	SECTION 7: LEARNER ACCESS, PARTICIPATION & SUPPORT	<u>POLICY DOCUMENT</u>
		VERSION 1 – OCTOBER 2022

SECTION 7: LEARNER ACCESS, PARTICIPATION & SUPPORT

7.1 Access to Programmes of Study

Fusion Training and Development is committed to facilitating learners' entry into its programmes. It accommodates their demonstration of the competencies required to access a programme. It ensures that learners can gain access to its programmes without unnecessary barriers, and it facilitates their successful participation in programmes. It is equally committed to ensuring that learners are given all the information necessary to make informed choices about the transfer and progression of the course on offer by us and others and by a national practice.

The company operates an open admission policy for learners who meet the requirements to engage in a course of study. It is central to our mission that we are inclusive and egalitarian and that we do not discriminate against any potential learners on any grounds, including those listed in the *Equal Status Acts 2000-2015*. As far as is possible within our resources and capacity, we aim to offer special accommodation for learners with disabilities.

It is the responsibility of potential learners to ensure they are fully informed about their elected course of study and complete all relevant documentation. Learner documentation refers to:

- Providing evidence of having achieved the required level of competence to access a QQI Level 6 programme¹
- Personal information (PPSN, Date of Birth) necessary to register the learner for certification
- Address and contact details - to be able to update learners, send them course documentation, to post certificate upon completion of the course.

7.2 English Language Requirements

Fusion Training and Development offers programmes in the English language and potential learners are required to possess a language level sufficient to successfully participate and complete the programme. Given the profile of potential programme participants (those who have attained NFQ Level 8 or higher and are working in a professional role in a community or voluntary organisation) , it is expected that all are using English as their everyday language – both oral and written. In the event that English language proficiency is in question, this can be proven formally through the provision of relevant qualifications in EFL or ESOL - e.g. Cambridge or IELTS - or through demonstrating sufficient competence in a conversation with the Managing Director. As our programmes require the capacity to interact and actively participate in groups, we place as much emphasis on spoken as written proficiency.

7.3 Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL)

Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) is offered to potential learners of Fusion Training and Development under clear and certain circumstances.

To accept an applicant based on non-certified learning, Fusion considers a selection of the following as relevant experience for their QQI6 Group Facilitation and QQI6 Train the Trainer programmes. These are:

- Six months' experience in personal development groups and/or six months experience in recovery groups and/or support groups (e.g. AL-Anon, FASN)
- Six months' experience in facilitating or co-facilitating groups
- Clear interest and some knowledge of the area

¹ Admission criteria: to access programmes leading to a specific award, in our case a QQI Level 6 minor award, the applicant should have reached the levels of skill, competence and knowledge required of the preceding level on the NFQ. This can be achieved either through a formal programme (i.e. a Level 5 qualification) or through relevant experience.

- Experience participating in psychotherapy - minimum 25 sessions
- Experience participating in individual or group psychotherapy for a minimum of 50 hours

The Managing Director speaks to the applicant to ensure that they are suitable for their chosen programme. If they believe the programme is not the right match for the applicant, they may suggest alternative courses the applicant might consider.

In the case of QQI6 Conflict Management, where total marks are currently ascribed to written assignments, Fusion Training and Development requires that applicants for the programme possess some of the following:

- Experience participating in psychotherapy for a minimum of 50 hours
- Six months' experience in recovery and/or support groups and
- Demonstrate sufficient standards of literacy to meet the demands of the programme²
- A clear understanding of how the programme would benefit them

The Managing Director speaks to the applicant to ensure they understand the nature and demands of the programme and to determine that the applicant can undertake the programme. In addition to assessing academic capacity, these conversations are also held to ensure that the applicant can actively participate in groups.

An application form for Recognition of Prior Learning must be submitted to the Managing Director. The application must contain a reference from their employer, or their psychotherapist/supervisor, attesting to their competence, interest and suitability for their elected programme.

7.4 Selection Procedure

The main conduit for identifying potential participants is through the network that the company has with the community and voluntary organisations in the wider geographical catchment. Potential participants are usually working in community development or similar roles either at the operational or management level – more

² Learners seeking to avail of RPL must show sufficient competence in spoken and written English. For non-native speakers, this can involve acquiring Cambridge Level 6 or IELTS score of 7, or evidence they have scored 100 in an online TOEFL test. For English speakers with literacy issues, a NALA test or reference from a literacy tutor attesting to their level may be required.

often the latter. All would have at least NFQ Level 8 qualifications. Accepting a learner on a programme must ultimately be founded on a clear and informed judgement that the potential learner can successfully undertake the programme. In assessing a student's capacity in this regard, Fusion Training and Development reserves the right, if it believes it necessary, to interview the potential participant by 'phone/virtual meeting or in person.

Should a potential participant not be offered a place on a programme due to over-subscription, they will be offered a place on the waiting list for the next available programme. Should they not be awarded a place due to other reasons - e.g. not having achieved qualifications at the preceding QQI level of the programme, or not having demonstrated sufficient language capacity - then clear reasons will be provided to them along with remedial courses of action.

7.5 Induction

All new learners who undertake a programme of study at Fusion Training and Development receive an induction to the company and their selected programme of study. This is conducted on the first day of the programme. It provides learners with clarity on all elements of the course, including what is expected of them academically (e.g. assessment, plagiarism, referencing), and they can expect Fusion Training and Development (e.g. support, standards, pastoral care). It also refers to health and safety matters, assignment submission dates, transfer and progression options etc.

