



Professional Learning Policy and Procedures

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1. Policy Statement

- 1.1 The college's Strategic Plan emphasises the vital role played by its staff. The plan's strategic directions recognise the importance of ensuring that the college remains an employer of choice and supports staff to develop their practice through professional learning:

We will continue to invest in our staff, providing training and support which will allow them not only to develop their skills to meet the challenges of working in an excellent college, but also in encouraging their innovation and problem solving skills.

Strategic Plan 2020-2024

- 1.2 The college is committed to supporting each individual's professional learning and to strive to develop a culture where learning and reflective practice is embedded in daily working life.
- 1.3 The college is committed to providing a range of training and development opportunities to help develop the necessary skills, knowledge and professional expertise required to successfully deliver individual, team and college objectives.
- 1.4 All staff are encouraged to take ownership of their professional learning and development. They should work with college managers to identify training needs and opportunities for development. All staff should actively engage in identified training activities.
- 1.5 The college's professional learning offer will be inclusive and accessible for all staff, regardless of age, gender, race, disability, ethnic background, religion or belief, or sexual orientation.
- 1.6 The college's professional learning offer will be inclusive and accessible for all staff irrespective of their employment status or contract type.

2. Definition and Scope

2.1 For the purposes of this policy the **definition** of professional learning is *activity that supports staff to improve their knowledge, skills and professional practice.*

2.2 The **key principles** adopted for this policy are based on a model of effective professional development and should:

- Be owned by each individual member of staff
- Be aspirational
- Ensure up-to-date industry expertise of teachers and assessors is maintained
- Ensure high quality performance in teaching and training is maintained
- Ensure that all functional areas of the college deliver high quality support
- Be based on the college's identified needs and support the implementation of the college's Strategic Plan
- Be appropriate to the development needs of each team
- Be appropriate to ensure staff can meet the needs of stakeholders, including employers
- Support the individual's annual performance review objectives
- Be negotiated between the individual and their line manager
- Provide equality of opportunity for training
- Have clear links with current or future practice
- Be planned well
- Have clear outcomes
- Be evaluated to assess the quality of training
- Be reviewed to assess impact on practice

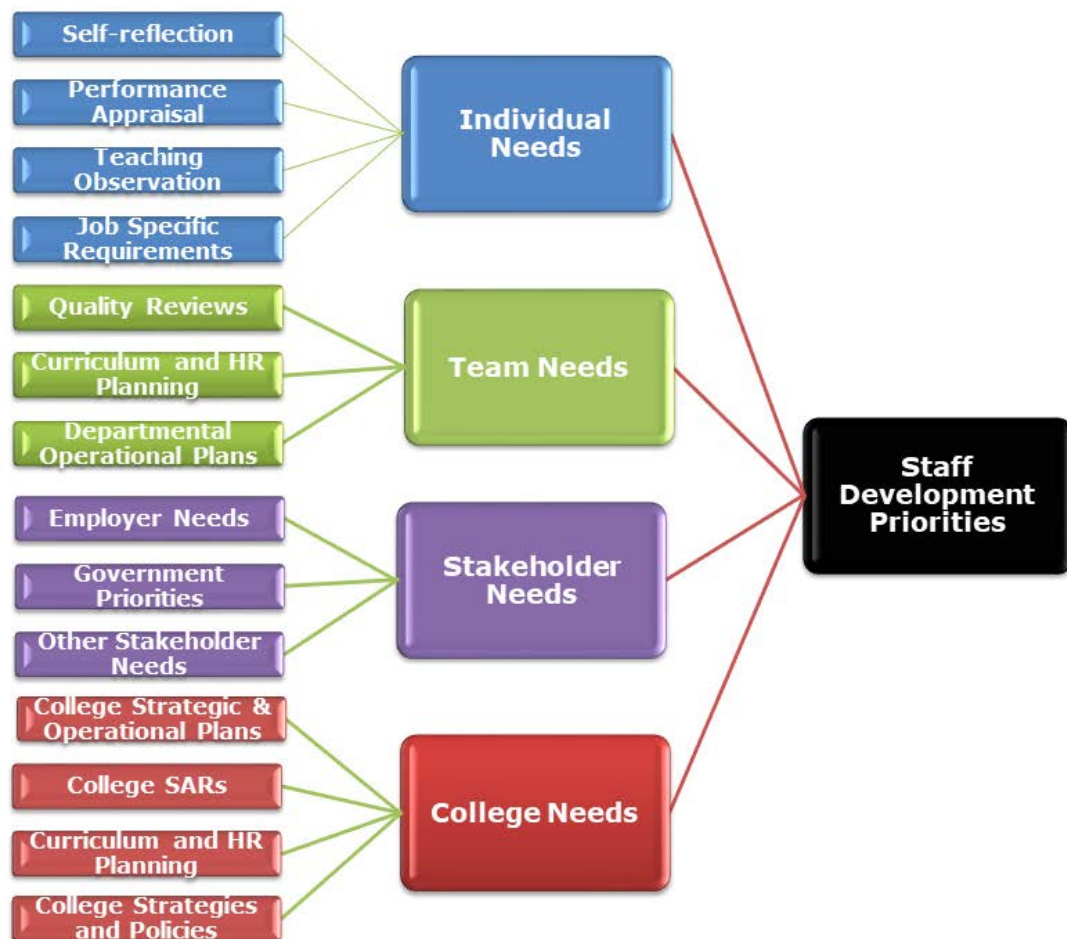
2.3 The **scope** of this policy includes all professional learning activity undertaken by college staff. It covers the planning, administration and evaluation of activity for all functional and learning area staff and college managers.

