



Quality Assurance at SIPTU



Preamble:

Services, Industrial, Professional, Technical Union (SIPTU) is Ireland's largest trade union and has as one of its objectives "the education and training of workers in social, industrial and political affairs" (Rule 3(d), SIPTU Rule Book, 2019). The responsibility for implementing this rule, the provision of such education and training, lies with a SIPTU Department which is known as SIPTU College. The college offers mainly short-run training courses for SIPTU members and staff in addition to two accredited programmes, both of which are part-time and modular in nature. This quality assurance manual is developed to provide a sound and transparent detailing of the structures in place at SIPTU's college; structures designed to ensure a consistently high standard of education and training for all learners and an exemplary fulfilment of the rules of the union. It represents a major revision of our quality procedures and is written in line with the statutory quality assurance guidelines developed by Quality Qualifications Ireland.

A robust process of consultation with stakeholders and extensive internal evaluation preceded the development of this manual. Both the process and the outcome clarified the need for revision of some structures and procedures at the college, some of which have already been achieved and are evident in this manual. The Covid-19 pandemic however, and its resultant restrictions, have had major impact on the operations at the college and indeed on the production of this manual. Face-to-face classes are suspended since March 2020 and our staff were faced with the by now familiar upheaval of adapting; working from home, unable to travel, connectivity problems, and often the loss of care and support services that make working possible. Nonetheless the last two years also saw a 50% increase in the numbers applying for our Level 6 programme at the National College of Ireland. We also achieved the design and widespread delivery of several training modules for all SIPTU staff and for Lead Worker Representatives as provided for in the Return-to-Work-Safely Protocol.

I have every confidence that a post-pandemic scenario will afford us the space and capacity to continue to enhance our quality assurance and thereby provide education and training for working people to the highest possible standard.

Joe Cunningham

GENERAL SECRETARY

29th March 2022

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I	2006	Norman A. Croke	Agreed with FETAC
II	March 2021	Tish Gibbons & Dimma van Dulmen	Submitted for reengagement with QQI
III	March 2022	Brian McGann & Dimma van Dulmen	Amendments based on Mandatory Changes and Specific Advice- QQI reengagement panel
IV	May 2022	Brian McGann & Dimma van Dulmen	Amendments based on QQI Conditions of Approval
V	November 2022	Brian McGann & Dimma van Dulmen	Amendments based on QQI Conditions of Approval
VI	June 2023	Eira Gallagher & Dimma van Dulmen	Inclusion of QA Officer Role and amendment of appeals process.

PART 1 - MISSION STATEMENT AND VALUES9

PART 2 - GOVERNANCE 10

2.2 Oversight Committee 13

 2.2.1 Terms of Reference Oversight Committee 13

2.3 General Secretary 14

2.4 Head of College 14

PART 3 - QUALITY COMMITTEE 16

3.1 Context 16

 3.1.1 SIPTU's college 2016-2020..... 16

 3.1.2 Legislative Context 18

3.2 Policy Statement..... 19

3.3 Procedures 20

 3.3.1 Quality Committee Membership..... 21

 3.3.2 Meetings of the Quality Committee 21

 3.3.3 Terms of reference of the Quality Committee 22

 3.3.4 Quality Assurance System 24

3.4 Responsibilities and Evidence Summary Table..... 25

PART 4.....26

PROGRAMME DEVELOPMENT AND REVIEW	26
4.1 Policy Statement.....	26
4.2 Procedures	27
4.2.1 Internal process.....	27
4.2.2 Post-application.....	29
4.3 Initial review of new programmes or modules	30
4.3.1 Policy Statement	30
4.3.2 Procedure.....	31
4.4 Annual Evaluations and Programme Review.....	31
4.4.1 Policy Statement	31
4.4.2 Procedures	31
4.4.3 Minor Changes to Modules and Programmes.....	32
4.5 Responsibilities and Evidence Summary	33
PART 5 – STAFF RECRUITMENT, MANAGEMENT, AND DEVELOPMENT	34
5.1 Policy Statement.....	34
5.2 Procedures	34
5.2.1 Recruitment	34
5.2.2 Management and Development.....	35
5.2.3 Roles and Responsibilities	36
5.2.4 Teaching Staff as of 1st January 2022	39
5.2.5 Quality Assurance of Teaching.....	40
5.3 Responsibilities and Evidence Summary	41
PART 6 - ACCESS, TRANSFER, AND PROGRESSION OF LEARNERS.....	42
6.1 Policy Statement.....	42
6.2 Procedures	42
6.3 Responsibilities and Evidence Summary	44
PART 7 - TEACHING, LEARNING AND ASSESSMENT STRATEGY.....	45
7.1 Policy Statement - Teaching and Learning	45

7.2 Procedures 46

7.3 AVA – Assessment, Verification and Authentication Process 48

7.3.1 AVA system 49

7.3.2 Physical Resources 54

7.3.3 Class Representatives 55

7.3.4 Social Aspects 55

7.4 Responsibilities and Evidence Summary 56

PART 8 - SUPPORTS FOR LEARNERS 57

8.1 Policy 57

8.1.1 Specific Support 57

8.2 Procedures 58

8.2.1 Registration: 58

8.2.2 Induction: 58

8.2.3 Additional Support & Representation 60

8.2.3 Quality Learning: 62

8.2.4 Learner Services: 62

8.2.5 Learner Complaints Procedure 62

8.2.6 Learner Responsibilities: 64

8.2.7 Reasonable Accommodation: 64

8.2.8 Compassionate Considerations: 65

8.2.8 Language: 65

8.2.9 Diversity and Equality: 65

8.2.10 Confidentiality: 66

8.2.11 Protection of Enrolled learners: 66

8.3 Responsibilities and Evidence Summary 68

PART 9 – TECHNOLOGY TO SUPPORT LEARNING 69

9.1 Policy 69

9.2 Background 69

9.3 Development of the technological infrastructure at SIPTU’s College 70

9.3.1 The siptuLEARN site 70

9.3.2 Introduction 71

9.3.3 Submission of Assignments: 71

9.3.4 Microsoft TEAMS / FORMS and WEBEX.....	72
9.4 Procedures	73
9.4.1 Using siptuLEARN.....	73
9.5 Responsibilities and Evidence Summary	75
PART 10 - INFORMATION AND DATA MANAGEMENT	76
10.1 Policy.....	76
10.2 SIPTU's college Register	76
10.3 Procedures	77
10.3.1 Personal Data	77
10.4 Responsibilities and Evidence Summary	79
PART 11- RISK EVALUATION & MANAGEMENT.....	80
11.1 Policy.....	80
11.2 Procedures	80
11.3 Responsibilities and Evidence Summary	82
PART 12 - PUBLIC INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION	83
12.1 Policy.....	83
12.2 Procedures	83
12.3 Responsibilities and Evidence Summary	85
PART 13 - OTHER PARTIES INVOLVED IN EDUCATION AND TRAINING	86
13.1 Policy.....	86
13.2 Procedures	86
13.3 Existing Collaborative Agreements.....	87
13.3.1 National College of Ireland.....	87
13.4 Other relationships	87

13.4.1	IDEAS Institute.....	87
13.4.2	Irish Congress of Trade Unions and affiliates	87
13.4.3	City of Dublin Education and Training Board	88
13.4.4	RED Learning Cooperative	88
13.5	Responsibilities and Evidence Summary	88
PART 14	– DIVERSITY AND EQUALITY MATTERS	89
14.1	Dignity at Work.....	89
15.2	Dignity in the Classroom.....	90
PART 15	- SELF-EVALUATION MONITORING AND REVIEW.....	91
15.1	Policy.....	91
15.2	Procedures	91
15.2.1	Ongoing internal monitoring	92
15.2.2	Annual Self-evaluation	92
15.2.3	Periodic Programmatic Review	93
15.2.4	Acquiring and Managing Input	93
15.3	Use of panellists, external experts.....	98
15.4	Responsibilities and Evidence Summary	99
PART 16	– OTHER ACTIVITIES AT SIPTU’S COLLEGE.....	100
16.1	Industrial Engineering/Safety and Health.....	100
16.2	Library / Book Exchange / Reading Circles.....	100
16.3	College Podcasts	101
16.4	Other	101
	Marino Institute of Education –.....	101
	Dublin City University	101
	Guest lectures	101
	Centre for European Policy Studies (CEPS), Brussels.....	101
	DELSA	102
	SHERPA	102

List of Figures

Figure 1.	SIPTU Governance Chart	9
Figure 2	Quality Assurance System Map	23
Figure 3	New Programme Development	29
Figure 4	Self-evaluation & Review	96

List of Tables

Table 1	Which Form to use when- a guide for tutors	51-52
Table 2	Learner Complaints Procedure	61
Table 3	Appraisal, Monitoring, Evaluating and Review	95

List of Appendices

Appendix A	SIPTU Rule Book
Appendix B	Staff Recruitment
Appendix C	SIPTU Staff Manual
Appendix D	Links and Tips for Tutors
Appendix E	Tutor Job Description
Appendix F	Learner Handbook
Appendix G	Staff Probation Assessment Form
Appendix H	“Jump Start” Programme Brochure
Appendix I	SIPTU Education Scholarship Scheme
Appendix J	Campus Addresses
Appendix K	Facilities Checklist
Appendix L	Retention Schedule
Appendix M	Enrolment Forms
Appendix N	SIPTU Retention Policy
Appendix O	SIPTU Data Protection Policies
Appendix P	NCI-SIPTU college Collaboration Agreement
Appendix Q	ETB-SIPTU college Letter of Agreement
Appendix R	QQI IAV Self-Evaluation Core QA Guidelines
Appendix S	Teaching Staff as of 1 st January 2022
Appendix T	SIPTU’s College Risk Register
Appendix U	SIPTU’s college Appeals Board

Part 1 - Mission Statement and Values

SIPTU's college is Ireland's only trade union college, a not-for-profit provider with responsibility for the training, education and upskilling of SIPTU¹'s members and staff, and also in some instances the membership of other trade unions. Trade union education in its broadest sense refers to:

- a) the 'tools' required to be an effective union activist: organising, representing, negotiating, and,
- b) awareness of the current social, political and economic 'issues' that form the background.

Thus, training union activists to be effective and well-informed activists is core but the college also aims to provide second chance formal education for union members while affording opportunities for accreditation on programmes useful for social activism as much as for work. Thus, the skills acquired are immediately transferable to learners' workplaces and to society, and often provide pathways to further and higher education not previously available to these learners.

SIPTU provides mostly short-run programmes which are learner-centred, ensuring fair treatment and equality of opportunity for all who attend. In keeping with our commitment to all of our members, classes are delivered in multiple locations nationwide with some blended learning opportunities to ensure access for all. Programmes are delivered where possible at union premises and with the support of union staff, and in a mutually supportive and respectful environment. As a trade union college, learners will normally be members of a trade union, active therein, and demonstrating their support for the union movement in their day-to-day activities and in their studies.

¹ Services Industrial Professional Technical Union

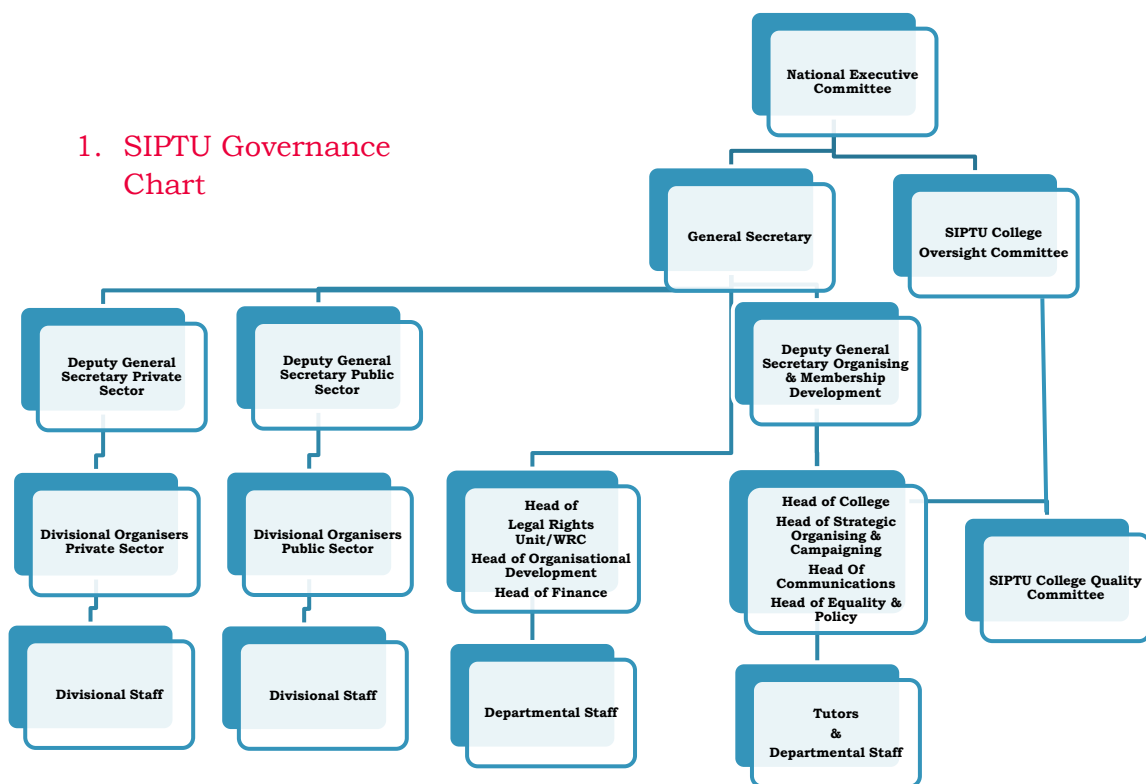
Part 2 - Governance

Services Industrial Professional Technical Union (SIPTU) is a large general union with membership from multiple industries and occupations in both the public and private sectors. Its object as set out in its Rule Book is:

organising the workers of Ireland to attain their full share of benefits of national wealth and economic activity in terms of living standards, equality, opportunity and participation in development, collectively and individually (SIPTU Rule Book)

Special emphasis is given under the same rule to “the education and training of workers in social, industrial and political affairs” (ibid.). SIPTU college, the union’s education and training department, is charged with responsibility for implementation of this rule and is enabled to do so independently. See Figure 1 below.

1. SIPTU Governance Chart



2.1 The National Executive Council

The National Executive Council (NEC) of SIPTU is the body responsible for the general direction and administration of the Union. It is comprised of ordinary members of the Union and elected on the basis of one NEC member per 9,000 union members, who are elected to the Council for a term of four years. An Honorary President and Honorary Vice President are elected at each Biennial Delegate Conference and if not already members of the NEC are deemed to be so on election. There are also National Executive Officers, specifically a General Secretary and three Deputy General Secretaries who are elected to their full-time positions for a term of six years and are full-time employees of the Union.

Elected officers and members for 2021-2022 are:

Honorary Officers:	Council Members and National Trustees
Mary O’Sullivan - <i>Honorary President</i>	Alan Daly
John Montgomery- <i>Honorary Vice President</i>	Alan Lindley
	Ann Marie Tibby
National Executive Officers	Bernie Heneghan
Joe Cunningham - <i>General Secretary</i>	Catherine Smith
Ethel Buckley - <i>Deputy General Secretary</i>	Ciaràn McKenna
John King - <i>Deputy General Secretary</i>	Fiona Doherty
Gerry McCormack - <i>Deputy General Secretary</i>	Ian Black
	Jackie Clarke
	Jacqueline Cooke
Vacant - <i>Staff Representative</i>	Lynda Scully
Pat Lamon - <i>Retired Members Representative</i>	

	Marion Walsh
	Paudie Power
	Paul Coomey
	Sally Corr
	Sean Ryan
	Stephen Millane
	Tommy Wynne
	Willie O'Shaughnessy
	Eugene Murphy (<i>Trustee</i>)
	Sean Murray (<i>Trustee</i>)
	Terrie Watson (<i>Trustee</i>)
	Tom Healy (<i>Trustee</i>)
	Trevor Skelton (<i>Trustee</i>)

Under Rule 78, the general direction and administration of SIPTU is vested in the National Executive Council (NEC). All commercial decisions relating to SIPTU and to SIPTU's college are considered by the National Executive Council. Operationally the General Secretary arranges the deployment of any sanctioned resources and has discretion regarding disbursement.

SIPTU members are organised according to Industrial Divisions and overseen by a Deputy General Secretary for each of both public and private sectors. A third Deputy General Secretary is assigned to Organising and Membership Development which includes the non-industrial departments which support the work of the union, i.e., Communications; Finance & Administration; Equality and Strategic Organising.

2.2 Oversight Committee

In order to meet the requirements of the QOI reengagement process, the National Executive Committee have established an Oversight Committee to review the work of the college and to consider proposals and reports from the Quality Committee and the Head of College as necessary.

The Oversight Committee is a sub-committee of the SIPTU National Executive Committee established to oversee the running of the union's college and to provide regular reports to the NEC. The terms of reference of the Oversight Committee will be as follows:

2.2.1 Terms of Reference Oversight Committee

- SIPTU Education and Training strategy
- Budgetary planning and processes
- Operational planning and delivery
- Resource requirements and making recommendations as required to ensure satisfactory levels of service and performance
- Risk factors including SIPTU's college Risk Register
- Reviewing the work of the SIPTU College Quality Committee in developing and revising training programmes, consider proposals by the Quality Committee and making recommendations to the NEC as appropriate

The composition of the Oversight Committee will be determined by the SIPTU National Executive Committee from time to time. The initial composition of the Oversight Committee is as follows:

- Chairperson
- General Secretary
- Deputy General Secretary (with responsibility for SIPTU's college)
- 3 NEC members
- Head of College

The Chairperson is selected by the NEC and attends the NEC meetings at which the Oversight Committee reports.

The Oversight Committee will meet at least three times per year, within three weeks of each meeting of the Quality Committee and will report to the next available NEC meeting. The Chairperson may convene additional meetings as required or additional meetings may be convened at the request of the General Secretary or two NEC members.

The National Executive Committee may add to the above Terms of Reference as the deem appropriate from time to time.

The term of the Oversight Committee will be three years. Members of the Oversight Committee may not serve more than two consecutive terms.