Fusion Training and Development recognises that induction is an essential process for learners starting a programme of education and/or training. The induction process is designed to ease learners' transition to studying at the company and to get a more precise understanding of the relevant programme of study and structure of the study programme. The process provides sufficient information on the company's academic policies and procedures and information on learner and staff rights and responsibilities.

Induction also provides learners with information on the Common Awards System (CAS) and its relationship to the development of QQI awards, consistent with the National Framework of Qualifications (NFQ). When learners have further questions regarding awards, they are invited to meet with the Managing Director. The induction

process also notifies learners of the supports available at Fusion Training and Development.

7.6 Transfer

Fusion Training and Development currently offers three QQI Minor Awards to a range of potential learners. The company has found that the requirement to transfer from one award to another is negligible and it, therefore, does not implement a Transfer policy. If Fusion Training and Development opts to further develop its QQI portfolio in the future, it recognises the requirement for an approved transfer mechanism may arise. The company will work to align its policies and procedures to QQI specifications in this regard.

7.7 Progression

QQI programmes available at Fusion Training and Development are designed to facilitate learners to progress onto other programmes where the relevant component is a mandatory or an elective requirement. Each minor award – if completed – leads to 15 credits. Successful completion of the component awards offered by the company enables learners to transfer to programmes leading to other certificates where this component is a mandatory or an elective requirement, for example, a QQI Level 6 Advanced Certificate in Business Studies. This is a Major Award. Major awards consist of eight minor components with the availability of 120 credits in total. Fusion Training and Development recognises the value of lifelong learning for all learners and Fusion Training and Development supports learners who wish to transfer or progress to other programmes, including other programmes offered by the company.

Where learners require advice on selecting further programmes that will help plan their academic or career path, the Managing Director provides guidance on progression routes through the NFQ framework available to learners from their programme of study as requested and appropriate.

Fusion Training and Development maintains strong peer relationships with organisations in the community and voluntary sector which provides opportunities for the discussion of current issues and emerging trends. These practices enable the

company to provide general guidance on progression and skill requirements to learners.

Fusion Training and Development also maintains records of learner achievement and certification. To facilitate progression, learners can request information that may be required by other institutions.

Learners are informed in the induction of the NQF; of the link between minor and major awards; of where they can pursue further study. The Managing Director also offers learners the opportunity to discuss learner options post-course completion.

7.8 Reasonable Accommodation

‘Reasonable accommodation is considered as any action that obviates or alleviates a noticeable disadvantage arising from challenges including disability, serious medical condition or learning difficulty, without undermining the integrity of the qualification’.

Fusion Training and Development is committed to providing reasonable accommodation to meet the needs of learners to facilitate them to complete their programme in the same way as other participants. All venues chosen for training delivery are proofed for accessibility and ease of access to facilities therein. Training materials are adapted to suit learning challenges such as poor or low vision situations (e.g. using larger font, more visuals). Facilitators are experienced in adjusting approaches to cater for a variety of learner profile types and are asked to do the same for those with needs such as impaired hearing (different voice projection levels). For participants who may have medical conditions which affect their ability to e.g. sit for long periods etc., facilitators accommodate this. Facilitators accommodate as much as possible while also being mindful of the need to support learners to complete their QQI certification journey.

7.9 Personal Mitigating Circumstances’ Policy

7.9.1 Purpose

Fusion Training and Development strives to ensure the academic success of learners enrolled on its programmes. Learners attending programmes of study at Fusion Training and Development are expected to attend all classes as the programme duration is five days’ equivalent. Full class attendance is an essential component in the academic development and engagement of learners to allow them to immerse

themselves fully in the process. However, the company recognises that circumstances may arise that may affect learners' ability to satisfy programme requirements or to achieve their academic potential. For this reason, learners can request that, under certain circumstances, personal mitigating circumstances be taken into consideration.

7.9.2 Policy

This policy outlines the mechanisms that are available to learners who present with a mitigating circumstance that precludes participation with given elements of a programme and at a certain point in time.

In the event of circumstances which affect learners' ability to participate fully in their programme of study or programme activities, learners are responsible for communicating this to the management at Fusion Training and Development. Where a medical issue is a potential reason for the change in circumstances of the learner, the company will provide learners with assistance in locating medical services if required. If learners do not wish to discuss the nature of their absence, Fusion Training and Development will advise them to contact their healthcare practitioner to arrange the relevant support and assistance.

Personal Mitigating Circumstances refer to particular conditions that prevent learners:

- Actively participating in or attending a programme of study during the period of enrolment
- Completing assessment activities, to the standard that otherwise would have been expected, during the period of programme enrolment

7.9.3 Responsibility

This policy is the responsibility of the Managing Director

7.9.4 Processes & Procedures

Learners may be facilitated in taking unscheduled breaks in the event of mitigating circumstances (for example, bereavement or illness). Such periods should be verified by supporting documentation.

Where absence occurs during a programme of study, learners must contact management outlining the expected duration of absence and return date. Where absence is recurring, learners must contact the management and, if relevant, provide evidence of medical certification for the period of illness/absence.