3. Identifying Development Needs

3.1 Professional learning needs will be identified through college processes such as strategic planning, quality review and performance appraisal. Development needs generally fall into four types:

- Individual staff needs
- Team needs
- Stakeholder needs
- College needs

3.2 These development needs should be identified through a wide range of college processes and documentation as summarised as follows:



3.3 Identifying Individual Needs - The most effective staff development activity is when an individual sees the direct relevance of the training to their everyday practice. So, each member of college staff should be actively encouraged and supported to identify the needs that will enhance their job specific and personal development aspirations.

The identification of individual needs should begin with self-reflection. This should be an honest appraisal of current performance to establish areas for development, alongside consideration of personal aspirations. For all staff engaged in teaching and learning (such as lecturers, LSAs, trainers and assessors) the reflection process should include any feedback from teaching or assessing observations as well as feedback from students, apprentices and employers on the quality of teaching and learning.

Individual professional learning needs should be identified through the annual performance appraisal process. Reviewing the performance from the previous year will highlight areas requiring improvement or new developments needed for the future. The appraisal discussion should also include the identification of training needs associated with the agreed objectives. For teaching and training staff, the evaluation of any observation or learner feedback, should also feed into the appraisal discussion and be used to identify training needs.

In addition to this structured approach to identifying individual professional learning needs, the college should also be responsive to specific needs that may arise though the year.

3.4 Identifying Team Needs - The identification of team development needs should also be based on self-reflection. Using the quality development plans created as part of the college's annual quality and planning cycles (including curriculum, learning and functional area plans) leaders and managers should identify any training needs that will ensure the actions can be completed effectively.

The process of curriculum and HR planning should also identify professional learning needs. These may include areas where there is a need to upskill existing staff to adapt or enhance their skills. They may also include training to improve current performance. Feedback from learners, staff and other stakeholders will also identify areas where development may be required to improve the quality of service provided by a team.

3.5 Identifying Stakeholder Needs - The identification of stakeholder needs is vital as the college responds flexibly and promptly to the training requirements of employers, through the college's apprenticeship provision and bespoke training. Providing a responsive curriculum is also key to addressing government priorities. It is therefore essential college staff have access to appropriate and timely professional learning opportunities to ensure they can meet these needs.

Professional learning priorities will include up-to-date training for teachers and assessors in their sector priorities and skills. Staff will be supported to gain professionally relevant qualifications or professional accreditation, as well as engaging in industrially-relevant placements or visits.

3.6 Identifying College Needs - At a cross-college level professional learning needs will be identified through strategic planning and the annual review of quality. Key priorities will emerge through the Annual Operational Plan and quality development plans. Cross-college needs will also be identified through government initiatives and changes in policy or legal obligations.

3.7 Using these methods for identifying training needs, the college will plan and, where necessary, prioritise the support given to professional learning activities. The appraisal meeting provides the best opportunity for each member of staff to identify their training priorities.

At team level, each manager will identify the priorities for training in their area through the Staff Development Portal. Through an annual training needs assessment meeting each manager will work with the Quality Team to plan relevant training. The Quality Team will collate these training needs and identify the key college professional learning priorities, which will be agreed by CMT.

4. Arranging Professional Learning Activities

4.1 All external training must be requested through the Staff Development Portal and approved by the line manager. Once approved, the Quality Team will organise booking and other arrangements including transport and accommodation

4.2 To ensure sufficient time for arrangements, external training should be requested at least two weeks before an event.