2.3 General Secretary

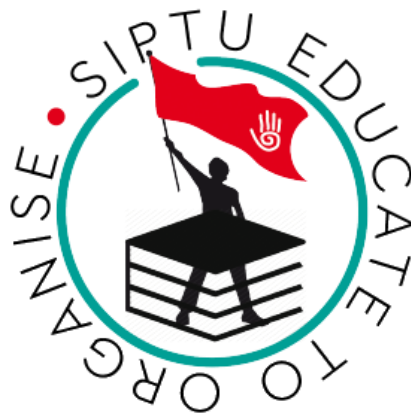
Under Rule 81 (SIPTU Rule Book, 2019) the primary responsibilities of the General Secretary are the general policy of the union and the conduct of industrial movements, financial administration, recruitment, organisation, education and training, general administration, and the promotion of the union. This is the most senior level of management in SIPTU and in terms of the education and training brief, the General Secretary oversees the allocation of resources sanctioned by the NEC in relation to the college. The General Secretary also receives regular reports from the Head of College on the development of education and training courses; the resourcing of courses, including the professional development of staff.

2.4 Head of College

The Head of SIPTU's college is the senior manager responsible for the direction and administration of the college. This is a senior post within SIPTU at the Divisional Organiser/Head of Department grade. This position is responsible for the strategic direction of the college and for the provision of education and training programmes throughout the union nationally. It reports directly to the General Secretary (or the relevant Deputy General Secretary) on staff and financial matters; on the provision of education and training programmes, including learner participation rates and completion, and all evaluations. The Head of college is also a member of the oversight committee (a subcommittee of the NEC) and will report on the operations in the college in this manner also. All staff assigned to SIPTU's college report to the Head of College position.

The Head of College, as a Departmental Head within SIPTU, is a member of SIPTU's Strategic Management Team which includes the Heads of all Industrial Divisions within SIPTU and the Heads of all other Departments. While this body has no jurisdiction over SIPTU's college it is a valuable vehicle for consultation and engagement with stakeholders (specifically union membership in the Divisions) regarding the training and education needs of the membership.

Academic quality assurance is the responsibility of the Head of College with support from the quality assurance officer and in consultation with the College Quality Committee. The Quality Committee newly formed in 2021, expands on the role of the former Assessment Boards, themselves amended as a result of self-evaluation and internal reviews. Mindful of the size and scale of SIPTU's college relative to larger HE and FE providers, there are no sub-committees, though their formation is provided for within the terms of reference. Academic oversight and decisions are the function of the Head of College in conjunction with the Quality Committee and are clearly outlined in Part 3 of this document.



Part 3 - Quality Committee

3.1 Context

The quality assurance policies and procedures herein are developed in the context of the re-engagement process with Quality Qualifications Ireland. This is a completely new document; its predecessor pre-dated significant changes to legislation in 2012 and 2019 and the publication of important core guidelines by QQI. Future versions should follow the enrolment / review cycle of the two accredited programmes offered by SIPTU:

- **Major Award in Trade Union Studies – 5M5165**

This programme is currently the subject of an internal review at SIPTU and is likely to be replaced and a series of Special Purpose Awards proposed for validation in 2022. If successful, the new programme would be due for programme review in 2027.

- **Certificate in Trade Union Studies – PG22089** – Special Purpose Award in collaboration with the National College of Ireland. This programme was the subject of a substantial review process in 2020 and is due for programme review again in 2025

3.1.1 SIPTU's college 2016-2020

In addition to the review necessitated by the re-engagement process, the development of this quality assurance system is informed by the events outlined below. Between 2016 and 2020, the college has engaged in several major processes of review, consultation, and self-evaluation at a number of levels as listed below:

- a) The college made a major contribution to a consultative process conducted within SIPTU during 2016 and 2017 which engaged with all members and staff across a wide range of topics. A major focus was on education, training, and skills and which demonstrated the need for new programmes and new methods of delivery.

- b) For a number of years between the global financial crash of 2009, and while ultimately unsuccessful attempts were made to establish a Workers' College, SIPTU's college itself was kept in abeyance, under-utilised and under-resourced. A decision by the SIPTU National Executive Council in 2016 to revitalise SIPTU's college was confirmed with the appointment of a full-time Head of College and additional teaching staff and a commitment to full resources.
- c) The newly appointed Head of College conducted a review of the college's operations during 2017 and 2018; engaged extensively with external examiners/authenticators and outside consultants, and initiated a staff development programme before embarking on the next two processes outlined in d) and e) below.
- d) In collaboration with the National College of Ireland, SIPTU's college delivers the Trade Union Studies QQI Level 6 Certificate programme to members of SIPTU and of all other ICTU-affiliated unions. This programme was the subject of a major programmatic review which necessitated an extensive process of evaluation and consultation in its own right. The programme was revalidated by QQI on the 10th of September 2020.
- e) Parallel to these developments has been the involvement of SIPTU's college in preparation for a single provider application to QQI on behalf of a number of trade unions. While this application is currently on hold, the process of preparation for engagement has again involved the college in a process of consultation and self-evaluation. This has made a major contribution to the development of Quality Assurance at SIPTU's college.
- f) Of particular note in all of the reviews undertaken, has been the need to address some shortcomings in our Advanced Activist training which is contained in the forthcoming application for Level 5 Special Purpose Awards.

All of the above enabled SIPTU to create a fresh approach to quality in education and training while ensuring accountability, transparency, and resilience. In particular the following were examined and amended herein as necessary:

- a) All Quality Assurance policies and procedures.
- b) The relationship between SIPTU's college and its governing authority, the National Executive Council of SIPTU, in reference to reporting procedures and representation.
- c) Internal, academic governance and management of SIPTU's college

- d) Internal record-keeping and the generation and storage of reports on which to base decisions and for reporting mechanisms.
- e) Data protection procedures
- f) Procedures for engagement with all stakeholders
- g) SIPTU 'reach' or the proportion of target learners participating on programmes

3.1.2 Legislative Context

The development of quality assurance systems at SIPTU's college is further informed by its relationship with QQI; adherence to QQI's guidelines and to relevant legislation as outlined below. QQI (Quality and Qualifications Ireland) is an independent State agency responsible for promoting quality and accountability in education and training services in Ireland. It was established in 2012 by the Qualifications and Quality Assurance (Education and Training) Act 2012.

QQI's role is *inter alia* to:

- promote, maintain and develop the Irish National Framework of Qualifications (NFQ), a 10-level framework for the development, recognition and awarding of qualifications in Ireland.
- approve programmes offered at a variety of schools, colleges and further and higher education and training institutions. These programmes lead to qualifications (QQI awards) listed in the NFQ, which are recognised internationally.
- regulate and promote the quality of programmes offered by schools and colleges leading to qualifications in the NFQ for the benefit of learners, employers and other interested parties.
- inform the public about quality assured education and training programmes and qualifications through a database of programmes and a register of providers.

The quality assurance policies and procedures outlined and appended have been developed between 2017 and 2020, in response to the major reviews outlined above and consultations with QQI. The college has also examined its processes in light of legislative obligations and the criteria and policies outlined by QQI including:

- Qualifications and Quality Assurance (Education and Training) Act 2012
- Qualifications and Quality Assurance (Education and Training) (Amendment) Act 2019

- QQI Policies and Criteria for the Validation of Programmes of Education and Training
- Guidelines for Completing the Programme Descriptor for programme(s) leading to new non-CAS FET Major, Special Purpose, Supplemental and Minor Award(s)
- Tool to support the evaluation by the provider of a new non-CAS programme against the QQI validation criteria
- QQI QA Guidelines - Core QA Guidelines / for Independent / Private Providers / for Blended Learning
- Quality Assuring Assessment - Guidelines
- QQI Policies and Guidelines – Access, Transfer and Progression
- RPL Principles and Operational Guidelines
- Protection for Enrolled Learners (PEL) - Information
- ISCED Fields of Learning Classification
- EQAVET framework

SIPTU is also cognisant of all employment related legislation; the Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Act, 1989-2005; Employment Equality Act 1998 – 2015; Equal Status Act 2004; General Data Protection Regulations, 2018 and has developed all policies and procedures in light of all of the foregoing.

3.2 Policy Statement

It is SIPTU's college policy that a robust quality assurance system is developed, reviewed and maintained, and appropriately documented. SIPTU's college quality assurance system is:

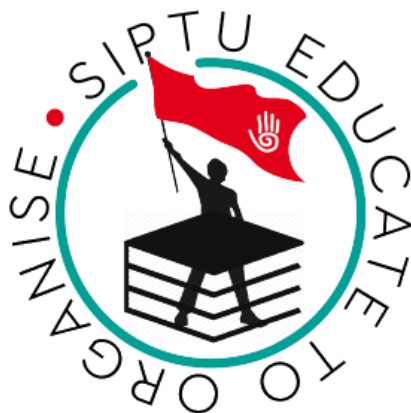
- informed by QQI quality assurance guidelines
- fully documented and available publicly and to staff and learners as appropriate
- fit for purpose and appropriate to the unique context of SIPTU's college
- central to the management of SIPTU's college
- cognisant of learner appraisal, tutor feedback and other stakeholder input

Scope - this document is relevant to any programmes offered by SIPTU which are validated for delivery by Quality Qualifications Ireland, i.e., Trade Union Studies 5M5165 and any subsequent amendments, additions or replacements. It is developed to avoid any unnecessary contradictions with the Quality Assurance procedures relevant to its delivery as 2nd provider with the National College of Ireland (NCI) of the Trade Union Studies QQI Level 6 programme.

It is SIPTU's college policy that the development, management and implementation of its quality assurance policies and procedures are functions of the Quality Committee, newly established in 2021 and whose terms of reference, membership and procedures are outlined below.

3.3 Procedures

The day-to-day running of SIPTU's college and the supervision of staff is the function of Head of College though all employed tutors are direct employees of SIPTU and as such answerable to the General Secretary and the National Executive Council (NEC) of SIPTU. The Quality Committee is assigned the role of planning, co-ordination, development and overseeing the academic governance of the college. It fulfils the functions of programme development; an examinations committee; monitoring and evaluation; results approval, risk analysis; co-ordination and planning and involvement with stakeholders. Its membership and terms of reference are set out below.



3.3.1 Quality Committee Membership

The Quality Committee is comprised of an external Chair, the Head of College, the quality assurance officer, all college tutors and college administrative staff. There are 6 full-time tutors and 6 part-time/adjunct tutors offering two QQI accredited programmes (one each at Levels 5 and 6) and some non-accredited internal training. The Chair will be an external member, who will have experience in an appropriate educational setting and will remain in position for three years with the option of being reappointed for a second term. Separate programme boards and examinations committees as provided for in larger FET and HET institutions are not deemed necessary in keeping with the scale of operations at SIPTU's college. The Quality Committee therefore serves as programme board on an ongoing basis except for the establishment of *ad hoc* programme development teams when new programmes are designed or for programme review purposes. One nominee of the National Executive Council (NEC) and one learner representative are also members. Due to the short-run nature of many of our courses, it is likely that the learner representative will be a past learner rather than a present learner, where possible we will nominate a learner who has completed a range of our modules and programmes. Dependent on the agenda, others may be invited to be present for part, or all, of a meeting. When the Quality Committee functions as the programme board for the Level 6 Trade Union Studies for example, membership includes the Dean or a nominee from the National College of Ireland (NCI).

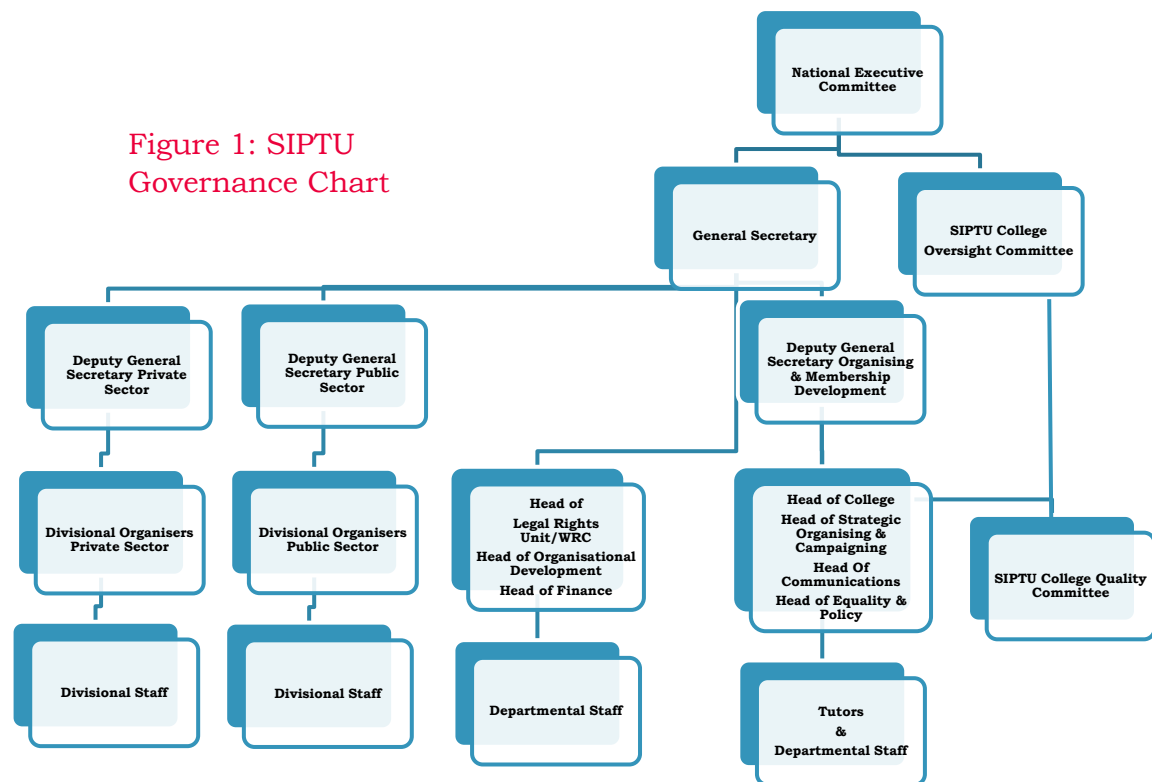
3.3.2 Meetings of the Quality Committee

Meetings will take place at a minimum of three times per year. Provisional dates are circulated by the Head of College to members at the beginning of each academic year. Generally, the meetings are scheduled to coincide with the commencement of the academic year, at a midway point and towards the latter period of the academic year (September, February, June). Where possible, meetings are scheduled bearing in mind QQI submission dates for the Level 5 programme and the dates of the examinations board at the National College of Ireland (NCI) regarding the Level 6 programme. The Head of College may convene additional meetings as circumstances and needs arise. The agenda for meetings is determined by the Head of College and the Chairperson and submitted to Quality Committee members one week in advance. The agenda includes any item referred to the Committee from the Oversight Committee, from tutors or Divisions or any ad hoc programme development or review team. The quality assurance officer prepares and distributes minutes within 2 weeks of each meeting.

3.3.3 Terms of reference of the Quality Committee

1. To assist in ensuring the ongoing delivery of programmes in compliance with Quality Assurance at SIPTU's college
2. To assist in any review of programmes and for ongoing evaluations.
3. To advise on the experience of delivery of programmes.
4. To engage with, and to implement as appropriate, recommendations from other stakeholders and/or external examiners
5. To engage with colleagues in the design and delivery of existing programmes
6. To identify the demand for new programmes and to establish programme development teams to design and to secure validation where appropriate.
7. To agree an outline schedule each year for both QQI accredited programmes and internal programmes as required
8. To agree on assessment instruments for each programme in conjunction with the relevant tutors and the advice of external examiners.
9. To facilitate progression across programmes and to avoid duplication
10. To ensure compliance with union policy and the relevance of each programme to current industrial relations
11. To report to the oversight committee (in writing after each meeting) on operational matters and the work of SIPTU's college, including programme review and design, results approval etc.
12. To engage with external academic advisors in the review and updating of programmes
13. To take cognisance of all reports and evaluative/consultative processes (*inter alia* learner appraisals/ complaints; self-evaluation reports; tutor feedback; Internal and External Review panel reports; external authenticators and examiners) in reaching decisions on delivery/assessment/progression.
14. To consider, and where possible to ameliorate, any risks to the college or any of its programmes.
15. To ensure that an Appeals Board sub-committee is in place when required in line with the membership and terms of reference outlined in Appendix U

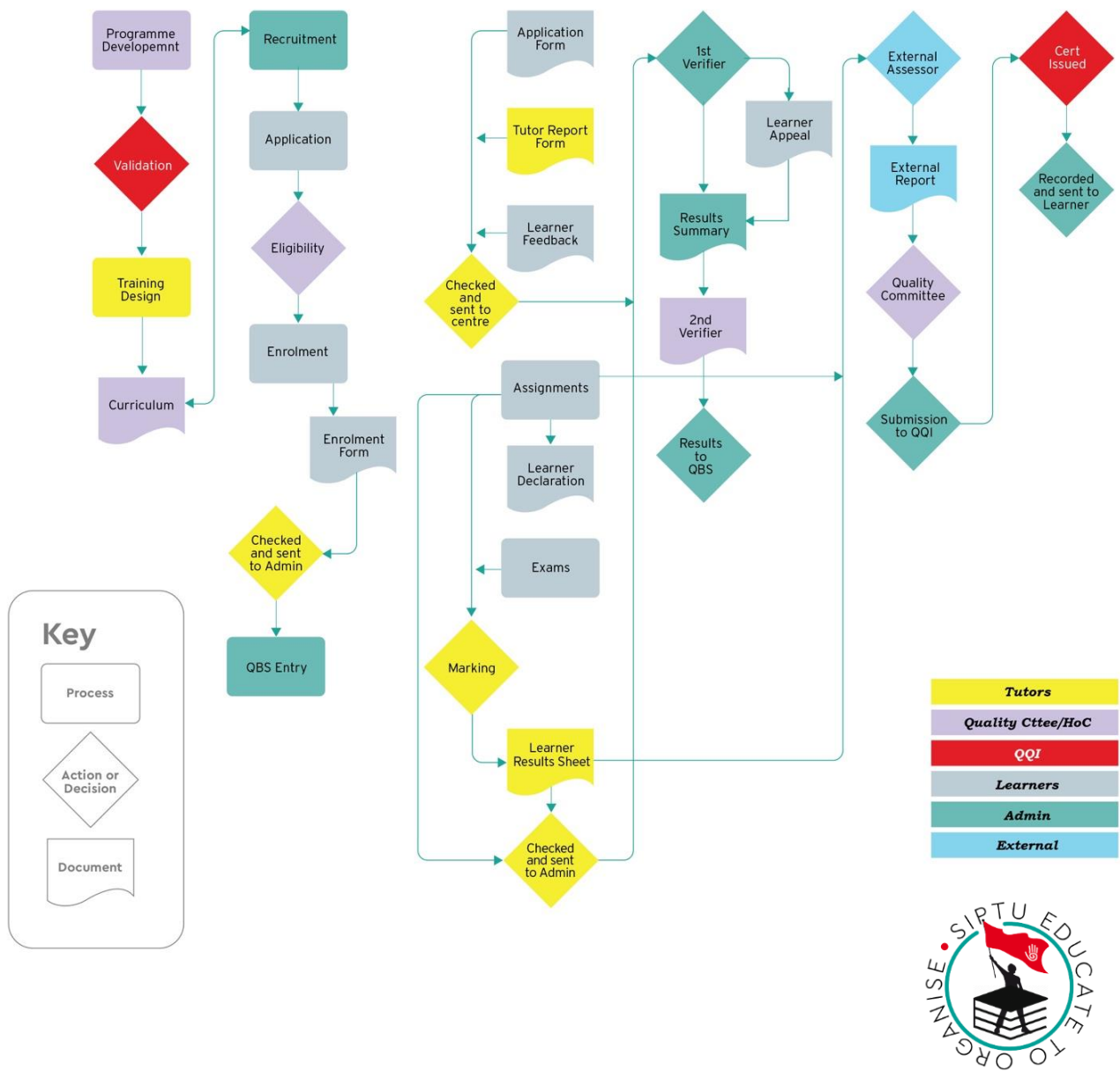
The Quality Committee informs and consults with the Oversight Committee in relation to the planning and co-ordination of the education work of the college. Decisions or outcomes of Quality Committee meetings are reported by the Head of College to the NEC via the Oversight Committee and the General Secretary as appropriate. After each Quality Committee meeting, a report will be prepared and submitted by the Head of College to the Oversight Committee. All the functions of the Quality Committee will be reported back to the Oversight Committee. See Figure 1.