Fusion Training and Development requests learners to engage with them during periods of absence so that alternative arrangements can be identified and implemented if required.

Due to the delivery structure of QQI-accredited programmes available at Fusion Training and Development, learners are strongly encouraged not to schedule holidays during programme enrolment.

Personal Mitigating Circumstances – Procedures

Where learner absence occurs during a period of submission dates for assessments of examinations, it is not possible for Fusion Training and Development to award learners with a grade for unsubmitted/incomplete assignments or examinations.

Learners are notified that, under certain circumstances, it is possible to apply for consideration for personal mitigating circumstances by contacting the Managing Director. Learners are advised to make an application with supporting documentation (for example, a medical certificate) for review by the management. Learners can submit an application for personal mitigating circumstances usually for up to ten working days after their period of absence. Fusion Training and Development treats valid personal mitigating circumstances in a supportive manner.

The Managing Director reviews learners' applications for personal mitigating circumstances and decides about the same in as timely a way as possible.

Where learners' applications for personal mitigating circumstances are approved, learners are notified of the decision.

Where learners' applications for personal mitigating circumstances are rejected, learners are notified of the decision and provided with a rationale for the decision. If learners wish to appeal the decision, the Academic Council reviews the documentation and makes a final decision and notifies learners in writing. Fusion

Training and Development recognises that it may be a difficult time for learners and accordingly, all correspondence with learners about these matters is treated with sensitivity and discretion.

The company treats all learner information privately and confidentially. Where personal mitigating circumstances need to be considered for assessment completion and learners submit medical certificates, these are presented at the Results Approval Panel (RAP), allowing the Panel the opportunity to consider the same.

7.10 Complaints' Policy

7.10.1 Purpose

This policy ensures that all legitimate complaints are investigated to resolve in a clear, fair, and timely manner.

7.10.2 Policy Statement

Fusion Training and Development, as a learner-centred organisation, is committed to being open and responsive to learner complaints and to seeking to handle them sensitively and fairly for all parties. While a formal complaints procedure is in place, in the first instance, the company seeks to resolve the issue through informal methods.

Complaints can provide an important source of feedback on the performance of the company's services and service delivery. As such, Fusion Training and Development carefully manages the registration of complaints and the hopeful progress towards attaining an agreed outcome for the parties involved.

Learners/complainants are advised that in making a complaint, it is expected that they have complied with the requirements of the Learner Code of Conduct Policy about the matter concerned. It is also expected that complaints are not of a personalised or malicious nature or for personal gain.

Academic Appeals are not covered by this policy (please refer to the appropriate policy for Review, Recheck or Appeal Policy). A complaint against another learner is not covered by this policy, this is dealt with under the Learner Code of Conduct and Policy.

7.10.3 Responsibility

Managing Director in the first instance. Thereafter, the Academic Council and if not resolved, this is dealt with by the Finance Council.

7.10.4 Processes & Procedures

Stages in the Complaints' Process

Before making a formal complaint, learners/complainants should first try to resolve the issue informally with the person who is the subject of their complaint (if applicable) or with Managing Director. There may be occasions when several learners/complainants feel they need to jointly need to make a complaint about a problem. In these circumstances, it may be appropriate to nominate a learner to act as a spokesperson.

Learners/complainants can be accompanied at any stage of the process by a family member or a colleague. In all instances, the accompanying party cannot be a legal advocate or representative. Their role is to take notes and act as support to the party engaged in the complaint. Discussions are between the named parties and do not involve accompanying parties. The intention to bring an accompanying party, the identity of the accompanying party and their relationship to the named party must be communicated in writing to the meeting organiser, not less than 72 working hours before the meeting.

The complaints procedure is based on the principles of natural justice and as a result, anonymous complaints cannot be dealt with or responded to.

Stage 1: Informal Process

This preliminary stage is generally a verbal process and a formal, written record is not made. If the complaint is not resolved, then the complainant may proceed to Stage 2 of the Complaints Procedure.

Stage 2: Formal Process

If the complaint is not resolved informally, the learner(s)/complainant(s)/Learner Representative should complete a Complaint Form which should be

forwarded to the Managing Director, who will escalate if required to Finance Council. The complaint should be specific and comprehensively documented. The procedures (both informal and formal) for dealing with each category of the complaint are then elaborated.

Complaints' Procedure

This section outlines the procedures to be followed for each of the categories of complaints (A or B) below.

Category A – Specific Subject/Module/Programme Issues

The following procedure is to be followed for complaints falling within this category:

- 1. Learners/complainants may complete a Complaint Form and submit it to the Managing Director. When the issue is resolved, the outcome is communicated to all relevant stakeholders. Where the problem is not resolved informally, the following procedure may be followed.*
- 2. In the case of unresolved issues relating to specific subjects or modules, meetings are set up with the facilitator, the learner(s)/complainant(s), and the Managing Director to resolve the issue satisfactorily. Such meetings should normally be completed within ten working days. Reference should be made to the programme documentation as part of this process. Both learner(s)/complainant(s) and the staff member may elect to have a representative or a third-party present at such meetings.*

Records are retained of such meetings, agreed, upon and signed by participants, and made available to each party. For issues relating to general programme issues such as course workload and timetabling, the learner(s)/complainant(s) submits the Complaint Form to the Managing Director to be included as an agenda item in advance of the regularly scheduled management meeting. The matter is processed through the next management meeting and escalated to the Finance Council if necessary.

