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1. Preamble.

1.1. IICP College supports each learner's motivation for learning and search for excellence through its own commitment to quality education. IICP College's Teaching, Learning and Assessment Strategy aims to develop engaging, high quality education and training environment for all learners and staff. This strategy describes the College's vision, priority areas, goals and activities for teaching, learning and assessment.

1.2. This Teaching, Learning and Assessment Strategy is aligned to the College's Strategic Plan.

2. Scope.

2.1. This strategy applies to undergraduate and postgraduate programmes provided by the College.

3. Overarching Principles: IICP College Mission, ethos and values.

3.1. IICP College Mission Statement is as follows:

3.1.1. IICP College aims to provide training and education to the wider community of professionals and volunteers working in the caring professions. This is achieved through offering opportunities to learners, both formally and informally, that enhance personal, professional, academic and intellectual development through comprehensive training and education within the context of mental health.

3.1.2. To achieve this aim, IICP College offers comprehensive programmes for those who wish to pursue professional and academic accreditation in the mental health services. This encompasses a multicultural and pluralistic approach with a core philosophical framework reflecting the principles and practices of an integrated method of therapy.

3.1.3. As practitioners, therapists have an obligation to engage in lifelong learning and continuous professional development. IICP College's ethos is one that supports this ideal, striving to provide a learner-centred, dedicated learning environment in which those engaged in the psychological and social science fields can advance their knowledge, develop their practice and increase their educational attainment.

3.2. IICP College Strategic Plan:

3.2.1. IICP College's Strategic Plan is built on a vision for training and education in the College. The vision identifies the following qualities which IICP College training and education seeks to achieve:

- 3.2.1.1. A quality education;
- 3.2.1.2. An education that is accessible;
- 3.2.1.3. An education that is learner-centred;
- 3.2.1.4. An education that is responsive; and
- 3.2.1.5. An education that is transformative.

3.3. The Priority Strategic Areas identified in the Strategic Plan are as follows:

3.3.1. Strategic Area No. 1. Accreditation and Recognition.

Our Strategic Goal is: Enhanced recognition for IICP College.

To enhance the standing of the College as a leading Higher Education Institution for teaching and learning, research, and innovation in the field of Counselling and Psychotherapy.

3.3.2. Strategic Area No. 2: Access and Progression.

Our Strategic Goal is: **Enhanced access and progression opportunities for learners.**

To enhance undergraduate and postgraduate learning through a commitment to learner access and achievement and the development of knowledgeable, competent, skilled, and engaged graduates prepared for a working environment in Counselling and Psychotherapy and related professions in a continually changing social context.

3.3.3. Strategic Area No. 3: Civic Engagement

Our Strategic Goal is: **Enhanced community and civic engagement.**

To expand on our community and civic engagement activities, through strengthening the incentives and resources for Counselling and Psychotherapy educational growth and development in the local community.

3.3.4. Strategic Area No. 4: Teaching and Learning

Our Strategic Goal is: **Enhanced teaching, learning and support.**

To provide a comprehensive service to support learner engagement and learning, and assist with progression to professional registration, work and employment.

4. Teaching, Learning and Assessment: Vision and Objectives.

4.1. *Vision:* Following on from its Strategic Plan, the College has constructed the following vision of its teaching, learning and assessment:

IICP College is committed to placing the learner at the centre of the learning process. The College aims to ensure that the learner's experience is supportive, challenging, engaging and stimulating. The College community strives to foster an approach to Teaching, Learning and Assessment that:

- Integrates academic, research and professional fields of knowledge in its programmes.
- Is grounded in caring, curiosity, critical engagement and reflexivity.
- Contributes to personal as well as professional development.
- Encourages civic engagement.
- Includes a learning environment that promotes active learning, critical thinking, collaborative learning, skills development and knowledge creation.

4.2. *Objectives:* In order to achieve its vision, IICP College has developed the following objectives for Teaching, Learning and Assessment in IICP College:

4.2.1. **Quality:** IICP College strives to develop and implement a College wide system of quality assurance that ensures that each module and programme are systematically reviewed and enhanced.

4.2.2. **Accessibility:** IICP College fosters diversity of the learner body through opening up appropriate access routes and developing strategies and practices that support diverse learning approaches.

4.2.3. **Learner centred:** IICP College promotes learner participation in decision making and the development of multiple fora for feedback and consultation. The College is committed to utilising feedback from learners for quality

improvement, acting on the basis of their input to enhance their learning experience.

4.2.4. **Responsive:** IICP College continues to develop a culture of active and ongoing inter-community dialogue through formal and informal means. IICP College is also committed to developing dialogue within the professional and disciplinary communities of Counselling and Psychotherapy, both nationally and internationally.