3.3.4 Quality Assurance System

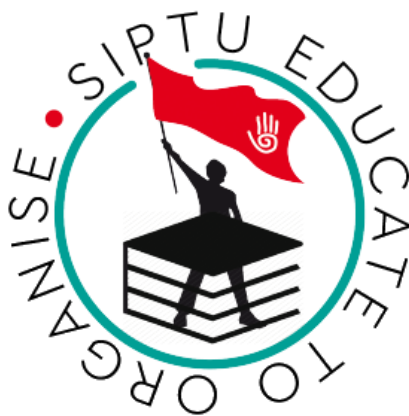
The figure below (*Figure 2*) depicts the relationship between the procedures regarding programme development and delivery at SIPTU's college. The figure outlines processes, actions, decisions and also references documents subsequently generated. All responsible actors are defined in this process- refer to colour coded legend.

Figure 2 - Quality Assurance System Map



3.4 Responsibilities and Evidence Summary Table

	Learners	Tutors	Quality Committee	Learner Support	Head of College	Oversight Committee / Gen Sec	QOI
Responsibilities		√	√		√	√	
Evidence (Recorded)	Quality Committee Minutes; All reports generated by or submitted to Quality Committee; Reports to QOI; Correspondence (<i>SIPTU College Documentation Centre</i> – siptuLEARN) Head of College Reports to Oversight Committee (<i>Office of Deputy/General Secretary</i>)						
Implementation Date	1 st April 2021						
Review Date	1 st April 2026						



Part 4

Programme Development and Review

This chapter outlines the policies on programme development and review at SIPTU's college. The purpose of this policy is to set out the contexts and means by which new programmes are developed and reviewed. This policy applies to all programmes developed at SIPTU which will be proposed for validation to Quality Qualifications Ireland (QQI).

4.1 Policy Statement

It is SIPTU policy to develop programmes of education and training that meet the objectives of SIPTU as defined in the Rule Book. All programmes will therefore support the aim of

organising the workers of Ireland to attain their full share of benefits of national wealth and economic activity in terms of living standards, equality, opportunity and participation in development, collectively and individually.

Programmes destined for application to QQI for validation will be developed in accordance with QQI Core Guidelines and in consideration of the needs of the stakeholders, the members, activists, and staff of SIPTU and other trade unions. In the development and review of these programmes, SIPTU will adhere to best practice in all areas but in particular regarding access, transfer & progression; teaching, learning & assessment; learner support, and as provided for in other policies in this document.

4.2 Procedures

4.2.1 Internal process - Identification of training needs or suggestions for new programmes or modules may arise from learner appraisals, from tutors, the Strategic Management Team or the Oversight Committee. Any such suggestions should be submitted to the Quality Committee for their initial consideration from an academic perspective. The Oversight Committee will also be briefed on suggestions and possible training requirements and consider these in line with the strategy of the college. If deemed appropriate, the Quality Committee will establish an *ad hoc* programme or module development board who will research and develop the proposal. Membership of an *ad hoc* programme board will be Chaired by the Head of College and consist of relevant staff and other nominees as determined by the Quality Committee. This programme or module development board may also incorporate/consult with external members where additional expertise is required. An initial proposal of a programme will consider the potential programme purpose, target learners, stakeholder needs and resource requirements. Based on this proposal, the oversight committee will consider the feasibility of designing and developing a programme and also associated resource requirements of effectively delivering a potential programme. In line with these processes, if at this stage, the programme is deemed feasible, the programme board will continue further development. The programme development board will ensure that programmes for validation by QQI will be developed always with regard to the core policies and criteria for the validation by QQI of programmes of education and training as per <https://www.qqi.ie/Publications/Publications/Initial Validation policy 7 10 13.pdf>.

The views and advice of the following may be sought and included in the development process: past, existing and potential learners; officers and staff of SIPTU and other unions; other providers and/or subject experts and practitioners; external examiners and authenticators. The *ad hoc* programme development board will report to the Quality Committee and in turn the Oversight Committee with the proposal in tabular form as per QQI's template for programmes: <https://www.qqi.ie/Downloads/Programme%20Descriptor%20Template%20%28Pilot%20Version%29.pdf> and in the event of a proposal for an individual module, will use Section 7 of that template.

Prior to submitting a programme for validation, the *ad hoc* programme development board should prepare a self-assessment report detailing how it believes that the programme meets the validation criteria outlined by QQI. This report should be submitted to the Quality Committee and the Oversight Committee with the programme proposal.

The Oversight Committee will review the proposal by considering its appropriateness for our target learners; feasibility of delivery; adherence to both QQI and SIPTU policies and procedures, and general fit with existing programmes. The Quality Committee will appoint an (Internal) Review Panel comprised of external appointees who will make an impartial judgment on the programme regarding content and standards. QQI guidelines and best practice will apply to the selection of appointees with regard in particular to competence, independence and confidentiality and in regard to the operation of the panel (<https://www.qqi.ie/Downloads/Roles%20Responsibilities%20and%20Code%20of%20Conduct%20for%20Reviewers%20and%20Evaluators%20v1%2025.09.2018.pdf>). The Quality Committee will review the report of the Internal Review Panel and amend the application as appropriate.

Where additional resources are required the Head of College will advise the Oversight Committee who will make a recommendation to the NEC for any necessary arrangements for the acquisition of same, pending validation. For validation, the Head of College will apply to QQI and adhere to the process and criteria for validation as prescribed in QQI's Core Policies and Criteria for the Validation by QQI of Programmes of Education and Training.

Next steps to be followed by the Quality Committee and Head of College include:

- Notification to QQI of the intention to submit a programme for validation
- The assembly of the application documentation
- The preparation of a list of potential nominees to the external independent evaluation panel

4.2.2 Post-application - Dependent on successful screening of the application by QQI, the Quality Committee/Head of College will prepare for a site visit by an independent evaluation panel and ensure that any amendments or addenda to the application proposed in screening are provided in a timely fashion, i.e., at least 6 weeks in advance of the site visit. Any conclusions, prerequisites for validation, conditions and recommendations contained in the Independent Evaluation Panel's report will be addressed by the Quality Committee/Head of College within the timeframe stipulated. A final set of documents will be provided by the Quality Committee/Head of College to the Programme & Awards Executive Committee (PAEC) at least 3 weeks prior to the PAEC meeting scheduled to consider the documentation. On validation, the Oversight Committee will be advised, and the Quality Committee will proceed to add the programme to the college schedule as appropriate.

No programme will commence without receipt of the Certificate of Validation from QQI.

Disputes or complaints regarding the above process are managed by QQI's policy on same <https://www.qqi.ie/Articles/Pages/Complaints-of-Service.aspx>.

Figure 3 below outlines the entire process for new programme development, from inception or proposal at or to the Quality Committee through to final acceptance and scheduling.

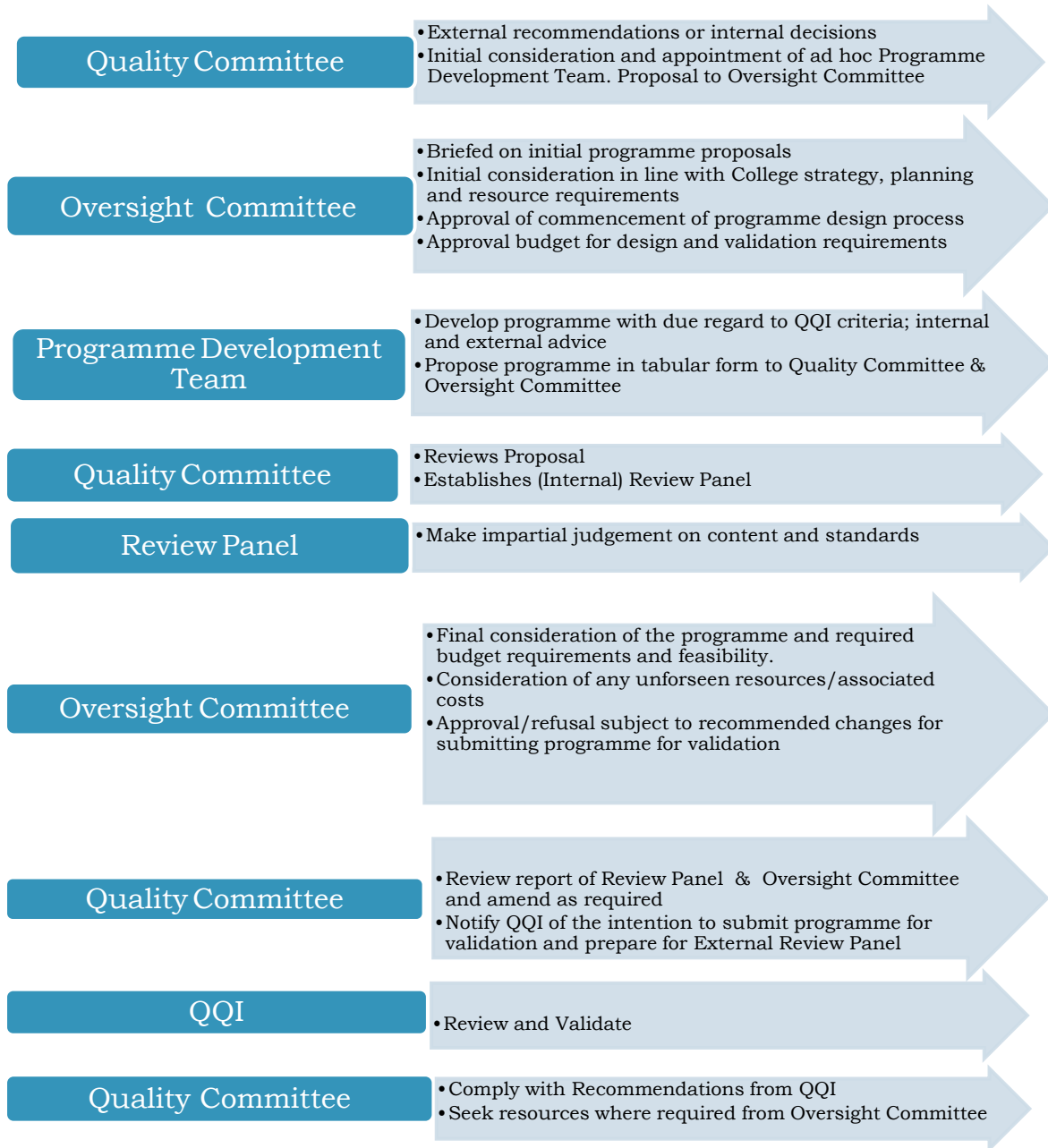


Figure 3 New Programme Development

4.3 Initial review of new programmes or modules

4.3.1 Policy Statement

It is SIPTU’s college policy to conduct an initial review of all new programmes and modules to ensure adherence to the original approved validation and to determine the effectiveness of delivery.

4.3.2 Procedure

The Head of College will arrange for an initial review of any new programme or module within 12 months of its first delivery or after one cohort have completed, whichever is earlier. Such review should be conducted by a committee nominated and chaired by the Head of College and consisting of at least one member of the original development board and one other member of the Quality Committee. This initial review will engage with both learners and tutors and examine the programme with regard to:

- Review the achievement of the learning outcomes by learners
- Learner effort
- Tutor input
- Meeting the aims and objectives of the programme

The review committee will report to the Quality Committee who will ensure that any necessary adjustments are made. Thereafter the programme will be subject to annual evaluation and programme review as per SIPTU's college Annual Evaluation and Programme Review policy.

4.4 Annual Evaluations and Programme Review

4.4.1 Policy Statement

It is college policy to conduct regular evaluation and review of programmes in order to reflect on and improve programmes with the benefit of the experience of delivery and in light of feedback from tutors and learners.

4.4.2 Procedures

All programmes will be annually evaluated by the Quality Committee with regard to:

- Compliance with original validation regarding aims and objectives
- Achievement of Learning Outcomes
- Completion rates and progression where relevant
- The incorporation of learner appraisal and tutor evaluation
- Tutor workload
- Any quality assurance policies and procedures impacting on the programme

Programmes validated by Quality and Qualifications Ireland (QQI) will be reviewed at least every 5 years and a reviewed programme submitted to QQI for revalidation. Any such programme submitted for revalidation will be developed to meet the Core Policies and Criteria for the Validation by QQI of Programmes of Education and Training. The review process may result in a new programme being proposed rather than the modification of an existing one. Such a programme should be submitted to QQI as a new programme validation. Whether a new programme is proposed or an existing programme proposed for re-validation, the Quality Committee will take into account the implications of any changes on learners already enrolled on the programme. In the interim between programme reviews, where major changes or any substantial variation to their original validation is required, the Quality Committee will seek differential validation from QQI.

4.4.3 Minor Changes to Modules and Programmes

The Quality Committee may approve minor changes to modules and programmes as follows:

- Assessment mix up to 10% variation between continuous assessment and final assignment
- Module reading lists and class / tutorial/ field trip mix
- The order of modules or the addition of modules
- Module learning outcomes (up to a maximum of 25%)
- Contact hours (up to a maximum of 25%)

The Head of College may approve minor changes which can be implemented on a provisional basis pending a meeting of the Quality Committee.

4.5 Responsibilities and Evidence Summary

	Learners	Tutors	Quality Committee	Learner Support	Head of College	Oversight Committee /Gen Sec	QQI
Responsibilities	√	√	√	√	√	√	√
Evidence	Report of ad hoc Programme Development Teams and of Internal Review Panels (<i>SIPTU College Documentation Centre – s iptuLEARN</i>)						
(Recorded)	Quality Committee & Oversight Committee Reports and Minutes in relation to programme development (<i>SIPTU College Documentation Centre – s iptuLEARN</i>)						
	Final Programme Documentation (<i>SIPTU College Documentation Centre – s iptuLEARN</i>)						
	Initial Review of New Programme (<i>SIPTU College Documentation Centre – s iptuLEARN</i>)						
	Annual Evaluation Reports (<i>SIPTU College Documentation Centre – s iptuLEARN</i>)						
	Programmatic Review Reports (<i>SIPTU College Documentation Centre – s iptuLEARN</i>)						
	Head of College Reports to Oversight Committee (<i>Office of Deputy/General Secretary</i>)						
Implementation Date	1 st April 2021						
Review Date	1 st April 2026						

Part 5 – Staff Recruitment, management, and development

5.1 Policy Statement

It is SIPTU's policy to assign staff who are suitably qualified and/or experienced for the roles to which they are assigned; to further ensure opportunities for development and relevant training in order to enhance the learner experience and to ensure that all staff work in a safe and supportive environment.

5.2 Procedures

5.2.1 Recruitment

All full-time tutors (Learning Co-ordinators) at SIPTU's college are employees of SIPTU who are assigned by the NEC to work at SIPTU college, one of several Departments within the union. SIPTU advertises from time to time seeking applications from existing staff interested in a full-time teaching role and a panel is formed from which vacancies are filled. Academic qualifications, teaching experience and industrial relations career are all assessed by the National Executive Council (NEC) as part of the appointment process. (See Appendix B – staff recruitment). Full-time tutor/Learning Co-ordinator is a promotional post within SIPTU and as such applicants will already have extensive experience in the industrial relations milieu on which they will teach. Learning Representatives/Adjunct tutors are generally employed in another department within SIPTU (Legal Affairs; Industrial Divisions) or in another ICTU affiliated union and are assessed by the Head of College under the same suitability criteria, though not as part of an appointment process. All tutors must, on appointment, avail of an internal tutor training programme (Learning Representatives) delivered in conjunction with UK-based RED Learning Cooperative and in accordance with International Labour Organization's ACTRAV training programme for union educators. This programme also includes access to tutor training provided by the Centre for Research and Innovation in Learning and Teaching (CRILT) at the National College of Ireland (NCI).