3. *Where the complaint is resolved, the Managing Director should complete a Complaint Resolution Form and inform the learner(s)/complainant(s) of the outcome. If not satisfied, the learner(s)/complainant(s) may appeal the outcome to the Finance Council as the final arbiter.*
4. *Where the issue is not resolved, the Finance Council reviews the matter and decides upon the appropriate course of action. Both the learner(s)/complainant(s) and staff member are kept up to date on the matter.*

Note: Regardless of the category utilised above, the Finance Council receives minutes from all meetings involving any form of communication relating to any alleged complaint. The Finance Council's decision is final in all cases.

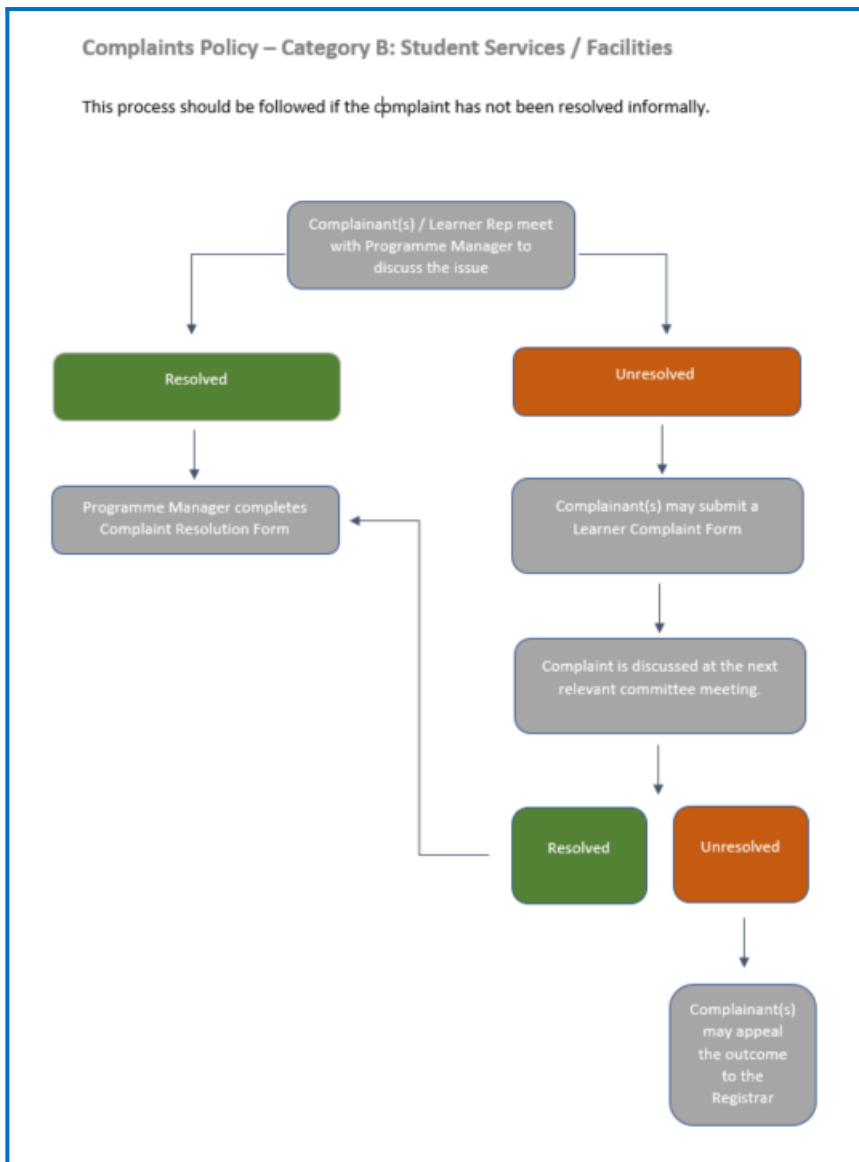
Category B - Learner Services/Facilities

Category B complaints (which relate to learner services or facilities) are initially dealt with by the Managing Director. The following procedure is to be followed for complaints falling within this category.

Where a complaint relating to a service/facility remains unresolved, the learner(s)/complainant(s) may submit a Complaint Form and the Managing Director places the item on the agenda of the next relevant committee meeting (where such exists). The Managing Director may also refer the matter to the Finance Council.

Where the complaint is resolved, the Managing Director should complete a Complaint Resolution Form and inform the learner(s)/complainant(s) of the outcome. If not satisfied, the learner(s)/complainant(s) may appeal the outcome to the Managing Director.

Note: Regardless of the category utilised above, the chair of the Finance Council receives minutes from all meetings involving any form of communication relating to any alleged complaint. The Finance Council's decision is final in all cases.



Category B – Learners’ Services/Facilities

7.11 Unscheduled Breaks & Class Attendance Policy

7.11.1 Purpose

The management of functions at Fusion Training and Development strives to ensure the academic success of learners enrolled on programmes of study. As programmes are of short duration (five days’ equivalent), learners are expected to attend all classes during the period of programme enrolment. Full and punctual class attendance is an essential component in learners' academic development and engagement. Attendance plays a key role in creating an environment of increased participation, interaction, and learning. Consistent attendance is a contributing factor

in enhancing the learning experience and facilitating the development of learning skills and learning progression. Attendance is also a key factor in ensuring that Fusion Training and Development achieves its mission to work with individuals and organisations to help them achieve their training goals.

