

## PROFESSIONAL LEARNING POLICY

### **1** VISION

Blackburn College is an institution of learning and has been for well over 100 years, serving its local community and the wider county through the provision of high-quality teaching, training and assessment. We believe in the power education has to change lives and we are passionate that, as a place of learning, all those who pass through our doors are given learning opportunities that meet their needs and support them in becoming better, doing better and living better. This vision applies equally to our staff as well as our students and our vision is that all staff benefit from the opportunity to engage in professional learning which supports their career development, their currency of skills and knowledge and ultimately the quality of service we give to all our customers.

### **2** PURPOSE

- 2.1 Blackburn College ensures staff have the appropriate skills and knowledge to do their job effectively at the point of their recruitment. With our focus on continuous improvement, however, we also recognise that, there must be the opportunity for staff to engage in professional learning that supports their career development, their currency of skills and knowledge, and the quality of service we are able to give to all our customers. This policy sets out our approaches to professional learning across the College.

### **3** SCOPE

- 3.1 This policy applies to all College staff, albeit in different ways dependent upon their job role. For clarity, staff have been divided into 2 distinct groups for the purposes of professional learning:
- Teaching, training and assessing staff;
  - Business Support staff.
- 3.2 Professional Learning refers to 3 types of staff development:
1. **Organisational Development** – to develop and enhance College culture; to enable staff to meet the expectations of the College Strategic Plan; to address areas of improvement across all groups or teams of staff.
  2. **Continuous Professional Development** – to develop individual staff members to be more effective in their job role; to encourage and support industry upskilling so that teaching is current and informed by real-world practice; to train staff to deliver areas of business-critical activity; to enable individuals to develop themselves and their career.
  3. **Mandatory Training** – to ensure that all staff have the required level of training and understanding to meet statutory requirements within law; to keep students and staff safe; to ensure the safety of the students and the security of the College environment. The upkeep of mandatory training is a staff member's responsibility and is a condition of their ongoing employment.

## 4 DEFINITIONS AND OBJECTIVES

4.1 All professional learning undertaken at the College should have a clear intended outcome that is related to improving the student experience.

4.2 **Organisational Development** is any activity that is designed to improve the way the College operates. Activities in this category may include:

- Staff events, symposiums, conferences or training events;
- Guest speakers, visiting lecturers and corporate training;
- Staff celebrations and rewards;
- Annual cross-cutting themes for development, e.g. Customer Service;
- Evaluating the impact of the mandatory training that staff complete to ensure that all training is effective.

4.3 **Continuous Professional Development** is any activity that supports a staff member in developing their job skills and knowledge, leading to a better customer experience.

Activities in this category may include:

- Vocational competence/professional qualifications/certification to practice;
- Supporting staff to gain appropriate levels of vocational and industrial experience sufficient to bring the curriculum to life and deliver outstanding learning based on the most current real-world practice;
- Collaboratively sharing best practice;
- Training and development identified through appraisal or observation;
- Activity that is used to help support and motivate staff in performance capability situations.

4.4 **Mandatory Training** is any training that the College has determined as being mandatory either for the role or to work in an environment that provides a service to young and/or vulnerable people whether or not the staff member comes into direct contact with students. This training is non-negotiable and its completion is a condition of employment. The completion of mandatory training is monitored throughout the year.

Activities in this category may include:

- Online learning packages;
- Classroom-based learning sessions.
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## 5 ANNUAL TRAINING EXPECTATION

5.1 All staff have a responsibility to annually maintain a minimum standard of training that will be agreed at appraisal/commencement of employment with their line manager. This will always include mandatory training, any professional standards or competencies that may be required to ensure fitness for practice and any other training appropriate to the role. It is an expectation that these elements of professional learning will be reviewed and updated annually.

5.2 **All staff** are expected to:

- Complete an induction and on-boarding period;
- Complete their mandatory training and review and renew as necessary;

- Complete an agreed amount of CPD (30 hours for full time staff, reducing on a pro-rata basis for part-time staff);
- Maintain vocational competence/professional qualifications/certification to practice.

5.3 As well as those detailed at 4.2, all **Further Education teaching/training/assessing staff** are expected to:

- Engage in industry upskilling each year as agreed with their line manager;
- Remain up-to-date with current developments in their subject and evidence this at appraisal.

5.4 As well as those detailed at 4.2, all **Higher Education teaching/training/assessing staff** are expected to:

- Engage in appropriate Scholarly Activity as determined by their line manager in fulfilment of HEI requirements;
- Remain abreast of current research in their field of study and evidence this at appraisal.

5.5 As well as those detailed at 4.2, all **Business Support staff** are expected to:

- Identify any necessary professional learning with their line manager.
- Remain up-to-date with any changes in their remit and evidence this at appraisal.

## **6 OD/CPD PLANNING**

6.1 Organisational Development is planned by the OD team in consultation with the College Leadership Team and Executive.

6.2 Continuous Professional Development is planned by employees and their line managers and those plans are shared with the OD team in order to authorise, book and evaluate the training required.

6.3 CPD needs may be identified in a number of ways:

- By individual staff members and their line manager in informal discussion or at appraisal;
- During the process of observation, curriculum area deep-dives or audits;
- Through an annual programme of industry upskilling, planned and agreed with the Head of School for each area;
- Through validation panels or University partnership reviews;
- Through business planning.

The College may provide financial assistance to those undertaking formal qualifications via the 'External Professional Development' application process.

6.4 **Monitoring and evaluating of OD/CPD**

Evaluation will be used to ensure that the professional learning has had the intended impact and the OD Team will seek and collate staff feedback to ensure that OD/CPD is meeting the needs of its end users. The level of staff satisfaction with OD/CPD is

reported to Governors and is a key metric by which we measure the effectiveness of the service.

## **7 STAKEHOLDER CONSULTATION**

7.1 This policy and associated guidance was created following consultation with the Policies and Procedure Committee, the College Leadership Team and the Principal and Chief Executive.

## **8 REVIEWING THE IMPACT**

8.1 Reports on the planning, delivery and impact of professional learning will be submitted to Policy and Resources Committee to ensure overview and scrutiny of the service provided to staff by the OD team.

8.2 The OD team will review the impact of professional learning on a regular basis through the 'Professional Learning Evaluation' process. This will look at the qualitative and quantitative evidence of the impact of professional learning on the service that each area of the College is able to provide and assess whether the intended outcome of the undertaken professional learning has been realised.

8.3 This policy will be reviewed every three years by the Policy and Resources Committee.

## **9 RELATED POLICIES AND PROCEDURES**

9.1 There are a number of related policies and procedures that underpin the Professional Learning Policy. Please click onto the link below to view the various documents:

- [Professional Learning Policy Guidance](#)
- [External Professional Development Process](#)
- [Appraisal Policy](#)
- [On-boarding and Induction Policy](#)
- [Probation Policy](#)
- [Performance Capability Policy and Procedure](#)
- [The Quality of Education Strategy](#)


## **10 MANAGEMENT RESPONSIBILITY**

10.1 The Head of the Quality of Education will manage the effective operation of the policy and associated procedures.

## **11 EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT**

11.1 This policy has been reviewed to ensure that it does not discriminate (either intentionally or unintentionally) any of the protected characteristics of age, disability, gender (including gender identity), race, religion or sexual orientation and meets our obligations under the Equality Act 2010. Therefore, this policy has no adverse impact on any of the above protected groups.

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