- A limited amount of information regarding PHECC approved courses is available to the public on the college website. However, once an individual becomes a member of the civil defence they are provided with comprehensive information to make an informed choice about their course. Information regarding course pre-requisites and entry criteria is documented. There is an equality and access to training policy in place which was available to view. There is a policy available

regarding recognition of prior learning. However the QRP noted that while the college is issuing EFR Instructor certificates through RPL, it does not (at the time of review) have course approval for the EFR Instructor course. This was raised as a concern by the panel and it was noted that correspondence will follow separately on this matter. The evidence indicates that students are provided with sufficient and appropriate information to make informed choices about course enrolment and progression.

- The RI has an Equality and Diversity policy in place which was available to view. The associated procedures are being formalised. During discussions RI representatives outlined how they accommodate individuals with specific needs. This is currently managed in an informal manner. However, evidence was made available of this support taking place. RI representatives indicated that staff have received equality and diversity training which was supported by a handbook from the department of defence. There is a code of conduct in place for all civil defence members which deals with equality and diversity.

- At the time of review there was no complaints policy and procedures in place that dealt directly with training activities.

- The facilities available for students at the college site provide a safe, clean, welcoming and comfortable learning environment. The evidence viewed shows a comprehensive range of resources and equipment available for all courses. Administration, check and document the resources needed for a course and ensure they are in place. Equipment is up to date, well maintained and stored on site. During discussions RI representatives indicated that CDOs have their own resources locally which they maintain. There is currently no documented evidence to show that the premises used for training activities outside the college meet the requirements for the courses on offer. The RI representatives also indicated during discussions that plans were being put in place to undertake more external monitoring of training activities.

- The health and safety statement is available to view. Procedures are in place to ensure the RI is compliant with all relevant health and safety legislation. Signage is in place onsite and stakeholders are made aware of procedures while onsite.

- Discussions indicated that faculty are encouraged to provide students with interesting and challenging learning opportunities and evidence was provided to show how this takes place. All staff at the college have qualifications in education and provide instructors with information on how adults learn. The course material viewed provided an opportunity to verify this and included a module on "How adults learn". The lesson plans viewed showed that the courses were designed to be learner centred, providing an interesting and challenging learning environment.

Section Three: Faculty Recruitment and Development

Standards

3.1 Organisational Staffing - All faculty are aware of their role and responsibilities when involved in the administration and/or delivery of a PHECC approved course and their conduct is professional at all times.

3.2 Faculty Recruitment - Faculty, are recruited on the basis of personal suitability, appropriate experience and qualifications.

3.3 Faculty Development and Training - Faculty are encouraged and supported to gain additional training/qualifications appropriate to their role in or with the institution.

3.4 Communication with Faculty - Two way communication systems are in place between management and faculty.

3.5 Work Placement and Internship - Host organisations (internship sites) are appropriate to the course content and learning outcomes to be achieved (NQEMT courses only).

3.6 Faculty and Stakeholder Management - A system is in place to ensure appropriately qualified and experienced individuals are engaged by the institution.

3.7 Collaborative Provision - Appropriate contractual arrangements are in place with affiliated instructors.

QRP Findings

- During discussions RI representatives outlined the process they undertake to recruit faculty. While there is an application/recruitment policy there are no associated procedures to support it. There are faculty lists in evidence for each PHECC approved course However, there is no evidence that the role and responsibility of faculty members for the quality assurance of PHECC approved courses is documented. Documentation indicates that the RI meets the minimum faculty requirements for course approval. RI representatives acknowledged the need to formalise QA arrangements with all faculty.

- The RI indicated that they have selection criteria for faculty which is in line with PHECC guidelines and that senior management are involved in the recruitment of all faculty members. However there were no documented job descriptions in evidence.

- During discussions RI representatives indicated that faculty members have the opportunity to avail of activities that would support there continuing professional development. While there was evidence showing faculty development it was heavily focused on clinical content and not tutoring/instructing abilities. However, there is no formal procedure in place to ensure these activities are taken up by faculty members. Evidence was provided to show that induction takes place but it is informal at the time of review. Informal meetings currently take place to discuss upskilling and development opportunities and these will be

formally documented in the future. There is a Child protection policy and associated procedures in place and faculty are made aware of their responsibilities towards children and vulnerable persons. There was evidence provided to show that faculty had been provided with the relevant information.

- During discussions RI representatives described a range of formal and informal methods of communication between faculty and management. There is evidence of meetings taking place but these are not frequent and documented. Informal meetings take place with faculty to discuss specific training issues. The RI representatives stated that a more frequent schedule of meetings would be introduced. Records of these meetings and communications will be maintained. Course reports are to be made mandatory for all courses as another method of feedback and communication.

- The RI has a formal arrangement in place with the national ambulance service (NAS). NAS have a policy in place regarding placements which the civil defence and students must sign up to prior to any placement. There are no formal procedures in place for the RI to monitor the learning experience of the student. Informal arrangements are in place with emergency departments through the medical advisor and college principal. Students maintain a log book of their activities which is available for inspection. In future this will be modified to provide a reflection of the learning experience. A schedule of host organisation monitoring visits is being formulated with mentors being named and trained.

- Information on faculty is maintained on the RI's computer system and was available to view. The system shows if faculty meet the minimum requirements set by PHECC to deliver courses. Observation is not carried out and is an area of concern for the panel. RI representatives stated that additional analysis of course content and delivery will be carried out. PHECC requirement of 10% course monitoring is not being achieved at the time of review. Faculty performance and activities while involved in PHECC approved courses is currently not documented.