7.11.2 Policy Statement

This policy explains Fusion Training and Development's approach to monitoring the engagement of learners in the various programmes of study and engagement with the organisation.

Although full learner attendance is the ambition, Fusion Training and Development recognises that circumstances and factors external to the training environment can impact learners' academic performance or influence learners' ability to attend classes or to complete assignments and/or examinations promptly. Fusion Training and Development may facilitate absences in the event of exceptional circumstances (for example, periods of illness and/or personal issues such as an immediate family bereavement).

In the event of circumstances which affect learners' ability to participate fully in their programme of study or programme activities, learners should refer to the Personal Mitigating Circumstances' Policy (for more information, see Personal Mitigating Circumstances' Policy above).

Due to the delivery structure of QQI-accredited programmes available at Fusion Training and Development, learners are encouraged not to schedule holidays during the period of their enrolment. The company maintains records of the attendance of all learners enrolled on programmes of study. Attendance records are updated daily by tutors. Learners are required to sign in for each day of their programme of study.

7.11.3 Responsibility

This policy is the responsibility of the Managing Director

7.11.4 Processes & Procedures

Due to the delivery structure of QQI-accredited programmes available at Fusion Training and Development, learners are encouraged not to schedule holidays or unscheduled breaks during programme enrolment.

Where unapproved absence occurs during a programme of study, learners must contact the Managing Director.

Where unapproved absence is recurring, learners must contact the Managing Director and subsequently provide evidence of medical certification for the period of illness/absence. Fusion Training and Development requests learners to engage with them during periods of absence so that alternative arrangements can be identified and implemented if required.

Learners are notified that, under certain circumstances, it is possible to apply for consideration for personal mitigating circumstances. Learners are advised to submit a completed Personal Mitigating Circumstances Form with supporting documentation (for example, a medical certificate). Learners can submit an application for personal mitigating circumstances usually up to 10 working days after their period of absence. The company treats all valid cases of personal mitigating circumstances in a supportive manner.

The Managing Director reviews learners' applications for personal mitigating circumstances and decides about the same as efficiently as possible.

Where learners' applications for personal mitigating circumstances are approved, learners are notified of the decision by the Programme Manager.

Where learners' applications for personal mitigating circumstances are rejected, learners are notified of the decision and provided with a rationale for the decision. Fusion Training and Development recognises that it may be a difficult time for learners and accordingly, all correspondence with learners about this matter is treated with sensitivity and discretion.

Class Attendance Procedure

Fusion Training and Development records and measures learners' attendance using attendance records. All learners are required to sign a programme attendance

register for each attendance on a specific programme of study. Fusion Training and Development provides tutors with attendance records and tutors are responsible for administering the attendance record to learners.

Learners are responsible for signing the attendance record on each training programme day. Any attempts by learners to falsify the attendance record (i.e. by attempting to sign in another absent learner) are in direct breach of the Code of Conduct Policy. Where this breach occurs, the instance is subject to the procedures documented within the relevant policy.

Sanctions for Poor Attendance

The reputation of Fusion Training and Development and its learners are guided by Fusion Training and Development's commitment to maintaining the highest standards of learning and instruction. Consistent attendance is a contributing factor in enhancing the learning experience. Attendance also plays a vital role in assisting Fusion Training and Development to achieve its objective to work with learners and organisations to achieve their personal and strategic goals.

Where learners' attendance falls below a manageable level, the company works to facilitate learners in completing a programme of study where possible.

7.12 Learner Code of Conduct Policy

7.12.1 Purpose

The purpose of the Fusion Training and Development Learner Code of Conduct Policy is to help establish the expectations of learners at Fusion Training and Development whilst ensuring the safety and protection of learners and company staff. The Learner Code of Conduct Policy and associated disciplinary procedures ensure a professional and safe environment exists for all.

7.12.2 Policy Statement

Fusion Training and Development works towards ensuring a good working relationship between all staff and learners. Fusion Training and Development additionally commits to recognition of the value of the diversity of learner

experiences and expectations. In this way, Fusion Training and Development is committed to treating learners fairly and transparently. All learners are required to comply with the requirements set down in this Learner Code of Conduct Policy.

The Learner Code of Conduct Policy defines the learners' rights and responsibilities. These rights and responsibilities form the basis of the relationship between members of the Fusion Training and Development community and its learners. This document provides a clear statement of the business's expectations of its learners in respect of academic matters and personal behaviour. Learners themselves have responsibilities towards tutors, employees, and other learners.

This document includes updated guidelines that detail the set of recognised ethical norms (or values) and standards of acceptable conduct and behaviour at Fusion Training and Development. This document describes clear and transparent procedures for reporting violations, reviewing incidents and the related due processes. It is expected that stakeholders comply with the Learner Code of Conduct Policy and that any complaints are not malicious or for personal gain. The Learner Code of Conduct Policy document is based on the principles of natural justice and consequently, anonymous complaints cannot be dealt with or responded to.

Where disciplinary actions are applied, these are primarily corrective and provide learners with the opportunity to amend their behaviour in line with the culture and ethos of the company.