5.2.2 Management and Development

The Head of College manages all staff assigned to SIPTU's college and allocates teaching roles in line with demand/agreed programmes and mindful of staff competences and qualifications. While industrial relations experience is paramount, further staff development is encouraged and actively facilitated at SIPTU. Participation on the following is obligatory:

- Staff training and seminars organised by the Centre for Research and Innovation in Learning and Teaching (CRILT) at the National College of Ireland (NCI) for teaching staff including tutors at SIPTU's college.
- In-house training for all staff (teaching and administrative) on the use of internal communications systems, learner supports, records systems, including, but not confined to: SIPTU's college Register, *siptuLEARN*, SIPTU Internal Administrative System; Microsoft TEAMS; Microsoft FORMS; Webex; data protection; instructional design and other policies and procedures.
- Appropriate teaching qualifications and/or post-graduate programmes in relevant disciplines, if applicable.
- An internal tutor training programme at SIPTU's college, the Learning Representatives programme. This is delivered in conjunction with UK based RED Learning Cooperative and in accordance with the ILO ACTRAV5 training programme for union educators.

These are facilitated by SIPTU's Staff Education Programme in which SIPTU offers all staff funding, study and exam leave for relevant studies and absorbs the costs of any internal training (see page 25 Staff Manual – Appendix C). SIPTU staff attendance on external programmes and any related exam and study leave is facilitated by the Head of College in college schedules.

In addition, an extensive programme of staff training has been implemented since 2017 at which all tutors are expected to attend and participate:

- Briefing for tutors from the Teaching & Learning Dept at the National College of Ireland
- Joint tutor training with the RED Learning Co-operative
- Attendance at training provided by external academics / consultants
- Attendance at briefings from such as Dyslexia Ireland, QQI, Aontas, etc.

Two recent appointees have completed appropriate posts-graduate programmes since appointment; two are completing tutor training and a member of staff is completing the PgD in Programme Design & Validation (FE) at Maynooth University in order to assist with the re-engagement and revalidation processes.

Tutors at SIPTU's college are members of a trade union and in the case of SIPTU staff are also members of the SIPTU Staff Representative Council. They also elect a member to SIPTU's National Executive Council and have recourse to the union's Personnel Officer and the grievance and disciplinary procedures as outlined in the SIPTU staff manual. SIPTU's "Health and Wellbeing" programme is available to all staff including tutors. SIPTU Staff and the NEC have agreed the Staff Manual (Appendix C) and reach regular agreement on the terms and conditions of employment of staff via direct negotiations and via the SIPTU Staff Partnership Committee. Communications with and between staff are via monthly staff meetings and quarterly Quality Committee meetings.

5.2.3 Roles and Responsibilities

The college has one quality assurance officer who is responsible for supporting the Head of College in the development and implementation of quality assurance standards at the college. The quality assurance officer will promote and support a collaborative, co-operative and integrated approach to embedding a culture of quality across the college.

Tutor responsibilities are outlined in two documents; the job description as issued on allocation to the college for full-time tutors and the *Links and Tips for Tutors* document issued to all, whether assigned full-time to SIPTU's college or in an adjunct capacity. (See Appendix D). There is a generic job description for full-time tutors included in Appendix E which is subject to change and which provides that tutors have responsibility for the following:

- To deliver training programmes
- To identify, develop and implement new and innovative methods of delivering training with regard to materials used; learning supports; timing and location of training
- Coordinating the timing and location of training for members with SIPTU staff in the Divisions and Departments.
- Designing on-line and distance learning supports to enable, where appropriate, participation in training outside of the traditional classroom.

- Participating in initiatives to develop and expand the reach of education and training.
- Participating in on-going professional development and study in areas related to the programmes offered by the college.
- Designing, developing, and delivering staff development initiatives.
- Working collaboratively with other staff to ensure that education and training is an integrated part of the union and consistent with strategic and operational objectives of the Union.
- Undertake any other duties that may be assigned from time to time by the Head of College.

This generic job description is further clarified during induction and includes the following specific duties:

- Participation in the SIPTU induction and probation process
- Class planning and course delivery
- Recording attendance
- Setting and assessment of assignments
- 2nd marking and peer review as appropriate
- Providing adequate support and feedback to learners
- Seeking and responding to student evaluations
- Timely return and assembly of all reporting materials
- Engaging with external examiner/authenticator reports
- Contributing to the work of the Quality Committee
- Remaining aware of their role and being proactive in their adherence to quality assurance particularly through their role on the Quality Committee
- Staying abreast of union policy and developments in relevant legislation and industrial relations practice
- Appropriate engagement with all stakeholders and in the relevant community of practice

Some administrative support is provided at the Liberty Hall site and otherwise, SIPTU college, as with all Departments in SIPTU, is fully supported by SIPTU staff in the Finance & Administration Department; the Communications Department; the Organisational Development & Support Services Department; the Information Technology Unit and the Legal Rights Unit. Appropriate induction and training are provided for administrative staff on their assignment to SIPTU's college and the college also avails of particular skills amongst the administrative staff in other Departments.

5.2.4 Teaching Staff as of 1st January 2022

Current tutors are listed in Appendix S, (both Learning Co-ordinator and Learning Representative, i.e., those assigned to the college as full-time tutors and adjunct tutors who work elsewhere, respectively). In addition, there are a further 6 qualified applicants from several unions under consideration for inclusion as Learning Representatives (adjunct tutor).



5.2.5 Quality Assurance of Teaching

Induction On assignment to SIPTU's college, tutors are progressed through an induction and 12-month probationary period. They receive a copy of the *Links and Tips for Tutors* document (Appendix D) and are appropriately briefed on the ethos of the college, on their responsibilities, and on Quality Assurance procedures and the regulatory requirements of the role. Peer-to-peer support is established at this time and maintained throughout their career. The *Tutor Space* on [siptuLEARN](#) is designed to provide support to tutors with ready access to the following:

- The Quality Assurance manual
- Programme descriptors for both the Level 5 and Level 6 programmes
- Module information sheets
- Lesson plan templates
- PowerPoint presentations
- Attendance sheets
- End-of-module report sheets
- Marking rubrics
- Sample assessments
- All forms in use at the college
- Learner Handbook (Appendix F)
- Links and Tips for Tutors (Appendix D)
- All materials from all modules

Probation – Assignment to SIPTU's college as a tutor is a promotional post senior to the entry level Assistant Industrial Organiser post. Thus, tutors will normally have extensive industrial relations experience in addition to the relevant academic qualifications and general suitability for the post. Nevertheless, there is a 12-month probationary period in SIPTU for all promotional posts. At the end of this period the tutor and Head of College jointly review performance and report to Personnel as appropriate. The probation assessment form in Appendix G is used for this purpose.

Monitoring – SIPTU accepts that there are contested views as to how to measure teaching quality and that there is not always a correlation between teaching quality and learner success rates. Assessing tutor effectiveness by the traditional reference to learner test scores is even more problematic in union education. Such evaluation must be long-term and a rigorous system of learner appraisal, tutor and Head of College evaluation, and feedback from stakeholders is therefore required. This is achieved in several ways: by learner appraisals; by tutor self-evaluation; by Quality Committee evaluation of assessment outcomes; by feedback from the Oversight Committee, by tutor probation reports; by feedback from industrial divisions in SIPTU via the SMT; by feedback from the NEC/Delegate Conferences and by engagement with external examiner/authenticator reports.

5.3 Responsibilities and Evidence Summary

	Learners	Tutors	Quality Committee	Learner Support	Head of College	NEC/Gen Sec	QOI
Responsibilities		√	√		√	√	
Evidence	Training Records (<i>SIPTU College Register</i>)						
(Recorded)	Staff Academic CVs (<i>Head of College</i>) Job Descriptions, Staff Contracts, Probation Reports, Staff Records, Training Records (<i>SIPTU Personnel Office</i>)						
Implementation Date	1 st April 2021						
Review Date	1 st April 2026						

Part 6 - Access, transfer, and progression of learners

6.1 Policy Statement

SIPTU is committed to implementing Section 56, Part 4 of the Qualifications and Quality Assurance (Education and Training) Act 2012 'Procedures for access, transfer and progression in relation to learners' as it applies to the unique scope of training provision at the college. We actively support learners in accessing and participating fully in our programmes and to transfer to other programmes within the limited scope of our provision. SIPTU is committed to ensuring that all prospective and current learners are treated fairly and equitably regarding access, transfer, progression, certification and recognition of prior learning, both formal and non-formal.

Access to SIPTU's college is generally reserved for members of SIPTU and of other ICTU affiliated unions and information about training at SIPTU is widely disseminated within SIPTU, and ICTU where applicable.

6.2 Procedures

All training available to workplace representatives is advertised within SIPTU and SIPTU accepts all nominations of learners submitted by SIPTU Organisers. This is to facilitate negotiation of paid release from work and the payment of any relevant expenses, a task best conducted by the Organiser who normally negotiates with the learner's employer. In addition, the Organiser plays an important role in supporting the learner and facilitating implementation and practice of the skills learnt on programmes. Advertisements include information on accreditation where relevant, though learners at SIPTU may attend modules and opt not to undertake assessments and/or not to seek accreditation. Where programmes are offered on a modular basis, it is to each individual module that learners are nominated.

Once enrolled for workplace representative training, learners are encouraged to then register with QQI and complete the assessment tasks associated with the module.

Access to workplace representative training at SIPTU is open to all members nominated by their SIPTU Organiser. For those registering on a QQI Level 5 programme eligibility is determined either by

- A QQI Level 4 award or equivalent
or
- Prior experiential learning in the role of a workplace representative as certified by their SIPTU Organiser on nomination
or
- By interview with SIPTU's college

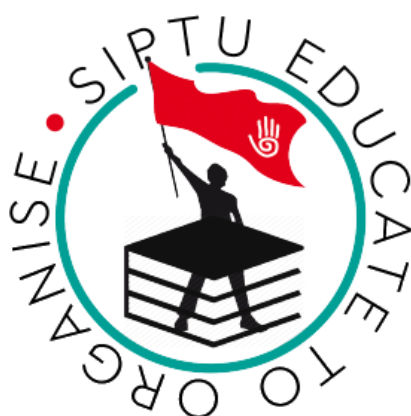
Once the nomination is accepted learners are advised of the date, time and venue of the module and any arrangements specific to that module. On attendance learners will complete an enrolment form and a separate registration form if opting to go the certification route.

If applicants are unsuccessful in their application, they will be contacted by the Head of College who will clearly explain the reason for their unsuccessful application. All applicants are entitled to appeal this decision to the Appeals Board (see Appendix U for membership and terms of reference of the Appeals Board).

Each module/programme has its own information sheet available to learners along with the Learner Handbook (Appendix F) both available in hard copy at SIPTU offices and on the college website and on the online learner support system [siptuLEARN](#). Learners are encouraged to progress from the non-accredited introductory sessions and briefings to the QQI Level 5 Advanced Activist programme and then to QQI Level 6 Trade Union Studies (TUS). By both design and purpose, the Level 5 programme is aimed at union members currently fulfilling a voluntary representative role in the workplace so onward progression possibilities are few. SIPTU does however encourage all participants to progress to the Trade Union Studies programme it offers in collaboration with the National College of Ireland (NCI) which in turn actively encourages TUS graduates to apply to progress to several part-time and fulltime day programmes there. SIPTU does not yet offer programmes beyond Level 6 but encourages all graduates to further study. In acknowledgement of the expense attached to further studies for adult part-time learners, SIPTU has established a 3rd Level Education Scholarship Scheme for members (Appendix I) which all members are encouraged to use. All learners are registered on the SIPTU college Register and module results are later uploaded by tutors.

6.3 Responsibilities and Evidence Summary

	Learners	Tutors	Quality Committee	Learner Support	Head of College	Oversight Committee/ Gen Sec	QQI
Responsibilities	√	√		√	√		
Evidence (Recorded)	<p>Nominations to college modules (<i>SIPTU Internal Administrative System, SIAS</i>)</p> <p>Learner Enrolment Forms and data (<i>SIPTU College Documentation Centre – siptuLEARN plus SIPTU College Register</i>)</p> <p>SIPTU College Register (<i>Head of College / Quality Officer</i>)</p>						
Implementation Date	1 st April 2021						
Review Date	1 st April 2026						



Part 7 - Teaching, Learning and Assessment Strategy

7.1 Policy Statement - Teaching and Learning

SIPTU is committed to delivering a high-quality learning experience to meet learner needs and the needs of SIPTU and the wider union movement. Equipping and empowering learners to function in a representative role in the workplace and in society are key goals. Providing an opportunity for some cohorts for a second chance at education is a secondary though much valued aim. High quality teaching and learning provision is essential to these aims as is a supportive and caring learning environment. SIPTU aims to provide a teaching and learning environment that:

- Is consistent with the union’s objective of “organising the workers of Ireland to attain their full share of benefits of national wealth and economic activity in terms of living standards, equality, opportunity and participation in development”
- Recognises the ability and experience of each learner and their individual and collective role in achieving that objective
- Accepts that there are unique challenges in the delivery of a union-centric education, and works to address those
- Enables each learner to be an active participant in their own learning
- Embeds the work of the college in the work of the union/unions
- Adheres to the quality assurance systems as agreed with QQI/NCI as appropriate
- Creates and maintains connections between learners and the wider industrial relations community
- Fosters supportive relationships between learners and tutors
- Supports the development of tutors, personally and academically
- Ensures democracy and inclusivity

7.2 Procedures

Teaching, learning and assessment at SIPTU's college are constructively aligned with learning outcomes. Such learning outcomes are defined at both module and programme level and specify what the learner will be able to demonstrate on completion, in terms of skills, knowledge and competence. The extent to which these learning outcomes are achieved is a major component in reviewing and evaluating all college programmes/modules at Quality Committee and at Oversight Committee level and by stakeholders.

The teaching, learning and assessment strategy at the college has developed specifically in recognition of our target learner profile; mature adult learners who are active in their trade union, often without prior academic experience. All programmes at SIPTU's college are thus delivered in a modular format, either via 1, 2 or 3 day-release blocks or traditional night class format for up to 12 weeks. In addition, there are increasing demands to deliver remotely, both synchronous and asynchronous, a demand that has become urgent in light of Covid restrictions. Self-directed and independent learning has heightened importance, as is usual with mature learners, and in particular because of the need to integrate learning in the classroom with application in the workplace or committee room. Thus tutor-led traditional exposition is core but teaching and learning at SIPTU's college also includes:

Collective exploration of materials; debate; role-play; aspects of the flipped classroom; guided reading; work-based projects or assignments both written and oral; maintenance of a learner log and exposure to real-life industrial relations fora and trade union activities.

In order to facilitate all of the above and to encourage in particular the collective nature of some activities, learner numbers in classes at the college are low. A stated tutor to learner ratio of 1:30 for QQI Level 6 and 1:20 for QQI Level 5 are considered maxima seldom reached deliberately. All programmes now allow for individual tutorial time and the allocation of scribes where necessary.

All modules are developed, and teaching and learning are designed, with the representative role of the learner in mind. To that end critical thinking, independence and self-sufficiency are encouraged. All tutors will have prior experience in representative roles themselves at both workplace and national level, and will often have been mature students, in common with the learners. Each module being delivered will have a lead tutor, these tutors are responsible for developing and maintaining suitable teaching and learning materials in their area of expertise. These will be in line with the relevant programme and module descriptors. Tutors in SIPTU work closely with their colleagues and support each other in peer review of teaching and learning materials. Whilst tutors are encouraged to have autonomy in the delivery of their modules, the quality of the teaching and learning materials will be reviewed by the Head of College prior to the commencement of a new academic year and in line with ongoing internal monitoring and self-evaluation. The Head of College and the Quality Committee have overall responsibility for the quality of teaching and learning at SIPTU's college.

Teaching and learning at SIPTU's college is constantly monitored by

- Learner appraisal at end of module
- Learner appraisal by biennial survey
- Tutor self-evaluation and end of module reports
- External authenticator reports
- Quality Committee evaluation and review procedures
- Feedback from SIPTU and other unions as stakeholders

7.3 AVA – Assessment, Verification and Authentication Process

Assessment on accredited programmes at SIPTU college is constructively aligned with learning outcomes and criterion referenced. This is to ensure valid and reliable assessment and contributes towards a fair and consistent process for all learners on all programmes. The Quality Committee establishes and implements assessment policies, processes, and procedures in line with the stated learning outcomes and validated procedures in Module Descriptors. Tutors devise assessment instruments, marking rubrics and assessment criteria in light of the learning outcomes and in consultation with the Head of College and/or Quality Committee where appropriate. Learners are advised in a timely fashion in assignment briefs which also stipulate submission deadlines and any special instructions in relation to the assignment. Processes relating to the submission of assessments and all relevant assessment policies and procedures are clearly outlined to learners during the module but are also available in their learner handbook. Tutors grade assignments according to established marking rubrics, comply with second-marking arrangements and submit all relevant documentation to Head of College.

Assessments are directly linked to learning outcomes, designed to encourage participation and to ensure a variety of modes across a programme. Assessment methods are subject to regular review but generally include the following:

Formative assessment- these assessments are generally small in scale, either oral or written, and take place in the early stage of module delivery. The purpose is to monitor progress and inform both the tutor and the learner regarding areas requiring improvement or focus. This assessment is usually low stakes (few if any marks) however tutor feedback is given, and suggestions are made for possible improvements in future assessments.

Continuous assessment occurs both during and at the end of the module allowing learners to achieve marks during the programme thereby ensuring that not all the marks are available at final assessment

Summative assessment- is aimed at evaluating the learning after instruction and can combine assessments taken during the module with end-of module assignments.

Learners are given regular feedback/feedforward on their assignments and their learning at key points in the module, but particularly when end of module results are issued. All assessment materials and learners' work are compiled in a results portfolio at the end of each module and returned by the tutor to Head of College.

7.3.1 AVA system

Enrolment forms to be completed by all participants on the first day of any module or submitted in advance depending on the module requirements. Forms are returned immediately to SIPTU's college (in security envelopes provided and using SIPTU's secure track & trace system) in order to facilitate the preparation of documentation necessary for the verification, authentication and submission process outlined below; to set aside sufficient time, and to be in a position to estimate the numbers of portfolios involved. PPS numbers are sought only from those attending accredited courses and destroyed/deleted once the learner has been registered on the relevant awarding body system. SIPTU does not retain learners' PPS numbers.