4.3 Most internal training will be arranged by the Quality Team working with the relevant manager or leader. Team training that does not incur costs can be arranged locally by the relevant manager or leader and recorded through the Staff Development Portal.

- 4.4 The Quality Team will ensure that accurate records of all approved training are maintained.
- 4.5 All staff should record any self-directed professional learning through the Staff Development Portal (see Appendix 2 for examples of self-directed professional learning)
- 4.6 Line managers can review all training in their area through the 'My Staff Training' dashboard. The Quality Team will produce training reports as requested.

5. Compliance Training

- 5.1 Some training will relate to the college's corporate responsibility in areas such as health and safety, child protection and equality and diversity. In general, training activities in these areas will be delivered through the Safety Media e-learning platform.
- 5.2 Staff are required to complete the following courses during their induction programme. Subsequently, all staff are required to complete regular refresher training for these courses in line with the college training schedule.
- Safeguarding Children and Vulnerable Adults
 - Equality, Diversity and Inclusion
 - Preventing Radicalisation and Extremism in Education
 - Data Protection UK
 - Information Security
 - Fire Safety Interactive
- 5.3 Identified staff will also be required to complete other Safety Media courses that are specifically relevant to their role. These will be agreed with their line manager and be added to their professional learning plan.
- 5.4 Line managers will monitor the completion of compliance training to ensure the safety of their staff and that the college fulfils its legal responsibilities. The Quality Team will provide line managers with regular updates of outstanding training. Where a staff member fails to complete compliance training on repeated occasions, the college reserves the right to invoke disciplinary action under the college's disciplinary procedures.

6. Budgeting

- 6.1 The Head of Quality is overall responsible, in collaboration with the CMT, for ensuring the college's professional learning budget, and any other professional learning funding, is effectively allocated to support the achievement of the college's strategic objectives and to provide value for money.
- 6.2 6.3 Expenses may be claimed for any travel, subsistence or accommodation linked to an approved professional learning activity in accordance with the college's Expenses Policy.
- 6.4 To ensure value for money, attendance at external training will usually be limited to one member of a department who will disseminate key learning to colleagues.
- 6.5 Financial support is not guaranteed for staff who have booked or reserved a place on a course without first obtaining the necessary approval. This will include course or exam fees as well as any travel, subsistence or accommodation expenses incurred without prior authorisation.
- 6.6 The college will allocate funds to support staff to study a long or professional qualification. Applications will be considered on an annual basis by a specially convened panel. Bursaries will be allocated in line with college priorities and amount of funding available. Financial support may vary from year to year, so bursaries are awarded for one year and subsequent requests will be considered separately.
- 6.7 The college reserves the right to recoup course fees should a member of staff enrolled on a course leave the college or fail to complete the course.

7. Evaluation of Staff Development Activities

- 7.1 All training activity should be evaluated to ensure it is fit for purpose and provides value for money. Training should also be evaluated to measure its impact on an individual or team's performance.
- 7.2 **Initial Evaluation** - Following all formal training activity each participant will complete an initial evaluation of the quality of training. This will be gathered through a short online feedback questionnaire. For larger training events or programmes the Quality Team will produce a summary report of the quality of internal and external activities, which will be used to inform future training.
- 7.3 **Impact Evaluation** – All staff will also evaluate how significant professional learning activities have impacted on their role and performance. This reflection will be carried out through the annual performance appraisal.

8. Responsibilities

8.1 Senior managers are responsible for:

- Identifying professional learning needs arising from internal planning and reviews, as well as external demands from stakeholders
- Liaising with the Quality Team to set professional learning priorities
- Providing appropriate resources (time and money) for professional learning activities
- Ensuring training opportunities are supported in accordance with the college's values

8.2 Line managers are responsible for:

- Ensuring that individuals have regular opportunities to discuss their professional learning needs
- Giving staff constructive, honest and timely feedback on their performance
- Identifying individual and team development needs which take account of both the college's priorities and relevant aspirations of individuals
- Discussing and agreeing development needs in line with the objectives set through the annual appraisal process
- Approving attendance at relevant professional learning activities, and making appropriate provision for the release of staff from their duties
- Monitoring the attendance of staff at planned CPD activity and taking action to address non-attendance
- Encouraging all staff to maintain a log of their own self-directed professional learning through the Staff Development Portal

In addition, learning area managers responsibilities include:

- Monitoring fulfilment of contractual CPD requirements in respect of the Lecturer's National Contract
- Identifying outstanding practice to support sharing of good practice across areas and the college
- Ensuring the qualification records of teaching staff are accurate and up to date
- Encouraging staff to maintain up-to-date knowledge of awarding body requirements