This Policy and Disciplinary procedure is formally reviewed regularly to reflect any legislative changes.

7.12.3 Responsibility

This policy is the responsibility of the Managing Director.

7.12.4 Processes & Procedures

Learner Code of Conduct

Fusion Training and Development is fully committed to maintaining and fostering a learning environment that provides support and respect to all.

Learners enrolled on a programme of study at Fusion Training and Development are expected to:

- *Conduct themselves in a manner that upholds and supports the organisation's learning environment and the experiences of others*
- *Work to assist in the creation of a learning environment that espouses the principles of collaboration, mutual aid, and professional relationships*
- *Avoid behaviours that may disrupt classes, Fusion Training and Development staff, or other persons enrolled on programmes of study*
- *Treat all Fusion Training and Development staff and other learners with respect*
- *Behave in a manner that does not bring the company or its stakeholders into disrepute*
- *Access and familiarise themselves with the specific policies, procedures, and academic expectations and regulations relevant to their enrolment in the organisation*
- *Attend all classes and adhere to the guidelines detailed in the unscheduled breaks and class attendance policy*
- *Avoid language or behaviours that may be considered threatening to others*

Misconduct is any unacceptable or improper behaviour or any behaviour motivated by premeditated or intentional purposes.

Misconduct can include unintentional behaviour which may occur as a result of errors in judgment by learners or which represents a minor breach of Fusion Training and Development regulations.

Examples include (but are not limited to) the following:

- *Failure to abide by Fusion Training and Development health and safety rules and procedures*

- *Minor breaches of Fusion Training and Development Regulations*
- *Unintentional and minor damage to Fusion Training and Development property*

Misconduct also refers to any behaviour which represents a serious breach of Fusion Training and Development regulations.

Examples include (but are not limited to) the following:

- *Failure to follow Fusion Training and Development rules and regulations relating to academic matters (for example, instances representing major academic malpractice)*
- *Major breaches of Fusion Training and Development health and safety rules and procedures*
- *Major breaches of Fusion Training and Development Regulations*
- *Any act which results in adverse publicity or reputational damage to Fusion Training and Development or its staff*
- *Persistent rude, disruptive or threatening behaviour towards learners, Fusion Training and Development staff, and Fusion Training and Development stakeholders*
- *Failure to comply with any reasonable instruction given by any staff member in the performance of their duties*
- *Bullying or harassment or engaging in any discriminatory behaviour*
- *Possession, supply, or use of illegal drugs*
- *Dangerous behaviour, fighting, or physical assault*
- *Failure to report damage to property or premises caused by the learner*

Gross Misconduct

Gross Misconduct refers to instances where any act destroys the relationship of trust and confidence between Fusion Training and Development and learners, making the relationship impossible to continue.

Examples of gross misconduct include (but are not limited to) the following:

- *Signing in on behalf of another learner for assessment purposes*
- *Sexual offences, sexual misconduct, and/or sexual harassment*

- *Possession of weapons or any item that might be construed as being a weapon or dangerous substance*
- *Assault on any member of Fusion Training and Development staff, learners, or any other Fusion Training and Development stakeholders*
- *Forgery, alteration, or misuse of Fusion Training and Development documents or records*
- *Providing false information to Fusion Training and Development or impersonating others to deceive*
- *Attendance at the business premises or other training venue under the influence of alcohol or drugs*

Breaches of Fusion Training and Development Learner Code of Conduct Process

Before making a formal allegation of misconduct, learners should first try to resolve the issue informally with the person who is the subject of the alleged misconduct or with the immediate manager/supervisor of the service. This can be done in person or through the Learner Representative. Learners can also seek the advice of another staff member or Managing Director, as appropriate.

Where allegations are reported, the Managing Director initially investigates these. This investigation may result in the application of sanctions (where applicable).

Depending on the nature of the allegation, and where the matter is resolved through learners' admission of responsibility, the Managing Director may close the allegation. The Managing Director provides learners with a link to the Code of Conduct Policy.

Where learners deny any responsibility, the Managing Director will write a report of the incident and forward this to the Finance Council for further review and action.

The Finance Council assesses the information forwarded by the Managing Director and determines if the case of alleged misconduct requires further action and/or investigation. If it is determined that further action and/or investigation is required, the relevant learners are notified. This notification will inform learners of:

- The outcome of the investigation

- The appeal options open to the learner

Where learners accept the outcome of the investigation, the matter is considered closed and a record of the event is kept on the learners' records until the learners complete the programme of study.

In the event of an appeal, an Appeals' Committee is constituted which will consist of one member of the Finance Committee and two external experts. The Finance Council notifies learners of the following:

- Learners need to attend an Appeals' Committee meeting and confirm their attendance in writing (within 5 working days of receiving communication from the Finance Council)
- The date and time of the scheduled Appeals Committee meeting
- The location of the Fusion Training and Development Code of Conduct Policy and disciplinary procedures
- Learners' rights to have a colleague or family member accompany them to the Appeals Committee meeting
- The role of the accompanying party is solely to take notes and to provide support to the party engaged in the allegation (rather than to act as a legal advocate or representative)
- The need for learners who choose an accompanying party to be present to notify Fusion Training and Development of this intention no less than 72 hours before the meeting. This notification must also provide details of the identity of the accompanying party and their relationship to the named party
- That the decision of the Appeals' Committee is final

Appeals' Committee

The Appeals Committee convenes where learners submit an appeal of a decision made by the members of the Finance Council. It consists of one member of the Finance Council and two external experts. The former have no voting rights.