Assessment Materials - All examinable parts such as assignments, projects, journals, exams, skills demonstrations, (i.e., a learner's portfolio) are all marked or assessed by the Learning Coordinator/Tutor using marking schemes agreed with the Quality Committee. Results are entered on a marking sheet for each examinable component and on an individual summary sheet for each participant. The marking sheet will be signed by the assessor for that particular component and where there is more than one assessor, the summary sheet will be signed by the lead assessor.

Assessment should normally be completed within 3 weeks of submission by the learner and in any event at least 3 weeks in advance of external authentication. This is to facilitate a timely verification process. External authentication takes place approximately a week in advance of each QQI submission date which are on the 12th of alternate months. The college aims to submit all First Term material on the 12th of February and the remainder on the 12th of June each year. Where necessary use will be made of the October and/or April submission dates also. Teaching staff will be expected to present portfolios for verification in January and May each year and on other dates as required. Where appropriate learners will be provided with provisional results and feedback from their tutor in advance of a Results Approval meeting- these results will be clearly outlined as provisional results and still subject to approval.

Verification is an internal two-way process:

Part a) requires a check that each participant's work is assembled in full; that the marks are correctly assigned, computed and recorded on both the marking sheets and summary sheets; that all work is correctly labelled; that there is a registration form submitted for each participant, and in general that the records are in keeping with QQI requirements. All tutors have a verifier's checklist against which to check the portfolios and returns.

Part b) involves the selection of a 20-25% sample (including borderline grades) to be separately verified and/or second-marking of the entire batch.

After verification, the results are entered on the QQI portal but not submitted for certification until after external authentication.

Authentication is the function of an accepted and suitably qualified individual independent of SIPTU, drawn from a panel agreed by trade unions and as per QQI guidelines. The Authenticator will attend in advance of QQI submission dates to determine whether internal assessment processes and procedures are in line with best practice and consistent with national standards. All marked and verified portfolios are assembled for her/his perusal along with results summary sheets for each learner and for each batch. The Authenticator's Report is forwarded to the Head of College for the Results Approval Process at the next Quality Committee meeting. The Quality Committee acts as the Results Approval Panel and the external chairperson will approve and sign off on results and also address any issues arising from the External Authenticator's report. Results will then be made available to learners via the college office and learners will be reminded of the appeals process, a request for certification will be made (flagging any which are the subject of appeal). Certificates, once received at the college, are sent by post to learners.

Submitting assignments - Learners will be fully informed regarding dates, times, and venues of assessment activities, and regarding deadlines and procedures for submitting written assignments. Some programmes require learners to submit assignments electronically and full instruction is given at induction. Where penalties for late submissions apply, this process will be fully explained. Late submissions, however, must be agreed with the relevant tutor in advance. All submissions must have the required identification information and learners must keep copies of their own submissions.

Plagiarism Each module tutor will outline to learners that the college has a clear policy on plagiarism. SIPTU's college defines plagiarism as: deliberately representing the work or ideas of others as your own work. It will be explained to learners that if they are using the ideas or work of others from books, journal articles, TV programmes, internet sources, class notes, etc. they should acknowledge and reference them correctly. Learners will be required to complete a standard declaration that written work for assessment is their own work, or that it is an appropriate element of a group project. If plagiarism is suspected, learners may be requested to explain the circumstance. If the case of plagiarism is a serious one, learners may lose marks, or be obliged to repeat the assessment activity appropriately. If two or more learners submit identical work where individual work is required, all may be required to repeat the assignment. Cases of plagiarism will be recorded on the learner record for examiners.

Compassionate Considerations

SIPTU understands that learners can experience a major life event in the weeks immediately before an assessment date, such as a physical injury, trauma, or a family bereavement. In such a case the learner should discuss the possible implications for assessment with the tutor and, if necessary, apply for additional submission time or for a deferral of assessment. The nature of modular delivery at the union's college contributes to a real ease in facilitating learners to undertake or complete a module at a later date. Learners are made aware of this possibility during their induction and it is outlined in the learner handbook.

Repeat Assessments

Where a learner is unsuccessful on a first attempt in an assessment activity, the college will provide the learner with a repeat assessment opportunity depending on the nature of the activity and the practical issues involved. The college cannot guarantee that re-sit opportunities will be provided for those who fail to attend or submit work on the due date.

Appeals

If a learner is surprised by a low assessment result the tutor should firstly give him/her informal assessment feedback and an explanation of the result in the first instance. If the learner is still dissatisfied, they may request a meeting with the Head of College, to discuss the grounds for an appeal and determine if the learner wishes to lodge a formal appeal. Appeals to SIPTU's college may be made using the Learner Appeals Form SC 10. The form should be completed in block capitals and submitted to the Head of College by the learner no later than 10 working days following receipt of results. Learners will be made aware of the appeals process in their induction, and it is outlined in the Learner Handbook, on issue of their results from the college office, a further reminder will be made.

Stage 1 The first stage of the formal appeal procedure involves the checking of the assessment process and the assessment results by a 'blind' second marker to ensure compliance with assessment policy and marking criteria (this second marker cannot be anyone involved in the original result decision). The learner will be informed of the outcome within 2 weeks. If the learner is not happy with the outcome of stage 1, the learner may within 2 weeks appeal to stage 2.

Stage 2 On receipt of an appeal from stage 1 of the appeals procedure, the contested assignment and associated documents will be referred to the Appeals Board for a determination (please see Appendix U for membership and terms of reference for the Appeals Board). The learner will be informed of the decision of the Appeals Board within 4 weeks of the Appeals Board having been convened. This is the final stage of the Appeals Process, and, on the completion of the appeals process, the final result will be inputted in the normal fashion and submitted to QQI and for issuing of an updated certificate. A learner appeal process will be recorded and retained in the SIPTU college Documentation Centre.

Calculation of assessment results

Assessment results are calculated according to approved assessment criteria and marking schemes for each module. Tutors will explain to learners how marks are calculated and grades awarded.

Documenting AVA

All such processes are appropriately documented and the table on the next two pages is published to aid tutors in the selection of the correct form for each occasion.

Covid-19 restrictions and the loss of access to classrooms and office spaces has necessitated the design of forms in an online format. Microsoft Forms is now used for this purpose and SIPTU's college publishes links to all its forms on its website and via e-mail as appropriate. Microsoft Forms presents the responses in Excel format where it is stored securely in SIPTU college Documentation Centre on siptulearn.



Which form do I use and when?

All courses			
I want to...	Which form...	Where and how...	When...
Enrol learners	<i>Form SC1</i>	Return to College	Day 1
Record attendance	<i>Form SC2</i>	Return to College	End of course
Record learner feedback	<i>Form SC3</i>	Return to College	End of course
Use a cover sheet	<i>Form SC4</i>		As necessary
Report an incident	<i>Form SC4</i>	Return to College with report or venue checklist	As necessary
Claim contract fees	<i>Form SC4</i>	Return to College with invoice	End of course
Return portfolios	<i>Form SC4</i>	Return to College with SC5, SC6, SC7 and Module Documentation ABCD (see below)	After assessment
Record learner declaration	<i>Form SC5</i>	Return to College	With portfolio

Record individual learner results	<i>Form SC6</i>	Return to College	After assessment
Record group results	<i>Form SC7</i>	Return to College	After assessment
Prepare for internal verification	<i>Form SC8</i>	Return to College	After assessment
<p>Forms SC2 and SC3 may accompany Forms SC5, SC6, SC7 and portfolios after assessment.</p> <p>Always use security envelope and Form SC4 as cover sheet and the secure Track 'n' Trace system if posting.</p>			
<p>Each module/programme has the following documentation which should accompany portfolios prepared for external authentication.</p>			
Validations	<i>(QQI Code) Form A</i>	For external authenticator	After assessment
Learner Descriptor / Information Sheet	<i>(QQI Code) Form B</i>	Give to learner	Day 1
Assignment brief for each assignment	<i>(QQI Code) Form C</i>	Give to learner in advance and for external authenticator	
Marking matrix for each assignment	<i>(QQI Code) Form D</i>	Use for assessing and for external authenticator	

Table 1: Which Form to use when- A Guide for Tutors

This table is available in the *Links and Tips for Tutors* document on [siptuLEARN](#) and all forms can be downloaded there also.

7.3.2 Physical Resources

The learning environment also has physical, resource, and social aspects. The physical environment includes classroom and other facilities appropriate to part-time adult learners mostly in employment. There are digital and other presentational facilities in each classroom setting. Resources include handouts and other presentational materials, either physical or digital and access to [siptuLEARN](#), the college's on-line platform. SIPTU is also currently investigating the possibility of developing a loan scheme for laptops or other suitable devices for learners.

Consistent with its commitment to all of SIPTU's membership, SIPTU has training facilities nationwide. The conference/training facilities at each of SIPTU's branch offices are adapted for use by SIPTU's college in order to reach members living and working in rural areas. Locations with classrooms currently include Dublin, Sligo, Galway, Limerick, Cork, Waterford, Kilkenny, Mullingar, and Tullamore. All facilities are wheelchair accessible and fitted with large screens for presentations. The safety statement for each of those premises is available on-site. There is a full list of campus addresses in Appendix J. Where to reach our members requires the hiring of classroom facilities at hotels or other locations, a full check is conducted using the facilities checklist in Appendix K.

7.3.3 Class Representatives

Every effort is made to ensure that learners can communicate with SIPTU's college as individuals and through group representation. Unfortunately, the modular nature of the QQI Level 5 programme does not lend itself easily to a system of class representative as learners will mostly attend via 3-day release blocks perhaps as infrequently as once a year. Where the programme in its entirety is offered in a continuous, night class pattern, learners are invited to elect class representatives. This invitation is routinely extended to groups on the Level 6 Trade Union Studies programme and they are also eligible to be represented by the Student's Union at the National College of Ireland. The college also engages via survey with learners/target learners and has a Learner Representative on the Quality Committee.

7.3.4 Social Aspects

An important recognition of the social aspects of our learning is evident in the location of training in union offices where possible. This is to facilitate further connections between tutors, learners and the wider union community and to enhance familiarity with union activities and personnel. Meals are provided at all locations during courses and all tutors, learners and union personnel are encouraged to mix and engage at such mealtimes. Award ceremonies are held annually at most education hubs where learners' achievements are recognised in the presence of family and friends, but also in the presence of local and national union personnel and colleagues.

7.4 Responsibilities and Evidence Summary

	Learners	Tutors	Quality Committee	Learner Support	Head of College	Oversight Committee/ Gen Sec	QQI
Responsibilities	√	√	√	√	√		
Evidence	Learner results (<i>SIPTU College Register</i>)						
(Recorded)	Learners results, End of Module Portfolios, Internal verification reports, End of module tutor returns, Extension requests, Results Approval Panel Minutes, Extern Report, Plagiarism Reports, Record of Appeals (<i>SIPTU College Documentation Centre – siptuLEARN</i>)						
	Safety Statement, Facilities Checklist (<i>SIPTU College Documentation Centre-siptuLEARN</i>)						
Implementation Date	1 st April 2021						
Review Date	1 st April 2026						

Part 8 - Supports for Learners

8.1 Policy

SIPTU regards learner supports and resources as critical components in the safe and enabling environment it aims to create. While aiming for an inclusive and effective learning environment, SIPTU's college is aware of the particular needs of its unique target learner. Thus, the supports and resources in place are those most suited to mature, adult learners attending one or more short-run modules over the length of their working careers. The college is therefore committed to providing suitable academic resources for learners but also those supports relevant beyond formal delivery of a programme. Such supports for learners are regularly reviewed and monitored via learner appraisal (formal and informal), staff feedback and best practice.

8.1.1 Specific Support

SIPTU recognises that some of its learners will be returning to education after a long absence and in some instances lacking confidence about study and writing skills. In recognition of this, SIPTU established two support programmes, "Jump Start" and "Return to Learn".

"*Jump Start*" was first delivered in 2017 in Dublin in response to requests from support workers in the health services who were considering returning to education, particularly those considering training for the Health Care Assistant grade. (See brochure at Appendix H). This programme is now available on request at each SIPTU college centre for members in any sector. In response to difficulties identified for some mature learners on the Level 6 Trade Union Studies (TUS) programme, '*Return-to-Learn*' was established as a short pre-requisite module for all enrolled on the TUS module. Such was its success that it is now a 5-credit compulsory first module on TUS as agreed by programme review in 2020.

Both modules facilitate early identification of any difficulties learners may have and allow for the introduction of any necessary supports including a scribe system for written assignments. Both are also available to any learners without anticipation of participation on any further college programmes.

8.2 Procedures

8.2.1 Registration:

The administrative office provides details of accepted learners to the relevant module tutor prior to induction. Registration forms are completed by learners and inputted on the Student Register. Learners are registered by module/programme and data is collected as outlined in Section 10.3.

8.2.2 Induction:

At SIPTU, it is our policy to ensure that learners feel well supported from the outset of their studies and throughout their attendance at SIPTU's college. An important part in achieving this is our induction process. All processes at SIPTU are cognisant of our target learner, and our aim to provide second chance formal education for union members. From their first interaction with SIPTU's college, learners will be provided with a respectful and supportive environment to ensure that they have a positive learning experience. Learners will be well-equipped with all knowledge that they need to have to ensure a successful start to their studies.

Learner Induction Procedure:

Our procedures for Learner Induction are as follows:

- On notification of acceptance to a course (via email), learners will be provided with a copy of the learner handbook and any relevant documentation for a course.
- Learners will be provided with a timetable for the module/course that they are attending.
- All relevant support details will be outlined to learners in an induction email and also in their induction lesson as outlined below. For learners on the Level 6 *Trade Union Studies*, this will also include a link to NCI Student support services which all learners will have access to.
- The first lesson of a module attended by the learner will include an induction component.
- This induction lesson has been developed by the Quality Committee and is subject to regular review, some examples of what this lesson will consist of are: introduction to the college, housekeeping (fire exits, evacuation procedures, phone policy, web etiquette if relevant etc) learner expectations, college expectations from learners and supports available for learners.

- Learners will also be provided with access to the siptuLEARN site and will be provided with online support for the use of this site.
- Specific induction for any eLearning platforms as relevant
- At the outset we outline the mutually respectful environment that we strive to achieve in our classrooms by setting any ground rules that may be relevant in a module, particularly around class discussions etc.
- In our classrooms, we encourage a supportive learning environment. We emphasise ‘ice-breaker’/introduction exercises and group work, in this way, learners will be encouraged to interact with each other and in general develop long lasting collegial support.
- Normally modules will include a component on essay planning, citing and referencing, in particular in Level 6 Trade Union Studies, learners must attend a mandatory *Return to Learn* module which deals with these topics and other features of returning to learn after a period of time. Where relevant, our pre-recorded essay planning [video](#) will be made available for learners and this will be highlighted in the induction lesson. At any stage, learners can seek assistance with essay writing etc.
- Individual mentoring and other supports are also available (see Section 8.2.3) to learners and these will all be outlined to learners within the induction process.
- In SIPTU’s college it is policy for tutors and staff to make themselves available to learners and in particular when difficulties arise, tutors will outline their preferred mode of contact and their availability in the induction lesson. Learners will be provided with contact details for all relevant tutors on their module/programme. Specific issues and the related procedures are outlined in the Learner Handbook (Appendix F).
- Learning outcomes of any particular module will be outlined in the session.
- Assessment overview, feedback, reasonable accommodation, compassionate consideration and appeal processes will be outlined to learners within the induction lesson and will be referred to throughout the module.
- Learners will also be briefed on the procedure for submitting assignments and this will be outlined again later in the module also.

8.2.3 Additional Support & Representation:

SIPTU is unable to provide structured pastoral care or referral services though any learner registered on the *Trade Union Studies* programme has recourse to all of NCI's student support services and to representation by the Students' Union. Learners will be made aware of the NCI Student supports via induction and the learner handbook. As members of a trade union, learners are also made aware of services available to them via their relevant trade union i.e., legal representation, discounted member services, including discounted access to personal development courses. We do endeavour to provide a caring and supportive environment to learners and where issues present that are outside of the current support remit, we will assist learners as best as possible and refer the learner to outside agencies.

The short-run nature of modules at SIPTU's college militate against a good system of class representatives, but all cohorts are nonetheless encouraged to elect representatives to raise issues/suggestions on behalf of their class or of general concern to all learners. Learners may also at any time approach a tutor or the Head of College or have their SIPTU Organiser do so on their behalf, to discuss any issues or difficulties/additional needs they may have which SIPTU will try to address. If learners are experiencing difficulties meeting course requirements, they are encouraged to ask for additional tutor support and advice. In the *Trade Union Studies* programme each learner has access to a mentor-tutor to assist with any difficulties they may face, in particular in cases where learners have been out of education for some time. Where SIPTU programmes are offered in their entirety, rather than as individual, discrete modules, this mentor-tutor system will be in place. Aside from a specific mentor, we encourage learners to approach staff members (e.g., tutor or trade union official) with any difficulties at any stage of their time in SIPTU's college.

Mentor Tutors: The function of a mentor tutor is to provide support and guidance to learners attending SIPTU's college. These can range from academic support, course-related queries, and general concerns. The overall aim is to ensure learner retention, engagement, progression, achievement, and a practical application of their learning in the wider union movement. Central to this role is identifying and dealing with early signs of learner difficulties, assisting the learner to navigate supports available and implementing suitable strategies and assistance. These tutors will also assist the learner with extension requests and assignment difficulties should they arise. Learners can also specifically seek out support from mentor tutors with regards to essay writing, citing and referencing and any other areas of learning which they may require assistance with. Mentor tutors and tutors generally will also assist, inform and encourage learners regarding progression within the college and within other institutions if appropriate.

IT Support: SIPTU commits to providing learners with IT support on our siptuLEARN site, via induction and with dedicated support as required. Some learners may also have difficulties in the use of technology and where possible we can facilitate smaller assistance basic classes for those who need help with Microsoft Word, email and the use of the internet for research purposes etc. We also encourage the opportunity for SIPTU members (in Dublin) to complete the Skills for Work programme in conjunction with CDET B which includes Online Computer Skills. In other parts of the country, we can assist members to source similar supports via the local ETB or alternative provider. All tutors have the support of SIPTU IT Unit and can seek specific technological advice for learners running into difficulties, particularly for learners accessing remote learning and possible connection issues etc.