- Encouraging staff to maintain up-to-date knowledge of their vocational or professional area in line with the Professional Standards

8.3 The Quality Department is responsible for:

- Developing the annual Professional Learning Plan
- Organising and co-ordinating in-house professional learning events in response to institutional and team needs
- Booking all external training events including transport and accommodation
- Managing the college's professional learning budget to achieve best value for money
- Managing any external funds allocated for professional learning
- Organising the college's Induction Programme
- Reporting on participation in professional learning activities
- Evaluating in-house professional learning activities

8.4 Individuals are responsible for:

- Reflecting upon their performance in their current role and future career aspirations, to identify appropriate development needs
- Discussing these with their line manager during the annual performance review to establish priorities in relation to their personal, departmental or college objectives
- Applying newly-developed knowledge and skills to their work and the development of their careers.
- Disseminating knowledge gained through professional learning activities to others where applicable
- Informing the line manager and the Quality Team of any changes in circumstances which may result in cancellation or changes to external courses
- Following college procedures for applying for, recording and evaluating professional learning activity
- Ensuring records of all self-directed professional learning are recorded through the Staff Development Portal
- Keeping up-to-date details of qualifications, and providing certificates for validation upon request

9. Yr Iaith Cymraeg / The Welsh Language

Mae Coleg Gŵyr Abertawe yn ymrwymedig i hyrwyddo'r iaith Gymraeg a bydd yn ymdrechu i ddelio ag anghenion siaradwyr Cymraeg â'u cefnogi yn unol â Chynllun Iaith Gymraeg y Coleg.

Gower College Swansea is committed to the promotion of the Welsh language and will endeavour to address and support the needs of Welsh speakers in accordance with the college's Welsh Language Scheme.

Appendix 1

Teaching Qualifications:

All lecturers are required to hold a teaching qualification as prescribed by the Further Education Teachers Qualifications (Wales) Regulations 2002. Where a lecturer does not hold such a qualification the college will provide reasonable support and assistance to enable the individual to successfully achieve the teaching qualification within the prescribed time frame, whilst balancing the demands of their role. The achievement of the qualification would usually be expected to be completed within the first two years of employment.

Teaching staff who are undertaking a professional teaching qualification at the request of the college will be expected to deliver a maximum of 90% of the annualised contract and at least 10% of the contract per week will be kept free on the timetable. This time is to be used to support the achievement of the qualification.

The college operates a scheme whereby the payment of the fees in respect of teaching qualifications can be made in monthly instalments.

Teaching staff who are new to the college will be supported by a teaching and learning mentor. The mentor will advise on appropriate professional learning needs.

EWC Requirements:

Membership of the Education Workforce Council (specifically for lecturers, assessors and LSAs) places a strong emphasis on CPD. Staff are expected to agree a programme of CPD with their line manager that supports them to complete **at least 30 hours** of meaningful CPD each year. This will be on a pro-rata basis for staff with fractional or part-time contracts. The college commits to support all staff to achieve this through making appropriate professional learning activities available.

As part of the annual review discussion, the Learning Area Manager and Lecturer will discuss and review the formal CPD activity and hours recorded on the Staff Development Portal.

The Learning Area Manager has discretion to formally endorse self-directed professional learning activity, subject to there being evidence of the activity and reflective practice, and that the content aligns to the agreed development needs.

Where a Learning Area Manager identifies that a lecturer has not met their CPD target in a particular year, they will work with the lecturer to review the reason

for this and agree an action plan going forward to ensure the situation is rectified.

Where a lecturer fails to engage in professional learning activity or repeatedly falls short of their contractual CPD hours, the Learning Area Manager will take advice from HR Services.

Appendix 2 – Types of Professional Learning Activity

Structured Professional Learning Activities:

These activities will make up the majority of training activity. They should be logged on the college's staff development system and will appear in each individual's training record. Here is a list of some of the types of structured activity that may be used for staff development.

- Job specific training event
- Online training course
- Industrial placement
- Team training event
- Conference
- Apprenticeships
- Webinar
- Scholarly activity
- Coaching or Mentoring
- Shadowing
- Gaining a professional qualification
- Sharing practice
- Network events

Non-Structured and Self-Directed Professional Learning Activities:

Some staff development activities may not take place in formal or structured sessions. These should be recorded using the *Self-Directed CPD* tab on the staff development portal. During an annual appraisal a level of recognition for these activities should be agreed with the line manager and an appropriate allocation of hours should be added to each individual's training record. This type of CPD might include:

- Research
- Networking with employers and others
- Visits
- Informal sharing practice
- Personal development