The Appeals Committee reviews all information relating to the allegation of misconduct and the learners' response/s and establishes if misconduct has occurred.

The Appeals Committee notifies learners of the:

- Outcome of the investigation
- Decision of the Appeals Committee as final

Breaches of Code of Conduct Sanctions

The reputation of Fusion Training and Development and its learners are guided by the company's commitment to maintaining the highest standards of learning and instruction. This commitment to standards includes the creation and fostering of a learning environment to meet the expectations of its stakeholders. The Learner Code of Conduct works to ensure the safety and protection of learners, stakeholders, and trainers.

Where learners are found in breach of the Learner Code of Conduct, sanctions may apply. Any sanctions applied to cases of confirmed breaches of the Learner Code of Conduct are determined by the severity of the misconduct.

Sanctions for Breach of Code of Conduct

Where breaches of conduct occur, learners are provided with a written notification to which the offence applies. Learners are guided to the area of the Quality Assurance (QA) Handbook which refers to the Learner Code of Conduct Policy and disciplinary procedures. The incident of misconduct is recorded and placed on file until programme completion.

Depending on the severity of the misconduct, learners may be immediately required to leave the programme of study. Where this occurs, learners will be unable to register their attendance for any other programmes of study provided by Fusion Training and Development and fees will not be refunded. The incident is recorded and placed on file for twelve months following the completion of the programme. Learners are advised that any further verified incidents of breaches of the code of conduct may be treated as evidence of gross misconduct.

Sanctions for Gross Misconduct

Where gross misconduct occurs or where learners are determined as having committed a second breach representing major misconduct, learners may be immediately required to leave the programme of study. Where this occurs, learners will be unable to register their attendance for any other programmes of study provided by Fusion Training and Development and fees will not be refunded. The incident is recorded and placed permanently on file.

7.13 Refunds' Policy

7.13.1 Purpose

Fusion Training and Development recognises that on occasions it may be necessary to provide for situations whereby learners' situations may change and require them to withdraw from a programme registration that they have committed to and paid for. The purpose of this policy is to support the provision of refunds in appropriate situations.

7.13.2 Policy Statement

Learners who register for programmes at Fusion Training and Development agree to accept the refund terms and conditions outlined within this policy document. Fusion Training and Development provides full refunds for cancellations made more than 10 working days before the programme start date. Fusion Training and Development must be notified of any cancellations using a dedicated email address. Learners who fail to attend or complete a programme of study are not eligible for refunds.

Organisations may substitute learners enrolled in programmes of study before the start of the course without incurring additional costs. Fusion Training and Development must be notified of any programme transfer or change-of-date requests by email at least 5 working days before the commencement of the specific original programme of study.

Fusion Training and Development provides its stakeholders with access to the company's Refunds Policy on the Fusion Training and Development website. Potential

learners will be required to indicate that they have read the company's Terms and Conditions (including refunds) before confirmation of payment for a programme of study.

7.13.3 Responsibility

This policy is the responsibility of the Managing Director.

7.13.4 Processes & Procedures

Refund Application Process

Persons who wish to apply for refunds should email Fusion Training and Development directly to request the refund. All applications for refund will be handled in line with Fusion Training and Development's conditions of sale (as documented on the Fusion Training and Development website). The email must provide details of the learner(s), the specific programme the refund relates to, the method of payment used, and the rationale for the refund. Where necessary, Fusion Training and Development may request additional documentation be submitted to support the applicant's refund request. All applications must be provided to Fusion Training and Development a minimum of ten working days before the commencement of the programme of study.

Where applications for refunds are approved, applicants will normally be provided with a refund payment within twenty working days of the refund decision.

Where applications for refunds are rejected, applicants will be notified of the decision in writing and provided with a rationale for the decision.

Programme Transfers and Change of Date Application Process

Persons who wish to substitute participants and/or change the date of a programme of study, must email Fusion Training and Development directly and request the programme substitution and/or change of date in writing. The email should provide details of the learner(s), the specific programme the request relates to, and the rationale for the substitution and/or change of study date. Where necessary, Fusion Training and Development may request additional documentation be submitted to

support the applicant's request(s). All applications must be provided to Fusion Training and Development a minimum of five working days before the commencement of the original programme of study.

The Managing Director will review the application(s) and make a decision.

Where an application(s) is approved, applicants will be notified within five working days of the decision.

Where an application(s) are rejected, applicants will be notified of the decision in writing.

Note: Applications for refunds, programme transfers, and changes of the date that are not lodged within the specified timeframe indicated for each application cannot be processed

7.14 Learner Representative Policy

7.14.1 Purpose

Learner Representatives contribute to the implementation of quality assurance (QA) processes and quality enhancement at Fusion Training and Development. Through gathering and providing feedback on the learning experiences of enrolled learners and sharing this with Fusion Training and Development staff and at Academic Council meetings, Learner Representatives ensure focus on learners' experiences is a key focus of the organisation.

The role of Learner Representative also provides learners with an opportunity to develop deeper connections with colleagues and staff and to develop negotiation, advocacy, leadership, and communication skills.