8.2.3 **Quality Learning:** Learners at SIPTU can expect SIPTU’s college to provide the highest quality learning experience possible, to respect personal data, to support learners in achieving the required learning outcomes for courses, to assess learning fairly, to take note of learner appraisal and evaluations, and to offer sound advice for future learning development. SIPTU commits to all learning resources that are fit for purpose and accessible to learners. There is an on-line resource available to all learners – www.siptulearn.ie – and our tutors offer individual support where needed. Quiet study space is available by arrangement and learners may also use the Book Exchange.

8.2.4 Learner Services:

SIPTU’s college aims to ensure that learner services and supports are integrated within the learner experience at SIPTU. Therefore, a dedicated staff member is assigned to the coordination of learner needs and supports. SIPTU will also ensure that learners are informed of and aware of supports available and where to request any further supports- promoted via the induction, siptuLEARN site and the learner handbook.

In summary, the following are available to learners at SIPTU’s college:

- Head of College
- Mentor Tutors
- Learning Support Services
- Jump Start and Return to Learn
- Union Organiser- facilitating implementation of skills learned
- Administrative Office
- IT Support
- Numerous feedback opportunities

8.2.5 Learner Complaints Procedure

It is SIPTU’s college policy that complaints should be resolved informally and amicably in the first instance. Complaints can be raised at any stage informally with any member of staff, the member of staff will discuss the issue and attempt to resolve it directly with the learner. Where this is not possible or fails, then the formal complaints procedure outlined below must be followed.

Table 2 Learner Complaints Procedure

Learner Complaints Procedure		
Stages	Responsible	Action
Stage 1	Subject of Complaint	Attempt at informal resolution with subject of complaint. If the matter is not resolved in this manner then the complainant proceeds to Stage 2
Stage 2	Head of College	Formal written complaint to the Head of College (not the subject of the complaint) within one week of the incident or within one week of meeting with the subject of the complaint. The Head of College will investigate and attempt to bring the matter to an amicable conclusion within two weeks of receiving the written complaint. If this does not succeed or is not possible, then Stage 3 applies.
Stage 3	Appeals Board	At Stage 3, the complaint will be heard by the Appeals Board. They will issue a formal written decision within two weeks of having considered the appeal. See Appendix U for membership and terms of reference of the Appeals Board. The Appeals Board will not consist of the subject of the complaint, or any tutor involved in an earlier stage of the procedure.
Where the Head of College is the subject of the complaint, the complaint should be made in writing to the General Secretary. The General Secretary will appoint an appropriate person within the organisation to deal with the complaint under this procedure.		
Both the complainant and the subject of the complaint may be accompanied by a representative or friend during the formal procedures.		

Complaints provide a valuable source of feedback on the performance of the college's services and staff. The Head of College will record formal complaints anonymously so as not to identify individuals but to ensure that complaints are registered and can be reported on in a general manner annually to the Quality Committee.

8.2.6 Learner Responsibilities: By the same measure, the college, has a set of reasonable expectations from learners on its courses. the college expects learners to inform themselves about their course requirements; to make a genuine effort to achieve the learning outcomes; to participate fully in any group tasks; to perform to their optimum in assessment tasks; to adhere to health and safety requirements; to respect the rights of colleagues; to maintain confidentiality where required, and to contribute honest evaluation afterwards. As a trade union college, all learners will be members of a trade union and will demonstrate their support for the union movement in their day-to-day activities and in their studies.

8.2.7 Reasonable Accommodation: It is the aim of SIPTU to ensure that no disability, illness, or financial problems will militate against successful participation in and completion of any programmes. We highlight this approach by discussing available supports and processes in our induction lesson and tutors always remain available to discuss any difficulties with learners. At SIPTU, we ensure that all premises have wheelchair access; dyslexia friendly fonts are used in communications/teaching materials; the cost of tuition fees and texts are absorbed by SIPTU for its members, and every reasonable effort is made to accommodate learners with special needs, whether permanent or temporary. If a sudden or unexpected difficulty arises which might create difficulties around assessment, the learner must make timely contact with their tutor or mentor tutor to discuss what reasonable accommodations may be made for them at that time. This may include extra time to complete an assessment; a different venue; a reader or scribe and the college will endeavour to provide these. SIPTU is unable at this time to provide any specialist assistive technologies.

8.2.8 Compassionate Considerations: As outlined above in the context of assessment, all learners at SIPTU have access to reasonable accommodation provision. Furthermore, compassionate considerations can also be made in extenuating circumstances. SIPTU understands that learners can experience a major life event in the weeks immediately before an assessment date, such as a physical injury, trauma, or a family bereavement. In such a case the learner should discuss the possible implications for assessment with the tutor and, if necessary, apply for additional submission time or for a deferral of assessment. The nature of modular delivery at SIPTU's college contributes to a real ease in facilitating learners to undertake or complete a module at a later date. Learners are made aware of this possibility during their induction and it is outlined in the learner handbook.

8.2.8 Language: All SIPTU programmes are offered in the English language and SIPTU is unable to offer programmes, reading materials or assessment opportunities in any other language. In an effort to ensure access to training for all, SIPTU accepts applications from those whose first language is another language where they have sufficient English language proficiency to fulfil the role of workplace representative as confirmed by their SIPTU Organiser. Every effort is made to assist with any difficulties, including, but not confined to, the services of a separate Basic English team in SIPTU, the Jump Start and Return to Learn programmes, the services of a scribe and the assistance of SIPTU staff members with other language skills.

8.2.9 Diversity and Equality: As a trade union SIPTU has consistently been to the forefront in activism and affirmation around equality and diversity issues. Such matters are a constant on all agendas within the union and under Rule 103, which establishes an Equality Sub-committee of the National Executive Council (NEC), it is also a requirement that “each Division, Sector and Department of the Union ‘equality proof’ its activities and outcomes in furtherance of the Union’s objectives for achieving equality at work and in society” (SIPTU, 2019, p.32). SIPTU therefore declares its commitment to ensuring that all staff, learners, visitors, and stakeholders are aware of equality and diversity issues and can expect to be treated with respect and dignity in terms of:

- Their access to college supports and services

- Their ability to attend or learn or teach in an equitable, safe, and supportive environment
- The suitability of teaching materials and of assessment methods and procedures

All staff and learners are expected to be aware of their responsibilities and to promote equality and combat discrimination in the areas of gender, marital status, family status, age, disability, race, sexual orientation, religious and political beliefs and membership of the travelling community. SIPTU complies with all relevant equality legislation, and further undertakes to regularly monitor and review all processes and procedures to ensure compliance with best practice in this area.

8.2.10 Confidentiality:

Where appropriate, SIPTU commits to dealing with all learner requests in a confidential manner. Should this be a disclosure of a disability, a learning difficulty, a personal issue, a request for support, a complaint or any difficulty that arises during the learner's time at SIPTU's college. Any information which needs to be disclosed i.e., to a class tutor for example, will only be disclosed with the consent of the learner. There is of course, no obligation on any learner to make such disclosures, but we encourage learners to have an open dialogue with the support systems in the college and in that manner, we can support the learner achieve their full potential.

8.2.11 Protection of Enrolled learners: The Qualifications and Quality Assurance (Education and Training) Act 2012 contains provisions for the protection of learners enrolled in programmes of education and training (Part 6, S. 64-67). The legislation applies to all education providers (other than those specifically exempt under legislation) and to any course of 3-month duration or longer where fees have been charged. QQI has developed protocols to facilitate providers in the fulfilment of their legal obligations with regard to PEL. As summarised by QQI, the 2012 Act seeks to ensure that:

- Learners have an opportunity to complete a programme leading to an award,
or

- Learners are refunded the moneys most recently paid if a programme ends before they complete it,
- Learners are provided with adequate and accurate information about the programme that they wish to pursue and about the protection in place for them in event that the programme ceases prior to their completion.

Many courses at SIPTU are shorter than 3 months and fees are not charged to SIPTU members. Nonetheless SIPTU extends the terms of good protection of enrolled learners' practice to all of its learners. All prospective learners at SIPTU's college have access to adequate and accurate information about all of our programmes via programme information sheets regularly circulated and as advertised in SIPTU communications and social media. The college website in particular provides extensive information about each programme and this is supplemented by access to the Learner Handbook on enrolment.

SIPTU's college is a not-for-profit entity whose chief aim is the education and training of SIPTU's own members and those of other ICTU affiliated trade unions. SIPTU absorbs the cost of all such training and education for its own members and charges only nominal fees to members of other trade unions. Most other unions also absorb the cost of fees for their members and/or offer scholarships and other supports. As all programmes are modular in nature fees are charged by module which are of a maximum of 12 weeks duration. As befits the special relationship between all of the trade unions, fees are not invoiced until the module has already commenced. In the event that any module is cancelled or cannot otherwise proceed, enrolled learners will be afforded the opportunity to take the module at another convenient date, time, and location. With a focus on short-run courses and a pool of adjunct tutors, replacement of absent staff is possible at short notice.

8.3 Responsibilities and Evidence Summary

	Learners	Tutors	Quality Committee	Learner Support	Head of College	Oversight Committee/ Gen Sec	QQI
Responsibilities	√	√	√	√	√		
Evidence	Learner Handbook (<i>SIPTU College Documentation Centre – siptuLEARN</i>)						
(Recorded)	Learner Appraisal Reports (<i>SIPTU College Documentation Centre – siptuLEARN</i>)						
	Tutor evaluations- Minutes of Quality Committee Meetings (<i>SIPTU College Documentation Centre- siptuLEARN</i>)						
	Complaints Report (<i>SIPTU College Documentation Centre- siptuLEARN</i>)						
Implementation Date	1 st April 2021						
Review Date	1 st April 2026						



Part 9 – Technology to Support Learning

9.1 Policy

It is the objective of SIPTU to develop its technological infrastructure to meet the requirements to support learning . The college aims to develop learner-centred and engaging content for use as supports while ensuring that staff and learners are supported in the continuous development of their digital literacy skills. Furthermore, SIPTU will ensure that any online learning is subject to regular review and relevant quality assurance and enhancement.

9.2 Background

QQI defines blended learning as “face-to-face programmes which incorporate remote online learning via a virtual learning environment” (QQI, 2018, p.3). Such traditional learning approaches alongside some e-learning opportunities have distinct advantages for learners such as those at SIPTU’s college. Blended learning can widen participation and provide additional flexibility for all, but in particular for shift workers and for those living or working at a distance from training facilities. A completely online or distance programme would be inappropriate for the programmes delivered at the college. Group work, role-play and the interaction between learners and union staff other than tutors, are key components of our teaching and not readily adaptable to an online environment. Any online supports must be exactly that: a support to traditional classroom teaching and learning. SIPTU will only use online learning as a support or synchronous live face-to-face learning. This assists SIPTU to facilitate remote synchronous learning for learners who may not normally be able to access training within the college.

9.3 Development of the technological infrastructure at SIPTU's College

9.3.1 The siptuLEARN site

The *siptuLEARN* site was originally developed in 2014 by SIPTU's Strategic Organising Department as support for an internal training programme, Educate to Organise. Consultation with target learners and feedback from conference delegates and the National Executive Council (NEC) emphasised the need for such a platform for this and other programmes. Learners consistently sought access to classes and to teaching materials and support outside of their working hours, in the evenings and at weekends.

A major focus in the design of the platform was to ensure that it would be user-friendly and a welcoming space for all users. The initial focus was on providing class notes and further explanations of more difficult topics and with links to video and audio materials so that various learning modes could be accommodated. Over time the site evolved to provide a personalised learning environment for learners with weekly quizzes; progress tracking and options for providing feedback to tutors.

The *siptuLEARN* site facilitates learners to access additional learning materials at their own pace and allows for review of earlier lessons and materials.

Feedback from users was consistently encouraging with almost 95% positive rating in its first year of use. Included below are some extracts from user feedback.

Well presented, easy to access the information and well laid out online.

12th May 2015

Group activities in class are good. Module Support is very good as there is a lot to take in on one day. Good mix of video, Powerpoint and reading which leaves it more interesting.

26th September 2016

I find the course stimulating and the online resources are an excellent way of catching up.

1st May 2017

I missed three classes this term, between the storm and my shift changed.

The web page helped me to catch up on what you did those times.

18th March 2018

Complaints were almost entirely focussed on the reliability of the website in terms of access and the lack of IT support at weekends and evenings, subsequently addressed when the system transferred to SIPTU's college, see below.

9.3.2 Introduction

With the transfer of the new Head of College from the Strategic Organising Department to SIPTU's college, it was decided to extend the site to enable it to support other programmes. External assistance with instructional design was considered essential at this stage. A new site *siptuLEARN* was thus developed in cooperation with iPlanit a digital agency and web design company engaged by SIPTU. This enhanced the functionality of the site and ensured it was fully mobile-responsive and easy to update.

During programme/module inductions, learners are now provided with a username and password and are instructed on access and use of this support system. Learners are added to the relevant module while tutors have access to all modules and to their own support area, Tutor Space. This system was initially in place for non-accredited programmes and by agreement with the National College of Ireland (NCI) is also available to participants on the Trade Union Studies (QQI Level 6) Certificate programme. SIPTU is seeking to introduce the supports available on *siptuLEARN* to learners on its QQI Level 5 programme/s.

9.3.3 Submission of Assignments:

Since 2017, learners on the Trade Union Studies (QQI Level 6) Certificate programme have had the option to submit their assignments via e-mail directly to a tutor's e-mail address and later to a dedicated e-mail address "College Assignments". Since 2018 all assignments on that programme may now be submitted using an electronic assignment submission space on the *siptuLEARN* site. Assignments are automatically sent to the relevant tutor and archived in the "College Assignments" e-mail address.

9.3.4 Microsoft TEAMS / FORMS and WEBEX

The introduction of Covid-19 restrictions in March 2020 resulted in the closure of all SIPTU premises and a hurried and enforced re-arrangement of teaching and learning opportunities. Level 5 modules were cancelled, and by agreement with the National College of Ireland (NCI), classes on the Level 6 Trade Union Studies programme were delivered online in both synchronous and asynchronous modes. Learners continued at this time to access the supports already in existence on [siptuLEARN](#). In 2020, learners were surveyed on their experience of online classes and a majority of respondents said they liked the online format with positive responses in the region of 90%-95% regarding how well they could hear, see and communicate with one another and with the tutor. There were some very positive comments about our tutors and the efforts they made to ensure classes went well online and the [siptuLEARN](#) site was considered useful for all but one module. There were however difficulties with using TEAMS for break-out sessions. In order to improve the experience for learners and tutors alike, SIPTU purchased access to Cisco Webex, a platform with increased functionality, easier access, and which is more suitable for online classes. Microsoft TEAMS has since then upgraded the capability for break-out session and we continue to use both platforms at the college.

The closure of offices and the loss of physical classrooms has also necessitated the need to provide access to soft copy versions of the forms in use at SIPTU's college. Forms required by tutors are already available on the Tutor Space on [siptuLEARN](#). Enrolment forms and evaluation/appraisal sheets for use by learners are now created on Microsoft FORMS and shared with learners via e-mail.

The full suite of remote learning opportunities now available at SIPTU's college includes:

- The use of virtual classroom technology for classes and tutorials. Depending on requirements, both Microsoft TEAMS and Webex are used.
- An online resource or virtual learning environment for learners which includes course presentations and notes; reading materials; multi-media content; quizzes and links to recommended material – [siptuLEARN](#)
- An online means of submitting assignments to the relevant tutor and to the college centrally for back-up and for archival purposes – on [siptuLEARN](#)
- Microsoft Forms for use by learners in providing evaluation on programmes undertaken and for application forms and enrolment purposes

- College Podcasts, an online monthly radio show which features discussions on topics relevant to courses and to which learners are sometimes directed to reinforce learning

SIPTU aims to introduce elements of remote learning to its other programmes. This will ensure greater access for learners who are geographically remote from centres and/or whose working hours are erratic or otherwise inconsistent with regular class attendance. It is also an appropriate means for adult learners to enhance their opportunities for self-directed learning and for learning at their own pace. Mindful of the different ways in which learners learn (simulation, animation, visualisation, narrative etc), use of technology affords the opportunity to incorporate these various learning modes. For the duration of Covid-19 restrictions, remote learning was the only way to provide training and ensure that learners could complete programmes they had already started.

9.4 Procedures

9.4.1 Using *siptuLEARN*

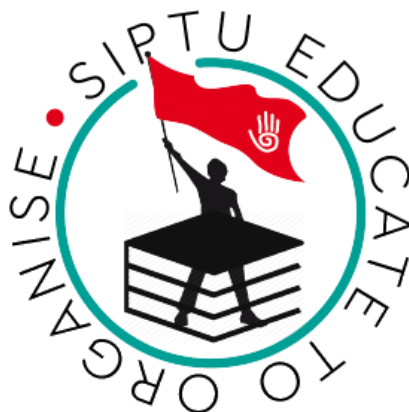
Once learners are enrolled on the relevant programme, they are given access to *siptuLEARN*. Full instruction on its use is given at induction stage and contact details are provided for IT support. Learners are given access to the modules on which they are registered and can easily navigate to the assignment submission page. This page provides a declaration of own work form used when uploading assignments. The tutor email account and the assignments email account (collegeassignments@siptu.ie) are both SIPTU Microsoft Outlook accounts and are secure. Neither assignments nor grades are stored on the *siptuLEARN* site, and as it is maintained by a 3rd party, it keeps only a minimal record of the time and date the learner used the assignments form but keeps none of the form contents or the attachment. All information on *siptuLEARN* and in the assignment's mailbox is protected against unauthorised access and may only be made available to those who have a legitimate need for access and who are authorised to do so.

- All learners are advised in advance of the course of the technical requirements and pre-requisite skills for effective participation on the course.
- Learners are provided with instruction during course induction on how to use the learning technologies associated with the course.