4.2.5. **Transformative:** IICP College provides an in-depth and integrated learning experience, with time spent in formal learning, self-directed learning, clinical practice and therapy, allowing learners to develop knowledge, skills and competencies as a counsellor in training over the full duration of their training programme.

4.2.6. **Participatory:** Drawing on studies in participatory learning, IICP College fosters an environment that is structured to encourage active participation by the learner.

4.3. IICP College continuously develops its pedagogical strategies and its learning environment in accordance with these teaching, learning and assessment objectives.

5. Teaching and Learning and Assessment: Goals.

5.1. Arising from its vision and objectives, the college has established the following goals and activities for Teaching, Learning and Assessment.

I. Learning is learner centred.

Involved learning requires attention to the person of the learner, and also the construction of spaces where learners can identify and describe their own self as learner, and how it impacts on their learning. Small group size and discursive spaces contribute to this personalisation and allow the programme to adjust pace and timing accordingly. Learning is tied to the interests and readiness-for-content of the learner and adjusts to the challenges experienced by learners in practice components of the programme.

Key strategies

- Provide spaces for inclusion of learners' voices in teaching, programme planning, quality improvement and institutional governance.
- Continue to foster inclusion of learners in all levels of governance in IICP College.

II. Learning is relational.

Relational learning recognises the complex social environment in which learners and teachers converse, share experiences, and participate in activities that, together, make for engaged learning. The quality of the relationship between learners and teachers is key for successful engagement and for fostering learner achievement.

The Higher Education Academy in the UK has identified this as an area of excellence in Counselling and Psychotherapy training¹. IICP College aim to foster and develop teacher excellence in this regard through the following strategies:

Key strategies:

- Foster recognition of spaces for reflection and dialogue between learners and teachers as key to teaching and learning in the discipline, and in education generally.
- Promote the value of step-by-step means of improving the learning of portions of subject matter and recognise the value of smaller, more contextually-sensitive teaching and learning activities.
- Use technology effectively for communicating with learners.
- Focus on the interaction between characteristics of learners and teaching methods rather than solely on teaching strategies and learning styles.

III. The Learning environment supports the learning goals of IICP College and of learners.

¹ Rutten, A. and Hulme, J. (2013). *Learning and teaching in Counselling and Psychotherapy. A report identifying the current needs of the academic community delivering teaching and training in Counselling and Psychotherapy.* York, UK: Higher Education Academy. Retrieved from <https://www.heacademy.ac.uk/system/files/counselling-report-final.pdf>

The College attends to creating a learning environment that promotes active learning, critical thinking, collaborative learning, skills development and knowledge creation.

Key strategies:

- **Develop resources and practices that contribute to IICP College Learning Environment, including:**
 - ❖ **Learning technology.**
 - ❖ **Learning resources.**
 - ❖ **Means of teaching.**
 - ❖ **Modes of learning.**
 - ❖ **Connections to cultural, social, temporal and personal contexts.**

IV. Teaching and Learning activities connect the academic and professional realms.

To ensure effectiveness, the curriculum and assessment must be relevant to the lives of learners. Teaching and Learning activities that connect learner experiences to real-world problems are more likely to be engaging and transformative. Teaching and Learning that provide parallel processes between educational and practice components foster engaged learning that is meaningful to learners. In particular an emphasis on integrating practice components into the teaching and learning opens up connections between knowledge and skills on the one hand and competence in clinical practice on the other.

Key strategies:

- **Make learners aware of their learning responsibilities as learners and as counsellors/psychotherapists in training.**
- **Increase opportunities for workplace learning and practice and continue to integrate work-based experience into the programme.**
- **Devise and implement a learner retention and achievement policy for all programmes.**
- **Develop initiatives to prepare learners for employment.**

V. Assessment is meaningful

Assessment is tied to the intellectual and practice requirements of counselling and psychotherapy. Consequently, assessment builds on learner motivation for learning, and is meaningfully incorporated into a cohesive framework that makes sense to the learners.

Key strategies:

- Seek specific feedback from learners on the fit between assessments and their professional and educational goals.
- Develop assessment practices and enhanced assessment descriptions that tie assessments to professional competencies.

VI. Assessment is authentic, transparent, and fair.

Assessment is grounded in attention to the tone and emotion of the assessment conditions. It is intended to make sense to learners – and therefore assessment mirrors practice. Considerable opportunity is given for formative assessment, where learners operating in safe environments receive feedback on their performance, giving them opportunities to improve.

Key strategies:

- **Increase opportunities for feedback from learners on formative assessment.**
- **Enhance opportunities for formative feedback in the curriculum.**