7.14.2 Policy Statement

Fusion Training and Development works to apply the Learner Representative Policy where it is feasible within the scope of its operations. Learner Representatives act as the 'voice of learners and provide a representation of the views and experiences of learners at Fusion Training and Development. Learner Representatives ensure that

learners' views are heard and assist the company in continually listening to and engaging with learners to improve teaching, learning, assessment, and academic experiences.

7.14.3 Responsibility

This policy is the responsibility of the Managing Director

7.14.4 Processes & Procedures

It is Fusion Training and Development policy that all new learners receive an induction to Fusion Training and Development and their chosen programme of study. Fusion Training and Development recognises that a well-organised induction can assist learners in developing an understanding of learner responsibilities and expectations while helping learners settle into the learning environment.

Learners are notified of the role of Learner Representative. Learners have the opportunity to volunteer for the role.

If the class signs up for the Learner Representative Policy, groups of learners can choose to select a learner representative from the group. (In classes of less than 8 days duration or less than three learners, there is no obligation on the group to sign up for this policy).

Where learners do not volunteer for the position of Learner Representative, tutors may select a learner representative from the entire learning group.

Where more than one learner wishes to assume the role of Learner Representative, the remaining learners enrolled on the programme of study must endorse the appointment through a voting system. Learners write their votes on a piece of paper. Tutors collect the votes and count the votes. The learner in receipt of the majority of votes is elected as the learner representative for that group.

Learner Representatives must assume a proactive role in representing and engaging with fellow learners. Where programme-related and company-related matters may arise, Learner Representatives are responsible to present this matter to the Managing Director.

Learner Representatives may be invited to attend Academic Council meetings.

7.15 Learning Venue & Equipment Suitability Policy

7.15.1 Purpose

This policy ensures that Fusion Training and Development's learning venue and its facilities are appropriate to meet learners' needs and meet the minimum standards outlined by the company.

7.15.2 Policy Statement

This policy outlines the minimum standard requirements to ensure a positive teaching and learning experience which can be delivered in a safe and supportive physical environment.

Fusion Training and Development ensures that all learners are given rights to equality of treatment and ease of access to its services. The company recognises the importance of achieving a coherent and integrated approach to the provision of services and support for learners with special needs. All facilities accommodate learners with special needs.

7.15.3 Responsibility

This policy is the responsibility of the Managing Director

7.15.4 Processes & Procedures

Fusion Training and Development is committed to providing a learning environment that supports the learning experience of all the business's learners. Fusion Training and Development select venues and uses a checklist in advance of any training activity to ensure that each venue meets the following minimum standard requirements:

- Health and Safety (incorporating Covid-19 requirements as appropriate)
- Security
- Disability Access and Facilities

- Suitability of the Learning Environment
- Equipment Suitability

Health & Safety

Physical learning venues and equipment must adhere to health and safety obligations. These include:

- *Emergency lighting*
- *Adequate fire escapes*
- *Assembly point noted*
- *Means of raising the fire alarm*
- *Evacuation signage/details available*

Fusion Training and Development holds public liability insurance which provides cover for all parties attending the training no matter the venue. This is in addition to the insurance coverage provided by the premises.

Disability Access & Facilities

All venues are selected for accessibility for wheelchair users or persons with mobility requirements.

Suitability of Learning Environment

All training rooms selected to provide adequate space for the number of learners enrolled on a programme of study and the practical elements of the programme. Lighting, heating, and ventilation equipment are available. Room lighting is adequate and window blinds are present (where required).

Equipment Suitability

Fusion Training and Development provides equipment directly or negotiates the use of the equipment at training venues. In circumstances where programme curricula content requires specific materials to support learning, these will be provided.

7.16 Learner Programme Feedback & End of Programme Evaluation Policy

7.16.1 Purpose

This policy ensures that Fusion Training and Development maintains a continuous process of programme review and evaluation to ensure that programme participants are benefiting from participation in programmes. It also helps to identify areas of impact of learning for programme participants as well as providing the company with insights into programme delivery and effectiveness and learning for the future.

7.16.2 Policy Statement

This policy describes the requirement to provide all programme participants with the opportunity to feedback on their learning experience during each programme delivery and at the end of the particular programme.

7.16.3 Responsibility

This policy is the responsibility of the Academic Council which oversees the policy's application by the Managing Director.

7.16.4 Processes & Procedures

Fusion Training and Development is committed to facilitating each programme participant to provide feedback on their learning experience throughout a programme's delivery (formative assessment) and at its conclusion (summative assessment).

Considerable emphasis is placed on formative assessment. We are committed to monitoring participants' learning through ongoing feedback practice which in turn allows facilitators/tutors to adjust their training activity to enhance learning. We note that formative assessments help participants to a. identify their strengths and challenges and the target areas that need work and b. help facilitators/tutors to recognise where participants are struggling and address any issues that may arise in a proactive way.

Each participant is also asked to complete an end-of-programme evaluation form. This helps the company to evaluate participant learning at the end of the programme by using rating mechanisms which can be measured and quantified (see **Appendices**).

The information gleaned from the above is used formatively when participants and tutors/facilitators use it to guide efforts and activities in future programme delivery.

7.17 Learner Charter

Fusion Training and Development has prepared a Learner Charter (available in the appendices and on the company website) for the purpose of supporting a progressive learning environment focused on enriching each participant's learning experience.