Section Four: Course Development, Delivery and Review

Standards

4.1 Course Development - Courses are designed to meet the requirements for PHECC approval and certification and reflect a commitment to quality improvement.

4.2 Course Approval - There are clear guidelines for course approval.

4.3 Course Delivery, methods of theoretical and clinical Instruction - Courses are delivered in a manner that meets students' needs and in accordance with PHECC guidelines.

4.4 Course Review - Courses are reviewed in a manner that allows for constructive feedback from all stakeholders.

4.5 Assessment and Awards - Assessment of student achievement for certification operates in a fair and consistent manner by all tutors and instructors in line with PHECC assessment criteria.

4.6 Internal Verification - There is a consistent application of PHECC assessment procedures and the accuracy of results is verified.

4.7 External Authentication - There is independent and authoritative confirmation of assessment and certification, where relevant, in accordance with PHECC guidelines.

4.8 Results Approval - A results approval process operates in the institution.

4.9 Student Appeals - A process is in place for students to appeal their approved result.

QRP Findings

- During discussions RI representatives outlined a comprehensive process for how course design and development takes place. There is no documented evidence to support these activities. Lesson plans were available to view which showed that appropriate activities were being carried out to allow students to meet the learning objectives. The lesson plans also indicated an appreciation of the learning styles of adults. Timetables for courses are available for students. Course information is clearly stated and outlined. Documentation also indicated that appropriate student/tutor ratios are maintained.

- The discussion revealed a comprehensive process for internal course approval is carried out informally between management, the facilitator, course director and tutors. There is no documented evidence of this process taking place. However, all the information required for PHECC course approval has been supplied. The approval process for host organisations has been adhered too.

- There is no documented policy or associated procedures for course delivery. The evidence indicated that all courses are delivered by appropriately qualified and certified personnel using a variety of teaching methods. RI representatives stated that student induction takes place for each course but this is currently not documented. Attendance sheets were viewed and are maintained but need to be

evidenced by the relevant instructor/tutor. Students have the opportunity to meet with their tutor – one to one - for feedback (Tutorials) on their progress on a weekly basis and this is documented. Student learning portfolios were available for review.

- There is no formal documented procedure in place for carrying out course reviews. However evidence was provided in discussions that regular formal and informal meetings take place to discuss training activities and student feedback. Student course evaluations were in evidence and it was indicated in discussion that these were analysed after each course, there was no documented evidence to support this available. There was evidence to suggest that students and faculty have the opportunity to provide feedback on course activities i.e. survey monkey. Students have to opportunity to make contact with management throughout their course.

- There is an assessment policy and associated procedures in place. There was evidence provided showing that faculty and associated stakeholders are made aware of the assessment process. There is an exam policy and associated procedures in place for carrying out these exams and for the security of assessment related material. Appropriate and verifiable methods are used to carry out assessment activities including any adaptations to accommodate individuals with special requirements. An assessment schedule is in place and students are made aware of this. Responsibility for the PHECC certification system is allocated to a named member of staff.

- RI representatives indicated in discussion that internal verification takes place on 100% of all courses. However, there was no evidence to support this.

- External Authentication is a new process and is currently carried out by PHECC.

- There is no formal results approval process documented or in place. The internal verifier checks the results and they are recorded on the IT system. Once checked the results are made available to the relevant civil defence officer who will issue certificates to students.

- There is an appeals policy and associated procedures in place and there is evidence to show that students are informed of their right and opportunity to formally appeal. The appeals procedure is appropriately time bound.

3.0 Conclusions and Outcomes

The findings from this review indicate that the recognised institution met or part met 97% of the quality standards set out in the PHECC quality review framework. There are policies and procedures in place that indicate a commitment to internal quality assurance and continuous quality improvement. The systems in place provide an oversight at all levels in the organisation to ensure continuous quality improvement is embedded in the organisation. The updates and revisions highlighted during discussions, when implemented as part of the quality improvement plan, will ensure that the RI meets all the PHECC quality standards and best practice for a centre of education and training. The evidence would support the conclusion that the RI's current activities meet the requirements to carry out PHECC approved courses.

Appendix 1: Comments and observations from Civil Defence College

AN ROINN COSANTA
DEPARTMENT OF DEFENCE

Ms Pauline Dempsey
Programme Development Officer
Pre Hospital Emergency Care Council
Abbey Moat House, Abbey Moat St,
Naas, Co Kildare

Re: Civil Defence College Recognised Institution, Quality Standards Review, On-Site Report

Having reviewed the above report, the Civil Defence College would like to submit the following feedback:

Section Two: Learning Environment

EFR Instructor course:
The Civil Defence College has submitted an application for approval for an Emergency First Response (EFR) Instructor course, we are awaiting formal approval.

Section Four: Course Development, Delivery and Review

Findings (1) The Civil Defence College has a Course Development Policy (which is included in as Evidence viewed at 2.3)

General Comments

Procedures:
The Civil Defence College is currently developing procedures to accompany existing policies that have been evidenced to the Quality Review Panel (QRP). These procedures will formalise processes which are already being implemented – but are not formally recorded.
New Policies:
The Civil Defence College is also currently developing new policies and associated procedures for "Course Approval", "Course Delivery" and "Complaints". It is hoped that these policies and procedures will be developed and implemented by the end of Q4 2015.

Yours Sincerely

Róisín McGuire
Civil Defence College Principal
10th November 2015

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