- IT Skills training is provided separately for those who require it.
- SIPTU provides technical support for its systems (e.g. Microsoft TEAMS/FORMS; Webex; *siptuLEARN*, etc.).
- Programme/module learning outcomes are the same for all modes of delivery.
- Staff are trained and/or have experience in instructional design with ongoing training and support from SIPTU's IT Department; from the National College of Ireland, RED Learning Co-operative and a web design company engaged by SIPTU (iPlanit).
- Where possible, the amount of student contact hours should be the same in all learning events where students have opportunities to ask questions contiguously (immediately following on).
- Learners have access to archived material in modules undertaken
- Where lectures are delivered asynchronously, further contact hours will be allocated for tutorials and individual help.
- Where learners are unable to access online resources or unable to submit electronically, the college will facilitate hard copies.
- The experience of online classes must be as close as possible to the experience of the physical classroom and any new modules/programmes must be developed with this in mind.
- Blended learning is a focus/agenda item in all quality review and evaluation processes and any issues identified are addressed in the same way as with face-to-face programmes.
- Blended learning will be incorporated into other SIPTU's college courses where appropriate and only after approval and validation by QQI.

9.5 Responsibilities and Evidence Summary

	Learners	Tutors	Quality Committee	Learner Support	Head of College	Oversight Committee / Gen Sec	QQI
Responsibilities	√	√	√	√	√		
Evidence	Learner Handbook (<i>SIPTU College Documentation Centre – siptuLEARN</i>)						
(Recorded)	Learner Appraisal Reports (<i>SIPTU College Documentation Centre – siptuLEARN</i>)						
	Tutor evaluations- Minutes of Quality Committee Meetings (<i>SIPTU College Documentation Centre- siptuLEARN</i>)						
	Staff Training Records for Blended Learning (<i>SIPTU College Documentation Centre- siptuLEARN</i>)						
Implementation Date	1 st April 2021						
Review Date	1 st April 2026						



Part 10 - Information and Data Management

10.1 Policy

SIPTU's college requires the collection, storage, processing, and retention of data and information in order to facilitate informed decision-making by the Quality Committee and others. The college develops and manages records of its activities to a standard appropriate to meet its stated aims and in compliance with information legislation. Reports are generated and communicated to QQI, NCI, SIPTU, Head of College, Quality Committee, learners and/or staff as appropriate and solely for the following purposes:

- Self-monitoring and planning
- Making informed decisions based on timely and relevant data
- For certification purposes
- To facilitate transfer and progression of learners
- To formulate accurate responses to requests from stakeholders including SIPTU and awarding bodies.
- General accountability

All data will be protected to best practice standards, in compliance with relevant legislation and with the assistance of SIPTU's data protection office.

10.2 SIPTU college Register

SIPTU is developing (in conjunction with iPLANit, a digital and web design company who have already developed and maintain the siptulearn site) a digital register of all SIPTU learners on all programmes. This will synchronise all of the following separate record systems:

- Learner personal data on SIPTU's Internal Administrative System (SIAS)
- Nominations to courses (also on SIAS)
- Level 5 results on QQI portal and separately recorded at SIPTU
- Level 6 results on NCI portal and separately recorded at SIPTU
- Data on non-SIPTU learners, separately recorded at SIPTU

The Register will provide ready access to information, the ability to cross-reference and to generate reports on all aspects of participation for use in monitoring, self-evaluation and programmatic review. It is being developed with due regard to security and data protection and is involving SIPTU's data protection office from an early stage in development.

10.3 Procedures

10.3.1 Personal Data

SIPTU gathers and maintains personal information on all learners for the purposes of registering them for certification with awarding bodies and to ensure appropriate access, progression, and transfer. SIPTU's college registers learners by module and where there is collaboration with other institutes i.e., QQI, ETB, NCI, learners may also be registered on their applicable student record system. This information is collected as part of the application/enrolment process at the start of each module. All such information (i.e., name, address, e-mail, telephone, PPSN [only for accredited modules] gender, nationality, occupation, trade union) is inputted on the SIPTU college Register and retained as per the retention schedule (Appendix L). At the application stage (see Enrolment Form in Appendix M), and as advised in the Learner Handbook (Appendix F), all learners are informed of SIPTU college's obligation to share this information with QQI or NCI or as appropriate. Hard copies of application/enrolment forms are being phased out and are routinely destroyed once the relevant information is stored on the SIPTU college register and uploaded to QQI/NCI portals or as appropriate.

All staff who come into contact with learners' personal data through their work, must treat the information confidentially and securely. All such material is transported from classrooms to the centre using the security envelopes provided and via the secure track & trace postal system in use in SIPTU. As a unique identifier for individuals, the PPSN is a valuable piece of personal information that SIPTU respects and safeguards against misappropriation or misuse. Access to PPSNs is limited to staff members who need these numbers to input learner data on the QQI QBS. SIPTU does not retain PPSNs once used for the sole purpose for which they were collected i.e., certification. All assessment materials are managed in the same secure and confidential manner. Details of results, grades and awards achieved by learners are retained indefinitely on the SIPTU college Register. Soft copies of meeting minutes, Quality Committee meetings, external examiner reports, broadsheets of results of cohorts of learners, are maintained indefinitely in the Documentation Centre on [siptulearn](#).

Details of the modules, programmes, and assessments completed by learners are recorded by SIPTU and maintained indefinitely, to facilitate certification of learners' work through the accrediting bodies as well as facilitating access, transfer, and progression within and beyond SIPTU's college and for informed decision-making. This information is maintained securely on the SIPTU college Register and shared as appropriate with QQI, NCI, ETB, SIPTU.

Assignments submitted via the [siptuLEARN](#) site are retained, while hard copies of assignments are destroyed, using SIPTU's confidential shredding service, within the terms of the retention policy (Appendix N & L). Learners are advised to keep copies of their own work as assignments cannot be returned. Learner appraisals are collected anonymously; initially retained for analysis and as required for self-evaluation and review, and then destroyed as per the retention policy.

All information on [siptuLEARN](#) on SIAS, on the SIPTU college Register and in SIPTU e-mail is firewalled and protected against unauthorised access and may only be made available to those who have a legitimate need for access and who are authorised to do so. All systems and processes at SIPTU have been checked by SIPTU's Data Protection Officer and are subject to the following SIPTU policies (Appendix O):

- SIPTU Access Control and Password policy
- SIPTU Data Retention and Erasure policy

- SIPTU Bring your own device and remote access policy
- SIPTU Data Processor policy / template
- SIPTU Confidentiality Agreement policy / template
- SIPTU Privacy Policy - Data Protection procedures
- SIPTU Information Security policy
- Appropriate Cookie and Privacy statements on each website

10.4 Responsibilities and Evidence Summary

	Learners	Tutors	Quality Committee	Learner Support	Head of College	Oversight Committee/ Gen Sec	QQI
Responsibilities		√	√	√	√		
Evidence	College Register						
(Recorded)	Retention Schedule (<i>SIPTU College Documentation Centre – siptuLEARN</i>)						
	Data Protection Policies (<i>SIPTU College Documentation Centre- siptuLEARN and SIPTU Data Protection Unit</i>)						
	Confidentiality Agreements and Data Processor policy agreements (<i>SIPTU College Documentation Centre- siptuLEARN and SIPTU Data Protection Unit</i>)						
Implementation Date	1 st April 2021						
Review Date	1 st April 2026						

Part 11- Risk Evaluation & Management

11.1 Policy

It is the policy of SIPTU's college to evaluate and manage risk in line with our operations. This will ensure that SIPTU's college is able to continue to deliver courses consistent with our stated aims. We will also ensure that we operate in accordance with all appropriate requirements and relevant legislation to ensure that our facilities and processes are safe and suitable for our staff and learners.

11.2 Procedures

SIPTU manages risks at an organisation wide level across a range of areas including staffing, finance, GDPR, IT, security, health and safety and staff well-being. SIPTU has a dedicated Health and Safety Advisor and SIPTU's college utilises these resources for advice on safety issues in training provision. Any incidents or safety issues are dealt with via incident reporting forms and risk assessment. The Oversight Committee consider, review and manage risk specifically within education and training operations. Within SIPTU, a college risk register is maintained, and any changes reported to the Oversight Committee at their meetings. The purpose of SIPTU's college risk register is to identify, assess and manage the risks presented to SIPTU and to ensure this complies with the strategic and academic objectives of the college. This is an ongoing process which considers all decisions made across the college. The register will identify existing and potential risks and within this structure, define a framework for eliminating or minimising the impact of such risks. This document will be updated as required by the Head of College in consultation with the Quality Committee and we will work to ensure that a proactive 'risk aware' culture is embedded within the college and support staff to comply with related policies and procedures. Risks are categorised under the following four main headings:

Strategy and Reputational Risks

It is critical that the governance and organisation structure allows SIPTU's college to operate at a high standard. At SIPTU, we aim to ensure that our strategy and all activities undertaken will enhance the learner experience and ensure that our reputation as a quality trade union college is maintained. We will also support staff to take ownership of risks directly related to their work environment.

Academic Risks

SIPTU aims to educate union members to be an effective union activist in organising, representing, and negotiating. By creating a stimulating and supportive learning environment, we aim to raise an awareness with learners of the current social, political and economic 'issues' that form the background to their places of work. Having highly trained and educated tutors who will train, educate, mentor, and support our learners is key to achieving this.

Financial & Operational Risks

Within the organisation structure, SIPTU's college strives to maintain resources and infrastructure which allows for a sustainable learning environment. By regular engagement within the Oversight Committee, we will continue to develop and pursue strategies in the best interests of our members and learners. The college can minimise interruptions and negative impacts on learner and staff by ensuring that they operate within a healthy and safe environment, with a physical infrastructure that is fit for purpose.

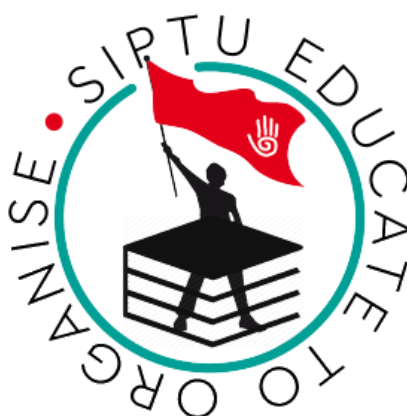
Compliance Risks

SIPTU's college aims to operate within compliance with key legislation and guidelines as stipulated by the nature of the organisation's status and QQI guidelines.

The latest college Risk Register is available in Appendix T

11.3 Responsibilities and Evidence Summary

	Learners	Tutors	Quality Committee	Learner Support	Head of College	Oversight Committee /Gen Sec	QQI
Responsibilities		√	√	√	√	√	
Evidence	SIPTU's college Risk Register (<i>SIPTU College Documentation Centre – siptuLEARN</i>)						
(Recorded)	Head of College reports to Oversight Committee (SIPTU College Documentation Centre- siptuLEARN)						
Implementation Date	1 st March 2022						
Review Date	1 st April 2026						



Part 12 - Public Information and Communication

12.1 Policy

SIPTU's college recognises the importance of effective and appropriate communication and has both formal and informal means at its disposal. There are systems and processes in place which enable frequent and clear communications within the Union, with colleagues in other unions, with target learners, and externally with stakeholders. SIPTU's college communicates clear, accurate, and up-to-date information internally and externally via appropriate media. Information published in respect of programmes complies with the spirit and the requirements of the 2012 Training and Education Act.

12.2 Procedures

- Information on SIPTU's college and its programmes is routinely made available via
 - Internal SIPTU communications
 - SIPTU's college website – www.siptucollege.ie
 - SIPTU's college Facebook page
 - College Podcasts
 - Printed college brochures and newsletters
 - SIPTU's newspaper "Liberty"
 - E-mail to contacts who have elected to join the mailing list
 - Recruitment material distributed by SIPTU Divisions and by other unions
 - Open days and information stalls at SIPTU, ICTU and other union conferences

Key findings from evaluation and review will be published in an easily accessible format on SIPTU's college website as soon as practicable after any such event and in an accessible manner. Quality Assurance policies and procedures are available on our website, in the Learner Handbook and in the *Links and Tips for Tutors* document.

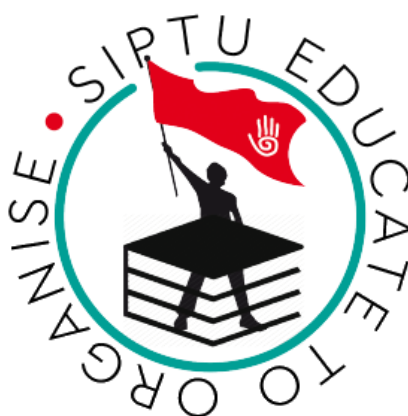
Programme information made publicly available includes:

- Programme and Award Title
- Accrediting Body
- Level of award on NFQ and associated credits
- Programme content
- Application process and entry requirements
- Student Support structures
- Access, transfer, and progression arrangements
- Policies and procedures in relation to Recognition of Prior (Experiential) Learning
- Dates, times, and venues for classes
- Testimonials

All materials are approved prior to publication by the Head of College, the Quality Committee or the General Secretary, as appropriate.

12.3 Responsibilities and Evidence Summary

	Learners	Tutors	Quality Committee	Learner Support	Head of College	Oversight Committee/ Gen Sec	QQI
Responsibilities		√	√	√	√		
Evidence	Learner Handbook (<i>SIPTU College Documentation Centre – siptuLEARN</i>)						
(Recorded)	Links and Tips for Tutors (<i>SIPTU College Documentation Centre – siptuLEARN</i>)						
	College Website						
	Brochures/Newsletters/Mailing List (<i>SIPTU College Documentation Centre-siptuLEARN</i>)						
Implementation Date	1 st April 2021						
Review Date	1 st April 2026						



Part 13 - Other parties involved in education and training

13.1 Policy

It is SIPTU's college policy to engage in collaborative provision and other partnerships where these are deemed to be conducive to the enhancement of all provision. SIPTU may therefore enter agreement with another education provider, professional body, business or community organisation regarding the development of a programme of education or training leading to a QQI award. SIPTU may also work in partnership with another education provider, professional body, business or community organisation in arrangements which fall short of collaborative provision. It is SIPTU policy that any such arrangements will only be entered into and maintained according to QQI Guidelines and best practice.

13.2 Procedures

Collaborative provision refers to any arrangement where another organisation contributes to the admissions decisions, teaching, programme design, preparation of learning materials, or assessment on any accredited programme. Collaborative provision may only be entered into once the following criteria have been satisfied:

- Negotiation on collaborative provision must be proposed or sanctioned by the National Executive Council of SIPTU
- Collaborative provision agreements should only be with other organisations which have the academic and/or professional standing to successfully deliver programmes of study to appropriate academic standards, the financial standing to sustain them, adequate infrastructure facilities and resources (including appropriate staffing) to support them.
- Collaborative provision partners should be compliant with legislative requirements and/or the core guidelines of QQI or other relevant awarding body.
- The quality assurance framework of partner organisations is adequate and compatible with that of SIPTU.
- All partners must sign any relevant data processing, data confidentiality and conflict of interest agreements where applicable.
- Due diligence should test all of the above.

13.3 Existing Collaborative Agreements

SIPTU has one such collaborative provision agreement as 2nd provider with the National College of Ireland (NCI).

13.3.1 National College of Ireland

SIPTU has a long-established relationship with the National College of Ireland, currently as a collaboration in the delivery of the Trade Union Studies Certificate programme, on which SIPTU's college is 2nd provider. The Collaboration Agreement is attached in Appendix P. The Centre for Research and Innovation in Learning and Teaching at the NCI also provides training and support for tutors at the college.

13.4 Other relationships

SIPTU engages with other education providers, professional bodies, business or community organisations in arrangements which fall short of collaborative provision. Some of these relationships may evolve in future and become collaborative relationships in which case they will be the subject of due diligence and formal ratification as provided for above.

13.4.1 IDEAS Institute

The Institute for the Development of Employee Advancement Services (IDEAS) was established in February 2001, by SIPTU. It is a limited liability company, registered as a charity and its focus is on workplace innovation, education, and research (particularly research involving workers, employment, and trade unions). Its task is to identify ways in which new thinking and new services can be introduced into the workplace for the benefit of employees and the enterprise as a whole. SIPTU's college shares training resources with the Institute and IDEAS staff are also adjunct tutors at SIPTU's college.

13.4.2 Irish Congress of Trade Unions and affiliates

SIPTU is affiliated to the Irish Congress of Trade Unions and has a working relationship with ICTU and its affiliates. It is SIPTU's ultimate aim to facilitate the development of a multi-union education and training approach, possibly as a single provider. In the interim SIPTU and the affiliates share training facilities when required and facilitate the attendance at training of members of other unions. (See also separate note regarding single provider negotiations).

13.4.3 City of Dublin Education and Training Board

Since 2017 SIPTU has facilitated the delivery of the ETB’s Skills for Work programme to SIPTU members at SIPTU’s college. Appendix Q contains the letter of agreement between the two parties.

13.4.4 RED Learning Cooperative

The UK based Research, Education and Development for Social Change (RED) Learning Cooperative brings together trade unions, non-governmental organisations, charities, community groups and the co-operative movement. There are mutual supportive arrangements on non-accredited training at each institute.

13.5 Responsibilities and Evidence Summary

	Learners	Tutors	Quality Committee	Learner Support	Head of College	Oversight Committee/ Gen Sec	QOI
Responsibilities			√		√	√	
Evidence	All partnership agreements (<i>SIPTU College Documentation Centre – s iptuLEARN</i>)						
(Recorded)							
Implementation Date	1 st April 2021						
Review Date	1 st April 2026						

Part 14 – Diversity and Equality Matters

As a trade union SIPTU has consistently been to the forefront in activism and affirmation around equality and diversity issues. Such matters are a constant on all agendas within the union and under Rule 103, which establishes an Equality Subcommittee of the National Executive Council (NEC), it is also a requirement that “each Division, Sector and Department of the Union ‘equality proof’ its activities and outcomes in furtherance of the Union’s objectives for achieving equality at work and in society” (SIPTU, 2019, p.32). SIPTU as both employer and provider, will not discriminate, and will work to actively counter any discrimination on any grounds.

14.1 Dignity at Work

All staff of SIPTU are subject to and protected by SIPTU’s ‘Respect for others in the workplace’ (page 31 Staff Manual Appendix C). SIPTU’s college therefore declares its commitment to ensuring that all staff, learners, visitors, and stakeholders are aware of equality and diversity issues and can expect to be treated with respect and dignity in terms of:

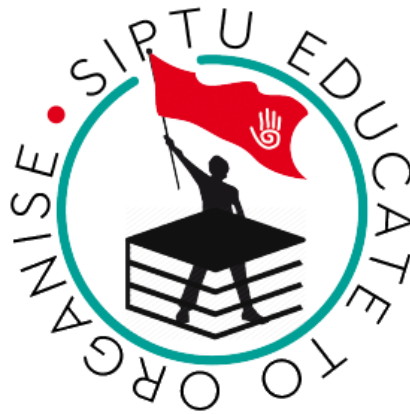
- Their access to SIPTU’s college supports and services
- Their ability to attend or learn or teach in an equitable, safe, and supportive environment
- Freedom from sexual harassment, harassment, bullying and intimidation, committed to creating a harmonious working and learning environment.
- The suitability of teaching materials and of assessment methods and procedures

All staff and learners are expected to be aware of their responsibilities and to promote equality and combat discrimination in the areas of gender, marital status, family status, age, disability, race, sexual orientation, religious and political beliefs and membership of the travelling community. SIPTU’s college complies with SIPTU policies, all relevant legislation, and further undertakes to regularly monitor and review all processes and procedures to ensure compliance with best practice in this area.

15.2 Dignity in the Classroom

Tutors at SIPTU's college have the skills and competencies to deal effectively with increasing diversity in the classroom due to prior experience as industrial organisers in SIPTU. An inclusive classroom is ensured and tutors are vigilant to ensure that this carries over into the social events at the College. Any complaints in this regard will be subject to either the 'Respect to Others in the Workplace' or the Learner Complaints procedure outlined in Part 8 of this document. SIPTU tutors work closely with several other groups in SIPTU to assist in the development and delivery of training where necessary. Below are the SIPTU groups and activities involved:

- Equality Committee – female leadership training
- Migrant Worker Support Network – shop steward training
- Disability Forum – campaigning and lobbying training



Part 15 - Self-evaluation monitoring and review

15.1 Policy

SIPTU fosters a dynamic and flexible environment that is responsive to learner needs, to the needs of SIPTU and to the needs of the wider union movement. SIPTU is dedicated to ensuring the highest standards while enabling ease of fulsome participation for all union learners. Regular internal monitoring plus self-evaluation and programme review at specified intervals are fundamental components of SIPTU's college quality assurance system. It is through this systematised process of self-reflection and examination that the objectives of the college and of the Union will be measured and will allow for continual improvement and enhancement.

15.2 Procedures

There are three strands of systematised reflection and examination at SIPTU's college:

1. ongoing internal monitoring
2. annual self-evaluation, and
3. periodic programmatic review.

There are multiple forms of input for each, including but not confined to:

- Learner Appraisal
- SIPTU's college Staff and Quality Committee
- Feedback from the Oversight Committee
- External Authenticator and Examiner reports
- Feedback or information provided by QQI and NCI
- Feedback from SIPTU's National Executive Council
- Feedback from SIPTU's Strategic Management Team
- Feedback from SIPTU Industrial Organisers
- Feedback from potential learners

There are several key performance areas on which there should be focus:

- Learners – satisfaction; ease of access; attendance; completion; certification/results; compliance; progression; LO achievement; post-training connection and implementation
- Tutor – evaluation of all of the above; satisfaction; training needs; adequate resources; appropriate effort
- Quality Committee – evaluation of all of the above; policies and procedures; resources
- Relationships with stakeholders – relevance of SIPTU’s college provision to SIPTU needs – relationships with other unions
- Compliance with legislation and awarding body criteria

15.2.1 Ongoing internal monitoring

SIPTU’s college staff and the Quality Committee monitor programme delivery on an ongoing basis. With ongoing monitoring of existing activity, any issues should they arise can be remediated quickly. Regular monitoring also highlights areas of good practice which can be shared across programmes and services. When required, outcomes of reports will be used to propose improvements at that point and will contribute to both annual self-evaluation and periodic programmatic review.

15.2.2 Annual Self-evaluation

The policy and procedures contained in the Quality Assurance handbook and relating to all training programmes provided by SIPTU will be subject to a self-evaluation process within one year of having its Quality Assurance Policies and Procedures validated by QQI and on a yearly basis thereafter. The Quality Committee will establish a sub-group to conduct the evaluation and which will consist of:

- Head of College
- Quality Officer or staff member with QA responsibilities
- One Tutor
- One Learner
- One External Evaluator (appointed according to QQI criteria)

This self-evaluation group will agree terms of reference and methodology and the evaluation will be conducted according to the self-evaluation criteria as outlined by QQI and according to best practice at that time. (See QQI IAV Self-Evaluation Core QA Guidelines (Appendix R)). The group will submit to the Quality Committee a report on its findings and include recommendations and a plan for improvement. The Quality Committee will review the plan and provide for its implementation.

15.2.3 Periodic Programmatic Review

Programme reviews will be carried out on a cyclical basis, usually every 5 years, and as deemed appropriate by the respective awarding bodies and according to their criteria. The Quality Committee may appoint an *ad hoc* programme review board to lead this process. All ongoing monitoring and self-evaluation reports will contribute to this process.

15.2.4 Acquiring and Managing Input

Learner Appraisal

Policy It is SIPTU's college policy to ensure learner involvement in its internal self-monitoring, in self-evaluation and in programmatic review of programmes. It is through such engagement with union members who are potential, current and past learners, that it is possible to identify areas of improvement of existing programmes and of innovation in terms of new programmes or modes of delivery. The design of learner surveys and other appraisal mechanisms and their effectiveness is reviewed on an ongoing basis to ensure ease of communication and extensive reach.

Procedures In all programmes, students are invited to submit appraisal sheets at the end of each module; to take part in biennial surveys aimed at those who have completed entire programmes, and to engage with college staff around class times; at Conferences and other union events. In addition, learners are encouraged to nominate a representative to the Quality Committee. This is an integral role, which allows for direct learner input into all elements of education and training provision of interest to the learner population at SIPTU.

Appraisal is conducted both formally and informally. Formally there are two methods, end-of-module appraisal sheets and biennial on-line surveys. Appraisal sheets are distributed at the end of each module to allow learners to outline their learning experience. There is also the option for learners to expand on their thoughts and offer additional comment. These evaluations are anonymous and evaluate overall satisfaction and which may include aspects of the following but is not limited to:

teaching and learning methodologies; module content, relevance, and workload; quality of learning materials; assessment & feedback; academic support, learning resources and other relevant areas.

Appraisal sheets can be paper-based or online and aim to be brief and user friendly.

The biennial surveys have a wider reach and are collated to inform the programme/module review process, future programme delivery, quality issues, and to flag potential areas for improvement. These surveys engage with both past and current learners, and similar to end of module appraisals they are anonymous. Biennial surveys contain both quantitative and qualitative elements with indicators designed to build an overall view of particular and more general aspects of the programmes and SIPTU's college. The questions are designed and grouped using engagement indicators within certain themes i.e., logistical and delivery issues, effective teaching practices, supportive environment, progression etc. As with appraisal sheets, there are always ample opportunity for free flow of comments to ensure the results are not constrained by specific questions.

Due to relatively small sized classes, it is possible for SIPTU to involve learners in the quality agenda informally yet in a meaningful and collaborative way. Learners are encouraged to freely give their opinions and feedback on their learning experience in class, or in specially arranged focus groups and elsewhere.

All appraisal data is collected, analysed, and collated and is presented to the Quality Committee for onward inclusion in self-monitoring reports and in the self-evaluation and programmatic review processes. The Quality Committee and Head of College will make decisions and recommendations based on the analysis of the data. At the college, survey and appraisal data is an important mechanism by which to identify good practice, continually enhance the quality of teaching and learning experience and assists in planning for learner-centred enhancement.

College Staff and Quality Committee

SIPTU staff are encouraged to involve themselves in ongoing monitoring and evaluation of their own performance and of the effectiveness and quality of all activities at SIPTU's college. Their role is clearly defined regarding teaching, learning and assessment, and their contribution to the informal and formal processes of self-reflection.

External Authenticator and Examiner reports

The reports from external authenticators and external examiners are the subject of focus at the Quality Committee, both in terms of the formal Results Approval process and as contributions to self-evaluation and programmatic review. In addition, the Head of College engages with external authenticators and external examiners on an ongoing basis for their overall views and advice.

Feedback or information provided by QQI and NCI

The Head of College engages frequently with appropriate personnel at QQI and with key personnel at NCI, in particular the Dean and Vice Dean; the Quality Officer and the Centre for Research and Innovation in Learning and Teaching (CRILT). These engagements, both formal and informal, contribute to the process of monitoring, self-evaluation and programmatic review and are viewed as opportunities to avail of advice and support in order to enhance our practice.

Feedback from SIPTU and other unions

As training union activists to be union activists is a core SIPTU objective, it is critical that that we regularly evaluate if this objective is being achieved, from the point of view of those who set the objective. Therefore, key to our internal monitoring, self-evaluation and programmatic review is to engage with the Officers and Industrial staff of SIPTU, of ICTU, and of other trade unions. The latter is facilitated by involvement with the Education Officer and sub-committee at ICTU and by engagement with the Education Officers of other trade unions. A key component of stakeholder engagement however is the interaction with the members of SIPTU's Strategic Management Team. These are the Heads of the Industrial Divisions who have a responsibility to arrange the education and training of the members in the Division and who represent the Industrial Organisers who work with union members on the ground. The SMT meets on a monthly basis and reports from and to the Head of College are a standard on the agenda. Valuable feedback from all of these stakeholders is acquired in this way and contributes to all of the self-reflexive processes at SIPTU's college.

Feedback from potential learners

SIPTU's college engages with potential learners, i.e., the wider union membership, in a number of ways:

- By inviting feedback in regular newsletters issued to members via SIPTU Organisers or directly via a mailing list
- By attendance at Delegate and Divisional Conferences where SIPTU's college has a display stand and uses the opportunity to survey delegates or engage less formally at focus groups or individually
- By engagement with NEC nominee and adjunct tutors at quality committee level
- By attendance at local District Council meetings – tutors attend the District Council meetings in their own locality ensuring that education and training needs are a regular agenda item and are discussed.
- Social media platforms are now also used to good effect, in particular the use of YouTube and podcasts and seeking feedback on these on Facebook.

Table 4 on the next page outlines all of the appraisal, evaluation and review mechanisms in place at SIPTU's college.

Table 4. Appraisal, Monitoring, Evaluating and Review

Evaluation/Review Methods	Matters Addressed	Stakeholders Involved	Frequency
Appraisal forms from learners	Content, Delivery, Supports, Materials, siptuLEARN	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learners • Tutors 	At end of each module.
Online learner appraisal survey	Content, Delivery, Supports, Materials, siptuLEARN	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learners • Tutors • Quality Committee 	At end of programme / biennially
Quality Committee deliberations including ad hoc programme boards; review panels; self-evaluation and periodic programmatic reviews	All of the above plus Standards, Compliance, Assessment reliability and validity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Head of College • Quality Committee • Tutors • Gen Sec/nominees • NCI Dean/nominee • Learner rep • Review Panels • Awarding bodies • Oversight Committee • Externals 	Each Quality Committee meeting and as per requirements of each evaluation and review process
Strategic Management Team	Learning outcomes and union needs met	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gen Sec • Strategic Management Team • Head of College 	Monthly
National Executive Council	Learning outcomes and union needs met	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • National Executive Council • Gen Sec 	Monthly
Delegate Conferences	Learning outcomes and union needs met	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Target and existing learners • General membership • National Executive Council 	Annually

Figure 4 below outlines the college’s self-evaluation and review timeline.

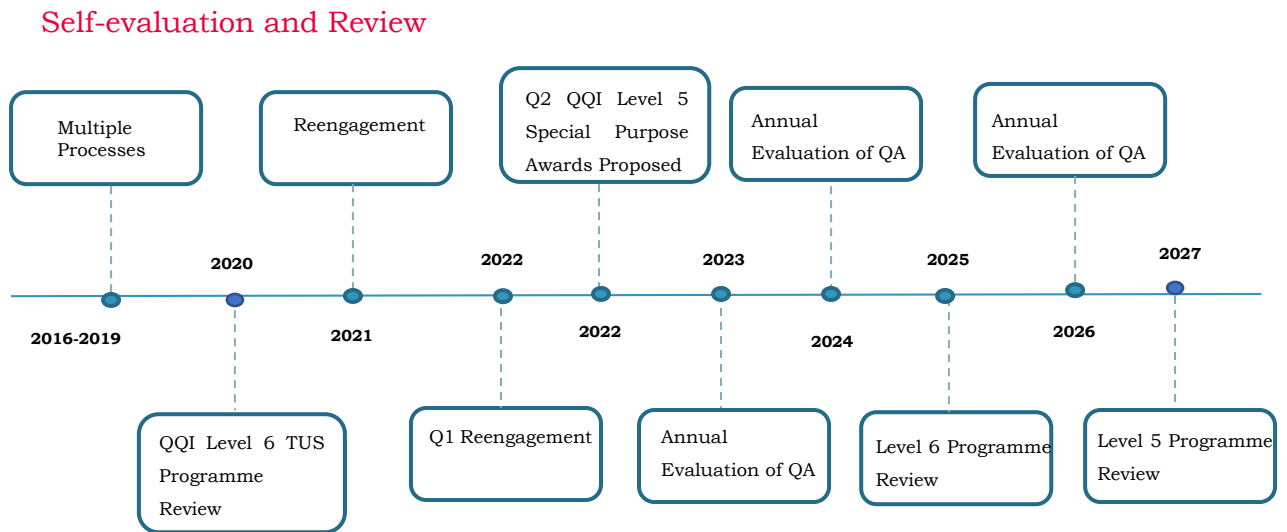


Figure 4 Self Evaluation and Review

15.3 Use of panellists, external experts

Dependent on the circumstance and requirement explicit criteria and procedures will be drafted for the recruitment, selection and engagement of all external experts. At the very least, SIPTU requires a declaration by any external expert regarding their independent expertise; any interests that could conflict, or might appear to conflict, with the role or responsibilities proposed by SIPTU. Independence and expertise are reviewed each time an expert is engaged and the names and affiliations are collated and monitored by the provider.

15.4 Responsibilities and Evidence Summary

	Learners	Tutors	Quality Committee	Learner Support	Head of College	Oversight Committee/ Gen Sec	QOI
Responsibilities	√	√	√		√		
Evidence	Learner Appraisal data reports, Minutes of the Quality Committee, Authenticator Documents, Programme Review Documents, Self-Evaluation Reports, QOI/NCI Monitoring Reports (<i>SIPTU College Documentation Centre – siptuLEARN</i>)						
(Recorded)							
Implementation Date	1 st April 2021						
Review Date	1 st April 2026						



Part 16 – Other activities at SIPTU’s college

SIPTU’s college has responsibility for a range of other functions in SIPTU as outlined below. The involvement of SIPTU staff in other functions, research and engagement within their field of practice is considered an important contribution to remaining up to date and connected to the wider union and society.

16.1 Industrial Engineering/Safety and Health

SIPTU’s college provides some additional services to the membership of SIPTU in the areas of industrial engineering and occupational health and safety. Some safety and health investigations, and assessments of industrial processes and risk, are conducted by those tutors who hold additional qualifications in this area.

16.2 Library / Book Exchange / Reading Circles

There is a small library at the college which offers a range of printed and electronic books, periodicals and other materials for tutors in the disciplines in which they teach: industrial relations, employment law, economics, occupational health & safety, labour history. All learners at the Kilmainham premises have access to the Book Exchange which operates on a bring-and-borrow basis and includes material relevant to the disciplines above and to the educational programmes available at SIPTU. Both tutors and learners at SIPTU’s college organise reading circles at several locations around the country during the winter months (pre Covid-19 restrictions). Multiple copies of some titles are available at the College Library for these reading circles, for example James Plunkett’s “Strumpet City”; Mary Beard’s “Women and Power”; Robert Tressell’s “The Ragged Trousered Philanthropist”; James Bloodworth’s “Hired”.

16.3 College Podcasts

The college launched its own Podcast on May Day 2019 with the aim of providing monthly broadcasts of interesting talks and interviews on topics such as trade unions, workers' rights, international affairs, society, culture, economics, and labour history. It is available through various mediums including iTunes, Google Podcasts, Acast, Soundcloud and the college website. The college has published 8 episodes featuring interviews with well-respected writers, academics, activists, and historians such as authors James Bloodworth, Liz Gillis and Francis Devine; Dr. Eugene Hickland (Dublin City University); Prof. Tony Dundon (University of Limerick); Dr. Charles Umney (University of Leeds); Moira Leydon (AONTAS and ASTI) and Senator Frances Black. The show also highlights the ongoing work of SIPTU's college and emphasises the importance of trade union education. It is also used as part of the learning experience in that students are encouraged to listen to and engage with the discussions featured on the podcast.

16.4 Other

Marino Institute of Education – SIPTU hosts two students each year for the adult education work experience component of their degree course

Dublin City University – SIPTU's college successfully tendered to partner Dublin City University in REWIR, an EU supported research project on the experiences of workers returning to work after serious illness - Negotiating return to work in the age of demographic change through industrial relations (REWIR). College tutors are conducting the research and will author the final 'Ireland' report.

Guest lectures – College staff guest lecture on request on post-graduate programmes at DCU and NUIG.

Centre for European Policy Studies (CEPS), Brussels – SIPTU college successfully tendered to work with CEPS on an EC commissioned research project examining the effectiveness of social dialogue - Enhancing the effectiveness of Social Dialogue Articulation in Europe (EESDA) Project No. VS/2017/0434. College tutors conducted the interviews and authored the 'Ireland' chapter of the subsequent report.

DELSA – SIPTU college has been invited by the Adult & Community Education Department at Maynooth University to be an associate partner on an EU-funded project – Digital Empowerment for Digitally Upskilling Adults, DELSA. It is aimed at producing materials for training and education to support adults to upgrade their basic digital skills. The project is producing a range of digital literacy open access training materials to upskill adult learners for greater digital participation – a critical issue now. The materials produced will be made available first to SIPTU’s college as a partner on the project – a very welcome development.

SHERPA – We are in discussion with European trade unions regarding the holding of joint seminars to discuss the development of union learning representatives or mentors in the workplace as part of their ESF funded project.

Ends.





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